

The Role of Organizational Support, Teacher Proficiency and Student Academic Engagement in Criminology Program

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ABSTRACT

The academic institution, which served as the primary agency in this study, played a crucial role in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of criminology students through the strategic provision of organizational support, enhancement of teacher proficiency, and promotion of student academic engagement. This study is to examine the impact of organizational support and teacher proficiency on student academic engagement, with a focus on how these factors contribute to the academic success and development of criminology students in one of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Zamboanga del Sur during the 2024-2025. The respondents were the 218 students selected through stratified sampling. Data was collected using modified questionnaires. Results both organizational support and leadership are vital, teacher proficiency emerges as the most influential factor in enhancing criminology students' academic engagement by significantly strengthening their academic self-efficacy and critical thinking skills. The researchers recommended that institutions prioritize strengthening organizational support, enhance leadership initiatives, and provide continuous professional development for teachers, while incorporating targeted strategies to boost student engagement, self-efficacy, and critical thinking skills in criminology programs.

Keywords: Academic engagement, critical thinking, organizational support, resource availability, teacher proficiency

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the study

This study was significant as it explored how organizational support, teacher proficiency, and academic engagement collectively influenced student success and retention in criminology programs. Equitable leadership practices and psychological safety had been found to enhance teacher performance, thereby improving student outcomes (Emerald Insight, 2021). Teacher proficiency, which had been aligned with standards such as those set by the NSW Education Standards Authority (2023), had contributed to high-quality learning environments. Additionally, academic engagement had emerged as a key predictor of success, particularly in criminology, where student commitment and participation had been essential (Ramel & Renante, 2025). By examining these interconnected factors, the research had offered holistic insights for strengthening educational practices and institutional support systems.

The academic institution played a pivotal role in shaping criminology students' educational outcomes by strategically providing organizational support, enhancing teacher proficiency, and promoting academic engagement. Studies have shown that institutions offering strong support structures and professional development opportunities significantly improve faculty effectiveness and student success (Nguyen et al., 2021). Additionally, investment in continuous teacher training was found to directly enhance proficiency in specialized fields like criminology (Martinez & Brown, 2023). Prioritizing student-centered policies and active learning environments also led to higher levels of student engagement, critical for retention and achievement (Zhao & Wang, 2022).

In criminology programs, organizational support played a key role in enhancing teacher proficiency. Continuous training and development enabled educators to stay updated with criminological theories and practices, leading to improved instructional strategies (Abbott, 2022). Educators with strong institutional backing also showed greater confidence and effectiveness in engaging students, particularly in fostering critical thinking through innovative teaching approaches (Osario, 2023).

Organizational support significantly influences student academic engagement in criminology programs by creating an environment that promotes active learning and participation. Shen et al. (2024) found that teacher emotional support boosts engagement through positive academic emotions and mastery-approach goals. Similarly, a study in *BMC Public Health* (2023) reported that social support positively predicts academic engagement, mediated by life satisfaction and academic motivation. At Northwestern University, organizational support was also identified as a key factor in fostering criminology students' engagement. These findings highlight the critical role of institutional support in promoting academic success (Shen et al., 2024; *BMC Public Health*, 2023).

The literature gap is identified as most existing studies on organizational support and teacher proficiency focus on general education or STEM fields, with little attention to criminology programs. Criminology students have unique needs, such as understanding legal systems, criminal behavior, and public safety practices. Exploring how organizational support and teacher proficiency influence academic engagement in criminology programs specifically can provide targeted strategies for improving outcomes in this field.

This paper seeks to determine the level of organizational support in terms of resource availability, leadership support, workplace environment, and training and development opportunities. It also seeks to assess the level of teacher proficiency based on subject matter knowledge, andragogical skills, assessment feedback, and student engagement and motivation. Additionally, the study intends to evaluate student academic performance in terms of self-efficacy and critical thinking. It further examines whether there is a significant relationship between organizational support and student academic engagement, as well as between teacher proficiency and student academic engagement. Finally, the study aims to identify the predictors of students' academic engagement.

METHODS

With the aim of gathering data and information, this study used a quantitative research approach, with a survey questionnaire serving as the data collection instrument. Descriptive correlation analysis was employed to analyze the data gathered (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2021). *Research methods in practice: Strategies for description and causation*. Sage Publications. . The purpose of the study was to explore how organizational support and teacher proficiency influenced student academic engagement, aiming to understand the extent to which institutional structures and instructional quality contributed to the learning experiences and academic development of criminology students. A quantitative methodology was utilized to collect data and information through surveys administered to criminology students regarding their level of satisfaction with the organizational support and teacher proficiency provided by the institution.

The study took place in one of the higher education institutions in Zamboanga del Sur. Zamboanga del Sur is a province located in the Zamboanga Peninsula region on the island of Mindanao, in the southern part of the Philippines. It is part of the Zamboanga region (Region IX) and is bordered by Zamboanga del Norte to the north, Zamboanga Sibugay to the east, and the Sulu Sea to the west. The institution is a private, non-sectarian institution of learning offering various academic programs, including the College of Criminology.

