RESEARCH ARTICLE

DIFFICULTIES AND COPING MECHANISMS OF CRIMINOLOGY INSTRUCTORS HANDLING NEW SUBJECTS UNDER COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION MEMORANDUM ORDER NO. 5 SERIES OF 2018(CMO 5, S. 2018) AMONG STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (SUCs) OF CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION (CAR)

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Manuscript Info

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Abstract

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The new curriculum is implemented to align education with the current needs of our society and environment. In this implementation, the criminology instructors faced difficulties in handling the new subjects. The researcher used descriptive-qualitative research in this study. Unstructured interview guide questions were used to identify and describe the difficulties faced by the criminology instructors and their coping mechanisms. The five (5) participants of this study are Criminology faculty members of SUCs of CAR offering BS Criminology Program who are currently teaching new subjects provided by the new curriculum (CMO 5 s. 2018). The results revealed that the participants experienced difficulties due to inadequate resources in their institutions and the lack of information about the new subjects assigned to them. With these difficulties, the criminology instructors became creative and adaptable to the changes. The participants cope with these difficulties by doing advanced reading about the subject, collaborating with other institutions, and attending training and seminars to enhance their teaching effectiveness.

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Introduction

The first semester of the 2018-2019 academic year was the full-blast implementation of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 5, series of 2018. This CMO provides new Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSG) for the Bachelor of Science in Criminology (BS Criminology) Program. It specifies the "core competencies" expected from the BS Criminology graduates regardless of the type of HEI they graduated from. Migrating to this new curriculum has brought burdens to the faculty members most especially those who were tasked to handle the newly offered subjects. Throughout the implementation of the said CMO, new courses/subjects have been required. These new subjects/courses are considered first-hand and fresh on the part of the faculty members to which instructors looked at themselves as strangers to such subjects. As a result, most of the concerned instructors are experiencing difficulties in sourcing references, lesson preparations, delivery, and others. While it is true that difficulties are often an unavoidable but important part of the learning process (Lodge et al, 2018), the instructors have no other choice but to accept the subjects assigned to them.

Moreover, other faculty members have low self-confidence in handling these new subjects considering that they have limited knowledge. These realities are attributed to the reason that the instructors never had these subjects

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during their college days, as these are not required by their respective curricula under which they were covered. Another reason is the scarcity of textbooks and instructional materials that could serve as references of the concerned instructors. In reality, difficulties in handling new subjects could be attributed by lack of or inadequate teaching and learning resources/materials (Amalyah 2021; Ardiyani et al., 2021; Chabbott& Sinclair, 2020).According to Mandukwini (2016), unavailability of necessary resources is one of the contributing factors that affect the proper effective implementation of curriculum changes. Park and Sung (2013) also found out that teachers are insufficiently provided with professional development programs that support curriculum implementation. In addition, the new subject itself is found to be difficult to handle. As stated by Pagulong and Bulilawa (2021), doing self-study, finding opportunities to enrich thier knowledge, attending seminars/workshops to cater to the teaching needs, and buying their own materials and references or looking for alternative sources are some of the teachers' coping mechanisms. Up to this time, faculty members are still in the process of coping and adjusting to their difficulties and continuously sourcing out references and materials for them to be able to fully and effectively tackle the subject matters. Aside from this, there could be more reasons or factors attributing to the challenges and difficulties of faculty members. More information regarding difficulties, challenges, and coping mechanisms as well as other factors could be elicited through the conduct of this study. With all of the above-mentioned considerations, these give particular interest to the researcher to conduct this study.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework
The new curriculum is implemented to align education with the current needs of our society and environment. With this, the faculty members may experience difficulties in the newly offered subjectsthat may further drive them to do somecoping mechanisms. However, educators will still be effective in delivering the new topics to their students with the help of different learning theories. Learning theories are essential for effective teaching in that they shed light on different aspects of the learning process. The spectrum of learning theories can be categorized into three main areas:behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism(Yilmaz, 2011).

