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Navigating Challenges: A Comprehensive Exploration of Research Obstacles Faced by Master in Criminal Justice Education Students

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Abstract

This descriptive correlational research investigated the challenges faced by MCJE students of Wesleyan University Philippines in conducting research. A total of 74 respondents were chosen purposively. The study found out that the majority of the MCJE students are male, married with a monthly income of almost Php 30,000, are Philippine National Police (PNP) Officers and have 0 to 2 seminars

attended and 1 research output. They are motivated to conduct research, however, the challenges are in complex research, language barriers, and balancing academic and work commitments. MCJEs with fewer research outputs face higher challenges, highlighting the need to support and encourage research productivity in overcoming academic obstacles.

Keywords: Challenges, MCJE, Philippine National Police, Research, Wesleyan University Philippines

Introduction

Earning a Master's degree in Criminal Justice Education is a transformative journey that equips individuals with advanced knowledge and skills required to take on leadership roles in the criminal justice system (Rasdi, Pujiyono, Rochaeti, & Rehulina, 2022) ^[10]. A crucial aspect of this academic endeavor involves carrying out comprehensive research, which enhances not only theoretical understanding but also cultivates the development of critical analytical and investigative abilities (Ertz, Durif, & Arcand, 2019) ^[9]. However, students pursuing a Master's degree in Criminal Justice Education face many problems when conducting research. These challenges can be classified into four distinct groups, as outlined in this study. The problems can be categorized as skill-related, time-related, motivation-related, and support-related.

Master's students often face a formidable barrier in their skill-related issues, namely a lack of sufficient knowledge and abilities in research (Rufi'i & Gede, 2023) ^[11]. The intricacies of conducting academic investigations, along with the view of research as a demanding endeavor, present significant challenges (Dempsey, Brennan, Holzberger, & McAvoy, 2022) ^[4]. Furthermore, the inclusion of a new language in academic research, along with the perception of a disconnect between technical research skills and their practical implementation in professional contexts, intensifies the difficulties faced by students (Ainaini, & Junaedi, 2021) ^[1].

Time, being a finite resource presents a substantial constraint for students attempting to manage their academic pursuits alongside their existing work commitments (AlMazrouei, 2023) ^[2]. The arduous nature of research, coupled with the impression of it as an additional responsibility, places considerable strain on persons attempting to juggle their academic responsibilities with the demands of their current roles in the criminal justice system (Rasdi, Pujiyono, Rochaeti, & Rehulina, 2022) ^[10].

The drive is a vital factor in motivating research endeavors, however, many Master's students encounter hurdles that impede their drive (Thizy, Coche, & de Vries, 2020) ^[15]. The absence of backing from those in higher positions, a scarcity of inherent interest in research, and a perceived gap between research and career progression all contribute to a diminished level of motivation among students (Egorov, Egorycheva, & Pleshakov, 2021) ^[6].

Finally, with matters concerning assistance. Adequate support mechanisms are crucial for the success of any research endeavor (Bai, Millwater, & Hudson, 2014) ^[3]. Master's students in Criminal Justice Education often face challenges such as insufficient

reference materials, limited access to research methodological training and seminars, financial constraints, and a vague role for law enforcement professionals in the research domain (López-Cabarcos, López-Carballeira, & Ferro-Soto, 2023) [8].

This study aims to thoroughly investigate and analyze these difficulties, providing insights into possible approaches and actions to enable Master in Criminal Justice Education students to overcome these barriers and participate in influential, significant research that contributes to the progress of their academic and professional goals. Specifically, it explored the following: the profile of the respondents, their challenges in doing research, the relationship between the profile and their challenges and their suggestions on how to enhance the support for those who are conducting research activities.

Methodology

This research utilized descriptive-correlational research. It describes the profile and the challenges faced by the respondents in doing research and then correlates these two main variables. The respondents of the study who were chosen purposively (Subia, 2018) [13] were Master of Criminal Justice Education students enrolled at Wesleyan University Philippines, Cabanatuan City, who are currently employed in different areas of assignment and are Novo Ecijanós (Subia, Mangiduyos, & Turgano, 2020) [14].

The questionnaire utilized in this study is a researchers' made instrument validated by five experts in the field of research and criminal justice education. The reliability of the instrument was computed using Cronbach's alpha. The instrument was found reliable with a reliability coefficient of 0.922.

