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Navigating Strength and Skill: Exploring the Lived Experiences of Criminology in Physical Agility Training

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Abstract

Physical agility training is an essential component of criminology education, particularly in preparing students for the physical and psychological demands associated with their prospective careers in law enforcement and other criminal justice professions. This study explored the lived experiences of criminology students in participating in physical agility training, focusing on their experiences, challenges and achievements, and perceived influence of training on their physical preparedness, self-efficacy, and confidence. Employing a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study involved 17 purposively selected criminology students from Marinduque State University and Educational Systems Technological Institute during Academic Year 2025–2026. Data were gathered through a validated, self-structured interview guide and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. The findings revealed that students generally viewed physical agility training as a meaningful yet demanding experience. Their accounts highlighted positive experiences, struggles associated with training demands and academic responsibilities, and the perceived importance of physical conditioning in preparing for future professional roles. Despite experiencing physical exhaustion, time-management difficulties, and other challenges, participants recognized their achievements in developing discipline, perseverance, resilience, and commitment to self-improvement. Furthermore, their experiences were perceived to contribute to greater self-efficacy and confidence in confronting physically demanding tasks and future professional responsibilities. The study highlights the value of integrating structured physical agility training with personal development and academic support in criminology education. These findings provide a basis for strengthening physical training initiatives that promote students' physical readiness, resilience, and confidence as aspiring criminal justice professionals.

Keywords: criminology students, physical agility training, lived experiences, physical preparedness, self-efficacy, confidence

Introduction

Physical fitness is an important component of professional preparation in law enforcement because police officers are expected to respond to situations that may require strength, endurance, speed, agility, and the ability to perform physically demanding tasks. Although police work includes administrative and sedentary responsibilities, officers may also encounter situations involving foot pursuits, obstacle navigation, physical restraint, self-defense, and emergency response. These occupational demands

require an adequate level of physical conditioning to support effective and safe task performance. Dawes et al. (2022), in their examination of the New Zealand Police Trainee Physical Competency Test, emphasized that occupational fitness is necessary for police trainees to perform tasks that reflect the actual physical requirements of policing. Their study further demonstrated how physical competency assessments can incorporate activities such as running, jumping, climbing, and dragging to approximate duties that police officers may encounter in the field.

Research on law enforcement training has likewise established the relevance of specific fitness components in preparing recruits for occupational requirements. Poirier et al. (2022) found that power, agility, and visuomotor reaction time were associated with performance in a standardized physical abilities test among police cadets. Similarly, Lockie et al. (2022) examined the relationship between fitness and law enforcement academy graduation, highlighting the importance of physical conditioning in recruit preparation. These findings suggest that physical training should not be limited to general exercise but should also develop capabilities relevant to the demands of law enforcement. For criminology students who aspire to enter policing and related criminal justice professions, physical agility training may therefore serve as an important part of their educational and professional preparation. Nevertheless, the value of such training extends beyond the completion of physical exercises, as students must also learn to manage demanding activities, recognize their physical limitations, and develop the discipline necessary to sustain their participation.

Despite the recognized importance of physical fitness in law enforcement, participation in physical agility training may present considerable challenges for criminology students. Training activities may require sustained physical effort, regular practice, and perseverance, which can become demanding when undertaken alongside academic coursework and other student responsibilities. Students may experience fatigue, physical exhaustion, difficulty managing their schedules, and pressure to meet both academic and training expectations. These experiences may influence how they perceive their physical capabilities, respond to demanding activities, and assess their readiness for future professional responsibilities. At the same time, overcoming training difficulties may provide opportunities for personal development, particularly in developing discipline, perseverance, resilience, and confidence. Thus, understanding physical agility training requires attention not only to physical performance but also to the experiences and meanings students attach to their participation.

