



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Beyond the Belt: Problems Encountered on The Fundamentals of Martial Arts by The Bachelor of Science in Criminology Students of Apayao State College

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Abstract

Martial arts education has been widely recognized as a vital component in developing discipline, resilience, and physical preparedness among students, particularly those in criminology programs where such skills are essential for future law enforcement careers. However, challenges related to training, facilities, and personal circumstances often affect the effectiveness of martial arts instruction. This study examined the problems encountered in the fundamentals of martial arts by first-year Bachelor of Science in Criminology students of Apayao State College, Conner Campus, during Academic Year 2022–2023. Using a descriptive research design, data were gathered through adapted survey questionnaires and analyzed using frequency, percentage, and weighted mean, with total enumeration of 51 respondents. Results revealed that students experienced moderate challenges in training courses, equipment and facilities, and personal and emotional aspects, with overall means interpreted as *Neutral*. Physical strain and dizziness during repetitive drills were acknowledged as notable difficulties, while issues related to equipment such as the absence of foam rollers, protective gear, and first aid kits were present but not overwhelmingly detrimental. Personal and emotional challenges were primarily linked to financial constraints and commuting distance, whereas relationship-related stress was less significant. Overall, the findings suggest that while students face a combination of physical, environmental, and personal challenges, these do not severely hinder their training experience, emphasizing the need for improved facilities, scheduling, and support systems to enhance martial arts education in criminology programs.

Keywords: Martial arts; Problems; Criminology students

1. Introduction

Martial arts have historically been regarded as more than a system of combat; they represent discipline, respect, and cultural heritage. Across the world, martial arts are integrated into educational and professional training programs to instill values of perseverance, ethical conduct, and physical preparedness. In criminology education, martial arts are particularly relevant because they provide students with skills necessary for law enforcement, conflict resolution, and personal defense. However, despite their recognized importance, martial arts training often faces challenges in terms of accessibility, pedagogy, and institutional support. These challenges are magnified in academic contexts where martial arts are taught not only as physical activity but also as a discipline linked to criminological practice.

Channon, (2018) examines how martial arts function as social spaces where gender norms are both reinforced and challenged. He argues that while martial arts often reproduce traditional ideas of masculinity through emphasis on strength and aggression, they also provide opportunities for women and marginalized groups to resist stereotypes and cultivate empowerment. This dual role makes martial arts a valuable site for sociological inquiry into identity, power, and cultural transformation. Channon & Jennings (2014) review empirical research on martial arts and combat sports to highlight how these practices shape experiences of embodiment. They argue that participation in such disciplines influences physical self-awareness, identity, and social interaction, offering unique insights into how bodies are trained,

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disciplined, and experienced in cultural contexts. Their analysis underscores martial arts as rich sites for exploring the relationship between physical practice, social meaning, and embodied identity.

Origua et. al, (2018) conducted a systematic review examining the health benefits of hard martial arts (such as karate, taekwondo, and judo) among adults. Their findings highlight improvements in physical fitness, including cardiovascular health, strength, flexibility, and balance, alongside positive effects on mental well-being such as reduced stress and enhanced self-confidence. The study concludes that hard martial arts can serve as effective forms of exercise that promote both physical and psychological health, making them valuable interventions for adult populations. Malmo & Rolfe (2019) shows that men are predominantly depicted in active, combative poses emphasizing strength and skill, while women are more frequently represented in passive or sexualized ways that highlight appearance rather than martial ability. This imbalance underscores how media representations contribute to the marginalization of women in martial arts, shaping public perceptions and reinforcing gendered hierarchies.

In the Philippine setting, martial arts hold a unique place in national identity. Gonzales (2016) examines how Filipino martial arts (FMA) contribute to shaping Filipino national identity by tracing their historical development, cultural symbolism, and global recognition. The study argues that FMA are not only systems of combat but also cultural practices that embody resilience, heritage, and unity, reinforcing narratives of Filipino distinctiveness and pride. Through this lens, martial arts become a means of expressing and sustaining national identity in both local and international contexts. Malmo, (2016) dissertation explores the motivations that drive instructors to continue teaching Filipino Martial Arts, emphasizing cultural identity, personal fulfillment, and the transmission of tradition. Through qualitative analysis, the study highlights how instructors' dedication stems not only from passion for the art itself but also from a desire to preserve heritage and foster community among practitioners.

