

Reserve Officers' Training and its Influence on the Leadership Skills and Discipline of Criminology Students

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ABSTRACT

Structured training programs such as the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) play an important role in developing leadership competencies and discipline among students, particularly those preparing for careers in law enforcement and public safety. This study aimed to determine the influence of ROTC training on the leadership skills and discipline of criminology students in a private higher education institution in Misamis Occidental. The study employed a descriptive–correlational research design. Data were collected from 141 criminology students using a researcher-made questionnaire to measure ROTC training, leadership skills, and discipline. Data were analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation, and Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient. Findings revealed that students experienced ROTC training to a very great extent, while leadership skills were rated very good, and discipline was very high. Results showed a statistically significant relationship between ROTC training, leadership skills, and discipline. The study concludes that ROTC training strengthens leadership competencies and disciplined behavior, highlighting its importance in criminology education. Educational institutions offering criminology programs may continuously support ROTC activities and integrate leadership-enhancing experiences that will help students apply leadership principles in both academic and real-life situations.

Keywords: Discipline, Criminology, Law Enforcement, Leadership Skills, Training

INTRODUCTION

In criminology programs, ROTC training is particularly relevant because it develops competencies associated with law enforcement, such as discipline, leadership, and adherence to institutional authority. The Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) has long served as a formative training ground for students in higher education, providing structured activities that cultivate discipline, leadership, and a strong sense of national identity. In many countries, ROTC serves as an applied counterpart to classroom learning, enabling students to engage in exercises that strengthen civic awareness and enhance their readiness to contribute to national development (Perez, 2023). In the Philippines, discussions on reviving mandatory ROTC have once again highlighted the program's perceived value in shaping the character of young people, particularly those preparing for careers in public safety and law enforcement. As outlined in the National Service Training Program (NSTP) framework implemented by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), ROTC is specifically designed to nurture patriotism, moral integrity, respect for civilian authority, and adherence to constitutional ideals (CHED, 2002). With this policy guidance in place, the program remains an important avenue for developing future leaders who embody discipline and civic responsibility.

ROTC training promotes holistic student development through a blend of physical drills, leadership exercises, and civic education, thereby strengthening both competence and moral values. Research shows that structured military-style routines foster students' adaptability and growth mindset, enabling them to respond effectively to demanding situations (Llanes & Domingo, 2021). Similarly, Hernandez (2024) emphasizes that the values embedded in youth training programs reinforce character development and civic consciousness. In addition, Flores and Medina (2022) highlight that experiential activities such as field exercises and teamwork-building drills significantly contribute to developing students' accountability and perseverance. These findings support the idea that ROTC serves as a “discipline laboratory,” where students internalize responsibility, respect, and

service-oriented attitudes. These studies collectively suggest that ROTC training contributes not only to physical preparedness but also to cognitive and moral development among students.

Leadership skills in criminology education involve the ability to make decisions under pressure, manage teams, and maintain situational awareness during critical operations. Leadership formation is a central objective of ROTC, as the program exposes cadets to hierarchical structures and performance-based tasks that strengthen critical leadership competencies. Contemporary studies indicate that structured leadership training enhances students' ability to delegate, communicate, and analyze situations under pressure (Torres & Villafuerte, 2021). In a similar vein, Gutierrez (2023) notes that collaborative military drills help cadets cultivate confidence and decisiveness—qualities essential in public safety professions. Additional findings by Morales and Javier (2022) show that leadership simulations and command responsibilities within ROTC significantly boost teamwork and initiative. Collectively, these studies reflect ROTC's role as a dynamic leadership environment that molds students into responsible and composed decision-makers.

In the context of criminology education, discipline refers to the ability to regulate behavior, follow institutional protocols, and demonstrate accountability in both academic and operational settings. Discipline stands as another foundational value developed through ROTC education. Recent research underscores that discipline acquired from regimented training enhances students' task regulation and emotional resilience (Navarro & Cruz, 2022). Likewise, Ortega (2023) asserts that routine-based learning fosters punctuality, order, and ethical behavior, all of which are vital for students entering criminal justice fields. Moreover, Manalo and Rivera (2020) found that exposure to structured drills improves time management and reduces impulsive behavior among young adults. These insights reinforce the idea that ROTC discipline is not merely about compliance but about shaping individuals into steady, reliable, and morally grounded members of society.

When combined with leadership development, ROTC discipline provides a behavioral foundation essential to effective law enforcement practice. Discipline continues to be one of the most formative outcomes of ROTC training, especially for students preparing for careers in law enforcement and public safety. The structured routines, drills, and behavioral expectations embedded in the program help strengthen students' ability to regulate their actions, manage time effectively, and remain focused under pressure. According to Villareal and Santos (2021), cadets gradually develop stronger self-control and consistency through repeated exposure to regimented activities and performance-based tasks. Likewise, De Lara and Fermin (2024) noted that ROTC cultivates perseverance and emotional stability, enabling students to maintain composure in demanding academic and field situations. These insights suggest that discipline fostered through ROTC is not merely about compliance but about shaping students into reliable, steady, and resilient individuals capable of meeting the expectations of criminology and public safety professions.

Thus, ROTC training provides a preparatory framework that aligns closely with the professional expectations of criminology students entering public safety careers. Recent studies emphasize that ROTC-instilled discipline enhances criminology students' overall professional readiness by fostering ethical behavior, situational judgment, and responsible decision-making. Ramos, Dizon, and Alvarez (2025) describe this development as "applied discipline," a concept that reflects cadets' ability to translate learned values—such as accountability, respect, and duty—into their daily academic and practical activities. This form of discipline strengthens students' confidence and equips them to handle real-life tasks that demand precision and adherence to established protocols. As a result, the discipline gained through ROTC not only influences personal behavior but also becomes a core competency that prepares future criminologists for the rigorous demands of law enforcement service, where integrity and regulated conduct are essential.

Despite these perceived benefits, empirical evidence on how ROTC training actually influences criminology students' leadership and discipline remains limited. For criminology students, ROTC offers a unique training environment that complements their professional formation. The field of criminology requires individuals who are not only skilled in law enforcement techniques but also disciplined, ethical, and effective leaders. As Del Rosario (2024) points out, ROTC provides a structured avenue for criminology students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world leadership contexts. Previous research conducted at Leyte and Misamis University (Philippine News Agency, 2023) revealed that criminology cadets reported enhanced accountability, teamwork, and moral integrity after participating in ROTC. This alignment between ROTC's objectives and

criminology's ethical foundations makes it a critical component of character and professional development in law-related programs.

However, ROTC is not without its challenges. Many students have reported difficulties balancing the program's physical demands with academic requirements, often leading to stress and fatigue. Contemporary research supports this, with Alvarez and Bautista (2021) highlighting how intensive training schedules can strain students' academic performance. Likewise, Soriano (2022) found that cadets often struggle with physical exhaustion, which impacts their motivation and daily routines. Similarly, Calderon (2023) noted that heavy training loads may lead to emotional fatigue among youth trainees, especially during peak academic periods. Despite these challenges, students still recognize that these experiences strengthen their stamina, time management, and perseverance. These challenges highlight the need to assess whether the benefits of ROTC training outweigh its physical and academic demands.

Nevertheless, criticisms concerning ROTC's safety, inclusivity, and welfare implications continue to surface. Scholars such as Beltran and Castillo (2020) emphasize that concerns about student welfare require stricter program oversight to prevent potential abuses. In addition, Valdez (2021) highlights the need for transparent policies to ensure that training remains aligned with ethical standards and student protection. Furthermore, Cruz and Mercado (2024) argue that without proper oversight and evaluation, ROTC risks reinforcing outdated practices that may hinder rather than support student development. These concerns underscore the need for ongoing reforms and empirical evaluation to ensure ROTC remains both effective and safe.

An empirical gap exists in the current body of literature regarding the measurable effects of ROTC training on the leadership skills and discipline of criminology students. Although previous studies acknowledge the potential of ROTC programs to enhance self-discipline, accountability, and leadership development, much of the existing research remains qualitative or descriptive. As a result, there is limited quantitative evidence that establishes statistically significant relationships between ROTC participation and the development of leadership competencies and disciplinary behavior among criminology students. This lack of empirical validation restricts the ability to generalize findings and objectively assess the extent of ROTC's influence.

Specifically, the study determines the levels of ROTC training, leadership skills, and discipline and examines the relationships among these variables. This study is significant as it provides a quantitative examination of the influence of Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) training on the leadership skills and discipline of criminology students. As criminology programs prepare students for careers in law enforcement, public safety, and security services—professions that require strong leadership competencies, self-regulation, and adherence to rules—understanding the developmental contribution of ROTC training is both academically and professionally important. By comparing students who have undergone ROTC training with those who have not, the study generates empirical evidence on whether meaningful differences exist in terms of leadership skills and disciplinary orientation. Moreover, by examining the relationship between ROTC participation and these attributes, the research clarifies whether greater engagement in structured military training is associated with enhanced leadership development and discipline. The findings may benefit criminology students by highlighting competencies relevant to their future careers, assist educational institutions in evaluating the role of ROTC within criminology curricula, and support academic leaders and policymakers in making evidence-based decisions regarding youth formation programs. Ultimately, this study contributes to a more empirically grounded understanding of ROTC training as a formative component in criminology education.

Therefore, this study seeks to determine whether ROTC training significantly influences the leadership skills and discipline of criminology students. ROTC remains a vital program for cultivating both discipline and leadership, particularly among criminology students preparing for careers in public service. Despite its long-standing presence, there is still a limited understanding of the program's actual impact due to a lack of precise, data-driven analysis. By examining how ROTC training shapes students' leadership capabilities and strengthens their sense of discipline, this study aims to provide clearer insights into its effectiveness. The findings are expected to guide educators, policymakers, and program administrators in optimizing ROTC to nurture future law enforcement officers who are competent, ethical, and consistently uphold the principles of responsibility and integrity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored in Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 2020), Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2020), and Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Reggo, 2021).

Bandura (2020), in his Social Learning Theory, argued that individuals develop new behaviors, skills, and attitudes by observing and imitating others in their environment. Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece (2021) similarly emphasized that structured programs like ROTC provide opportunities for participants to internalize observed behaviors, norms, and ethical conduct. In ROTC, criminology students observe instructors and senior cadets during drills, leadership rotations, and command-based exercises, thereby developing teamwork, decision-making, communication, and problem-solving skills. Discipline is also reinforced through repeated exposure to routines, hierarchical authority, and the consistent modeling of responsible and ethical behavior. Together, these perspectives illustrate how criminology students cultivate leadership and discipline through ROTC training.