The respondents of the study were 218 students who currently enrolled in the criminology program during the SY 2024-2025. They were selected regardless of age, sex, and year level through stratified sampling. The criteria for choosing the participants are: (1) officially enrolled in the criminology program, (2) willing to participate in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study will determine the level of engagement of the criminology students towards the organizational support and teacher proficiency in one of the higher educational institutions in Zamboanga del Sur. Specifically, the study will:

After performing the survey, I discovered in Table 1 indicates a Very High level of organizational support across several key constructs: resource availability (M = 4.32), leadership support (M = 4.46), workplace environment (M = 4.40), and training and development opportunities (M = 4.44). The overall organizational support score is also categorized as Very High (M = 4.41). These scores suggest that the organization effectively provides essential resources and a supportive environment for its employees, fostering their growth and productivity.

The data indicated a very high level of organizational support, with leadership support receiving the highest mean score of 4.46, reflecting effective guidance in faculty development and teaching quality. Training and development opportunities followed closely with a score of 4.44, highlighting strong faculty support for professional growth. The workplace environment scored 4.40, showing a positive work setting with room for improvement, while resource availability received a score of 4.32, indicating sufficient provisions but some gaps in areas such as financial support and updated research resources. Overall, with an aggregate score of 4.41, organizational support was deemed very high, demonstrating the institution's strong commitment to fostering faculty and student success (Guchait et al., 2021).

Table 1 Level of Organizational Support

Constructs	M	SD	Remarks
Resource Availability	4.32	0.52	Very High
Leadership Support	4.46	0.52	Very High
Workplace Environment	4.40	0.53	Very High
Training and Development Opportunities	4.44	0.53	Very High
Overall Support	4.41	0.53	Very High

Scale: 4.20-5.0 (Very High); 3.40-4.19(Moderately High); 2.60-3.39 (High); 1.80-2.59(Low); 1.0-1.79 (Very Low)

The data in Table 2 indicated that teachers exhibited a high level of proficiency across key teaching areas, with the highest score in subject matter knowledge (M = 4.52), reflecting their deep understanding of criminology and their ability to explain complex concepts. Teachers also excelled in andragogical skills and assessment feedback (both M = 4.48), demonstrating their capacity to facilitate active learning and provide constructive feedback. The lowest rating, though still high, was for student engagement and motivation (M = 4.47), indicating strong student involvement in class activities (Cavanagh, 2022; Liu et al., 2021). Overall, the teachers' proficiency in these areas reflected a comprehensive approach to promoting student learning, with particular strengths in subject expertise and teaching strategies for adult learners.

Table 2 Level of Teacher Proficiency

Constructs	M	SD	Remarks
Subject Matter Knowledge	4.52	0.49	Very High
Andragogical Skills	4.48	0.48	Very High

Assessment Feedback	4.48	0.49	Very High
Student Engagement	4.47	0.51	Very High
Overall Level of Proficiency	4.40	0.49	Very High

Scale: 4.20-5.0 (Very High); 3.40-4.19(Moderately High); 2.60-3.39 (High); 1.80-2.59(Low);1.0-1.79 (Very Low)

In table 3 the findings indicated that criminology students demonstrated very high levels of academic self-efficacy (M = 4.39) and critical thinking (M = 4.32), with an overall engagement mean of 4.36, suggesting strong confidence in their academic abilities and analytical skills. According to Facione (2020) while students showed slightly greater confidence in managing academic tasks than in critical evaluation, both dimensions were rated highly, highlighting the importance of further strengthening critical thinking alongside maintaining strong self-efficacy.

Table 3 Level of Student Academic Engagement

Constructs	M	SD	Remarks
Self-Efficacy	4.39	0.55	Very High
Critical Thinking	4.32	0.57	Very High
Overall Level of Proficiency	4.36	0.56	Very High

Scale: 4.20-5.0 (Very High); 3.40-4.19(Moderately High); 2.60-3.39 (High); 1.80-2.59(Low); 1.0-1.79 (Very Low)

In table 4 the findings indicated that among the dimensions of organizational support, leadership support had the strongest relationship with student academic engagement, significantly influencing both academic self-efficacy and critical thinking (r = 0.77). Resource availability followed closely (r = 0.71), highlighting its crucial role in enhancing students' confidence and analytical skills. The work environment also showed a strong correlation (r = 0.68), suggesting that a positive and collaborative atmosphere supported engagement. Training and development opportunities had the lowest, though still significant, correlation (r = 0.63), indicating a comparatively lesser impact. Overall, all organizational support indicators were found to be significantly and positively associated with academic engagement (p < .001), emphasizing the importance of a supportive institutional environment in fostering student confidence and critical thinking Dabbagh & Kitsantas (2020).

