#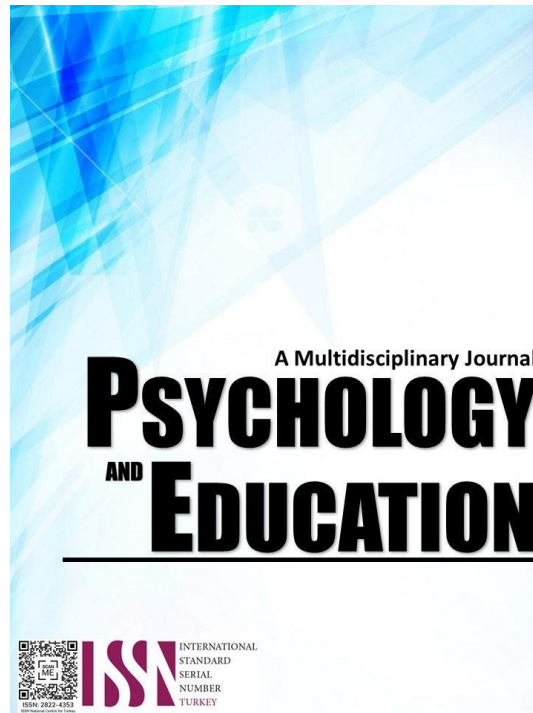 DELVING INTO THE IMPACTS OF ONLINE RESERVE OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS (ROTC) AMONG CRIMINOLOGY INTERNS OF TRINIDAD MUNICIPAL COLLEGE

Delving into the Impacts of Online Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) Among Criminology Interns of Trinidad Municipal College

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Abstract

This study delves into the impacts and perceptions of online Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs among fourth-year criminology interns at Trinidad Municipal College (TMC) in Poblacion, Trinidad, Bohol. Using a descriptive survey, 130 respondents provided insights into their perceptions of online ROTC and the program's effectiveness. Statistical analyses were used to analyze the data, including percentage formulas and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients. Findings reveal concerns among respondents regarding hindrances to physical fitness and feelings of isolation in the online format, with a consensus that in-person training is more effective. The study concludes that online ROTC programs present challenges and limitations, with no significant difference between perceived impact and actual experiences. Recommendations include enhancing hands-on training, improving communication, simulating real-life scenarios, evaluating program flexibility, enhancing instructor training, and conducting regular evaluations to optimize online ROTC programs.

Keywords: *criminology interns, criminology practicum, online ROTC, program impact and effectiveness*

Introduction

The recent shift towards online learning, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has extended to programs like Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), impacting fourth-year criminology interns at Trinidad Municipal College (TMC). This research aims to address a notable gap in the literature by examining the effects of online ROTC on these students and acknowledging the unique challenges they face in adapting to virtual learning.

The study recognizes the pivotal role of ROTC programs in fostering comprehensive student development. It highlights the significance of understanding how the transition to virtual training has impacted criminology interns' educational and professional growth. By navigating uncharted territory brought about by the pandemic, the research seeks to unearth valuable insights into the consequences of remote ROTC training. These insights are expected to substantially enhance future educational strategies tailored to criminology students in an evolving educational landscape where technology and adaptability are paramount.

Despite extensive research on the effects of traditional ROTC programs, a pressing knowledge gap existed regarding the influence of online ROTC, particularly for criminology interns during the pandemic. This research filled this void, providing a foundation for evidence-based decision-making and curriculum development. In conclusion, the study recognized the unfolding chapter of online education in ROTC programs. It aimed to contribute to the discourse on the changing dynamics of education in the digital age, guiding the way forward for criminology interns and educational institutions navigating this transformative journey.

A substantial body of literature contributes valuable insights to understanding ROTC programs, both locally and internationally. In Trinidad and Tobago, Julien and Dookwah's (2020) research investigated the unique challenges higher education programs face transitioning to online learning, providing context-specific insights.

Gagnon (2024) explored the impact of traditional ROTC on leadership development, laying the groundwork for understanding how the shift to online ROTC influences leadership aspects. Faulconer (2022) offered a local case study perspective on online military training, including ROTC, providing insights into specific circumstances within the region.

Internationally, Padilla's (2020) examination of the U.S. Army ROTC's transition to virtual training sheds light on the effectiveness of online instruction, revealing insights into challenges and adaptations made by ROTC programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Garingan (2023) delved into online programs' challenges, identifying best practices for successful implementation. This collective body of research serves as a valuable resource, enriching the study by offering context-specific and international perspectives on how online ROTC impacts the training and development of criminology interns at Trinidad Municipal College.