Bandura (2020) further explains that reinforcement and feedback strengthen learned behaviors, as evidenced by ROTC cadets receiving guidance, evaluations, and recognition for their performance. Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece (2021) add that repeated practice in cooperative and command-based roles helps students internalize professionalism, resilience, and accountability. Through these observational and experiential processes, ROTC serves as a practical platform for students to translate theoretical knowledge into leadership actions and disciplined conduct, preparing them for future careers in law enforcement.

Building on the principles of social modeling, another perspective that deepens the understanding of ROTC's impact on student leadership and discipline is Transformational Leadership Theory. Burns (1978) argued that transformational leaders inspire individuals to exceed expectations through vision, motivation, and ethical influence. Bass and Riggio (2021) highlighted that transformational leadership encourages personal growth, ethical behavior, and proactive decision-making in structured environments. In ROTC, senior cadets and instructors act as transformational leaders, guiding students through leadership tasks, drills, and problem-solving scenarios while modeling integrity, responsibility, and dedication. Leadership skills are developed as cadets take initiative and make decisions under supervision, while discipline is reinforced through the expectation of following rules and upholding ethical standards.

Northouse (2021) emphasizes that transformational leadership fosters internalization of values such as perseverance, responsibility, and teamwork. Antonakis and House (2020) similarly note that mentoring and modeling in structured programs such as ROTC help students enhance self-confidence, resilience, and a commitment to duty. ROTC, therefore, not only builds leadership competence but also instills disciplined habits and ethical conduct in criminology students, making them better prepared for the demands of law enforcement and public service careers.

Deci and Ryan (2020) in Self-Determination Theory explained that intrinsic motivation is strengthened when three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are satisfied. Guay, Ratelle, and Chantal (2020) further highlighted that structured programs can fulfill these needs by offering opportunities for skill mastery, collaborative engagement, and meaningful responsibility. In ROTC, cadets experience autonomy through leadership assignments, competence through successful completion of drills and tactical tasks, and relatedness through teamwork and mentorship with peers and instructors. This environment promotes intrinsic motivation, self-discipline, and responsible leadership.

Vansteenkiste and Ryan (2021) note that when intrinsic motivation is supported, individuals demonstrate greater persistence, self-control, and ethical decision-making. In ROTC, this is observed as cadets develop the ability to remain focused under pressure, adhere to structured routines, and take responsibility for their actions. By satisfying psychological needs, ROTC training fosters both leadership and discipline among criminology students, preparing them to meet the professional and ethical expectations of law enforcement service.

Collectively, Social Learning Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Self-Determination Theory explain how ROTC training shapes leadership skills and discipline among criminology students. Through

observational learning and modeling, students adopt disciplined behaviors and leadership practices. Transformational leadership within ROTC encourages initiative, ethical conduct, and responsibility, while intrinsic motivation strengthens students' commitment to self-discipline and leadership development. These theoretical perspectives collectively support the assumption that structured ROTC training fosters leadership competencies and disciplined behavior among criminology students. Guided by these theories, the study assumes that ROTC training (independent variable) influences the development of leadership skills and discipline (dependent variables) among criminology students.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study's conceptual framework proposes that ROTC training, through its structured activities and leadership exposure, influences the development of leadership skills and discipline among criminology students. The framework assumes that participation in ROTC training enhances students' leadership competencies and strengthens disciplined behavior necessary for future careers in law enforcement and public safety. In this study, ROTC Training serves as the independent variable, while Leadership Skills and Discipline serve as the dependent variables.

ROTC training serves as the foundation of this study, functioning as a structured program that integrates military principles with civic and leadership education. It is designed to instill discipline, leadership, and patriotism among students through regimented physical exercises, drills, and command responsibilities (Delos Reyes, 2022). The training provides a platform where students can apply theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios, encouraging teamwork, decision-making, and moral development. According to Perez (2023), the structured environment of ROTC exposes cadets to pressure-based tasks that promote resilience and adaptability, both of which are essential in law enforcement careers. Hence, ROTC training becomes a transformative experience that molds criminology students into responsible, confident, and disciplined individuals prepared for public service.

Training Structure and Organization is a fundamental sub-variable of ROTC training examined in this study. It refers to the systematic arrangement of training activities, a clearly defined hierarchy, standardized procedures, scheduled drills, and codified rules that govern ROTC instruction. Military-based training programs, such as ROTC, are intentionally designed around formal organizational frameworks that emphasize the chain of command, accountability, unity of effort, and adherence to established protocols (Department of the Army, 2022). Contemporary leadership scholarship holds that structured, well-organized training environments promote leadership development by clarifying roles, strengthening decision-making skills, and fostering responsibility within teams (Northouse, 2021). Moreover, defense education frameworks highlight that discipline is cultivated through consistent enforcement of standards, repetition of regulated routines, and institutionalized expectations of conduct (U.S. Department of Defense, 2023). In the context of criminology education, where future professionals are expected to operate within highly regulated justice and law enforcement systems, exposure to structured and organized ROTC training may significantly influence the development of leadership skills and discipline. Thus, examining the training structure and organization enables this study to quantitatively determine how the formal design and systematic implementation of ROTC training shape the leadership competencies and disciplinary orientation of criminology students.

Physical and Mental Training Rigor is a crucial sub-variable in the study. This refers to the intensity, consistency, and discipline embedded in both physical conditioning and mental resilience exercises that ROTC cadets undergo. Rigorous physical training develops endurance, strength, and stamina, which are essential for handling the demands of law enforcement and security-related professions. In contrast, mental training rigor strengthens focus, stress management, and problem-solving abilities (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Studies have shown that structured physical and mental challenges enhance self-discipline, perseverance, and adaptive leadership skills, particularly in high-pressure contexts similar to those encountered in criminology and law enforcement careers (Brown et al., 2022). Additionally, programs that integrate both physical and mental rigor encourage cadets to develop accountability, self-regulation, and resilience, which are critical attributes for professional effectiveness and ethical decision-making (Thompson & Lee, 2023). By examining the rigor of physical and mental training as a component of ROTC, this study aims to determine how structured exposure to challenging activities contributes to the development of leadership skills and discipline among criminology

students, ultimately linking military-style training to the professional competencies required for their future careers.

Leadership Training and exposure play a significant role in shaping the leadership skills and discipline of criminology students. This aspect of ROTC involves structured opportunities for students to practice decision-making, team management, conflict resolution, and problem-solving within supervised military-oriented activities and field exercises. Leadership training in ROTC provides experiential learning through drills, simulations, and mentorship, enabling students to internalize leadership principles and apply them in real-world scenarios (Carter & DeChurch, 2020). Exposure to leadership responsibilities has been shown to enhance self-efficacy, accountability, and ethical decision-making, all of which are essential traits for criminology students preparing for careers in law enforcement and public safety (Riggio & Tan, 2021). Additionally, research indicates that repeated, guided leadership experiences within structured programs such as ROTC can foster personal discipline, resilience, and the ability to work effectively under pressure (Antonakis & Day, 2020). By examining leadership training and exposure as components of ROTC, this study aims to quantify the extent to which active participation in leadership exercises contributes to the development of leadership competencies and disciplined behavior among criminology students.

Discipline and Obedience Training emphasizes the inculcation of self-control, adherence to rules, and respect for authority through structured drills, rules enforcement, and consistent behavioral expectations. ROTC programs implement rigorous routines designed to develop students' ability to follow instructions accurately, maintain professional conduct, and act responsibly under supervision—qualities that are essential for leadership in law enforcement and criminology-related professions (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Research indicates that structured obedience and discipline training not only improves compliance with rules but also enhances decision-making, accountability, and resilience in challenging situations (Brown et al., 2022). Moreover, discipline-based training fosters a sense of ethical responsibility and personal integrity, which are critical in the formation of future criminology professionals who must operate within regulated legal frameworks (Miller, 2020). By focusing on this sub-variable, the study aims to quantify how ROTC's discipline and obedience training contributes to the development of both leadership capabilities and the capacity for self-regulation among criminology students.

Values Formation and Character Development focuses on how ROTC programs instill core ethical principles, personal integrity, civic responsibility, and moral reasoning in cadets, shaping their overall character and behavior. ROTC training emphasizes not only physical and leadership skills but also the internalization of values such as discipline, respect, accountability, and service to others, which are essential for future law enforcement professionals (Lau et al., 2021). Research in educational psychology and military training has shown that structured character development programs enhance moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, and personal responsibility, all of which are critical components of effective leadership (Pillai & Williams, 2022). Additionally, character development in military-oriented programs has been linked to improved self-discipline, resilience, and professional conduct among students, traits vital for criminology practitioners operating in highly structured, ethically demanding environments (Smith & Roberts, 2020). By examining values formation and character development as part of ROTC training, this study aims to understand how these programs cultivate leadership qualities and disciplined behavior among criminology students, thereby bridging the gap between theoretical training and practical professional readiness.

Leadership skills are among the most important outcomes of ROTC training. Through hierarchical structures and assigned responsibilities, cadets develop the capacity to lead peers and manage teams effectively. Leadership, in this context, encompasses a range of abilities—such as communication, critical thinking, and confidence—that enable cadets to influence others positively and achieve common goals (Ramos & Villanueva, 2022). For criminology students, leadership training provides the moral and operational readiness necessary for their future roles in law enforcement and justice administration.

Decision-making ability is a vital component of leadership development, particularly within structured programs such as the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). It encompasses a cadet's capacity to assess complex situations, weigh possible alternatives, and select the most appropriate course of action that aligns with mission objectives and organizational values. ROTC training strengthens this skill through scenario-based

exercises, tactical simulations, and field drills that expose students to time-pressured, uncertain environments, allowing them to practice making sound judgments under stress or ambiguity. According to Santos (2021), experiential training environments such as ROTC foster sharper analytical thinking because cadets are required to interpret dynamic situations and anticipate potential outcomes. Similarly, Dela Cruz and Manalo (2022) emphasize that decision-making in military-oriented training develops strategic reasoning, as cadets learn to balance risks, resources, and responsibilities during simulated operations. More recently, Reyes (2024) noted that structured leadership tasks in ROTC cultivate the ability to make ethical and mission-aligned decisions, reinforcing confidence and accountability—qualities crucial for future law enforcement professionals. Through consistent exposure to these learning experiences, criminology students develop a more disciplined, strategic, and thoughtful approach to leadership decision-making.

Communication skills are a fundamental outcome of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program, crucial for establishing functional command and cohesive team environments. This ability is not merely about verbal articulation. However, it encompasses the capacity to transmit, receive, and confirm information with clarity, respect, and precision across the organizational hierarchy and within peer groups (Bohol, 2023). ROTC achieves this enhancement through continuous, structured interactions that emphasize the articulation of clear directives, the delivery of constructive feedback, and the establishment of mutual understanding (Santos & Alconaba, 2024). Drills and group exercises are designed to simulate operational pressures, compelling students to practice a style of communication that is both assertive and respectful, thereby reducing ambiguity and potential for error in high-stakes scenarios (Reyes et al., 2025). For criminology students, mastery of this skill is vital; effective law enforcement and investigative work depend on seamless collaboration, whether coordinating a patrol operation or briefing a multi-agency task force. As noted by Cruz (2023), the capacity to communicate precisely under duress is a hallmark of effective police leadership and directly contributes to operational success.