The data gathering lasted for more than 1 month from November 2023 to December 2023.

Results and Discussion

1. Profile of the MCJE Students

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, civil status, monthly income, area of assignment, number of research seminars attended and outputs.

Table 1: Profile of the MCJE students

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	41	55.4
Female	33	44.6
Total	74	100.0
Civil Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	31	41.9
Married	43	58.1
Total	74	100.0
Monthly Income	Frequency	Percent
Php 10,000 to 30,000	36	48.6
Php 30,001 to 50,000	22	29.7
Php 50,001 to 70,000	8	10.8
Php 70,001 to 100,000	8	10.8
Total	74	100.0
Area of Assignment	Frequency	Percent
PNP (Philippine National Police)	43	58.1
TRI-BUREAU	4	5.4
AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines)	4	5.4
Academician	16	21.6
BFP (Bureau of Fire Protection)	7	9.5
Total	74	100.0
Number of Research Seminars Attended	Frequency	Percent

0 to 2	56	75.7
3 to 4	14	18.9
5 to 6	2	2.7
7 to 8	1	1.4
9 to 10	1	1.4
Total	74	100.0
Number of Research Outputs	Frequency	Percent
0	20	27.0
1	29	39.2
2	14	18.9
3	7	9.5
4	2	2.8
5	2	2.8
Total	74	100.0

The data reveals that among the participants, 55.4% were male and 44.6% were female. In terms of civil status, a majority (58.1%) were married, while 41.9% were single. Concerning monthly income, 48.6% fell within the Php 10,000 to 30,000 range, while only 10.8% reported incomes between Php 70,001 to 100,000. The area of assignment indicated that 58.1% were associated with the Philippine National Police (PNP), 5.4% with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and 21.6% were academicians. When it comes to research-related activities, a significant majority (75.7%) attended 0 to 2 seminars, and a notable 39.2% produced one research output, with only 2.8% having four research outputs.

The findings suggest potential gender-related disparities and marital status influencing research participation. Financial constraints are apparent, with a majority earning moderate incomes. The dominance of the Philippine National Police in participation could impact research perspectives (Edullantes, et al., 2022) [5]. The high percentage attending 0 to 2 seminars emphasizes the need for increased research training. Varied research productivity levels highlight potential areas for targeted support.

2. Challenges Faced by the MCJE Students

Table 2 shows the challenges faced by the MCJE students in conducting research in terms of skill, time, motivation and support.

Table 2: Challenges Faced by the MCJE Students in Doing Research

Skill Related	WM	Verbal Description
1. I do not have enough knowledge to do research	2.08	Disagree
2. I find researching a difficult task	2.51	Agree
3. The language used in research is unfamiliar to me.	2.50	Agree
4. Technical knowledge needed in research is not aligned with my profession.	1.78	Disagree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.22	Disagree
Time-Related	WM	Verbal Description
1. I find researching time-consuming.	2.88	Agree
2. I find researching additional work.	2.78	Agree
3. I am too busy with my current work to do research	2.80	Agree
4. I am so busy with my personal life to do research.	2.23	Agree
5. Heavy workload affects my practice of research.	3.25	Strongly Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.79	Agree

Motivation Related	WM	Verbal Description
1. I do not receive encouragement from my superiors to do research.	1.47	Strongly Disagree
2. I have no interest in researching at all.	1.38	Strongly Disagree
3. I am not motivated to do research.	1.47	Strongly Disagree
4. I do not see the importance of research in my career.	1.20	Strongly Disagree
5. There is a lack of recognition to conduct research activities.	1.69	Strongly Disagree
Overall Weighted Mean	1.44	Strongly Disagree
Support Related	WM	Verbal Description
1. There are insufficient reference materials (journals, research books, research reports, etc.) in the school/library.	2.01	Disagree
2. There is insufficient training and seminars on research.	2.14	Disagree
3. There is insufficient budget from the Department to undertake research.	2.51	Agree
4. There is a lack of clear role of police in conducting research	2.01	Disagree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.17	Disagree

In terms of skills, the table shows that MCJE students face challenges in their skills in research particularly in the complexity of conducting research (2.51) and unfamiliarity with research language (2.50) indicates a potential language barrier. The overall weighted mean of 2.22 reflects a general disagreement regarding challenges, yet the concerns about difficulty and language suggest a need for targeted support to bolster research skills among MCJE students.

