| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Tao of Teaching and the Criminology Instructor

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| ABSTRACT

This is a phenomenological study on the TAO of teaching and the Criminology Instructors. Phenomenological interviewing was used in data gathering to describe the meaning of the phenomenon. This study was conducted in Central Visayas, Philippines where the informants were those Faculty members who have experience in teaching laboratory and non-laboratory courses. These were ten informants who were selected through the convenience sampling. The study utilized an interview Guide to elicit in-depth responses from the informants. In-depth interviews were conducted to arrive at the three-phase data collection needed in the study. The study sought answers to the following: experiences of informants in teaching non-laboratory courses, experiences of the informants in teaching laboratory courses, and views of the informants in their teaching profession. Result revealed that two themes came up on the experiences of informants in teaching non-laboratory courses which are: Pros and Cons: Perks and Privileges in Teaching and it Takes Two to Tango. On the experiences of the informants in teaching laboratory courses there were two themes: Considerations: Perks and privileges in teaching and Student-Teacher responsibility. On the views of the informants in their teaching profession, two (2) themes emerged: Value of Teaching Profession and Noble Profession. It was recommended that teachers handling non-laboratory and laboratory courses in criminology should meet the minimum standards set by the Commission on Higher Education to be more competent in their teaching professions and they must attend seminars and trainings to boost their confidence and the forensic science laboratories, facilities, apparatus & equipment should be upgraded aligned with the CHED Memorandum order to meet the standard and best education to the criminology students as future law enforcer.

| KEYWORDS

Criminology Instructors, Art of teaching, Phenomenological study, Philippines

1. Introduction

Teaching is a vital aspect in life, not only in school but also at home, Children grow and achieve their goals and ambitions in life, not just because of their own doings, but by the teaching and guidance of their parents, for them to follow the right direction in life, considering that children or youth are the hope of the nation and all over the world. The same manner, professors in different Colleges and Universities around the world have the same vision to guide and mold the students as best as they can to teach them to be a responsible individual, reach their ambition, to be competent in their chosen field of endeavor & most of all, they become productive citizen to the community. However, while being an educator is deeply rewarding and has some fantastic moments, there is no denying that it is extremely hard work and requires passion and commitment to mold students into better people. Nevertheless, teachers still face various issues related to their teaching profession, such as: (1) how to teach effectively to the students, (2) whether teachers are competent enough to impart knowledge to the students, and (3) whether the teachers have skills and specialized training in line with the subject matter.

In the Philippines, all colleges and universities offering a Bachelor of Science in Criminology must first secure authority from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). In Article V of CMO No. 05 s. 2018, it states that the BS in Criminology has a total of 177 units. The general education comprises the program, professional courses, and practicum (On the Job Training Community

Immersion). Criminalistics is a key component of the Professional Course that students must complete before graduation. Teaching this subject carries significant responsibility, as it demands extensive research, training, practical experience, and specialized skills. These are essential to prepare students for the board examination and to ensure they can apply their knowledge effectively when they enter law enforcement.

Republic Act No. 11131 also known as "The Philippine Criminology Profession Act of 2018" stipulated that for criminology students to pass the board exam, they must obtain a minimum of 6o% percent in all six areas of the criminology board examination. Therefore, faculty members handling both laboratory and non-laboratory subjects must teach students not only to pass the subject but also to succeed in the board examination.

In Cebu City, numerous colleges and universities offer the Bachelor of Science in Criminology program, in compliance with CHED Memorandum Order No. 21, Series of 2005. This order mandates that the criminology institutions must cater to students' needs through a combination of laboratory and non-laboratory subjects. Teachers play a crucial role in preparing students for careers in law enforcement agencies. Therefore, the researcher was intrigued by the experiences of faculty members teaching both types of subjects in schools across Central Visayas. As a criminologist, a laboratory assistant, and a part-time instructor, the researcher became fascinated in understanding the challenges faced by these faculty members.

As a criminologist, I felt obligated to conduct an in-depth study to assist faculty members who teach both laboratory an   - laboratory courses. The goal is to enhance their teaching strategies, expand their knowledge and skills, and align their expertise with criminology topics. Ultimately, this will better equip students to succeed in the Criminology Licensure Examination and confidently tackle a real-world challenges.