In the Philippine context, criminology education prepares students for careers in law enforcement and other fields within the criminal justice system. However, discussions of professional preparation should consider how students experience the practical and physical components of their education alongside their academic requirements. The manuscript's review of related literature identifies limited attention to the specific physical training experiences of criminology students, particularly the challenges they encounter and the perceived contribution of training to their preparedness for future careers. This concern is also relevant to criminology institutions in Marinduque, where physical training forms part of students' preparation for prospective law enforcement roles. Examining the experiences of students from Marinduque State University and Educational Systems Technological Institute provides an opportunity to understand how physical agility training is experienced within their educational settings and how students interpret its relevance to their personal and professional development.

Although previous studies have examined physical fitness, occupational performance, and physical competency requirements among law enforcement recruits, these investigations have largely emphasized measurable fitness components and performance outcomes. Comparatively, less attention has been given

to the perspectives of criminology students who undergo physical agility training as part of their educational experience. In particular, there is a need to understand how students describe their participation, the challenges and achievements they encounter, and how they perceive the influence of training on their physical preparedness, self-efficacy, and confidence. Addressing this concern through a phenomenological inquiry can provide a deeper understanding of the personal and educational significance of physical agility training beyond physical performance measures.

In response to this need, the present study, titled "Navigating Strength and Skill: Exploring the Lived Experiences of Criminology Students in Physical Agility Training," explores the experiences of criminology students from Marinduque State University and Educational Systems Technological Institute. Specifically, it examines how students describe their participation in physical agility training, the challenges and significant achievements they encounter, and their perceptions of its influence on physical preparedness, self-efficacy, and confidence in pursuing their future careers. By giving attention to students' accounts and interpretations, the study seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of physical agility training as a component of criminology education. Its findings may provide useful insights for improving training practices and developing educational initiatives that support students' physical development, resilience, and preparation for future professional responsibilities.

Theoretical Foundations

This study is anchored in Human Capital Theory and Operant Conditioning Theory, which provide complementary perspectives for understanding the experiences of criminology students in physical agility training. These theoretical foundations explain how participation in physical training may contribute to students' development of professional capabilities, physical preparedness, discipline, and behavioral development.

Human Capital Theory explains that investments in education, skills development, and health contribute to the improvement of an individual's capabilities and productivity. Within the context of criminology education, physical agility training may be viewed as an investment in students' human capital because it provides opportunities to develop physical fitness, strength, endurance, coordination, and agility. These capabilities are particularly relevant to students who intend to pursue careers in law enforcement and other criminal justice professions, where certain responsibilities may require physical readiness and the ability to respond effectively to demanding situations.

In this study, Human Capital Theory provides a basis for understanding how criminology students perceive physical agility training as part of their preparation for future professional responsibilities. Beyond developing physical capabilities, participation in training may also strengthen students' appreciation of self-improvement, personal discipline, and professional preparedness. Although training may require considerable effort and time, the skills and capabilities developed through consistent participation may be viewed as valuable personal and professional investments. Thus, the theory supports the examination of students' experiences and their understanding of the relevance of physical fitness to their future careers.

Operant Conditioning Theory explains how behaviors are influenced by their consequences and how reinforcement can increase the likelihood that desirable behaviors will be repeated. In the context of physical agility training, repeated participation in structured exercises provides opportunities for students to develop consistent training habits and reinforce behaviors such as discipline, perseverance,

commitment, and adherence to training requirements. Through continuous practice, feedback, and the experience of accomplishing challenging physical activities, students may become more motivated to sustain their participation and improve their performance.

For this study, Operant Conditioning Theory provides a perspective for understanding how repeated physical training may contribute to the development of positive behavioral patterns. As students encounter demanding exercises and work toward completing training activities, they may gradually develop greater consistency, determination, and confidence in their ability to overcome difficulties. These experiences may extend beyond the training environment and influence how students approach academic responsibilities and other challenging situations. The theory therefore helps explain the behavioral and personal dimensions of students' lived experiences in physical agility training.