Team management in the context of ROTC training provides students with practical exposure to the organizational and motivational aspects of leadership, preparing them for roles where they must guide diverse groups toward shared objectives. This skill set extends beyond issuing orders; it involves organizing personnel, directing activities effectively, and continuously motivating members to maintain high levels of performance and morale (Ramos & Villanueva, 2022). Students gain hands-on experience in the critical leadership tasks of delegating based on individual strengths, proactively resolving conflicts arising from group dynamics, and actively encouraging participation from all members (Garcia et al., 2025). These experiences cultivate a capacity to foster cooperation and maintain harmony among peers, transforming a collection of individuals into a unified unit (Ocampo & Jimenez, 2024). This is an indispensable quality for criminology graduates, as they will inevitably be responsible for managing complex police units, overseeing correctional staff, or leading intricate investigative teams where group cohesion directly impacts public safety outcomes (Dela Vega, 2022). Furthermore, practical application of leadership theories during field training solidifies their competence in promoting collective responsibility and mission focus (Soriano, 2023).

Problem-solving skills are strategically engineered in the ROTC curriculum through the deliberate insertion of complex, unexpected situations and challenges. Cadets are repeatedly placed in scenarios—such as demanding tactical simulations and time-sensitive emergency drills—that demand an immediate and strategic response (Delos Reyes, 2022). This pedagogical approach forces students to analyze issues critically, moving beyond superficial observations to understand the root causes and operational variables at play (Mendoza & Reyes, 2024). The pressure of time constraints common in these exercises specifically nurtures the ability to conceive and implement innovative solutions, distinguishing leaders who are merely reactive from those who are adaptable and resourceful (Lim, 2021). This training in adaptability and logical reasoning is a vital asset for criminology graduates, who are routinely expected to confront complex, novel real-world problems—from organizing disaster relief efforts to solving cold cases—where established protocols may be insufficient and quick, sound judgment is paramount (Domingo, 2025). The iterative process of after-action reviews in ROTC further refines their ability to reflect on decisions and improve future crisis response strategies (Talavera, 2020).

Confidence and initiative are strengthened as cadets progressively handle leadership responsibilities that require accountability, self-direction, and sound judgment. As they engage in complex tasks, cadets develop a

sense of efficacy, enabling them to trust their abilities and respond decisively in situations that demand immediate action. This growing confidence naturally complements the development of initiative, as students learn to step forward, anticipate needs, and take action without relying solely on external prompts. Moreover, decision-making ability becomes a crucial component of this process. Through structured challenges, simulations, and real-time leadership scenarios, ROTC training exposes cadets to environments where quick yet thoughtful decisions are essential, helping them refine their capacity to evaluate options, consider consequences, and choose appropriate courses of action. Studies show that military-style training enhances cadets' cognitive readiness and decision-making skills by promoting disciplined thinking, situational assessment, and adaptive problem-solving (Garcia & Santos, 2021; Mendoza, 2022; Cruz, 2024). Likewise, ROTC's merit-based system reinforces initiative by acknowledging proactive efforts and rewarding cadets who demonstrate strong judgment, responsibility, and autonomous leadership, motivating them to accept leadership roles voluntarily rather than waiting for directives (Perez, 2023).

Discipline is the second major outcome variable influenced by ROTC training. It refers to students' ability to control their behavior, obey rules, and perform their duties consistently and with respect for authority. Discipline in ROTC is enforced through routine drills, punctuality requirements, and adherence to regulations (Santos, 2021). These structured experiences help criminology students internalize values of responsibility and integrity—qualities necessary in the practice of law enforcement and criminal justice.

Punctuality is rigorously emphasized in ROTC through strict time management and unwavering adherence to schedules, making it a non-negotiable aspect of military discipline. Cadets are trained to value time not just as a commodity, but as an essential element that reflects professionalism and operational readiness (Bohol, 2023). Through repetitive practice in attending formations, meeting deadlines, and executing maneuvers on schedule, students internalize the understanding that timeliness reflects reliability and profound respect for others' efforts and time (Lim & Garcia, 2024). This ingrained habit transcends the training environment and directly carries over to professional responsibilities, particularly in law enforcement, where an officer's timely arrival and execution of duty can be critical to public safety and justice administration (Mendoza, 2022). Consequently, ROTC establishes a foundational habit that links personal discipline to collective effectiveness.

Obedience to rules and regulations is central to maintaining order within the hierarchical structure of the ROTC, serving as a critical mechanism for instilling institutional loyalty and operational discipline. Students are systematically trained to follow both direct commands and established institutional policies without hesitation, thereby promoting immediate respect for organizational hierarchy and lawful authority (Santos, 2021). This systematic training cultivates a profound sense of duty and preparedness, which is crucial for criminology students transitioning into law enforcement agencies where strict compliance, adherence to the chain of command, and legal fidelity are paramount for operational integrity (Castro, 2023). The internalization of this principle ensures that graduates can function effectively and ethically within the highly regulated parameters of the justice system (Ramos & Cruz, 2024).

Self-control in ROTC develops dynamically through exposure to physically and mentally challenging, stressful tasks that simulate the unpredictable demands of military and law enforcement environments. Cadets are conditioned to remain calm and composed under duress, actively managing intense emotions to ensure rational and strategic decision-making even when fatigued or faced with unexpected setbacks (Del Rosario, 2024). This rigorous training in emotional regulation ensures students develop the maturity to handle confrontations or crises in professional settings—such as tense interrogations or volatile public order situations—with necessary restraint and professionalism (Villanueva, 2020). By successfully navigating these high-pressure scenarios, students develop the capacity for self-regulation, which is vital for preventing misconduct and ensuring ethical, measured responses in high-stakes law enforcement operations (Alcantara, 2025).

Respect for authority is fundamentally instilled through ROTC's hierarchical structure and formal protocols, requiring students to interact respectfully with superiors, peers, and subordinates alike. This subvariable emphasizes the core military virtues of humility, discipline, and ethical awareness in all interpersonal and chain-of-command interactions (Perez, 2023). By learning to formally follow commands and interact appropriately within a strict system, students acquire an understanding of the proper deference due to legitimate power structures (Diaz & Reyes, 2022). Furthermore, ROTC teaches that this respect is mutual;

leaders must earn respect through ethical conduct, which provides criminology students with values aligned with ethical policing and public service, preparing them to both follow and eventually lead with integrity (Soriano, 2024).

Accountability represents the deep-seated sense of personal responsibility and ownership that cadets gain through their comprehensive participation in ROTC activities. Every task completed, every piece of equipment maintained, and every command executed carries an inherent sense of ownership and consequence (Del Rosario, 2024). Students learn to openly acknowledge both their successes and failures, refusing to shift blame, thereby reinforcing the core virtues of integrity and dependability (Gonzales, 2023). This internalized accountability forms a vital foundation for their future duties in law enforcement and criminology, ensuring they accept responsibility for their actions and decisions, which is non-negotiable for maintaining public trust and ethical conduct in the criminal justice system (Tolentino, 2020).

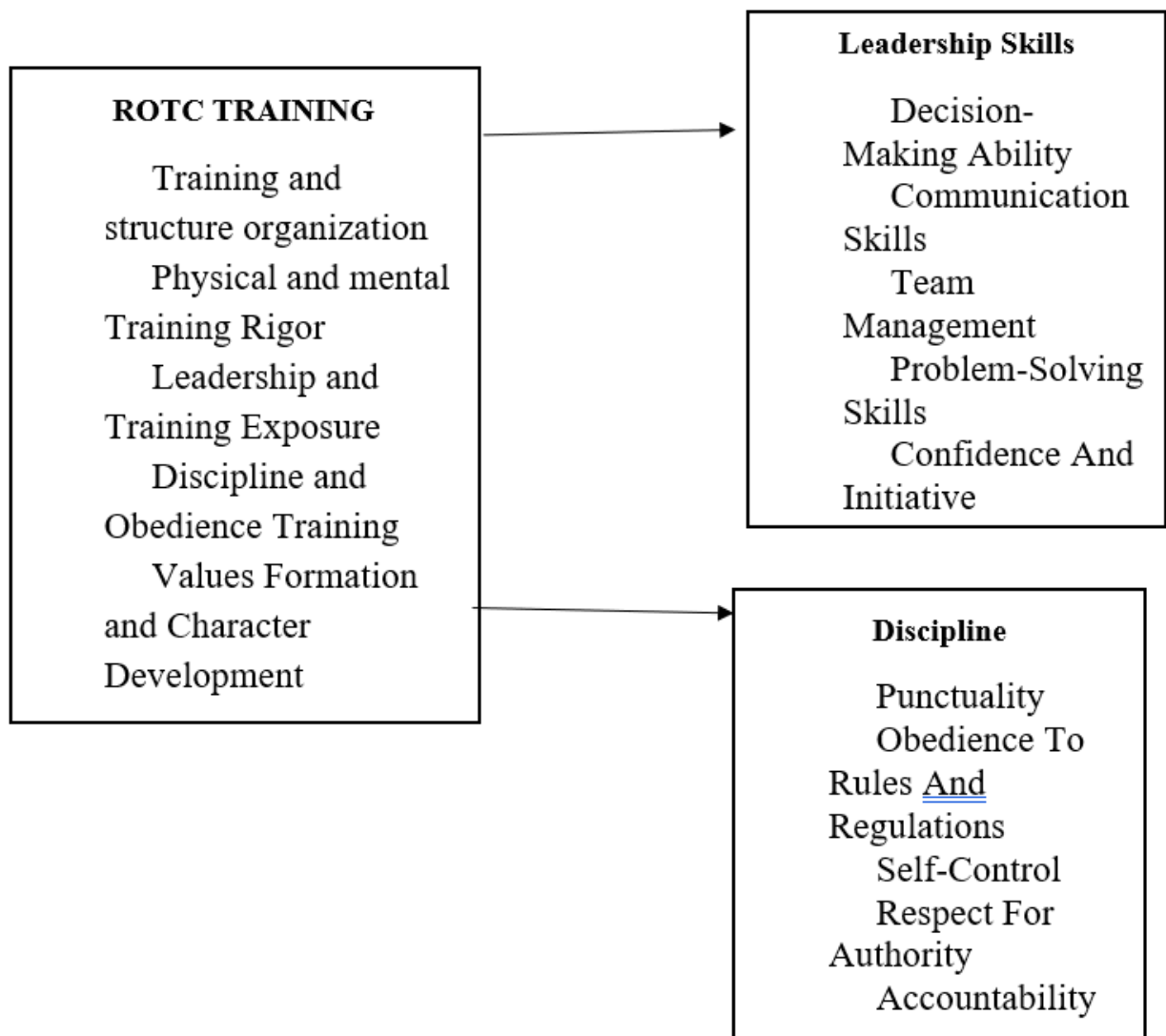


Figure 1 Schematic Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the influence of Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) training on the leadership skills and discipline of criminology students. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of ROTC training of the criminology students?