2. Literature Review

This study is anchored in the Transformational Learning theory of Mezirow (1924) and supported by the Theory of Educational Productivity of Walberg (1978) and Adult Learning Theory of Knowles (1978). Transformational Learning Theory focuses on how an individual's values, beliefs, and assumptions shape the lens through which they interpret and make sense of personal experiences. When this meaning system no longer adequately accommodates new or challenging life experiences, transformational learning enables individuals to replace it with a new perspective, one that is more inclusive, discerning, open, emotionally resilient, and reflective; in other words, more developed. Therefore, transformational learning aims to foster independent thinking.

According to Mezirow (1924), fostering greater autonomy in thinking is both a goal and a method for adult educators, and achieving greater autonomy in thinking is a product of transformative learning. He also commented that even partial independence requires communicative competence and transformative learning. Therefore, critical reflection on experience is key to transformational learning; having an experience is not enough to effect a transformation. What is valuable is not the experience itself but the intellectual growth that occurs through the process of reflecting on experience. Accordingly, effective learning stems not merely from a positive experience, but from thoughtful reflection on those experiences. Mezirow (1924) differentiated among three types of reflection on experience, only one of which, premise reflection, can lead to transformative learning. However, content reflection involves thinking about the practical experience; process reflection focuses on how to handle the experience; and premise reflection entails examining long-held, socially constructed assumptions, beliefs, and values about the experience or problem. Premise reflection, or critical reflection on assumptions, can be about assumptions we hold regarding the self (narrative), the cultural systems in which we live (systemic), our workplace (organizational), our ethical decision making (moral-ethical), or feelings and dispositions. Therefore, the transformation process, according to Mezirow, always involves critical reflection upon the distorted premises sustaining our structure of expectation.

Transformational learning theory emphasized that all humans have an instinctive drive to make meaning of their daily lives. However, since there are no enduring truths, and change is continuous, we cannot always assure ourselves of what we know or believe. Therefore, as an adult, it is crucial to cultivate a critical worldview to better comprehend the world around us. These include learning to navigate and act on our own beliefs, values, and emotions rather than simply adopting those of others. Nevertheless, developing trustworthy beliefs, verifying their accuracy, and making informed choices are essential to adult learning. It is atransformative learning theory that explains this learning process of constructing and appropriating new and revised interpretations of the meaning of an experience in the world (Taylor, 2017). Transformative learning is one theory of learning, and particularly focuses on adult education and young adult learning. Transformative learning is sometimes called transformational learning and focuses on the idea that learners can adjust their thinking based on new information. Jack Mezirow is known as the founder of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1924).

 This study is supported by Educational Productivity of Walberg (1978), which addresses the influences on learning that affect a student's academic performance. It is an exploration of academic achievement, in which Walberg used a variety of methods to identify

the factors that affect the student's academic performance. He analyzed his theory with the help of different theorists and integrated his study with over 3,000 studies. In his theory, he classified 11 influential domains of variables. Eight of which were affected by social-emotional influences, namely classroom management, parental support, student and teacher's interactions, social-behavioral attributes, motivational-affective attributes, and peer group. The variables reflect with different representations. First three variables (ability, motivation, and age) reflect characteristics of the student. The fourth and fifth variables reflect instruction quantity and quality, and the final four variables are classroom climate, home environment, peer group, and exposure to media) represent aspects of the psychological environment. He explained that these variables have certain effects that might cause problems if teachers or caregivers do not properly guide students' academic performance. Giving importance to a particular variable can significantly impact a student's academic performance. To increase educational productivity and efficiency, both the educational process and achievement goals must be considered. Educational process goals include student perceptions of the social environment, creativity, self-concept, participation in extracurricular activities, and interest in subject matter. Ignoring these perceptions and experiences in favor of traditional goals measured by test scores will decrease motivation and ultimately lower educational achievement. Many educational experiments and psychological theories of education fail to produce desired outcomes because they do not clearly identify, define, and measure educational variables (Walberg, 1978).