Taken together, Human Capital Theory and Operant Conditioning Theory provide a complementary understanding of physical agility training among criminology students. Human Capital Theory emphasizes the development of physical capabilities and skills as investments in future professional preparedness, whereas Operant Conditioning Theory highlights the role of repeated practice and reinforcement in developing discipline, consistency, and perseverance. These perspectives provide a theoretical basis for examining how students experience physical agility training, the challenges and achievements they encounter, and their perceptions of its contribution to physical preparedness, self-efficacy, and confidence. Through these foundations, physical agility training is understood not merely as a physical requirement but also as a developmental experience that may contribute to students' personal growth and preparation for future careers in the criminal justice profession.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of criminology students participating in physical agility training. The phenomenological approach was appropriate because the inquiry focused on understanding how students experienced the training activities, the challenges and achievements they encountered, and the meanings they attributed to these experiences in relation to their physical preparedness and future professional aspirations. Through participants' narratives, the study sought to develop an understanding of the personal and educational significance of physical agility training among criminology students.

Research Participants and Setting

The study involved 17 key informants selected through purposive sampling. The participants were criminology students from Marinduque State University and Educational Systems Technological Institute, both located in Boac, Marinduque, Philippines. The study was conducted during Academic Year 2025–2026.

Participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Criminology program; (2) directly involved in physical training provided by their respective institutions; and (3) willing to participate voluntarily in the study. Students who did not meet these criteria or were unwilling to participate were excluded. Purposive sampling was employed to identify individuals who had direct experiences with the phenomenon being investigated and could provide relevant information for answering the research questions.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a researcher-developed, semi-structured interview guide. The instrument was developed based on a review of relevant literature and studies concerning physical agility training, physical fitness, and the preparation of criminology students for future professional responsibilities. To establish content validity, the interview questions were evaluated by three experts. The Content Validity Index (CVI) and Scale-Level Content Validity Index (S-CVI) both obtained values of 1.000, indicating agreement among the validators regarding the relevance of the interview questions.

Data Collection Procedure

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher secured the necessary permission from the concerned authorities. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their selection as informants, and the general nature of the interview questions. They were also informed of their right to discontinue participation at any point during the interview.

The researcher personally conducted the interviews, which lasted approximately 15 to 20 minutes per participant. During each session, relevant information, significant ideas, and distinct responses were noted. Following the interviews, the responses were encoded in a Microsoft Word document and subsequently organized using Microsoft Excel to facilitate data management, examination, and thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using the six-phase thematic analysis procedure of Braun and Clarke (2006). First, the researcher familiarized herself with the data by reviewing the interview responses to gain an overall understanding of the participants' accounts. Second, initial codes were generated by identifying significant statements and meaningful information relevant to the research questions. Third, related codes were examined and organized into potential themes. Fourth, the emerging themes were reviewed to determine their consistency with the coded data and the overall dataset. Themes that lacked sufficient empirical support or appeared disconnected were refined, combined, or discarded. Fifth, the themes were defined and named according to their central meanings and analytical focus. Finally, the findings were presented through an interpretative narrative supported by relevant participant quotations.

This analytical process enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns of meaning across the participants' accounts and organize their experiences into themes that addressed the objectives of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical principles to protect the rights, privacy, and well-being of the participants. Informed consent was obtained after the participants were provided with information regarding the purpose, nature, and procedures of the research. Participation was voluntary, and the informants were given the freedom to decline or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or negative consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained in handling the participants' responses, and the information collected was used exclusively for research purposes. Appropriate measures were also observed to safeguard the collected data against unauthorized access, loss, or misuse.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented according to the three research questions guiding the study. Analysis of the interview responses of the seventeen (17) criminology students revealed recurring patterns concerning their experiences in physical agility training, the challenges and achievements they encountered, and their perceptions of its influence on their physical preparedness, self-efficacy, and confidence. The themes presented below reflect the participants' accounts and the meanings they associated with their training experiences.

1. Lived Experiences of Criminology Students in Physical Agility Training

The participants generally described physical agility training as a meaningful experience characterized by positive feelings, physical challenges, and an increasing awareness of the importance of physical preparedness. Although some students initially experienced difficulty and discomfort, they recognized the value of training in developing their physical capabilities and preparing them for the demands of their future careers. Three themes emerged: Positivity and Praise, The Struggle for Success, and Physical Readiness for the Future.