2. What is the level of leadership skills of criminology students in terms of decision-making ability; communication skills; team management; problem-solving skills; and confidence and initiative?
3. What is the level of discipline of criminology students in terms of: punctuality; obedience to rules and regulations; self-control; respect for authority; and accountability?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the level of ROTC training among criminology students and their leadership skills?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the level of ROTC training among criminology students and their level of discipline?

Null Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the level of ROTC training among criminology students and their leadership skills.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the level of ROTC training among criminology students and their level of discipline.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

In this study, ROTC training serves as the independent variable, while leadership skills and discipline serve as the dependent manipulating variables. This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design, a quantitative approach that aimed to describe variables and examine the degree of relationship between them without the variables. This design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to present an accurate portrayal of the current status of ROTC training and the existing levels of leadership skills and discipline among criminology students. Descriptive-correlational research also allows researchers to determine whether variables are related and, if so, to identify the strength and direction of these relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through this approach, the study seeks to assess whether a statistically significant connection exists between ROTC training and two major outcome variables: leadership skills and the discipline of criminology students.

Setting

This study was conducted at a private higher education institution in Misamis Occidental. The institution also implements the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) as part of the National Service Training Program, making it an appropriate setting for examining the influence of ROTC training on criminology students. Several of its programs have attained various levels of accreditation, reflecting its commitment to quality education. As an academic community, the institution is dedicated to fostering holistic development and contributing to social transformation. Guided by its mission rooted in human and Christian values, it actively engages in innovative teaching practices, scholarly research, and meaningful collaborations with both community partners and institutional stakeholders.

Respondents

The respondents were selected through stratified sampling based on year level to ensure proportional representation of criminology students across different academic levels. The respondents in the study are 141 students currently enrolled in the criminology program during A.Y. 2025-2026. They were chosen regardless of age, sex, and year level through stratified sampling. The criteria for choosing the respondents are: (1) officially enrolled in the criminology program, (2) willing to participate in the study, and (3) undergoing ROTC training.

Instruments

This study utilized the following research instrument:

A. Level of ROTC Training Questionnaire. This researcher-developed questionnaire consists of 20 statements that focus on dimensions such as training structure and organization, physical and mental training rigor, leadership training and exposure, discipline and obedience training, and values formation and character development. To ensure the test's validity and reliability, it was pilot-tested with respondents not included in the study's actual sample and reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha.

In interpreting the level of ROTC training, the following scales will be used:

Responses	Continuum	Interpretation
5- Strongly Agree	4.20-5.00	Very Good (VG)
4- Agree	3.40-4.19	Good (G)
3- Neutral	2.60-3.39	Fair (F)
2-Disagree	1.80-2.59	Poor (P)
1-Strongly Disagree	1.00-1.79	Very Poor (VP)

B. Level of Leadership Skills Questionnaire. This researcher-made questionnaire consists of 25 statements covering decision-making ability, communication skills, team management, problem-solving skills, and confidence/initiative. To ensure the test's validity and reliability, it was pilot-tested with respondents who were not included in the study. The instrument was pilot-tested, and reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha.

In interpreting the level of leadership skills, the following scales will be used:

Responses	Continuum	Interpretation
5- Always (A)	4.20-5.00	Very Good (VG)
4- Often (O)	3.40-4.19	Good (G)
3- Sometimes (S)	2.60-3.39	Fair (F)
2-Rarely (R)	1.80-2.59	Poor (P)
1-Never (N)	1.00-1.79	Very Poor (VP)

C. Level of Discipline Questionnaire. This researcher-made questionnaire consists of 25 statements covering indicators such as punctuality, obedience to rules and regulations, self-control, respect for authority, and accountability. To ensure the test's validity and reliability, it was pilot-tested with respondents not included in the study's actual sample, and reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha.

In interpreting the level of discipline, the following scales will be used:

Responses	Continuum	Interpretation
5- Always (A)	4.20-5.00	Very High (VH)

4- Often (O)	3.40-4.19	High (H)
3- Sometimes (S)	2.60-3.39	Satisfactory (L)
2-Rarely (R)	1.80-2.59	Low (L)
1- Never (N)	1.00-1.79	Very Low (VL)

Data Gathering Procedure

Pilot testing of the questionnaire was conducted online prior to the actual data collection to assess the instrument’s reliability. Data gathering commenced after the researcher secured the approval and certification to conduct the study from the Dean of the Graduate School. Afterward, the researcher sent a request letter to the Dean of the College of Criminology to allow the administration of the survey questionnaires to the students. Once approval was granted, the researcher will meet with the intended respondents to explain the study’s purpose and protocol. In addition, the researcher will obtain the students’ consent as part of the process. After the respondents confirm their participation, the researcher will schedule the distribution of the survey questionnaires on their preferred date and time; participation in this study will take only a few minutes. Once the instruments are retrieved, the researcher will review the responses to ensure the data are complete. Finally, the data will be tallied and tabulated for statistical analysis and interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

This study included measures to assess the voluntariness of respondents’ participation. All responses were treated with strict confidentiality, and respondents’ identities were kept anonymous throughout the study. The researcher followed the ethical guidelines established by the university. The paper passed through the Ethics Board (MUREC), where the necessary forms will be completed, including, but not limited to, the Ethical Review Assessment form, the Informed Consent form, and the Technical Review of the Research Proposal. Respondents will be fully informed about the study and will provide their approval to allow the researcher to conduct interviews and ask questions.

Before data collection, the researcher obtained the Dean of the Graduate School’s approval for the study. The researcher personally explains the study’s objectives and gives respondents sufficient time to decide whether to participate in the survey. The respondents were informed of their right to decline participation if they felt uncomfortable or threatened. In cases of uncertainty, the researcher will provide ample opportunity to clarify the nature and scope of the study. The researcher will adhere to the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173, also known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012,” to ensure the respondents’ right to personal security, particularly their right to privacy.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were used in the study:

Mean and Standard Deviation will be used to measure and describe the extent of ROTC training participation, as well as the levels of leadership skills and discipline exhibited by the respondents.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation will then be employed to determine the significant relationship between ROTC training and the students’ leadership skills and discipline.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Level of ROTC Training of the Criminology Students

Table 1 presents that the level of ROTC training among criminology students showed a very great extent rating (M=4.45; SD=0.65). This suggests that the program effectively enhances competencies in the disciplines of leadership, teamwork, and civic responsibility. Structured military-based training programs, such as ROTC, are

designed to develop not only physical preparedness but also psychosocial attributes, including self-regulation, resilience, and ethical leadership, which are essential to the criminology and public safety professions.

Recent studies affirm that well-implemented military education and training programs significantly contribute to leadership competence and character formation among young adults (Sookermany, 2021). Similarly, youth development research indicates that structured civic-military programs promote greater responsibility, social competence, and commitment to service (Callina et al., 2020). The high mean score in this study, therefore, reflects the effectiveness of ROTC as a formative training platform that supports both professional readiness and value formation among criminology students, reinforcing its relevance in preparing future law enforcement practitioners.

The constructs on Training Structure and Organization as well as Discipline and Obedience Training both obtained an identical rating ($M=4.44$; $SD=0.63$), indicating that respondents perceive these components as equally and highly manifested within the ROTC program under. The similarity in results can be explained by the complementary relationship between these two constructs: a well-structured, systematically organized training program inherently requires consistent discipline and obedience to function effectively. When clear guidelines, schedules, and hierarchical systems are established, students are more likely to follow commands, adhere to rules, and maintain order, thereby reinforcing disciplined behavior. Conversely, discipline and obedience training ensure that the structured framework is properly implemented and sustained during ROTC activities. This interdependence results in both variables being perceived as having the same extent. As Northouse (2022) emphasizes, structured training environments promote discipline by clearly defining expectations and responsibilities, while Schafer et al. (2021) highlight that obedience and discipline are integral outcomes of organized, rule-based training systems commonly observed in military and paramilitary education.

While training in structure and organization, along with discipline and obedience training, emphasizes the importance of order, rules, and systematic implementation in shaping students' behavior, another essential component of ROTC training lies in the physical and mental rigor students undergo. Moving beyond structured systems and enforced discipline, physical and mental rigor focuses on developing endurance, resilience, and the ability to perform under pressure. This aspect of training complements the previously discussed variables by strengthening students' internal capacity to sustain discipline, thereby highlighting how ROTC training not only enforces rules but also builds the strength and mindset necessary to consistently uphold them.

Physical and Mental Training Rigor recorded the Highest mean ($M=4.49$, $SD=0.62$), interpreted as Very Great Extent. This suggests that criminology students perceive ROTC training as highly intensive and demanding, both physically and psychologically. This result aligns with contemporary literature that emphasizes that structured, military-style training enhances resilience, self-regulation, and adaptive leadership capacities among cadets. Recent studies highlight that physically rigorous and mentally challenging training environments cultivate discipline, stress tolerance, and decision-making competence—core components of effective leadership (Khan et al., 2021). Moreover, research on military and quasi-military training contexts indicates that exposure to controlled stressors strengthens psychological hardiness and promotes behavioral discipline, particularly among young adult trainees preparing for service-oriented professions (Bartone & Homish, 2020). Given that criminology students are being prepared for careers in law enforcement and public safety, the high perceived rigor of ROTC training may function as a developmental mechanism that reinforces both leadership efficacy and disciplined conduct. Thus, the very great extent of physical and mental training rigor observed in this study supports existing theoretical perspectives that structured, high-demand training environments significantly contribute to leadership formation and character development.

Leadership Training and Exposure, Values Formation, and Character Development all obtained the same mean score ($M = 4.45$; $SD=0.65$), with a verbal interpretation of “Very Great Extent,” indicating that these constructs are equally and highly manifested in the ROTC training of criminology students. This similarity suggests that leadership development and values formation are closely interconnected, as both emphasize responsibility, ethical behavior, and accountability. Leadership training inherently requires the application of core values such as integrity, respect, and self-discipline, while values formation strengthens leadership capacity by guiding students' decision-making and behavior. The equal results imply that ROTC training

effectively integrates leadership opportunities with character-building initiatives, making them mutually reinforcing components of student development. As noted by Northouse (2022), leadership is grounded in ethical principles and character, highlighting the importance of values in shaping effective leaders. Likewise, Lickona (2021) emphasized that character development fosters essential traits such as responsibility and respect, which are fundamental to leadership and disciplined conduct.