Adult learning theory of Knowles (1978) further supports this study. Andragogy refers to how adults learn and how this process differs from the way children learn. It aims to show how adult learning is distinct and to identify the learning styles that suit adults best. Over the years, the theory has been expanded and adapted. At its core, it contains five key assumptions about adult learners and four principles of andragogy, namely: (1) self-concept, (2) adult learner experience, (3) readiness to learn, (4) orientation of learning, and (5) motivation to learn (O'Neill, 2013). The approach to adult education will be via the route of situations, not subjects. Our academic system has grown in reverse order: subjects and teachers constitute the starting point, students are secondary. In conventional education, the student is required to adjust himself to an established curriculum; in adult education the curriculum is built around the student's needs and interests. Every adult person finds himself in specific situations with respect to his work, his recreation, his family-life, his community-life, et cetera-situations which call for adjustments. Adult education begins at this point. The resource of highest value in adult education is the learner's experience. If education is life, then life is also education. Too much learning consists of various substitutions of someone else's experience and knowledge (Knowles, 1978).

Although teaching has always been a challenging profession, in some ways, contemporary teachers find it increasingly difficult to make course material and the classroom experience relevant to today's students. One alternative for improving the effectiveness of teaching may be to employ the practices of andragogy, the art and science of helping adults learn. Andragogy is a process built around seven principles. The principles are : (1) the learning environment is positive, designed for co-creation and characterized by mutual respect, collaboration, teamwork, and trust. It should be a culture of support that enables openness and humanness among participants; (2) the environment actively involves learners in the content planning process; (3) learners select their learning interests to meet personal and organizational demands and standards; (4) the learning context allows learners to actively participate in defining learning goals; (5) a shared community engages learners in creating roadmaps to help them reach their learning objectives; (6) a learning system helps learners achieve competencies based on selected objectives; and (7) the learning community actively involves learners in outcomes assessment and evaluation. However, adaptive teaching strategies develop through a conscious modeling of self-learning behaviors for all learners. To achieve a heightened level of understanding, students must actively participate in the learning process. Only a well-designed learning context will facilitate such a transformation, with the instructor assuming the roles of facilitator and designer (Traore, 2008).

Andragogy, the art and science of helping adults learn, has a long and rich history that has shaped the understanding of adult learning and continues to be a strong force in guiding how adults learn. While adult educators in the U.S. are familiar with andragogy through the work of Dr. Malcolm Knowles, the theory of andragogy, reaches a worldwide audience of practitioners striving to improve learning through its respectful and engaging method focused on the learner. The teacher's role is to educate and guide students toward a successful future. (Henschke, 2011). Any attempt to develop a theory of andragogy will necessarily be based on a view of the relationship between person and society, and those educators who propose educational reforms, or new educational programs, or new teaching introduction practices will invariably be called upon to articulate their views. This is because education as an activity explicitly links the individual with the social. In particular, adult education is seen as a vehicle for explicitly addressing significant social issues connected to areas such as the environment, race, health, gender, class, the aged, the unemployed, and the dislocation and exploitation of migrants. In the text that follows, I consider in more detail the above general scenario. I argue that many prevailing theories in psychology and adult education lead to an overly regular and overly systematic view of adult learning and development, which is understood as a process subject to the vagaries of historical and social variation (Tennant, 2007).

 CHED memo order No.21, Series of 2005, clearly stipulated what should be observed by criminology institutions to provide the students' needs (German, 2007). CHED Memo No. 5, Series of 2018, mandates that all private higher education institutions (PHEIs)

intending to offer BS in Criminology must first secure proper authority from the Commission in accordance with the PSG. All PHEIs with an existing BS Criminology program are required to shift to an outcomes-based approach based on the PSG. State universities and colleges (SUCs) and local universities and colleges (LUCs) should strictly adhere to the policies and standards provided. Based on the curriculum and the means of its delivery, CHED determined the physical resource requirements for the library, laboratories, and other facilities, as well as the human resource requirements in terms of administration and faculty (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2018).