The Criminology students at Apayao State College encounter specific problems in learning the fundamentals of martial arts. These challenges may include limited facilities, varying levels of physical preparedness, and the need to align martial arts training with criminology's professional competencies. Understanding these issues is crucial, as martial arts training is not only a physical discipline but also a vital component in preparing criminology students for careers in law enforcement and public safety. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the problems encountered by Bachelor of Science in Criminology students in their martial arts fundamentals, situating these local experiences within the broader global and national discourse on martial arts education.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study used descriptive and quantitative methods, and the data were gathered through survey questionnaires. Total enumeration was employed in identifying the respondents.

2.2. Locale of the study

The study was conducted in Apayao State College at Malama Conner Apayao.

2.3. Participants of the Study

The respondents of the study are the 1st batch enrolled in 1st year BS Criminology of Apayao State College at Conner campus for the Academic Year 2022 -2023.

Table 1 Distribution of Criminology Students AY 2022-2023

GENDER	TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Male	31
Female	20
Total	51

2.4. Research Instrumentation

An adapted survey questionnaire was used in this study. The survey questionnaire has 2 parts. The first part elicits the profile of the respondents as to age, sex, civil status, parent's monthly income and ethnicity. Part II elicits data on training course, equipment facilities, and personal and emotional problem.

2.5. Statistical Analysis

Frequency and percentage were used to describe the profile of the students. On the other hand, weighted mean was used to compute the assessment on the problems encountered by the respondents. The following 5-point Likert Criterion Scale were also used to describe the means of the responses:

Table 2 5-Point Likert Scale

SCALE	MEAN RANGE	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
5	4.20 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.40 – 4.19	Agree
3	2.60 – 3.39	Neutral
2	1.80 – 2.59	Disagree
1	0 – 1.79	Strongly Disagree

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Assessment On the Problems Encountered by The Respondents

Table 3 Training Course

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
I feel a bit stress due to physical strenuous exercises	3.12	Neutral
I am surprised to execute these stretching exercises during our warm up	3.62	Agree
I feel dizzy when repetition increases during our training	3.75	Agree
My bones cannot stand upright when I push more than my limits	3.46	Agree
I feel fed up during a hundred of repetition in those hand strikes and leg strikes	3.38	Neutral
I feel difficulty in following Japanese terms of instructions by my instructor	3.17	Neutral
Difficulty in breathing because the training area is not conducive	2.81	Neutral
Due to lack of air and a little bit hot inside the room	2.71	Neutral
Due to I do not have any idea about martial arts training	3.06	Neutral
Due to not consistent days of training because of clustered schedule of classes	2.88	Neutral
Overall Mean	3.19	Neutral

The findings in table 3 suggest that while students occasionally agreed on difficulties such as dizziness during repetitive drills ($M = 3.75$) and physical strain when pushing beyond their limits ($M = 3.46$), most responses leaned toward neutrality. This indicates that although martial arts training posed physical and emotional challenges, these were not overwhelmingly negative but rather manageable. Neutral ratings on issues like breathing difficulty due to poor facilities ($M = 2.81$) and inconsistent training schedules ($M = 2.88$) highlight environmental and organizational factors that may hinder optimal learning.

Similar observations were made in a study by Moore et. al, (2023), which found that martial arts interventions can enhance student self-efficacy but also introduce physical and psychological stressors that require proper instructional

support and conducive training environments. This underscores the importance of balancing rigorous physical training with supportive teaching strategies and adequate facilities to maximize student outcomes.