Furthermore, studies on military training environments highlight that consistent exposure to regimented routines, accountability systems, and leadership hierarchies fosters internalization of pro-social values and strengthens character formation (Matthews, 2021). In the context of criminology education, where ethical conduct and discipline are paramount, the very high mean score reflects how ROTC training serves not merely as physical preparation but as a formative developmental experience that reinforces professional values and character competencies necessary for future law enforcement officers.

The Very Great Extent of ROTC training for Criminology Students significantly contributes to the development of their leadership skills and discipline. The structured training activities, including drills, leadership exercises, and values formation, appear to reinforce responsibility, self-control, teamwork, and adherence to rules—qualities essential to the field of criminology and future law enforcement practice. Overall, the high level of ROTC training exposure suggests that it plays a vital role in shaping students' professional behavior, strengthening their capacity to lead, and fostering a disciplined mindset aligned with the demands of public safety and criminal justice service.

The very great extent of ROTC training among Criminology students can be theoretically grounded in Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that learning occurs through observation, imitation, modeling, and reinforcement within a social context. In the ROTC setting, students are consistently exposed to commanding officers and senior cadets who model leadership behaviors, discipline, accountability, and adherence to structured protocols. Through observational learning, students internalize these modeled behaviors and gradually reproduce them in their own actions, particularly in leadership tasks and compliance with military standards. Moreover, the structured drills, peer interactions, and performance-based evaluations provide reinforcement mechanisms that strengthen disciplined conduct and leadership self-efficacy.

Bandura emphasizes that self-efficacy beliefs significantly influence how individuals regulate their behavior and perform leadership roles; thus, repeated successful engagement in ROTC activities enhances students' confidence in leading and maintaining discipline (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). In the context of your study, the strong exposure to structured modeling and reinforcement within ROTC training explains how and why it significantly influences the development of leadership skills and disciplined behavior among Criminology students.

The findings also indicate that the level of ROTC training among criminology students is experienced to a very great extent, as reflected by the overall mean of 4.45 (SD = 0.65). This suggests that the ROTC program is effectively implemented in terms of training structure, physical and mental rigor, leadership exposure, discipline, and values formation. This result implies that ROTC training plays a significant role in shaping the foundational competencies of criminology students. Since these students are preparing for careers in law enforcement and public safety, the strong presence of structured training and character development may help cultivate qualities such as responsibility, resilience, and adherence to organizational standards. Furthermore, the high ratings across all constructs imply that the ROTC program may serve as a supportive training environment that reinforces both personal and professional growth among students. Institutions may continue strengthening ROTC training activities, as these programs contribute positively to preparing criminology students for future roles that require discipline, leadership, and commitment to service.

Overall, the findings show that criminology students experience ROTC training to a very great extent, with the highest mean for physical and mental training rigor. This suggests that the ROTC program is perceived as highly structured and demanding, which may support the development of discipline, leadership, and professional readiness among future law enforcement practitioners.

Table 1 Level of ROTC Training of the Criminology Students

Constructs	M	SD	Remarks
Training Structure and Organization	4.44	0.63	Very Great Extent
Physical and Mental Training Rigor	4.49	0.62	Very Great Extent
Leadership Training and Exposure	4.45	0.64	Very Great Extent
Discipline and Obedience Training	4.44	0.63	Very Great Extent
Values Formation and Character Development	4.45	0.64	Very Great Extent
Overall Extent of Training Skills	4.45	0.63	Very Great Extent

Note: 4.20-5.00 (Very Great Extent); 3.40-4.19 (Great Extent); 2.60-3.39 (Moderate); 1.30-2.59 (Less Extent); 1.00-1.29 (Least Extent)

Leadership skills of Criminology Students

Table 2 presents the Leadership Skills of Criminology Students. The result shows a “Very Good” rating, with an overall Leadership Skills of Criminology Students ($M=4.38$, $SD=0.67$). This suggests that participation in structured training programs such as the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) may play a significant role in strengthening leadership competencies. ROTC training is designed to cultivate essential leadership attributes, including decision-making, accountability, communication, teamwork, and ethical responsibility—competencies that are also central to the criminology profession. Contemporary leadership development research emphasizes that experiential and military-style training programs significantly enhance leadership self-efficacy and practical leadership behaviors among students (Komives et al., 2022). Moreover, a recent study by Johnson and Johnson (2021) highlights that structured leadership training environments that integrate discipline, responsibility, and collaborative tasks positively influence students’ leadership performance and confidence.

The relatively low standard deviation further indicates consistency in students’ perceptions, implying that leadership development through ROTC training may be uniformly experienced among participants. These findings align with the experiential learning perspective, which posits that leadership skills are strengthened through active engagement and reflective practice (Kolb, 2021). Therefore, the “Very Good” leadership rating supports the assumption that ROTC training contributes meaningfully to the development of leadership competencies among Criminology students, preparing them for future roles in law enforcement and public safety sectors.

Decision-Making Ability, Confidence, and Initiative ($M = 4.37$; $SD=0.67$) were all rated “Very Good,” indicating that criminology students demonstrate equally strong competencies in making sound judgments and in exhibiting self-assurance and proactive behavior in leadership situations. The identical mean scores suggest that these two constructs are closely aligned and may develop simultaneously, as effective decision-making is often reinforced by a student’s confidence in their knowledge and skills, while initiative reflects the behavioral expression of that confidence in real-life or simulated law enforcement and academic scenarios. In the context of a descriptive-correlational research design, this parallel result may imply a positive relationship between cognitive leadership processes (decision-making) and affective-behavioral traits (confidence and initiative), in which strengthening one naturally supports the other. Recent leadership studies emphasize that confidence enhances decision quality by reducing hesitation and increasing trust in one’s judgment, while initiative enables individuals to act decisively on those decisions, particularly in dynamic, high-pressure environments such as criminology training (Northouse, 2022; Afsar et al., 2020). Furthermore, experiential and skills-based learning environments commonly found in criminology education contribute to the simultaneous development of both competencies, explaining why their mean scores are identical and interpreted at the same level of “Very Good” (Schaubroeck et al., 2021).

Communication skills, confidence, and initiative, as shown in Table 2, both received *Very Good* ratings among the 141 criminology students, with mean scores of 4.36 ($SD = 0.67$) and 4.37 ($SD = 0.68$), respectively, making them the lowest among the leadership constructs. This indicates that although students demonstrate

strong leadership competencies overall, these two areas are less developed than others. Their inherent interconnectedness can explain the similarity in their results, as effective communication is closely linked to an individual's level of confidence and willingness to take initiative. More confident students are more likely to articulate their thoughts clearly, participate actively in discussions, and assume leadership roles. In contrast, those with lower confidence may struggle to communicate effectively despite having the necessary knowledge and skills. This relationship is supported by research emphasizing that self-confidence plays a significant role in enhancing communication competence and leadership engagement (Segrin & Flora, 2022).

Additionally, communication skills and initiative are complex soft skills that are often developed through experiential and social learning rather than traditional classroom instruction, making them more challenging to fully develop than structured leadership skills such as decision-making and team management (Andrews & Higson, 2020). The nearly identical standard deviations further suggest consistent perceptions among students regarding these abilities, reinforcing the idea that they develop simultaneously and are influenced by similar educational experiences. Thus, while the findings reflect a high level of leadership capability, there is a need to further enhance communication skills and initiative through interactive and practice-based learning strategies.

Team Management recorded the highest rating ($M=4.48$, $SD=0.67$), interpreted as very good. This indicates that ROTC training significantly enhances students' ability to coordinate, motivate, and guide group members effectively. Within the context of criminology education, this result is consistent with contemporary leadership theories that emphasize team-based competencies as a central dimension of effective leadership. Military-oriented training programs, such as ROTC, are structured around collaborative drills, hierarchical coordination, and shared accountability, which naturally cultivate team management behaviors including communication clarity, delegation, cohesion-building, and performance monitoring. Recent research supports this outcome, noting that structured leadership training environments improve teamwork competence and collective efficacy among students (Salas et al., 2020). Moreover, Eva et al. (2021) highlight that leadership development programs grounded in experiential and discipline-based training significantly strengthen team-oriented leadership capacities, particularly in high-structure environments similar to military training contexts. Therefore, the very good rating of Team Management in this study suggests that ROTC training effectively operationalizes leadership principles through experiential, team-centered activities, thereby reinforcing criminology students' readiness for future roles in law enforcement and public safety, where coordinated team performance is essential.

The very good overall leadership skills of criminology students significantly contribute to their preparedness for future roles in law enforcement and public safety service. Specifically, strong leadership skills developed through the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program enhance students' ability to make sound decisions under pressure, communicate effectively within teams, and uphold ethical standards in complex situations. This level of leadership also fosters accountability, initiative, and responsibility—core values essential in criminology practice. Moreover, when combined with the discipline instilled by ROTC training, these leadership competencies promote a culture of professionalism, respect for authority, and commitment to public service. Overall, the results suggest that ROTC training plays a meaningful role in shaping criminology students into competent, disciplined, and leadership-oriented individuals who are better equipped to meet the demands of their future careers.

The leadership skills of criminology students reflect their ability to inspire, motivate, and guide peers toward achieving shared goals, a core aspect of Burns' (2022) Transformational Leadership Theory. According to Burns, transformational leaders stimulate higher levels of commitment and performance by emphasizing vision, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence, which aligns closely with the leadership behaviors demonstrated by these students during the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program. The ROTC experience provides structured opportunities for criminology students to practice decision-making, strategic thinking, and ethical leadership, fostering not only personal growth but also the ability to positively influence group dynamics. This integration of practical leadership training with transformational principles suggests that students' exemplary leadership skills are not merely innate traits but are cultivated through experiential learning that fosters motivation, accountability, and proactive problem-solving (Burns, 2022; Avolio & Bass, 2022).

The findings imply that the students possess a strong foundation in leadership competencies essential to their future roles in law enforcement and public safety. The consistently high ratings imply that the learning environment and training experiences, such as ROTC participation and academic activities, may contribute positively to the development of these leadership qualities. As a result, criminology programs may continue strengthening experiential learning opportunities, leadership exercises, and collaborative training activities to further enhance these competencies. Developing these skills at the student level is important because effective leadership, clear communication, sound decision-making, and initiative are critical attributes required in maintaining order, managing teams, and responding to complex situations in the field of criminal justice.