According to Johnson (2014), teaching is the most honorable profession. The teaching of professional development is a relatively new phenomenon in our discipline. The ability to synthesize the experiences gleaned from one's involvement in teaching, research, and service and to offer them to students through creative, structured, and unstructured (organic) experiences will determine how the teaching of professional development evolves in our discipline. A course on professional development can be a capstone experience an opportunity to synthesize students past experiences with a vision for their future. The suggestions in this article reflect my opinions. In considering of the need for adaptation and innovation, feel free to pick and choose from my suggestions to find what works best for your teaching style. For me, being a teacher has helped me become a better student. Nothing more rewarding than learning new information, new ways of thinking, new ways of processing my reality, and new ways of sharing what I know with others. I appreciate the opportunity to share some of what I have learned in my 30+ years of teaching and time as an academic administrator. Look forward to receiving your feedback and advice as "we" take on the mandate to mentor the next generation of scholars. According to Johnson & Crews (2013), ratings of ease, helpfulness, clarity, overall quality, and "hotness" were collected from 407 criminal justice and criminology faculty members across the United States. The data analysis will determine which faculty characteristics influenced these ratings. Experience working in the criminal justice field predicted higher ratings, while years of teaching experience predicted lower ratings. After controlling for instructors' easiness and "hotness" ratings, ascribed characteristics such as race and sex explained the greatest proportion of variance in clarity, helpfulness, and overall quality scores. Professional characteristics, such as years of experience, publication rate, and possession of a doctorate, were less influential. According to Kleck & Barnes (2011), one important dimension of the quality of a graduate program is the quality of its faculty. Previous assessments of the publication productivity of criminology and criminal justice (CCJ) faculties have been needlessly incomplete and narrow, reflecting publications only in a small number of CCJ journals. Assessments covering only CCJ journals fail to reflect the multidisciplinary nature of CCJ and bias results against programs whose most productive scholars publish in non-CCJ journals. The present research covers the full array of major journals in which CCJ-related research appears by searching for articles using the multidisciplinary Web of Science database as well as the Criminal Justice Periodical Index database.

The academic job search process is perhaps one of the most important and stressful events for scholars hoping to gain full-time employment in academia. The stress this process induces is due, at least in part, to the fact that candidates are forced to make important, life-changing decisions with very little information (Gould et al., 2011). According to Elen et al. (2007), the rich diversity of views on the research–teaching nexus is described from four different perspectives. First, we outline the respondents' thoughts about what constitutes research for them. We then describe the consequences of this conceptualization for the goals and strategies they propose for their teaching. This analysis is deepened in the third section, where we discuss the underlying reasons that the respondents expressed for the importance they attach to research for high-quality teaching. Finally, we present how the respondents believe teaching might contribute to their research. This study confirms several previously reported findings on the relationship between research and teaching. It also reveals two striking features of research-intensive teaching in research-intensive universities: (1) it is more research- than student-centered, and (2) the link between research and teaching is fundamentally based on and directed toward a mature epistemological disposition. It argues that these two features must explicitly consider faculty development.

According to Williams & Conyers (2016), some of the concerns faculty have in managing discussions on race in the classroom involve making explicit what which is often implicit when discussing race. Key objectives are to mitigate tension in the school, thereby creating a safe space for difficult race discussions, and to develop and promote faculty preparation for courses and course components that focus on race and racism. The development of pedagogical skills depends on self-awareness, emotion management, and understanding student values. Faculty preparation needs to be ongoing, flexible, and adaptable to the values of both students and the system. Student-centered examples and strategies provide aid emotion management in the classroom. According to Haas & Senjo (2004), the field of criminal justice/criminology has few studies that examine faculty opinions regarding using technology as both a replacement for and a supplement to traditional classroom instruction. This study uses sample of criminal justice and related discipline at higher education institution in California; this study examines perceptions of effectiveness and the actual use of various classroom-based technologies. The results reveal that, while most faculty members hold positive views toward the use of technology, far fewer are actually integrating technology-based methods of instruction into their courses. Meanwhile, the majority of faculty members report insufficient administrative support, which stands in contrast to the institution's stated dedication to faculty development and success. Overall, acceptance for the integration of technology into criminal justice education appears to be greatest when it is used as a supplement rather than a replacement for face-to-face classroom instruction.

According to Sitren & Applegate (2012), we find that many characteristics are regarded as at least moderately important. At the extremes, involvement in research, publishing, and teaching stand out as particularly important, while demographic factors are considered relatively unimportant. We also find considerable consensus among faculty regarding the importance of various candidate attributes. We discuss the implications of our findings in terms of their relevance to job market preparation and to the broader field of criminal justice. The criminal justice programs at traditional institutions of higher learning have been moving toward offering courses online and, in some cases, placing entire programs online for the better part of the past decade. In response to competition from for-profit institutions, many traditional colleges and universities have expanded their distance education offerings to include online courses and programs in order to attract students. As a result, the number of criminal justice students has increased, along with the profits for their home institutions. With the growth of the online education market, criminal justice faculty have been thrust willingly or unwillingly into the world of online teaching, a mode of instruction that remains unfamiliar to many. Drawing on the authors' experiences at their current institutions and, in the case of the lead author, a second institution this paper addresses several key issues that faculty members should consider before undertaking this type of time-intensive initiative (Hummer et al., 2010).