1.1 Positivity and Praise

The theme Positivity and Praise reflects the participants' favorable perceptions of their involvement in physical agility training. Despite the physical exertion required by the activities, several participants described their experiences as enjoyable, worthwhile, and rewarding. Their responses suggest that the value of training was not limited to physical improvement but also involved feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment.

The participants' descriptions of the training as a "great experience," a "happy" experience, and a "good experience" indicate that they generally appreciated their participation. These positive perceptions suggest that students could recognize the benefits of engaging in physically demanding activities even when the exercises required considerable effort.

This finding highlights the importance of students' emotional responses in shaping their overall training experiences. When learners recognize the value of an activity and experience satisfaction from their participation, they may become more willing to engage in similar activities and sustain their efforts. In this study, positive experiences appeared alongside the recognition that physical agility training contributed to personal development and career preparation.

1.2 The Struggle for Success

The theme The Struggle for Success captures the physical difficulties and adjustments experienced by students during training. Participants described the activities as tiring, physically demanding, and initially difficult, particularly when they were not accustomed to the exercises. Some experienced body aches and struggled to meet the required performance standards.

Informant 2 explained:

"As a criminology student, my experience with physical agility is very tiring at first because I'm new to it, and my body always aches at first, but as time goes by, I become physically fit."

Similarly, Informant 11 shared:

"During the physical agility test it was difficult for me to meet the passing points because I was not prepared well to perform sit-ups, running and push-up."

These accounts illustrate how the participants experienced physical agility training as a process of adjustment. Initial limitations and insufficient preparation made the activities difficult; however, the participants also recognized the possibility of improvement through continued participation. Their

experiences suggest that physical difficulty was not necessarily interpreted as failure but could also become a motivation to develop their abilities.

The findings emphasize that students may need time and consistent practice to adjust to the physical demands of agility training. The experience of overcoming initial difficulties can also provide opportunities for developing perseverance and a more realistic understanding of their physical capabilities.

1.3 Physical Readiness for the Future

Physical Readiness for the Future reflects the participants' understanding that physical agility training provides preparation for the physical requirements of their prospective careers. They recognized that criminology-related occupations, particularly law enforcement work, may involve activities requiring strength, endurance, agility, and overall physical fitness.

Informant 9 described the experience as reflective, stating:

"My experience in physical agility is rather reflective, as it allowed me to see areas in which I am lacking physically."

Meanwhile, Informant 11 explained:

"When we have physical agility training, we do different exercises that help make our bodies strong. These activities build our strength and keep us healthy for our future tasks."

These statements indicate that training helped participants recognize both their existing physical capabilities and areas requiring improvement. More importantly, they associated their present training experiences with the anticipated demands of their future professional responsibilities.

The finding suggests that physical agility training is perceived not merely as an academic or institutional requirement but also as a preparatory experience for future occupational activities. Through training, students become more aware of the importance of maintaining physical fitness as part of their professional development.

2. Challenges and Significant Achievements Encountered During Physical Agility Training

The participants' accounts revealed that physical agility training involved considerable physical demands and the need to balance training with academic responsibilities. Nevertheless, they also identified improvements in their physical abilities and the development of positive personal qualities. Three themes emerged in relation to this research question: The Demands of Training, Time Management Training, and A Formation of Character.

2.1 The Demands of Training

The theme The Demands of Training describes the physical difficulties experienced by participants while performing agility exercises. Their accounts indicated that training required sustained physical effort and could result in exhaustion, fatigue, and bodily strain. These experiences were particularly challenging for students who were still developing their physical conditioning.

The participants' responses also identified improvements in their physical capabilities as significant achievements. Informant 11 stated:

"I improved my running speed and endurance, and I can now do more push-ups and sit-ups than before."

Similarly, Informant 14 reported:

"I improved my endurance, strength, speed, and coordination."

Informant 15 also shared:

"I was able to do the exercises and improve my personal records after multiple physical agility training."