Cognitive learning theory understands that learners can be influenced by both internal and external elements. Under this theory, the educators may give the students to learn by asking questions for them to think and process their thoughts. It improves the learner's ability to process information more deeply, transfer and apply information to new situations, and result in enhanced and better-retained learning (Winn et al, 2019). Behaviorism learning theory is the idea that how a student behaves is based on their interaction with their environment. Since every individual has a different behavior in how they think and cooperate in class, the educators may give positive reinforcement to the students to retain the information. As cited by Ng'andu et al (2013), the theory of behaviorism concentrates on the study of overt behaviors that can be observed and measured. Lastly, the theory of constructivism focuses on learning as an active process, which is personal and individual for each student. It provides an opportunity to replace an authoritarian classroom, controlled, content-based, and individualistic learning with an active, autonomous, skills-based, collaborative, and knowledge-building paradigm of learning (Tsulaia, 2023).

Illustration of the Study
To better understand the flow of the study, the researcher utilized the figure below. The first box represents the input of the study that includes the difficulties experienced and coping mechanisms of the criminology instructors handling new subjects under the new curriculum. The second box comprises the unstructured interview guide questions, followed by the interview proper, identifying the themes and thematic analysis. Lastly, the third box represents the output of the study and includes the identified difficulties and coping mechanisms of the criminology instructors handling new subjects under the new curriculum and the recommendations to enhance the teaching and learning experience of the faculty.

Objectives
The general objective of this study is to identify the difficulties experienced and coping mechanisms of criminology instructors handling new subjects under Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No. 5 Series of 2018 (CMO 5, s. 2018) among State Colleges and Universities (SUCs) of Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

Specific Objectives
Specifically, the researcher aims to:
1. To identify the difficulties experienced by Criminology Instructors handling new subjects under the new curriculum and;
2. To identify the coping mechanisms of Criminology Instructors handling new subjects under the new curriculum.
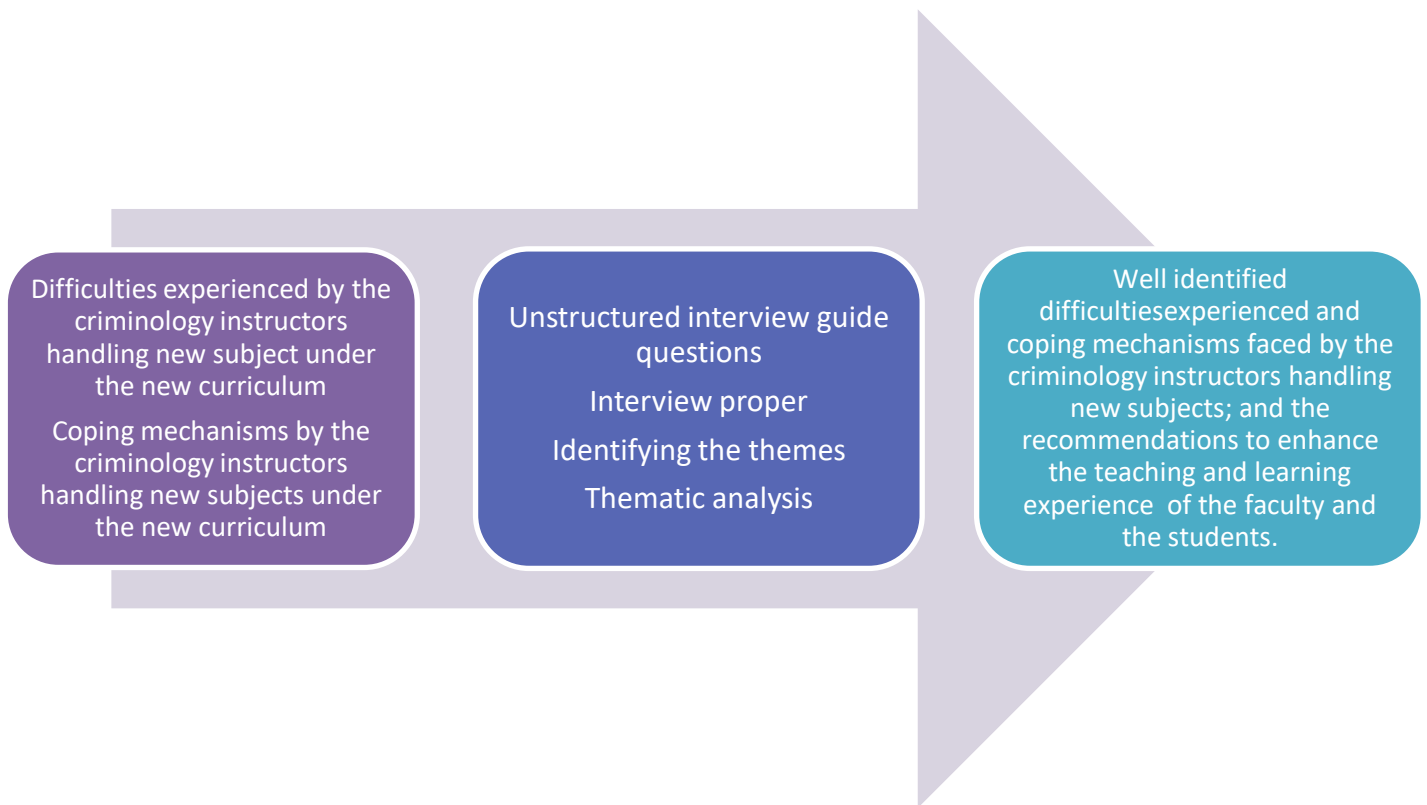
*Figure 1.*Illustration of the Study.