Acker (2003) noted that, there may be very few truly outstanding teachers who make a positive and meaningful difference in their students' academic development and, at times, in other areas of their lives as well. Although the general attributes of a good teacher can be roughly described, a variety of personal and professional obstacles may prevent a college faculty member from developing into one. Professors who do become accomplished teachers can feel justifiably fulfilled, as there is little more satisfying than having educated and inspired others, and being remembered fondly by at least a few students. Through their ability to inspire, the most meaningful lessons of these outstanding teachers can live on, as attested by several of the professors whose reflections are presented here. Gault (1918) stated that, a professor of criminology may devote his full time to his professorship or may allocate a portion large or small of his time and energy to teaching courses in sociology or in psychology, strictly defined. He emphasized that criminology courses should be organized in a way that attracts both pre-law and pre-medical students. In fact, Gault argued that, at a minimum, students of law should be required to complete at least a half-year of instruction in general criminology during their pre-legal education or within law school itself. As he used the term, criminology also encompassed penology.

According to Cahnmann & Sanders (2019), there are several interrelated themes in arts-informed pedagogy and teacher preparation: (1) the arts as tools to improve students' academic achievement in other content areas, such as math, science, social studies, language arts, and foreign languages; (2) the arts as a holistic and dynamic process for meaning-making; (3) the arts as a means of supporting teachers' professional identity and satisfaction (e.g., fostering teacher reflection, retention, job satisfaction, and relationship-building); and (4) the arts as a vehicle for social change, social justice, and educational advocacy. Additionally, a series of key questions and concerns arise regarding where, how, and why arts-informed teacher education practices being use, who uses them, and for what purposes. Kim (2014) stated that, in introductory classes, the primary goal is often to expose students to foundational content and to establish a general understanding of crime and the criminal justice system. Students are introduced to various subject areas within criminology they are typically expect to memorize and recall predefined material; however, they are less likely to develop critical thinking or application skills at this stage. In upper-level courses, therefore, both the goals and instructional methods must shift to support more advanced knowledge acquisition. Students are expected to recognize the conceptual complexity of key issues related to crime and justice and to apply the foundational knowledge gained in introductory courses to real-world situations. As supported by findings from prior research, while traditional teaching methods may be appropriate for foundational learning in introductory courses, problem-based learning (PBL) is a more effective instructional strategy for fostering higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills in advanced-level courses.

Thurgood (2020) suggests that, when designing curricula, it is important to remember that we cannot predict where students will ultimately go in their criminology careers. Even the students themselves may be uncertain about their future paths, despite having specific career ambitions at the time of study. Criminology degrees must therefore prepare graduates for a wide range of career options. It could be argued that students with more applied career goals may not need to fully understand research methods. One option, then, would be to offer a tailored research pathway that not all students are required to take. While this approach could satisfy those resistant to learning research methods and simultaneously challenge and equip others with strong graduate skills, it risks weakening the employability and career advancement prospects of students who wish to work in criminology and criminal justice but lack these essential skills. Given the importance that potential employers place on the research abilities of criminology graduates, a better approach would be to embed research skills throughout the degree using a structured and progressive learning framework.

Lloyd (2017) stated that research shows that including the arts in the classroom benefits both general education and special education students. The arts enable students of all ability levels to access curricula that teachers have traditionally taught through written and spoken language. Furthermore, the arts have been shown to support students, helping them succeed both academically and socially. Rogers (1986) noted that, interest in improving teaching and quality education has reached an all-time

high this decade, supported by organizations such as the American Sociological Association, the American Society of Criminology, and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. These organizations have been key in promoting teaching excellence through conferences, membership, authorship, and panel participation. This paper aims to contribute to this collaborative effort by focusing on three key tasks: updating resources, addressing current issues, and improving teaching effectiveness. The suggestions provided here offer practical steps to achieve these goals.