These statements show that the participants recognized measurable improvements in their performance, particularly in running speed, endurance, strength, and coordination. Their experiences suggest that although physical agility training can be demanding, repeated participation provides opportunities for students to recognize their progress and identify improvements in their physical capabilities.

The findings highlight the importance of appropriate preparation and progressive training activities. Students may experience difficulty when they are not yet accustomed to the physical requirements of the exercises. Consequently, training programs should consider students' varying levels of physical readiness while providing opportunities for gradual improvement.

2.2 Time Management Training

The theme Time Management Training reflects the need for students to manage their training activities alongside their academic responsibilities. Physical agility training requires time, energy, and commitment, which may become challenging when students also need to attend classes, complete academic requirements, and fulfill other responsibilities.

The participants' accounts suggest that balancing physical training and academic work required them to become more organized and disciplined. Informant 10 explained:

"As a student, physical agility training also develops discipline, perseverance, and time management. It teaches me how to push beyond my limits and stay focused under pressure. These qualities are not only important in physical tasks but also in academic responsibilities and future professional duties."

This account demonstrates that participants viewed time management as an important skill developed through their training experiences. The demands of physical activities encouraged them to recognize the importance of allocating time and maintaining focus despite competing responsibilities.

The finding suggests that physical agility training may contribute to students' ability to manage different demands in their academic and personal lives. However, the challenges associated with balancing these responsibilities also indicate the importance of providing reasonable training schedules and appropriate academic support to help students participate without unnecessarily compromising their academic commitments.

2.3 A Formation of Character

A Formation of Character reflects the participants' recognition that physical agility training contributed to the development of positive personal qualities beyond physical fitness. These included discipline, perseverance, consistency, resilience, and the ability to maintain an active lifestyle.

Informant 2 stated:

"Training taught me discipline and consistency, and I gained confidence in handling physical challenges."

Similarly, Informant 10 shared:

"I gained a healthier lifestyle and a more active daily routine."

These accounts suggest that the participants associated their training experiences with changes in their habits, attitudes, and approaches to challenges. The repeated performance of physical exercises encouraged them to become more consistent and disciplined, while overcoming demanding activities provided opportunities to practice perseverance.

This finding is particularly relevant to criminology education because the development of professional competence involves more than physical capability. Personal discipline, resilience, and the ability to

remain focused when confronted with demanding situations are also important qualities for students preparing for future professional responsibilities. Nevertheless, the findings represent participants' perceived personal development and do not independently establish changes in objectively measured character traits.

3. Perceived Influence of Physical Agility Training on Physical Preparedness, Self-Efficacy, and Confidence

The participants generally perceived physical agility training as beneficial to their physical preparedness and psychological development. Their responses indicated that improvements in physical performance were associated with greater confidence in their abilities and a stronger belief that they could overcome difficult tasks. The findings highlight four related patterns: Mastery of the Mind and Body, The Efficacy Transfer, The Driving Force to Overcome, and The Transformation of the Body.

3.1 Mastery of the Mind and Body

The theme Mastery of the Mind and Body reflects the participants' perceptions that physical agility training contributed to both physical improvement and personal discipline. Participants associated their experiences with becoming physically stronger, maintaining consistency, developing perseverance, and improving their ability to meet demanding tasks.

Informant 10 explained:

"Physical agility training significantly improved my self-efficacy and confidence. As I noticed improvements in my performance, I began to believe more in my abilities. Completing difficult exercises made me realize that I can overcome challenges through hard work and determination. It strengthened not only my body but also my mindset."

This statement illustrates the connection participants perceived between physical improvement and psychological development. As they recognized progress in their physical performance, they also developed greater confidence in their ability to accomplish challenging activities.

The finding suggests that physical agility training may provide students with opportunities to experience personal mastery through effort and repeated practice. The perceived improvement of the body becomes associated with a stronger belief in one's capacity to perform and overcome difficulties.

3.2 The Efficacy Transfer

The theme The Efficacy Transfer describes how participants perceived the confidence and self-belief developed through physical training as applicable to other areas of their lives, including academic activities and anticipated professional responsibilities.