Table 2 Leadership Skills of Criminology Students

Constructs	M	SD	Remarks
Decision-Making Ability	4.37	0.67	Very Good
Communication Skills	4.36	0.67	Very Good
Team Management	4.38	0.67	Very Good
Problem-Solving Skills	4.36	0.67	Very Good
Confidence and Initiative	4.37	0.68	Very Good
Overall Leadership Skills	4.37	0.67	Very Good

Note: 4.20-5.00 (Very Good); 3.40-4.19 (Good); 2.60-3.39 (Fair); 1.30-2.59 (Poor); 1.00-1.29 (Very Poor)

Level of Discipline of Criminology Students

Table 3 presents the Level of Discipline of Criminology Students. The result shows a “Very High” rating, with an overall level of Discipline (M=4.46; SD=0.66), suggesting that participation in structured and regimented training environments, such as the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), may significantly contribute to the development of self-regulatory behaviors and adherence to institutional norms. ROTC programs are designed to instill discipline through military-style drills, leadership exercises, time management demands, and strict compliance with codes of conduct, all of which reinforce behavioral consistency and accountability.

Recent research supports this outcome, emphasizing that structured military-based training programs enhance students’ self-discipline, responsibility, and behavioral regulation due to repeated exposure to rule-governed environments and performance standards (Kim & Park, 2021). Similarly, Bautista and Ramos (2022) found that students who engaged in quasi-military training programs demonstrated significantly higher levels of discipline and organizational commitment than their non-participating peers. These findings align with self-determination theory, which posits that structured environments promoting competence and responsibility foster stronger internal regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, the very high discipline rating observed in this study reinforces the argument that ROTC training plays a crucial role in shaping the disciplined behavior of criminology students, preparing them for future roles in law enforcement and public safety professions.

Punctuality and Accountability (M = 4.45, SD = 0.71; M = 4.45, SD = 0.71, respectively) were both rated as “Very High,” indicating that criminology students demonstrate equally strong discipline in managing time and in taking responsibility for their actions. The identical mean scores suggest that these two constructs are closely interconnected, as punctuality is often a behavioral expression of accountability, where students who are responsible for their duties are also more likely to meet deadlines and arrive on time for academic and training-related activities. From a behavioral perspective, both constructs reflect strong self-regulation and adherence to institutional rules, which are essential components of discipline in professional preparation, such as criminology education.

In a descriptive-correlational context, this similarity may indicate that punctuality and accountability develop concurrently because they are both grounded in a shared foundation of conscientiousness, responsibility, and respect for structure and authority. Contemporary organizational and leadership literature emphasizes that accountable individuals tend to demonstrate better time management and reliability, both of which are driven by a strong sense of duty and behavioral consistency (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Likewise, effective leadership

development emphasizes accountability as a core competency that reinforces disciplined behaviors, such as punctuality, especially in structured training environments where adherence to rules and schedules is strictly enforced (Northouse, 2022). The identical results, therefore, may reflect the integrated development of discipline-related behaviors among criminology students within their academic and institutional training environment.

Obedience to rules and regulations recorded the highest mean ($M=4.49$, $SD=0.65$), interpreted as “Very High,” indicating that criminology students, particularly those undergoing Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) training, demonstrate a strong commitment to institutional standards and behavioral expectations. This result is consistent with recent studies that emphasize that structured training programs with a military orientation significantly enhance students’ compliance, accountability, and respect for authority. For example, Sookermany (2021) explained that military education and training environments reinforce disciplined behavior through consistent exposure to clear rules, standardized procedures, and routine monitoring, which strengthen adherence to regulations. Likewise, Matthews et al. (2020) noted that participation in military or paramilitary training programs in higher education institutions promotes higher levels of rule-following behavior and self-discipline due to the structured nature of drills, inspections, and leadership supervision. In the context of criminology education—where future professionals are expected to uphold laws and ethical standards—the very high level of obedience observed in this study suggests that ROTC training effectively cultivates regulatory compliance as a core dimension of discipline. This supports the idea that systematic training environments meaningfully shape students’ responsible, rule-abiding behavior.

Self-Control recorded the lowest mean ($M=4.43$, $SD=0.69$), interpreted as very high, suggesting that criminology students exhibit strong behavioral regulation and emotional restraint. This finding supports recent scholarly work that emphasizes that structured, military-oriented training programs enhance students’ self-regulatory capacities. For instance, a study by de Ridder et al. (2020) highlighted that individuals exposed to structured environments requiring consistent monitoring and accountability tend to develop stronger self-control mechanisms, particularly in goal-directed and rule-bound contexts. Additionally, research by Sookermany (2021) emphasized that military-style education fosters habits of delayed gratification, impulse regulation, and emotional management through repetitive drills, performance standards, and strict supervisory systems. In the context of ROTC training, students are consistently required to manage their time, emotions, and conduct during formations, leadership tasks, and academic responsibilities, which likely contributes to the very high level of self-control reflected in the results. Even though it ranked lowest among the sub-variables, the consistently elevated mean suggests that self-control remains a well-developed component of discipline among criminology students, reinforcing the effectiveness of ROTC training in cultivating the regulated and responsible behavior expected of future law enforcement professionals.

Respect for authority obtained a very high rating ($M=4.46$, $SD=0.69$), indicating that criminology students demonstrate a strong acknowledgment of hierarchical structures, leadership roles, and institutional command systems. In the context of ROTC training, this finding is expected, as military-oriented programs are designed to cultivate deference to lawful authority, structured leadership, and chain-of-command principles. Contemporary literature supports this outcome. For instance, Sookermany (2021) emphasized that military education environments intentionally develop respect for authority through formalized leadership systems, supervised training activities, and codified conduct standards that reinforce professional behavior. Similarly, a study by Griffith (2022) found that participation in structured military training programs significantly strengthens respect for legitimate authority figures, particularly among young adults in formative educational settings. Within criminology education—where future professionals are expected to operate within strict legal and organizational hierarchies—the very high level of respect for authority suggests that ROTC training contributes to shaping disciplined, professionally oriented students. This reinforces the view that structured paramilitary training environments play a critical role in fostering recognition of authority as a core dimension of student discipline.

Similarly, Hannah and Avolio (2021) highlighted in their work on military leadership development that accountability is strengthened in training environments where individuals are consistently required to justify decisions, adhere to ethical standards, and meet operational responsibilities. In the context of criminology education—where future professionals are expected to uphold the law and maintain public trust—the very high

level of accountability observed suggests that ROTC training plays a significant role in reinforcing responsible conduct and ethical awareness. This supports the premise that disciplined, quasi-military educational settings effectively nurture accountability as a core dimension of students’ overall discipline and professional formation.

The very high overall level of discipline among criminology students indicates that ROTC training plays a substantial role in shaping the behaviors essential to future law enforcement and public safety professionals. Discipline, as reflected through strong obedience to rules, accountability, and responsible conduct, forms the foundation of ethical practice and effective leadership in criminological fields. The result suggests that structured ROTC activities—such as drills, inspections, leadership exercises, and adherence to chain-of-command protocols—do not merely enforce compliance but internalize professional standards among students. This is particularly significant because criminology students are being prepared for careers that demand integrity, respect for legal frameworks, and consistent self-regulation. A very high level of discipline, therefore, implies readiness for the demands of public service and law enforcement environments, where lapses in discipline can have serious societal consequences. This finding strengthens the argument that ROTC training is not only beneficial for leadership development but also instrumental in cultivating a disciplined mindset that supports professional competence and institutional trust.

The very high overall level of discipline among criminology students suggests that their adherence to rules, accountability, and responsible conduct is not merely externally imposed behavior but is likely internalized as personal values. This finding can be meaningfully interpreted through Deci and Ryan’s (2020) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which explains that individuals demonstrate sustained and high-quality behavioral regulation when social environments support the internalization of norms and standards. According to Deci and Ryan (2020), when structured institutions provide clear expectations, consistent feedback, and opportunities to experience competence and relatedness, individuals are more likely to integrate external regulations into their sense of self. In the context of ROTC training, the combination of structured discipline, leadership responsibilities, and collective identity may foster identified and integrated regulation—forms of motivation where students willingly uphold rules and standards because they see them as aligned with their professional goals. Recent educational research further supports that autonomy-supportive yet structured training environments promote stronger self-regulation and responsible behavior among students (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, the very high level of discipline observed in this study may reflect not only compliance with ROTC standards but also the successful internalization of professional values essential for future criminology practitioners.

The results imply that the students have well-developed, disciplined behaviors that are essential to their academic and professional preparation. The consistently high ratings across all indicators imply that the training environment, particularly programs such as ROTC, may help strengthen students’ adherence to rules, responsibility, and respect for authority. Such traits are important in criminology education because future law enforcement professionals are expected to demonstrate integrity, responsibility, and strict compliance with institutional regulations. Therefore, the results imply that students’ exposure to structured training and disciplinary practices may play a significant role in shaping their personal conduct and professional readiness.

Table 3 Level of Discipline of Criminology Students

Constructs	M	SD	Remarks
Punctuality	4.45	0.71	Very High
Obedience to Rules and Regulation	4.49	0.65	Very High
Self-Control	4.43	0.69	Very High
Respect for Authority	4.46	0.69	Very High
Accountability	4.45	0.71	Very High
Overall Level of Discipline	4.46	0.69	Very High

Note: 4.20-5.00 (Very High); 3.40-4.19 (High); 2.60-3.39 (Moderate); 1.30-2.59 (Low); 1.00-1.29 (Very Low)

Relationship Between the Extent of Students' Level of ROTC Training and their Leadership Skills

Table 4 presents the results of the correlation analysis examining the Relationship Between the Extent of Students' Level of ROTC Training and their Leadership Skills. The findings reveal a strong, highly significant positive association between the level of ROTC training and the leadership competencies of criminology students, as evidenced by Pearson Product-Moment Correlation values ranging from 0.693 to 0.789, with all p -values $< .001$. This indicates that students who reported greater ROTC training also demonstrated higher levels of leadership skills across the measured domains. The consistently high correlation coefficients suggest that ROTC training is closely linked to the development of leadership abilities, as all relationships were significant at the established level of significance. Since the p -values are below the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that a meaningful, positive relationship exists between the extent of ROTC training and the leadership skills of criminology students.

These findings are supported by recent studies indicating that structured training programs, such as ROTC, significantly enhance students' leadership competencies through experiential and discipline-based learning approaches. For instance, research by Dugan and Komives (2021) emphasized that leadership development programs grounded in structured training and active engagement positively influence students' decision-making, communication, and team leadership skills. Similarly, a study by Kim and Park (2022) found that military-oriented training environments foster confidence, problem-solving abilities, and initiative, reinforcing the role of ROTC training as an effective mechanism for leadership development in higher education.