Martin (2015) noted that, the findings reveal participants experienced this phenomenon in developmental stages. In order to progress from a state of professional disillusionment to a renewed sense of professional vitality, higher education faculty members must overcome cognitive dissonance, seek support at multiple levels, and engage in self-reflection. Three major policy implications emerge from this study: revamping doctoral programs, expanding professional development opportunities for faculty, and encouraging various organizations and associations to take an active role in supporting the developing of both current and future faculty members. Livingston (2011) stated that, the researchers designed the surveys to capture the components of the operational definition of faculty engagement: perpetual focused attention, enjoyment, and enthusiasm for the activities associated with faculty work through which the individual finds purpose, senses congruence with personal values and talents, is challenged to use knowledge and skills, and experiences productivity even during difficult times. Through Structural Equation Wodeling (SEM), the relationship between the items and their latent constructs was explained, and the items that did not reflect faculty engagement in a given work role were identified. In addition, the final validated model of faculty engagement included only the items that contribute to the most parsimonious instrument. Laurillard (2013) emphasized the importance of evaluating various teaching and learning activities within a teacher's repertoire against requirements derived from educational theory. The Conversational Framework is intended to challenge both conventional and digital approaches to designing teaching and learning activities, with the goal of motivating and enabling learners. A century of educational research has led to a collective understanding that formal learning requires a complex set of interactive transactions between teachers and learners, as well as between the learner's conceptual understanding and practical experience. Professional teachers take these elements into account when designing for learning. Their goals include: (1) motivating and enabling learners, (2) encouraging learners' articulation and action, and (3) modulating learners' concepts and practices. Without this guidance, learners are left to rely solely on their own resources. While they may still succeed, the framework effectively defines the desired outcome of "learning to learn."

Knight (2002) stated that, several key themes developed in his book: the value of having friends to learn from, talk to, and feel at ease with; the importance of collegiality and collaboration, regardless of distance; and, perhaps most significantly, the idea that emotions matter in both writing and teaching. It is easy to assume that being a good teacher is solely a personal responsibility dependent on whether you prepare thoroughly, speak well, read books on teaching, use the right technology, smile often, and give sensitive feedback to students, among other things. Jaques (2000) emphasized that, small-group discussion plays a valuable role in the holistic education of students. It enables them to negotiate meaning, express themselves using the subject's language, and establish a more personal connection with academic staff than is possible through more formal teaching methods. Additionally, it helps develop essential practical skills such as active listening, presenting ideas, persuading others, and working in teams. There are increasing expectations for graduates to communicate effectively, a demand further reinforced by the high standards set by radio and television, which have created a more critical audience. Most importantly, small-group discussions can and should provide students with opportunities to monitor their own learning, fostering a degree of self-direction and independence from their tutors in their academic work.

3. Methodology
3.1 Research Design
The study employed a qualitative research method using a questionnaire to gather the informants' views on the lived experiences of criminology instructors teaching both laboratory and non-laboratory courses. Phenomenology is recognized as the appropriate approach to this present study as it focuses on the human phenomenon and its importance, especially to criminology as a field of discipline. As this is a qualitative analysis of narrative data, the methods used to analyze the data must differ from traditional or quantitative research methods. Essentially, the focus is on meanings the meaning of experiences, behaviors, and narratives (Paley, 2016).

According to Boije (2009), phenomenology is sometimes considered a philosophical perspective and an approach to qualitative methodology. It has a long history in several social research disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and social work. Phenomenology is a school of thought that emphasizes a focus on people's subjective experiences and interpretations of the world. That is, the phenomenologist seeks to understand how the world appears to others. Phenomenological methods are especially effective at highlighting individuals' experiences and perceptions from their own perspectives, thereby challenging structural or normative assumptions. By adding an interpretive dimension to phenomenological research, it can serve as a foundation for practical theory, enabling it to inform, support, or challenge policy and action.

3.2 Research Participants

This research was conducted in Central Visayas, Philippines. Ten (10) key informants were purposely selected for this study. Four (4) of these informants were Individually Interviewed (ID), while six (6) participated in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) held at one venue. All informants came from different schools in the province of Bohol. They have firsthand experience and knowledge in teaching both laboratory and non-laboratory courses. The informants were asked to share their experiences teaching non-laboratory and laboratory courses, as well as their views on the teaching profession. To qualify as informants, participants had to meet the following criteria: a) have at least five years of teaching experience; b) have handled both laboratory and non-laboratory courses; c) be licensed criminologists; and d) willingly agree to participate in the study by signing a consent form. The researcher personally conducted in-depth interviews with each informant. The interview questions focused on the sub-problems of this study.