Table 4 Relationship Between Organizational Support and Students' Academic Engagement

Variables	r value	p value	Decision
Resource Availability and			
Self- Efficacy	0.65	< .001	Reject Ho
Critical Thinking	0.63	< .001	Reject Ho
Leadership Support and			
Self- Efficacy	0.63	< .001	Reject Ho
Critical Thinking	0.65	< .001	Reject Ho

Work Environment and			
Self- Efficacy	0.64	< .001	Reject Ho
Critical Thinking	0.64	< .001	Reject Ho
Work Environment and			
Self- Efficacy	0.76	< .001	Reject Ho
Critical Thinking	0.77	< .001	Reject Ho

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the organizational support and the students’ academic engagement

Note: Probability Value Scale: **p<0.01 (Highly Significant); *p<0.05 (Significant); p>0.05 (Not significant)

In table 5 the findings indicated that the strongest relationship was between student engagement and motivation and their academic self-efficacy (r = 0.81), suggesting that higher teacher proficiency in motivating students significantly enhanced their confidence in handling academic tasks. A substantial correlation was also observed between teachers’ andragogical skills and students' academic self-efficacy (r = 0.72), demonstrating that effective teaching strategies and real-world applications fostered greater academic confidence. Teacher proficiency in subject matter knowledge showed a strong positive relationship with students’ critical thinking skills (r = 0.69), while assessment feedback, though slightly lower (r ≈ 0.65), still played a meaningful role in supporting both self-efficacy and critical thinking. All results were statistically significant (p < 0.001), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirming that various dimensions of teacher proficiency significantly contributed to enhanced academic engagement among criminology students (McCoy et al.,2020).

Table 5 Relationship Between the Teachers’ Proficiency and Students’ Academic Engagement

Variables	r value	p value	Decision
Subject Matter Knowledge and			
Self- Efficacy	0.66**	< .001	Reject Ho
Critical Thinking	0.65**	< .001	Reject Ho
Andragogical Skills and			
Self- Efficacy	0.72**	< .001	Reject Ho
Critical Thinking	0.68**	< .001	Reject Ho
Assessment and Feedback and			
Self- Efficacy	0.69**	< .001	Reject Ho
Critical Thinking	0.65**	< .001	Reject Ho
Student Engagement and Motivation and			
Self- Efficacy	0.81**	< .001	Reject Ho
Critical Thinking	0.75**	< .001	Reject Ho

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the teachers' proficiency and the students' academic engagement

Note: Probability Value Scale: ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not significant)

In table 6 the analysis revealed that teacher proficiency was the strongest predictor of student academic engagement, with a substantial standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.60$, $p < .001$), indicating that students who perceived their teachers as highly proficient were more likely to exhibit strong self-efficacy and critical thinking skills. Organizational support also had a significant, though smaller, effect ($\beta = 0.32$, $p = .002$), suggesting that institutional resources and support contributed meaningfully to engagement. The model demonstrated strong explanatory power, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.61, showing that the combined influence of teacher proficiency and organizational support accounted for a significant portion of the variance in student academic engagement (Zhang et al., 2020).

Table 6 Predictors of Students' Academic Engagement

Predictors	Coef (β)	SE Coef	t- value	p-value
(Constant)	0.27	0.22	1.22	0.226
Organizational Support	0.32	0.10	3.13	0.002
Teachers' Proficiency	0.60	0.11	5.61	< .001
Adjusted r^2	0.61			
F value	178.00			
p-value	<.001			
Academic Engagement = .27+0.32* organizational support+.60* teachers' proficiency				

CONCLUSIONS

To enhance employee engagement and achieve better organizational outcomes, it is recommended that institutions establish a strong organizational framework characterized by sufficient resource availability, supportive leadership, a positive workplace environment, and ample training and development opportunities. Strengthening these areas can create a more conducive atmosphere for both teachers and students, ultimately improving overall educational quality and academic engagement.

Given that teachers demonstrated high proficiency across key instructional areas, efforts should focus on maintaining and further developing this level of excellence. Continued professional development programs, peer collaboration, and feedback mechanisms can help teachers refine their instructional practices, ensuring they effectively support student learning and engagement in criminology programs.

While criminology students showed strong academic self-efficacy, there is a need to place greater emphasis on nurturing their critical thinking skills to achieve deeper academic engagement. Institutions should design targeted interventions and curricula that challenge students' analytical abilities. Moreover, since both teacher proficiency and organizational support were found to significantly influence academic engagement—with teacher proficiency being the most critical factor—it is essential to invest in enhancing teacher capabilities while simultaneously reinforcing institutional support systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The institutions enhance their organizational support by improving resources, leadership, workplace environment, and professional development, while teachers are encouraged to refine strategies that boost student

engagement and motivation. Criminology programs should also implement targeted activities to develop students' critical thinking skills, and institutions must prioritize leadership initiatives and training programs to strengthen academic engagement, self-efficacy, and instructional effectiveness.

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