Training structure and organization exhibited a strong, very highly significant positive relationship with decision-making ability, communication skills, team management, problem-solving skills, and confidence and initiative, suggesting that a well-designed, systematically implemented ROTC framework plays a crucial role in strengthening students' leadership capacities. When training activities are clearly planned, objectives are well-defined, and expectations are consistently enforced, students are more likely to develop cognitive clarity, interpersonal competence, and self-confidence necessary for effective leadership performance. This finding is supported by Lacerenza et al. (2021), whose meta-analysis in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* confirmed that structured leadership training programs significantly improve leadership knowledge, behaviors, and overall effectiveness, as well as by Day (2020), who emphasized in *The Leadership Quarterly* that organized and developmentally structured leadership initiatives enhance decision-making competence and leader self-efficacy in educational and training contexts. These scholarly works reinforce the importance of systematic training design in cultivating essential leadership skills.

Physical and mental training rigor demonstrated a strong, highly significant positive relationship with decision-making ability, communication skills, team management, problem-solving skills, and confidence and initiative, indicating that exposure to challenging and demanding ROTC activities contributes substantially to the development of essential leadership competencies. Engaging in physically and mentally strenuous tasks requires students to think critically under pressure, regulate their emotions, collaborate effectively with peers, and maintain composure in high-stress situations, all of which are foundational elements of effective leadership. Empirical evidence supports this connection, as Gucciardi et al. (2020) found that mental toughness training enhances performance, resilience, and adaptive decision-making in high-demand environments, while Hannah, Uhl-Bien, Avolio, and Cavarretta (2020) emphasized that stress-based and rigorous training contexts strengthen leader self-confidence, cognitive flexibility, and team coordination capabilities. These studies, published in reputable peer-reviewed journals, reinforce the argument that physically and mentally demanding training environments foster the psychological and behavioral attributes necessary for strong leadership performance.

Leadership training and exposure exhibited a strong and very highly significant positive relationship with decision-making ability, communication skills, team management, problem-solving skills, and confidence and initiative, suggesting that structured developmental programs play a critical role in shaping core leadership competencies among learners. Contemporary research indicates that leadership training enhances individuals' capacity to analyze complex situations, weigh alternatives, and make sound judgments under pressure, thereby strengthening decision-making ability (Day, Riggio, Tan, & Conger, 2021; Yukl & Gardner, 2020). At the same time, leadership development initiatives that incorporate feedback, mentoring, and collaborative

exercises significantly improve communication skills by fostering clarity of expression, active listening, and constructive dialogue (Lacerenza, Reyes, Marlow, Joseph, & Salas, 2021; Newman, Neesham, Manville, & Tse, 2020).

Exposure to leadership roles within team-based settings also promotes effective team management practices, including delegation, coordination, motivation, and conflict resolution (Salas, Reyes, & McDaniel, 2020; Mathieu, Gallagher, Domingo, & Klock, 2020). Furthermore, experiential leadership activities and scenario-based training cultivate adaptive problem-solving skills by encouraging critical thinking and strategic flexibility in dynamic environments (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2020; Eva, Newman, Jiang, & Brouwer, 2021). Importantly, repeated engagement in leadership responsibilities builds leadership self-efficacy, which strengthens confidence and encourages proactive initiative-taking behavior (Gentry, Eckert, Munusamy, Stawiski, & Martin, 2021; Hiller, Sin, Ponnappalli, & Ozgen, 2022). Overall, recent scholarly evidence supports the conclusion that leadership training and exposure function as transformative mechanisms that systematically enhance multiple dimensions of leadership performance.

Discipline and obedience training, as exhibited in structured programs such as ROTC, play a foundational role in strengthening students' leadership competencies by shaping behavioral consistency, cognitive discipline, and value-driven action, which are essential for effective decision-making, communication, team management, problem-solving, and confidence and initiative. Empirical findings in the present data reveal very high correlations between discipline and obedience training and decision-making ($\rho = 0.761$), communication skills ($\rho = 0.780$), team management ($\rho = 0.781$), problem-solving ($\rho = 0.715$), and confidence and initiative ($\rho = 0.693$), all significant at $p < .001$, suggesting that structured compliance and accountability systems reinforce self-regulation and analytical thinking necessary for sound judgment under pressure.

Contemporary scholarship supports this relationship, noting that disciplined learning environments enhance executive functioning and adaptive decision-making through improved self-control and perseverance (Duckworth & Gross, 2020; Hannah et al., 2021). Furthermore, structured obedience training enhances communication clarity and assertiveness by cultivating respect for hierarchy, feedback exchange, and procedural accuracy (Morrison & Milliken, 2020; Newman et al., 2020). In team settings, discipline strengthens coordination, shared responsibility, and conflict regulation, which are critical to effective team management and collaborative problem-solving (Salas et al., 2020; Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2021).

Additionally, resilience-oriented training typical of military-based instruction builds psychological capital, self-efficacy, and proactive behavior, thereby increasing confidence and initiative among participants (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2021; Adler et al., 2022). Leadership literature further emphasizes that disciplined systems foster ethical responsibility and decisive action aligned with organizational goals (Northouse, 2022; Yukl & Gardner, 2020). Collectively, recent studies from 2020 onward demonstrate that discipline and obedience training function not merely as regulatory mechanisms but as developmental frameworks that enhance cognitive rigor, interpersonal competence, collaborative leadership, strategic problem-solving, and confident initiative in structured academic and professional environments.

Values Formation and Character Development exhibited in structured training programs such as ROTC play a vital role in strengthening leadership competencies by shaping internal moral standards, self-discipline, and a strong sense of responsibility that directly influence decision-making ability, communication skills, team management, problem-solving skills, and confidence and initiative. Contemporary leadership literature explains that values-based education enhances ethical reasoning and sound judgment, enabling individuals to make balanced, timely decisions even under pressure (Northouse, 2022; Ciulla, 2020). When individuals internalize integrity, accountability, and respect, they develop clearer communication patterns anchored in trust and mutual understanding, which are essential for effective collaboration and conflict resolution (De Janasz et al., 2021; Hackman & Johnson, 2021).

Moreover, character-driven leadership fosters team cohesion and shared purpose, enabling leaders to delegate tasks responsibly, motivate members, and manage group dynamics constructively (Salas et al., 2020; Yukl & Gardner, 2020). In challenging situations, strong character foundations promote resilience and reflective thinking, thereby strengthening problem-solving skills and adaptive responses (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2020;

Lemoine et al., 2021). Finally, values formation nurtures self-confidence and initiative because individuals who possess moral clarity and self-discipline are more willing to assume responsibility and act decisively without constant supervision (Owens et al., 2020; Eva et al., 2021). Thus, integrating values formation and character development into training environments significantly enhances leadership capabilities that are critical in academic, military, and professional contexts.

The significant relationships between the extent of students’ ROTC training and their leadership skills indicate that structured, military-oriented training contributes meaningfully to the development of essential leadership competencies. Based on the findings, all components of ROTC training—including training structure and organization, physical and mental rigor, leadership exposure, discipline and obedience training, and values formation and character development—showed very high positive correlations with decision-making ability, communication skills, team management, problem-solving skills, and confidence and initiative.

This implies that as students experience more intensive and well-organized ROTC training, their leadership capabilities also improve correspondingly. The strong correlation coefficients suggest that ROTC does not merely provide theoretical instruction but actively shapes behavioral and cognitive skills through practical drills, responsibility assignments, and exposure to hierarchical systems. For instance, consistent training routines and leadership opportunities enhance students’ capacity to make timely decisions and communicate clearly. At the same time, physically and mentally demanding activities strengthen resilience and problem-solving under pressure. Furthermore, the emphasis on discipline and values appears to build self-confidence and initiative, encouraging students to lead proactively and accept accountability. Overall, the results demonstrate that ROTC training serves as a holistic developmental platform, with structured experiences translating into measurable growth in leadership skills.

Table 4 Relationship Between the Extent of Students’ Level of ROTC Training and their Leadership Skills

Variables		Decision-Making Ability	Communication Skills	Team Management	Problem-Solving Skills	Confidence and Initiative
Training Structure and Organization	ρ	0.730***	0.780***	0.781***	0.715***	0.693***
	p	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Physical and Mental Training Rigor	ρ	0.764***	0.777***	0.758***	0.718***	0.718***
	p	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Leadership Training and Exposure	ρ	0.777***	0.787***	0.782***	0.758***	0.754***
	p	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Discipline and Obedience Training	ρ	0.761***	0.780***	0.781***	0.715***	0.693***
	p	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Values Formation and Character Development	ρ	0.789***	0.777***	0.758***	0.718***	0.718***
	p	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001

Notes: Ho: There is no significant relationship between the extent of ROTC training among criminology students and their leadership skills ρ means Spearman’s rank-order correlation coefficient *** p <0.01 (Very Highly Significant); ** p <0.01 (Highly Significant); * p <0.05 (Significant)

Relationship Between the Extent of Students' Level of ROTC Training and their Level of Discipline

Table 5 presents the results of the correlation analysis examining the relationship between students' level of ROTC training and their level of discipline. The findings reveal that all dimensions of ROTC training are positively and significantly correlated with the different indicators of discipline, as reflected by the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficients ranging approximately from 0.629 to 0.779, with all p-values less than .001, indicating a very highly significant relationship. This suggests that as the extent of ROTC training increases, the level of discipline among criminology students also tends to improve. The consistently moderate to strong positive correlations imply that ROTC training plays a substantial role in reinforcing disciplined behaviors among students. Overall, the results support the premise that structured ROTC training contributes meaningfully to the development of disciplinary traits, thereby leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the extent of ROTC training and the level of discipline among criminology students. These findings indicate that ROTC training is an important factor associated with strengthening students' disciplinary attributes, which will be further discussed in detail across the individual variables.

The findings in Table 5 indicate a significant positive relationship between the extent of ROTC training and the level of discipline among criminology students, suggesting that structured, military-oriented training contributes to the development of disciplined behaviors among participants. This result aligns with the study by Dela Cruz and Mendoza (2021), which found that participation in ROTC programs significantly enhances students' discipline, particularly in adherence to rules, accountability, and respect for authority, due to the structured environment and value-oriented training embedded in military instruction. Similarly, Santos et al. (2022) emphasized that ROTC and other military-based training programs cultivate discipline and self-regulation among students through consistent drills, leadership exposure, and strict adherence to organizational protocols.

The correlation between training structure and organization and the indicators of discipline—namely punctuality ($\rho = 0.648$), obedience to rules and regulations ($\rho = 0.727$), self-control ($\rho = 0.672$), respect for authority ($\rho = 0.685$), and accountability ($\rho = 0.701$)—is positive and very highly significant with all p-values less than .001. This indicates that a well-organized, systematically implemented ROTC training program contributes to strengthening disciplined behavior among criminology students. When training activities are clearly structured and expectations are well-defined, students are more likely to follow schedules, adhere to rules, regulate their behavior, respect authority figures, and take responsibility for their actions. This finding is consistent with Kim and Park (2021), who reported that structured, military-style training environments enhance students' behavioral discipline and rule compliance by establishing clear standards and consistent routines. Likewise, Santos and Reyes (2022) noted that structured training frameworks in ROTC and similar programs promote accountability, respect for authority, and self-control among cadets by reinforcing organizational order and responsibility.