Table 4 Equipment and Facilities

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
Due to not having loose outfit/uniform during our training	3.23	Neutral
We do not have foam roller for our falling techniques	3.42	Agree
We do not have spacious place to train which affects our training	3.08	Neutral
When times of no current the location is too hot for us to do physical exercises	3.19	Neutral
Lack of first aid kit during the training which those who fainted will suffer dizziness	3.13	Neutral
No protective gear when in the session of actual sparring	3.08	Neutral
The room have chairs around and the floor is slippery that cause dis balance in training	2.98	Neutral
There are no focus mitts and punching bags in punching and kicking exercises	2.88	Neutral
The location is very disturbing in training because some are watching outside	3.04	Neutral
No enough water to drink in the area when we are thirsty during and after training	3.00	Neutral
Overall Mean	3.10	Neutral

The results in Table 4 reveal that the overall mean of 3.10, interpreted as *Neutral*, indicates that students generally experienced moderate challenges with equipment and facilities during martial arts training. While the lack of foam rollers for falling techniques ($M = 3.42$) was notably agreed upon as a problem, most other issues such as insufficient space ($M = 3.08$), absence of protective gear ($M = 3.08$), and lack of first aid kits ($M = 3.13$) were rated neutral, suggesting that these concerns were present but not overwhelmingly detrimental. Environmental factors like heat during power outages ($M = 3.19$) and distractions from outside observers ($M = 3.04$) also contributed to training difficulties.

These findings highlight the importance of adequate facilities and safety equipment in martial arts education. A related study by Villamon et al. (2004) emphasized that the quality of facilities and resources significantly affects martial arts instruction and student engagement, underscoring the need for proper infrastructure to ensure effective training.

Table 5 Personal / Emotional Problems

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
Due to the reasons that I cannot concentrate because my member of my family got sick	2.85	Neutral
Due to Financial problem which I need to have any sideline for my personal allowance	3.27	Neutral
My home is too far in our school which sometimes I got late	3.35	Neutral
I have personal injury that limits my maximum training	2.60	Neutral
I was emotionally stress because my lover got my extra time instead of personal training	2.27	Disagree
The fear and risks of being injured in martial arts training	2.83	Neutral
I fell discomfort and worried because of sometimes bad weather and I feel worried of the condition of my family members	3.10	Neutral
I have credits that I need to pay in due time	2.67	Neutral
I have work to finish because I'm a self-supporting student	2.94	Neutral
My boarding house is not spaciously conducive to recall the physical lessons in martial arts training	2.88	Neutral
Overall Mean	2.87	Neutral

The results in Table 5 show that the overall mean of 2.87, interpreted as *Neutral*, indicates that students generally experienced moderate personal and emotional challenges during martial arts training. While some issues such as distance from home ($M = 3.35$) and financial problems requiring sideline work ($M = 3.27$) were more strongly acknowledged, other concerns like family illness ($M = 2.85$), fear of injury ($M = 2.83$), and lack of conducive living spaces ($M = 2.88$) remained neutral, suggesting that these factors affected students but were not overwhelming. Interestingly, emotional stress related to relationships ($M = 2.27$) was disagreed upon, showing that personal distractions were less significant compared to financial and logistical challenges.

These findings highlight that external pressures, such as economic constraints and commuting difficulties, play a greater role in shaping students' training experiences than purely emotional concerns. A related study by Lakes and Hoyt (2004) found that martial arts training can improve emotional regulation and reduce stress among students, but emphasized that external life challenges often influence how effectively learners engage with training.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that first-year criminology students at Apayao State College encountered moderate but manageable challenges in their martial arts training, with most responses leaning toward neutrality. Physical strain and dizziness during repetitive drills were acknowledged as notable difficulties, while issues related to equipment and facilities, such as the absence of foam rollers, protective gear, and first aid kits, were present but not overwhelmingly detrimental. Personal and emotional concerns, particularly financial constraints and commuting distance, were more significant than relationship-related stress, which was largely disagreed upon. Taken together, these results suggest that while students face a combination of physical, environmental, and personal challenges, these do not severely hinder their overall training experience, highlighting the importance of addressing logistical and resource-related factors to further enhance martial arts education.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Disclaimer (artificial intelligence)

We acknowledge that we have not used ChatGPT or Copilot for refining some of the sections in the document.

Statement of ethical approval

The study was conducted with approval and in accordance with the standards of the university. No ethical approval was required, as the research followed all applicable ethical guidelines, ensuring respect for the respondents' privacy and confidentiality.

Statement of informed consent

We affirm that the respondents voluntarily agreed to participate after being fully informed about the purpose, nature, and potential implications of the study. Their responses have been collected with utmost respect for their privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with ethical research guidelines.

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