Methodology

In this study, the researcher used the descriptive-qualitative research design in exploring experienced difficulties as well as the coping mechanisms of Criminology instructors. Thus, this method provided a deep understanding about how the criminology instructors experienced difficulties in handling new subjects under the new curriculum. Also, unstructured interview guide questions were utilized to elicit the relevant data desired by this study. The participants of this study are those faculty members of the SUCs of CAR offering BS Criminology Programwho have been loaded with new subjects provided by the new curriculum (CMO 5 s. 2018). Criminology faculty members who were never loaded with new subjects under this new curriculum were excluded as participants in the study. The data collected was done via Google form to foster a better connection between the researcher and the participants of the study and ensuringaccurate answers.With the consent of the participants, the data were kept electronically for consolidation. Such electronic storagewas utilized only for research purposes and real identities of the participants were not disclosed in public in order to respect confidentiality. Thereafter, the researcher identified and analyzed the themes using the six (6) steps data analysis process of thematic analysis by Clarke and Braun (2013). The phases include: first, familiarization of data; secondl,generation of codes; third iscombining codes into themes. The fourth step was reviewing the themes and followed by the determination of the significance of the themes. The sixth and the last step is the reporting of findings.

Results and Discussions

Teaching is a phenomenal career as it is fulfilling to mold and bring changes in the lives of the youths. Yet, it's also a career that comes with its challenges that many aren't aware of (Care Check, 2021). Based on the findings of the study, the following themes were identified.

Difficulties Experienced by Criminology Instructors Handling NewSubjects Under the New Curriculum
There are two themes identified on the experienced difficulties of the Criminology instructors who are teaching new subjects under the new curriculum. First is the inadequate resources, and the other one is insufficient information.

The first theme developed was**inadequate resources.** Available resources allow the visibility of the school and facilitate knowledge sharing, however, based on the gathered data, the criminology instructors who are handling new subjects under the new curriculum encountered difficulties in delivering high-quality education to the students. These difficulties stem from the introduction of new subjects they are required to teach, coupled with the lack of adequate resources to support effective instruction.

This is supported by the statements of key informantsA who specified "*few references*" andC who stated**"***I have no experience in the field of medicine or allied medical courses, terminologies or medical terms being used, also there are limited crime laboratories or linkages for an outcomes-based or experiential learning***."** In addition, key informant B also stated "*there are no enough materials for the newly offered subjects*" and key informant G further mentioned "*lack of instructional materials.*"

Adequacy of learning materials plays crucial roles to aid instructors in their lesson preparations. Having plenty of materials can give teachers more confidence in handling the subject since they don't have to worry as to where they would source out such needed learning materials. Adalikwu andIorkpilgh(2013)said that when giving teachings, instructional materials act asconduit between the instructor and the students. Instructional materials may also act as source of inspiration for the teaching and learning process. For teaching, instructional materials are crucial, especially for new instructors. In every facet of their teaching, educators rely on instructional materials. They need resources to provide background knowledge on the subject they are teaching. In relation to this, Sulaimon et al. (2023) stated that an integral part of the teaching and learning process are instructional materials. Theyare essential to the efficient transfer of knowledge and skills to students which necessitates numerous real-world examples and illustrations. Teaching and learning can be hampered by inadequate and unavailable instructional resources.