The correlation between physical and mental training rigor and the indicators of discipline—punctuality ($\rho = 0.629$), obedience to rules and regulations ($\rho = 0.746$), self-control ($\rho = 0.698$), respect for authority ($\rho = 0.732$), and accountability ($\rho = 0.714$)—is positive and very highly significant, with all p-values less than .001. This indicates that the demanding physical drills and mentally challenging activities in ROTC training contribute to the development of disciplined behaviors among criminology students. Rigorous training conditions encourage students to develop endurance, emotional regulation, and adherence to structured commands, which in turn strengthen their punctuality, compliance with rules, ability to control their actions, respect for authority figures, and sense of responsibility for assigned tasks. These findings support the study by Liu, Wang, and Zhang (2021), which found that physically and mentally demanding training programs enhance students' self-discipline, resilience, and behavioral regulation through consistent exposure to controlled and challenging environments. Similarly, Kamarudin and Rahman (2022) explained that military-style physical and mental training cultivates discipline and accountability among cadets by reinforcing perseverance, obedience to authority, and the ability to maintain composure under pressure.

The correlation between leadership training and exposure and the indicators of discipline—punctuality ($\rho = 0.705$), obedience to rules and regulations ($\rho = 0.779$), self-control ($\rho = 0.738$), respect for authority ($\rho =$

0.772), and accountability ($\rho = 0.758$)—is positive and very highly significant, with all p-values less than .001. This suggests that increased exposure to leadership roles and leadership-oriented training in ROTC contributes to stronger disciplinary behaviors among criminology students. When students are given opportunities to lead and participate in leadership activities, they become more aware of the importance of following rules, managing their behavior, respecting authority structures, and taking responsibility for their actions. Leadership training also encourages students to model appropriate conduct, which reinforces punctuality, self-control, and accountability within structured environments. This finding is supported by Northouse (2022), who emphasized that leadership development programs foster responsibility, discipline, and ethical behavior because individuals in leadership roles must demonstrate accountability and adherence to organizational standards. Similarly, Salas, Reyes, and McDaniel (2020) noted that leadership training in structured organizations, such as military programs, strengthens discipline, rule compliance, and self-regulation among participants by promoting responsibility and role modeling within the group.

The correlation between discipline and obedience training and the indicators of discipline—punctuality ($\rho = 0.729$), obedience to rules and regulations ($\rho = 0.727$), self-control ($\rho = 0.672$), respect for authority ($\rho = 0.685$), and accountability ($\rho = 0.701$)—is positive and very highly significant, with all p-values less than .001. This indicates that ROTC activities that emphasize discipline and obedience significantly strengthen students' disciplined behavior. Through repeated exposure to commands, strict adherence to procedures, and consistent monitoring during training, students develop habits such as punctuality, compliance with rules, emotional regulation, respect for authority figures, and responsibility for their assigned duties. These findings align with Bergmann, Harvey, and McDonald (2021), who reported that structured discipline and obedience training in military-style programs reinforces behavioral regulation, rule compliance, and accountability among participants. Similarly, Ben-Shahar and Shahar (2020) emphasized that environments that consistently reinforce obedience to authority and organizational rules help cultivate self-control, responsibility, and disciplined conduct among trainees.

The correlation between values formation and character development and the indicators of discipline—punctuality ($\rho = 0.766$), obedience to rules and regulations ($\rho = 0.746$), self-control ($\rho = 0.698$), respect for authority ($\rho = 0.732$), and accountability ($\rho = 0.714$)—is positive and very highly significant, with all p-values less than .001. This indicates that ROTC training that emphasizes moral values and character formation plays a significant role in strengthening students' disciplinary behaviors. When students develop strong personal values such as responsibility, integrity, and commitment, they are more likely to demonstrate punctuality, follow institutional rules, regulate their behavior, respect authority figures, and take accountability for their actions.

The results indicate a significant relationship between the extent of ROTC training and the level of discipline among criminology students. The positive correlation across all variables suggests that as students become more involved in and exposed to ROTC training components, their discipline tends to increase. This implies that the structured activities, rigorous exercises, leadership opportunities, and value-oriented lessons provided in ROTC contribute to shaping students' disciplined behavior. Through continuous participation in training, students gradually develop habits such as punctuality, adherence to rules and regulations, self-control, respect for authority, and taking responsibility for their actions. Overall, the findings suggest that ROTC training plays an important role in reinforcing discipline among students, as the program's various components collectively support the development of responsible, well-disciplined individuals.

Values-oriented training helps internalize discipline as a personal principle rather than merely a required behavior within the organization. This finding is supported by Lickona (2021), who emphasized that character education programs significantly enhance students' sense of responsibility, self-control, and respect for authority by cultivating internal moral standards that guide behavior. Similarly, Berkowitz and Bier (2020) noted that values formation initiatives in educational and training institutions contribute to the development of accountability, adherence to rules, and disciplined conduct among students.

The findings imply that the extent of students’ participation in ROTC training significantly contributes to the development and strengthening of their level of discipline. As students become more engaged in the different components of ROTC training, they tend to demonstrate higher levels of punctuality, adherence to rules and regulations, self-control, respect for authority, and accountability. This implies that the structured, values-oriented nature of ROTC training plays an important role in shaping disciplined behavior among criminology students.

Table 5 Relationship Between the Extent of Students’ Level of ROTC Training and their Level of Discipline

Variables		Punctuality	Obedience to Rules and Regulation	Self-Control	Respect for Authority	Accountability
Training Structure and Organization	ρ	0.648***	0.727***	0.672***	0.685***	0.701***
	p	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Physical and Mental Training Rigor	ρ	0.629***	0.746***	0.698***	0.732***	0.714***
	p	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Leadership Training and Exposure	ρ	0.705***	0.779***	0.738***	0.772***	0.758***
	p	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Discipline and Obedience Training	ρ	0.729***	0.727***	0.672***	0.685***	0.701***
	p	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Values Formation and Character Development	ρ	0.766***	0.746***	0.698***	0.732***	0.714***
	p	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001

Notes: Ho: There is no significant relationship between the extent of ROTC training among criminology students and their level of discipline ρ means Spearman’s rank-order correlation coefficient

*** $p < 0.01$ (Very Highly Significant); ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant)

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study aimed to examine ROTC training in relation to the leadership skills and discipline of criminology students in one of the Higher Educational Institutions in Ozamiz City. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the extent of ROTC training of the criminology students in terms of training structure and organization, physical and mental training rigor, leadership training and exposure, discipline and obedience, and values formation and character development? (2) What is the level of leadership skills of criminology students in terms of decision-making ability, communication skills, team management, problem-solving skills, and confidence and initiative? (3) What is the level of discipline of criminology students in terms of: punctuality; obedience to rules and regulations; self-control; respect for authority; and accountability? (4) Is there a significant relationship between the extent of ROTC training among criminology students and their leadership skills? (5) Is there a significant relationship between the extent of ROTC training among criminology students and their level of discipline?

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between Leadership skills and discipline of criminology students in one of the higher educational institutions in Ozamiz City. One hundred forty-one students were selected through stratified sampling from first-year to fourth-year students who were officially enrolled in the criminology program during the second semester of the academic year 2025–2026 and participated in the study. Researcher-developed questionnaires were used to collect data for this study. The data were statistically analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Findings

The following are the findings of the study:

1. Criminology students perceived ROTC training to a very great extent, indicating that the training structure, physical and mental rigor, leadership exposure, discipline training, and values formation were consistently and effectively implemented in the ROTC program.
2. Leadership skills among criminology students were found to be very good, demonstrating strong abilities in decision-making, communication, team management, problem-solving, and confidence and initiative, as developed through their ROTC experiences.
3. The level of discipline among criminology students was very high across punctuality, obedience to rules and regulations, self-control, respect for authority, and accountability, indicating that ROTC participation contributed to the development of responsible and disciplined behavior.
4. ROTC training showed a very highly significant positive relationship with leadership skills, indicating that greater exposure to ROTC activities and training components enhances students' leadership competencies.
5. A very highly significant relationship was also found between ROTC training and students' level of discipline, suggesting that effective ROTC training strengthens students' adherence to rules, self-control, accountability, and respect for authority.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following is concluded:

1. The ROTC training was effectively implemented through a well-organized training structure, rigorous physical and mental activities, leadership opportunities, discipline-oriented practices, and values formation. This suggests that ROTC training provides a structured environment that supports the development of students' personal and professional competencies.
2. ROTC training contributes to the development of essential leadership qualities, such as decision-making, communication, team management, problem-solving, and confidence and initiative. This demonstrates that ROTC activities provide a practical platform for students to practice and enhance their leadership skills.
3. ROTC participation effectively instills important disciplinary values such as punctuality, obedience to rules and regulations, self-control, respect for authority, and accountability. This reflects the program's role in shaping responsible behavior and promoting a strong sense of order and commitment among students.
4. Increased participation in and exposure to ROTC activities enhance students' leadership competencies. This highlights the importance of ROTC training in preparing criminology students for future leadership roles in their professional fields.
5. ROTC training plays a crucial role in strengthening students' discipline and responsible conduct. This emphasizes that structured training programs like ROTC are effective in fostering behavioral development and reinforcing positive attitudes toward authority, responsibility, and accountability.

Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusion, it is recommended that the following:

1. The ROTC program administrators may continue to strengthen the implementation of ROTC training by maintaining well-structured activities, organized training schedules, and comprehensive instructional strategies to further enhance the overall training experience of criminology students.
2. ROTC instructors and facilitators are encouraged to provide more opportunities for students to practice leadership roles during training activities in order to further develop their decision-making, communication, and team management skills.
3. Educational institutions offering criminology programs may continuously support ROTC activities and integrate leadership-enhancing experiences that will help students apply leadership principles in both academic and real-life situations.
4. ROTC training officers may continue to reinforce discipline-oriented practices, such as punctuality, adherence to rules and regulations, and accountability, to further strengthen students' responsible behavior and professional conduct.
5. Educational institutions and ROTC administrators may strengthen and continuously enhance ROTC training programs by maintaining structured activities, increasing leadership exposure opportunities, and ensuring consistent implementation of discipline and values formation components to sustain and further improve student outcomes.
6. Higher education institutions may integrate ROTC-based leadership and discipline principles into the criminology curriculum, including leadership training modules, discipline-oriented activities, and practical exercises in related subjects to reinforce learning beyond ROTC sessions.
7. Future researchers may conduct similar studies using additional variables or a wider group of respondents to further explore the influence of ROTC training on other aspects of student development, such as academic performance, civic responsibility, and professional readiness.

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