Informant 2 stated:

"The training helps me trust myself more and feel prepared for both physical and professional challenges in the criminology field."

Informant 13 similarly explained:

"Training makes me feel stronger and more capable of handling difficult tasks in my studies. Completing these hard exercises builds my self-trust and gives me the courage to face future challenges."

These statements suggest that participants did not limit the value of their training to physical performance. Instead, they perceived the experience of completing difficult exercises as a source of confidence that could help them approach other challenging situations.

The finding indicates a perceived transfer of self-efficacy from physical activities to academic and anticipated professional tasks. However, this interpretation is based on participants' accounts and should

not be treated as evidence of objectively measured improvements in academic performance or occupational competence.

3.3 The Driving Force to Overcome

The theme The Driving Force to Overcome emphasizes how successfully completing challenging physical exercises strengthened participants' belief in their ability to face difficulties. The participants associated the accomplishment of demanding drills with increased confidence and a greater willingness to confront activities they previously considered difficult.

Informant 1 shared:

"Every time I completed a challenging drill it boost my confidence."

Informant 11 also explained:

"It boosted my self-efficacy and confidence. When I started, some tasks seemed impossible, but as I improved, I felt stronger and more capable. Completing tough drills and exercises made me believe in myself more."

These accounts illustrate how participants interpreted successful performance as evidence of their own capabilities. Each completed exercise provided an opportunity to recognize personal progress and strengthen their confidence in handling subsequent challenges.

The finding suggests that achievement during physical agility training may serve as an important source of motivation. When students recognize that effort and persistence can help them complete difficult activities, they may develop a stronger willingness to face future challenges.

3.4 The Transformation of the Body

The theme The Transformation of the Body reflects participants' perceptions of physical improvement and how these changes contributed to their confidence. They associated training with becoming stronger, improving their physical condition, and recognizing that their bodies could perform activities that initially appeared difficult.

Informant 12 stated:

"I'm become more confident to myself and break the limitations of my body."

Informant 15 also reported:

"It has improved my confidence since I was able to achieve a fit body."

These responses suggest that participants viewed physical improvement as an important part of developing confidence. Their perceived changes in physical condition reinforced their belief in their ability to perform demanding activities and extend their capabilities.

The finding highlights the relationship participants perceived between physical preparedness and self-confidence. As they became more aware of their physical progress, they also developed a more positive assessment of their abilities. In the context of criminology education, such perceptions may encourage students to maintain physical fitness as part of their preparation for future career demands.

Synthesis of Findings

Taken together, the findings reveal that criminology students experienced physical agility training as both physically demanding and personally meaningful. Their accounts reflected an initial struggle with strenuous exercises, physical fatigue, and the need to balance training with academic responsibilities. Despite these difficulties, participants identified improvements in endurance, strength, speed, coordination, and overall physical activity.

Beyond physical development, the participants perceived training as an opportunity to cultivate discipline, consistency, perseverance, resilience, and confidence. Their experiences of completing

challenging exercises contributed to a stronger belief in their ability to overcome difficulties, which they associated with academic responsibilities and anticipated professional demands.

Overall, physical agility training was perceived as an important component of the participants' preparation for future careers in criminology and related fields. The findings suggest that its value extends beyond physical conditioning to include personal development and perceived psychological preparedness. These results provide a basis for considering training approaches that integrate physical development, character formation, and support for students' academic responsibilities.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusion

This study explored the lived experiences of criminology students participating in physical agility training, focusing on their experiences, the challenges and achievements they encountered, and their perceptions of its influence on physical preparedness, self-efficacy, and confidence. The findings indicate that physical agility training was generally perceived as a meaningful component of criminology education, although participation involved considerable physical and personal demands.

The participants described their experiences as a combination of positive engagement, physical struggle, and growing awareness of the importance of physical fitness for their future careers. Although initial participation was often characterized by fatigue, body aches, and difficulty performing demanding exercises, students recognized the value of consistent training in improving their physical capabilities and preparing them for anticipated occupational responsibilities.