Resources or linkages provide opportunities for educators to be more effective in discussing the subjects with the students whether the subject is under the new curriculum or not. It prepares the students for future challenges while fostering innovation, collaboration, and societal development. Also, it provides partnerships with other agencies such as conducting research or learning other teaching methodologies that may help the educators to deliver high-quality instruction. Institutions and institutional change are central to driving learning and innovation. The processes of innovation do not end at the point of its creation. Linkages are important in the spread and diffusion of stocks of knowledge, which not only act as building blocks for new stocks of knowledge but also are synergized further through creative duplication and accumulation into new stocks of knowledge (Raisah, 2011).

Another difficulty experienced was the**insufficiency of information.** The lack of information on the subject significantly hinders the students' ability to understand the subject's objectives. It also limits their critical thinking skills and their capacity to relate it to real-world situations. When there is insufficient material, students will struggle to fully analyze the subject, leading to superficial learning only. This can impact the overall performance and preparedness of future law enforcers. Based on the collected data, the participants faced difficulties in delivering effective instructions such as having outdated textbooks in the library. Other books were not aligned with the new curriculum; thus, this situation hindered the participant's ability to deliver effective discussion on the subject matter. The mismatch between available resources and curriculum requirements has made it difficult for instructors to provide students with a comprehensive and relevant learning experience. It is supported by the statements of the following key informants:

Key informant A claims "*very limited information*" whereas, key informant B simply says that **"***there is not enough materials in our school.***"** Moreover, key informant C stated that **"***we have very limited information on the new subjects***"**, and key informant E answered **"**It affects my performance in teaching badly. . .students are left hanging due lack of facilities/amenities, equipment.**"**Insufficiency of information may also be attributed by inadequate training and experience as key informant D stated "*we have no enough training and orientation on the subject.*"

The implementation of a new curriculum requires adjustments not only to the faculty but also to the students. New subjects are always emerging but only some gain a place in the formal school curriculum. Most of the now-accepted conventional school subjects have, at some stage, struggled to become established Yueh et al. (2010). The new curriculum of BS Criminology offers a modern approach to learning based on the needs of society and it is inevitable. Thus, it takes time for educators to master the newly offered subjects.

Coping Mechanisms of Criminology Instructors Handling NewSubjects Under the New Curriculum
The themes generated on the coping mechanisms of Criminology instructors handling new subjects under the new curriculum are advance reading, collaboration, and attendance to training/seminars.Every challenge has a solution. Despite the difficulties experienced by the criminology instructors in handling new subjects under the new curriculum, the participants used the following coping mechanisms to overcome the difficulties they have experienced.

Advance Reading. The participants are open to adopt the changes in the new curriculum and maintaining the commitment in delivering quality education to the students. Thus, participants used advanced reading techniques to cope with the difficulties they encountered. This technique provides a deeper understanding of the topic by reading it ahead of time. Having an advance reading enables the faculty members master the new topics and vocabularies written under the new subjects. Hence, it will boost their confidence to deliver well the discussions and elaborations. By reading in advance the new topics to be discussed, the instructors may be prepared for the possible questions or queries that may arise. In addition, the instructos canbe able to give examples or illustrations related to the topic. This theme is supported by the statements of the key informants when they were asked how they cope with the difficulties in handling new subjects.

As mentoned above, this theme is supported by key informant A who simply said "*doing research for additional knowledge*" regarding the subject matter. Moreover, key informant B detailed **"***I have done some research beforehand in preparing my new topics and asked help from my colleagues who are in law enforcement*" and key informant C simply stated that "*I have to study more, search more to be confident before entering the class.*"Additionally, key informant E mentioned "*I review my lessons in advance and give extra effort in researching my next topic*".