3.3 Research Instrument

In gathering the data, I employed a self-made, panel-approach interview guide consisting of three parts: part 1 focused on the informants' experiences in teaching non-laboratory courses; part 2 addressed their experiences in teaching laboratory courses; and part 3 explored their views on the teaching profession. followed each major question with specific sub-questions to probe deeper into the informants' responses. I also utilized field notes and a voice recorder to accurately document the responses. This ensured clarity and prevented confusion during the transcription process. The researcher organized the interviews by locating the informants, arranging the interview schedules, explaining matters related to confidentiality, preparing consent forms, making the informants feel at ease, and carefully choosing the right words to initiate the interview.

The researcher focused my attention fully on the conversation with each informant. My role was to create a comfortable environment, encouraging the interviewees to speak freely. When necessary, I asked follow-up questions to clarify or expand on their answers, but most of the time, I listened attentively to their statements.

3.4 Data Collection

Before the interviews, a transmittal letter was sent to the appropriate authorities at the University of Cebu – Main Campus, University of Cebu – Banilad, University of Cebu, Lapu-Lapu-Mandaue Campus, University of Bohol, and BIT International College, Tagbilaran Campus. I explained the purpose of the study to the informants, informed them of their rights, and clarified the responsibilities of the researcher both before and after the conduct of the study. The informants were allowed to choose a comfortable venue to ensure they felt at ease and could provide honest responses to the questions. After the in-depth interviews, I transcribed the recorded responses and provided English translations as necessary.

This research study combines Individual Interviews [II] and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) as methods of data collection. Personal interviews are among the most widely used strategies in qualitative research. Researchers often select this method to gather detailed accounts of participants' thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge related to a specific phenomenon. This approach assumes that, if questions formulate appropriately, participants' responses will accurately reflect their lived experiences. While individual interviews can yield rich and in-depth data, the assumption that words are always accurate indicators of participants' inner experiences can be problematic. Interviewees may choose to withhold certain details or, conversely, embellish their accounts particularly when the truth does not align with their preferred self-image or when they aim to impress the interviewer. These factors raise questions about whether interviewee-interviewer characteristics (e.g., demographics) should sometimes be matched to reduce bias. Additionally, although interviewers may strive to maintain a neutral role, they may unintentionally convey preferences for certain viewpoints, thereby influencing participants' responses and potentially biasing the findings (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008).

On the other hand, focus groups are used by researchers worldwide to explore a range of phenomena. The primary goal of this method is to utilize interaction data generated through discussion among participants (e.g., questioning one another, commenting on each other's experiences) to deepen the inquiry and reveal aspects of the phenomenon that might otherwise remain inaccessible. Group interactions can highlight members' similarities and differences, providing rich insights into the range of perspectives and experiences. However, focus groups are often regrettably used as an "inexpensive" substitute for individual interviews, with transcripts analyzed primarily for the content of individual contributions. To fully realize the potential of this method, greater attention must be given to interaction analysis and the unique insights it offers into the phenomenon under study. If focus groups are viewed as a "social space" where participants construct their experiences through evolving discussions and interpersonal dynamics, then an additional layer of data becomes accessible. This perspective suggests a series of analytical questions aimed at identifying the nature of group interactions (Morse, 2003).

3.5 Data Analysis

Researcher collected the data from informants and analyzed it using thematic analysis, a widely used method in qualitative research. Thematic analysis emphasizes identifying, examining, and recording patterns or themes within the data. These themes represent patterns across the dataset that are relevant to describing a phenomenon and are closely tied to specific research questions. Once identified, themes serve as the categories for analysis. Thematic analysis typically involves six phases:

familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. In this study, thematic content analysis was employed to cluster interview responses into common themes for interpretation. Interview responses were recorded and analyzed deductively to extract key, discrete themes relevant to specific categories. The analysis of interview content revealed underlying messages within the participants' responses. Thematic coding was also used to examine recurring themes and assess the frequency and similarity of themes across participants.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

The researcher will treat all identified informants with confidentiality and will obtain their permission prior to conducting the interviews. In addition, the researcher will comply with the research policy by securing informed consent before engaging participants in the study.

4. Results and Discussion

From the gathered data, through the recorded responses of the informants, six (6) emergent themes were created. These themes formulated are as follows:

For the experiences of informants in teaching non-laboratory courses, the themes generated were: Pros and Cons: Perks and Privileges in Teaching and It Takes Two to Tango.