The findings also revealed that physical agility training presented challenges in balancing physical activities with academic commitments. Nevertheless, participants identified improvements in endurance, strength, speed, and coordination, alongside the development of discipline, perseverance, consistency, and time-management skills. These experiences suggest that the perceived value of physical agility training extends beyond physical conditioning to include personal development and the formation of habits relevant to students' academic and professional preparation.

Furthermore, participants perceived that completing challenging physical activities strengthened their self-efficacy and confidence. Their accounts indicated that recognizing improvements in physical performance encouraged them to believe in their capacity to overcome difficult tasks, including challenges beyond the training environment. However, these findings represent the participants' subjective experiences and perceptions rather than objectively measured changes in physical fitness, academic performance, or professional competence.

Overall, physical agility training was perceived as an important aspect of preparing criminology students for the physical and psychological demands associated with future careers in criminology and law enforcement. Its educational value may be enhanced when physical conditioning is complemented by appropriate guidance, progressive training activities, recovery opportunities, and support for students' academic responsibilities.

Practical Implications

The findings suggest several implications for criminology education and the implementation of institutional physical agility training programs.

First, criminology institutions may strengthen and structure physical agility training as an integral component of students' personal and professional development. Training activities may be designed progressively to accommodate different levels of physical readiness while developing strength,

endurance, speed, coordination, and agility. Connecting these activities with the anticipated physical requirements of criminology-related occupations may also help students understand the relevance of their training.

Second, institutions and instructors may establish supportive training and academic management practices. The reported experiences of fatigue and difficulty balancing academic responsibilities highlight the importance of coordinated schedules, appropriate recovery periods, manageable training intensity, and guidance in time management. These measures may help students sustain their participation while attending to their academic obligations.

Third, physical agility training may incorporate activities that promote self-efficacy, confidence, and professional preparedness. Practical exercises, achievable performance goals, constructive feedback, and supervised peer-support activities may provide students with opportunities to recognize their progress and develop confidence in their abilities. Such activities may also encourage teamwork, discipline, and perseverance.

In response to these implications, the study proposes FIT-CRIM: Physical Agility, Resilience, and Career Readiness Enhancement Program as a potential institutional initiative. The proposed program integrates progressive physical conditioning, agility development, recovery, resilience-building activities, time-management strategies, and self-efficacy development. It is intended to translate the challenges identified in the study into structured opportunities for physical improvement and personal growth. Its implementation and effectiveness, however, would require separate evaluation.

Limitations and Future Research

This study focused on seventeen criminology students from two educational institutions in Boac, Marinduque. As a qualitative phenomenological inquiry, its findings provide contextual insights into the participants' experiences and should not be interpreted as statistically representative of all criminology students. The findings also rely on participants' self-reported accounts and perceptions rather than standardized physical fitness assessments or objective measures of self-efficacy and academic performance.

Future studies may explore the experiences of criminology students from other institutions and geographical settings to identify similarities and differences in physical agility training practices. Researchers may also consider combining qualitative interviews with objective physical fitness assessments to examine how students' perceived improvements correspond with changes in physical performance. Finally, a separate program evaluation may be conducted to determine the feasibility, implementation outcomes, and effectiveness of the proposed FIT-CRIM program.

DECLARATION OF THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The authors declare that generative artificial intelligence (AI) was used as an assistive tool during the preparation of this manuscript. Its use was limited to assisting with language refinement, grammar and clarity improvements, organization of sections, and the development and revision of academic prose. AI assistance was also used to improve the presentation and coherence of the manuscript.

The authors reviewed, evaluated, and revised the AI-assisted content to ensure its accuracy, relevance, and consistency with the original research manuscript and collected data. All research findings, participant responses, interpretations, and conclusions remain grounded in the actual data gathered and analyzed by the researchers. AI was not used to generate participant responses, fabricate research data, or independently determine the study's findings.

The authors assume full responsibility for the content, accuracy, integrity, and originality of the submitted manuscript, including the verification of references and compliance with applicable research ethics and publication standards.

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