Research Questions

This study aimed to solicit the attitude of fourth-year intern students towards mandatory ROTC program. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
    1.1. sex;
    1.2. age; and
    1.3. block number?

2. What is the impact of having an online ROTC program?
3. What is the perception of criminology interns on online ROTC program?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the impact of online ROTC programs and the perception of criminology interns?
5. What improvement measures can be proposed based on the results of the study?

Methodology

Research Design

This research utilized the descriptive survey method to investigate college students' perceptions of mandatory ROTC programs and their influence on training and development. Survey questionnaires were administered to participants to collect the requisite data for achieving the study's objectives. This method was chosen as the most suitable approach for profiling participants across the various variables examined in the study.

Participants

The study involved 130 fourth-year students from Trinidad Municipal College in Trinidad Bohol, with 10 respondents selected from each block. It focused on evaluating the impact of implementing Online ROTC within the college environment.

Table 1. *Distribution of Research Participants*

Block Number	No. of Participants
Block 1	10
Block 2	10
Block 3	10
Block 4	10
Block 5	10
Block 6	10
Block 7	10
Block 8	10
Block 9	10
Block 10	10
Block 11	10
Block 12	10
Block 13	10
TOTAL	130

Instruments

The primary research instrument utilized in the study was the Likert Scale of Rensi's Likert, a 30-item survey questionnaire designed to assess the perceptions of fourth-year interns regarding the implementation of mandatory ROTC. Before administration, the questionnaire underwent a pilot testing phase to refine its clarity and relevance. The survey was conducted at Trinidad Municipal College during vacant periods, allowing the researchers and student respondents sufficient time to complete the questionnaire, typically 5 to 10 minutes. The questionnaire was distributed from room to room. The study aimed to investigate the impact of online ROTC on fourth-year interns.

Procedure

The researchers sought permission from the school authorities to conduct the study and distribute questionnaires to the students. The researchers distributed the questionnaires, which were collected after the respondents completed them. The accumulated responses underwent a careful process of collection and tabulation. Statistical treatment was applied to calculate the data, serving as the basis for answering questions that could only be solved through formulas. The generated results formed the basis for the interpretation, analysis, and drafting of a proposal for sustainability measures.

Data Analysis

A. Percentage Formula

In data analysis of data, the researchers used the simple percentage formula to identify the percentage of the respondents.

B. Weighted Mean

The weighted mean was used to determine the impact of online ROTC programs. The same formula was used to determine the perceptions of fourth-year criminology students about online ROTC programs.

C. t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

The t-test was used to determine if there is any significant relationship between the impact of online ROTC and the perceptions of

fourth-year criminology students about having an online ROTC program.

Results and Discussion

This section covers the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data collected through the survey questionnaire distributed to fourth-year intern students at Trinidad Municipal College- Trinidad, Bohol.

The first part deals with the respondents' profiles regarding sex, age, and block number. The second part shows the respondents' data on the impact of having an online ROTC program. The third part shows the respondents' data on their perception of online ROTC programs. The fourth part shows if there is a significant difference between the impact of online ROTC programs and the perception of criminology interns.

To determine the respondents' profiles, the researchers obtained the percentage of respondents who answered the questionnaire. The weighted mean of the respondents' answers to each question was used to determine their descriptive value.

Table 2. *Respondents' Profile on Gender (N=130)*

Profile on Gender	Frequency	%
Male	62	47.69
Female	68	52.31

Table 2 presents the respondents' gender profile. Data revealed that female respondents obtained the highest percentage, 52.31%, while male respondents garnered the lowest rate, 47.69%. This implies that female respondents dominate this study.

Table 3. *Respondents' Profile on Age (N=130)*

Profile on Age	Frequency	%
18-21	40	30.77
22 years old above	90	69.23

Table 3 shows the respondents' age profile. The data revealed that the age bracket 22 years old and above obtained the highest percentage of 69.23%, while the age bracket of 18-21 years old garnered the lowest percentage of 30.77%. This indicated that most fourth-year criminology interns in Trinidad Municipal College are in the bracket of 22 years old and above who answered the survey questionnaire.