For the experiences of informants in teaching non-laboratory courses, the themes generated were: Considerations: Perks and Privileges in Teaching and Student-Teacher Responsibility.

For the views of the informants of their Teaching profession, the themes generated were: Value of Teaching Profession and Noble Profession.

4.1.1 Pros and Cons : Perks and Privileges in Teaching.

This theme describes teachers' experiences in teaching non-laboratory courses. They face various challenges in the classroom while fulfilling their responsibility to impart knowledge, resulting in both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Teachers expressed that teaching criminology requires passion and commitment to achieve quality education. They felt joy and fulfillment when students were engaged, but also experienced frustration and disappointment due to students' behavior and differing levels of learning.

4.1.2 It Takes Two to Tango.

This theme centers on the fact that effective learning requires the active cooperation of both teachers and students during class discussions. Imparting knowledge should always be a collaborative effort between the teacher's guidance and the students' active participation.

4.1.3 Considerations: Perks and privileges in teaching.

This theme narrates the teachers' experiences in teaching laboratory courses. Teachers face various challenges in the laboratory while fulfilling their duties and responsibilities to impart knowledge to students. It describes the advantages and disadvantages they encounter when teaching laboratory subjects in criminology, where the goal is to enable students to perform laboratory activities and engage in hands-on work using laboratory apparatus and equipment.

4.1.4 Teacher and Student Responsibility.

This theme focuses on the idea that effective learning in laboratory courses requires the active cooperation of both teachers and students during discussions and practical work. Imparting knowledge in this context depends on strong collaboration between teachers and students. It emphasizes that teachers' dedication and commitment must be paired with students' active participation. A teacher's goal is to guide students and enable them to perform laboratory work and hands on experiments using laboratory equipment. Ultimately, both teachers and students must work together to achieve academic excellence.

4.1.5 Value of Teaching Profession.

This theme reflects teachers' views and experiences related to their teaching profession, particularly in working with criminology students. It highlights their happiness, dedication, and commitment to teaching, emphasizing that the profession requires passion and commitment to truly value one's career.

4.1.6 Noble Profession.

This theme highlights the teachers' experiences in teaching criminology students. Teachers play a significant role in the lives of their students, as they are responsible for shaping their future and guiding them onto the right path. This theme presents the teachers' views on their teaching profession and highlights teaching as a noble vocation, where educators act selflessly and go to great lengths to support their students, often without expecting anything in return. The teachers emphasized that teaching criminology is both fun and fulfilling, as it allows them to continually learn while shaping their students' futures and preparing them for the practical realities of their chosen field.

5. Conclusion

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of criminology instructors in Central Visayas as they navigated the demands of teaching both laboratory and non-laboratory courses. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the study illuminated the complex realities, challenges, and meaningful insights that shape the professional lives of criminology educators.

Findings revealed that teaching non-laboratory courses is characterized by both advantages and challenges, captured in the themes Pros and Cons: Perks and Privileges in Teaching and It Takes Two to Tango. These themes highlight that while instructors find fulfillment in sharing knowledge, they also encounter difficulties that can only be addressed through strong teacher–student collaboration.

Teaching laboratory courses, on the other hand, brought forth the themes Considerations: Perks and Privileges in Teaching and Teacher and Student Responsibility, emphasizing that laboratory instruction requires not only technical competence but also shared accountability between educators and learners. The hands-on nature of laboratory work demands preparation, adequate facilities, and active student participation to ensure meaningful and safe learning experiences.

Instructors' reflections on their profession revealed two additional themes—Value of Teaching Profession and Noble Profession. These underscore the deep sense of purpose, commitment, and pride that criminology instructors attach to their roles. Despite challenges, they view teaching as a vocation that shapes future law enforcers and contributes to nation-building.

Overall, the study demonstrates that effective criminology education is rooted in the teachers' competence, continuous professional development, and the provision of adequate institutional support especially in laboratory facilities. It reinforces that teaching, whether in laboratory or non-laboratory settings, is a reciprocal and transformative process that thrives on collaboration, commitment, and reflective practice.

In light of the findings, it is recommended that criminology instructors meet the minimum qualification standards set by CHED, participate in consistent training and seminars, and that institutions improve forensic laboratories and resources. Strengthening these areas will enhance instructional quality, boost teacher confidence, and ultimately better prepare criminology students for licensure examinations and future careers in law enforcement.

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