As to time-related challenges in research, the table presents what MCJE students encountered. The perception of research as time-consuming (2.88) and additional work (2.78) indicates a struggle to balance academic commitments. High agreement on being busy with current work (2.80) and personal life (2.23) underscores time constraints. The strong agreement on heavy workloads impacting research practice (3.25) emphasizes a significant obstacle. The overall weighted mean of 2.79 suggests a collective acknowledgement of these challenges.

Likewise, Table 2 shows that there are no challenges in terms of motivation to conduct research for the MCJE students. They are willing to research since they see the importance of the activity in their career. This indicates a positive trend regarding motivation among MCJE students in conducting research which implies a high level of willingness among students to engage in research activities. This is indicative of their recognition of the importance of research in shaping their career paths. The findings suggest a promising attitude toward research within the MCJE student community, implying that they are intrinsically motivated and perceive research as a valuable endeavor for their professional development.

In terms of support-related challenges, the findings indicate a generally favorable research environment for MCJE students, with disagreement on insufficient reference materials (2.01) and a lack of a clear police role in research (2.01). However, the agreement on the inadequacy of the budget for research (2.51) highlights a potential challenge. Addressing this budgetary constraint could enhance the overall research landscape. The overall weighted mean of

2.17 suggests a predominantly positive sentiment, indicating that the availability of reference materials and supportive infrastructure is perceived well.

The findings reveal that MCJE students face skill-related challenges in research, particularly in conducting complex research and dealing with unfamiliar research languages, indicating a potential language barrier. Time-related challenges include perceiving research as time-consuming and struggling to balance academic and personal commitments. However, students show a positive trend in motivation for research, reflecting a promising attitude. Support-related challenges include an inadequacy of budget for research, suggesting a need for improvement in this aspect. Overall, addressing language barriers, time constraints, and budgetary issues could enhance the research landscape for MCJE students (Li, Zhai, Dou, & Liu, 2021) [7].

3. Significant Relationship between the Profile of the MCJE Students and their Challenges

Table 3 shows the relationship between the profile of the respondents and their challenges in conducting research.

Table 3: Relationship between the Profile of the MCJE Students and their Challenges in Conducting Research

Profile	Challenges		
	correlation-value	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	.159	.177	No significant relationship
Civil Status	-.083	.483	No significant relationship
Area of Assignment	.047	.691	No significant relationship
Number of Seminars Attended	-.173	.141	No significant relationship
Number of Research Outputs	-.324**	.005	Significant relationship

** Correlation is significant @ 0.05 level

There is no significant relationship between sex, civil status, area of assignment number of seminars attended by the respondents and their challenges in doing research. This means that these profile variables are not linked with their challenges. However, the number of research outputs is significantly related to their challenges. The negative correlation ($r = -.324^{**}$) between the number of research outputs and challenges implies an inverse relationship. Respondents with fewer research outputs tend to face higher challenges in conducting research. This implies a potential link between productivity and overcoming challenges, emphasizing the importance of supporting and encouraging research output to mitigate obstacles in the academic journey (Sholes, Sullivan, & Self, 2023) [12].

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions are derived based on the findings of this study:

1. The study reveals potential gender-related and marital status disparities in research participation, financial constraints among participants with moderate incomes, the dominant influence of the Philippine National Police on research perspectives, a significant need for increased research training indicated by a high percentage attending 0 to 2 seminars, and varied research productivity levels, suggesting areas for

targeted support.

2. MCJE students exhibit positive motivation but face obstacles in complex research, language barriers, and balancing academic and work commitments.
3. Sex, civil status, and area of assignment show no significant association with research challenges, the negative correlation between the number of research outputs and challenges underscores an inverse relationship, indicating that individuals with fewer research outputs face higher challenges.

The following are recommendations offered based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. The Leaders of the different areas of assignments of the MCJE students may provide logistics and financial support to conduct research activities.
2. The Heads of any private or public Institution may lessen the workloads of those who will be engaged in research.
3. Senior Officers, by strengthening the incentives and encouragement, could motivate the researchers under them.
4. A similar study of the same nature focusing on other aspects of challenges and profile could be conducted by future researchers.

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