Societies are facing fundamental transformations as digital technologies are changing the ways we live, interact, work, study, and read (Schüller-Zwierlein, 2022). This and among others only prove that advance reading technique is very helpful for the criminology instructors handling the new subjects because change in the curriculum is unavoidable. Whether the faculty or the institution may agree or disagree, new curricula and new subjects are inevitable and so dynamic to meet the needs of society even in the future.

Collaboration. Due to inadequate resources and lack of information encountered by the participants, collaboration with partner agencies and other schools is the coping mechanism used by the participants to adopt the changes in the new curriculum. Inviting resource speakers and lecturers who are experts in the newly offered subjects was also adopted by the criminology instructors. Through this method, the students are provided with more opportunities to gain more knowledge and skills relevant to the newly required subjects. Collaboration is one way to strengthen not only the quality of instruction but also to bring together all the knowledge, ideas, and experience of multiple individuals, resource speakers, or organizations to achieve a common goal.

The above-mentioned theme is supported by the statement of key informant B who stated **"***I have to collaborate in another school because they have the resources that we do not have.*"Furthermore, key informant D mentioned, **"***I invite resource speakers or lecturers for some topics to be discussed needed in the new subject that I am handling.*"

The ability to work collaboratively with other organizations is becoming an essential component of contemporary school reform. It showcases camaraderie and shared objectives that create a welcoming atmosphere not only for the instructors but for the students as well. For example, the curriculum reform of 2016 stated that a "collaborative atmosphereis a keyfor school improvement; given that by working together across school subjects, the objectives of the new curriculum, such as teacher competence development, can be met" (Halinen,2015). According to Finkelstein et al. (2019), collaboration can mean that two or more teachers work together with other pedagogical specialists to design inclusive learning environments and support students in their personal and social development.

Attend a Training/Seminar. Attending a training/seminar is beneficial to both the personal and professional growth of the criminology instructors. According to Padillo et al. (2021), teacher professional development through trainings and seminars can lead to enriched knowledge on the subject matter, mastery of instructional design, and delivery of teaching, among other things.Based on the collected data during the conduct of the study, key informant E mentioned "I looked for a conference related to the new subject that I am handling, luckily I have found one via zoom."Also, key informant A stated**,** "*I have attended workshops because if I do not attend, I will be outdated.*"

Mashekwa (2020) emphasized that teachers' training is an important component of education. Such opportunities allow educators to gain valuable insights to new subjects outlined in the updated curriculum. Exposure to diverse training and seminars foster good relationships with faculty members from other institutions, creating a network of collaboration and knowledge sharing. Furthermore, these experiences could crucially provide deeper understanding of the topics covered as well as enriching the instructors' knowledge. Additionally, participating in these events increases the confidence of criminology instructors, enabling them to discuss complex subjects with their students effectively. In addition, Bilal et al. (2019) claimed that enhancing faculty strength in the areas of teachingis thought to greatly improve the learning environment and raise students' academic achievement. Thus, undeniably, a stand-alone educational approach for developing faculty members' professional skills and knowledge is the faculty development program (FDP).

Conclusion and Recommendations
Conclusion
Based on the gathered data, the participants' experienced difficulties in handling new subjects were primarily due to inadequate resources within their institutions and the shortage of books and other references that they could use to support their respective topics. However, the criminology instructors are resourceful and adaptable, with all the difficulties they've experienced, they were able to implement solutions in order to cope with these difficulties. The participants engaged in advanced reading as a coping strategy. Aside from this, collaboration with other institutions and attendance to trainings and seminars have been also adopted that significantly improved their teaching strategies. These coping mechanisms used by the participants, improved their teaching effectiveness in the classroom despite the lack of resources they have in their respective institutions.

Recommendations
Based on the conclusion drawn from the gathered data, several recommendations can be made to address the difficulties experienced by the criminology instructors in handling the new subjects under the new curriculum. First, the institution may invest in additional resources that the faculty may use to provide quality education to the students. Second, there is a need to strengthen collaboration with other institutions to facilitate the sharing of materials and to adopt the best practices of other institutions. Lastly, the faculty may explore online platforms. This could include virtual libraries and other online lectures. These recommendations aim to promote the constant development and strengthen the quality of education despite of the difficulties.

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