Table 4. *Students' Profile on Block Number (N=130)*

Profile on Block Number	Frequency	%
Block 1	10	7.69
Block 2	10	7.69
Block 3	10	7.69
Block 4	10	7.69
Block 5	10	7.69
Block 6	10	7.69
Block 7	10	7.69
Block 8	10	7.69
Block 9	10	7.69
Block 10	10	7.69
Block 11	10	7.69
Block 12	10	7.69
Block 13	10	7.69

Table 4 shows the students' profiles on their block numbers. The data revealed that each block number has an equal number of students. Each block number has a percentage of 7.69%.

Table 5. *Impact of Online ROTC Program (N=130)*

Statements	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation	RANK
1. The online ROTC program hinders my physical fitness program.	3.50	With high impact	10
2. I feel isolated from my peers and instructors in the online ROTC format.	3.52	With high impact	9
3. The online ROTC experience negatively affects overall satisfaction.	3.65	With high impact	8
4. In-person training is more effective than the online ROTC program.	4.05	With high impact	2
5. The lack of in-person is more effective than the online ROTC program.	3.78	With high impact	6
6. Motivation of engagement suffer in the online ROTC.	3.80	With high impact	5
7. Teamwork and camaraderie are challenging to foster in the online format.	3.77	With high impact	7
8. The technology used in the online ROTC program is cumbersome.	3.90	With high impact	4
9. I strongly prefer in-person ROTC training over the online format ROTC overweight the benefits.	4.11	With high impact	1
10. Overall the negative impact of the online ROTC program outweighs the benefits.	3.98	With high impact	3
Composite Mean	3.93	With high impact	

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Table 5 reveals the impact of having an online ROTC program on the fourth-year criminology interns. Statement number 9 states that the respondents prefer in-person ROTC training to the online ROTC program because it outweighs the benefits, and this statement obtained a weighted mean of 4.11 with the descriptive interpretation of high impact. While statement number 1 states that the online ROTC program hinders the respondents' physical fitness, this statement obtained a rating of 3.50 with the descriptive interpretation of high impact. The overall composite mean of the respondents' impact of the online ROTC program is 3.93, with a descriptive interpretation of high impact. The respondents agreed that there is a high impact of having struggles when the ROTC program is online.

Table 6. *Respondents' Perceptions on Online ROTC Program (N=130)*

Statements	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation	RANK
1. The online ROTC program lacks the hands-on necessary for effective learning.	4.23	Strongly Agree	1
2. Participants often feel disconnected or isolated during online ROTC sessions.	4.01	Agree	2
3. Flexibility in the online ROTC program leads to a lack of discipline and commitment among participants.	3.82	Agree	9
4. The online format hinders effective communication and collaboration among participants.	3.91	Agree	6
5. Participants believe that the online ROTC program does not adequately simulate real life scenarios	3.73	Agree	10
6. Technical issues and connectivity problems frequently disrupt the online ROTC sessions.	3.99	Agree	3
7. Instructors struggle to effectively convey information and engage participants in the online format.	3.94	Agree	5
8. Participants feel the online ROTC program enhances the learning experience.	3.95	Agree	4
9. The technology used in the online ROTC program enhances the learning experience.	3.81	Agree	8
10. Interaction and camaraderie among participants are hindered by the online format.	3.87	Agree	7
Composite Mean	3.93	Agree	

Table 6 reveals the respondents' perceptions of having an online ROTC program. Statement 1 states that the online ROTC program lacks the hands-on training necessary for effective learning. This statement obtained a rating of 4.23 with the descriptive interpretation of strongly agree. Statement number 5 states that the online ROTC program does not stimulate real-life scenarios, and this statement obtained a rating of 3.73 with the descriptive interpretation of agree. The overall composite mean of the respondents' perceptions of having an online ROTC program is 3.93, with a descriptive interpretation of agree. It can be inferred that the respondents agreed that the online ROTC program is not as effective as the in-person ROTC program.

Table 7. *Difference on the Impact of Online ROTC and the Perceptions of Fourth Year Criminology Interns*

Source of Difference	N	Comp t-value	Critical t-value	Interpretation	Decision
Impact vs Perceptions	130	1.5016	1.73406	No Significant Difference	Accept Ho

Table 7 shows no significant difference between the impact of online ROTC programs and the perceptions of the fourth-year criminology interns. Since the computed t-value of 1.5016 is smaller than the critical t-value of 1.73406, the researchers were prompted to accept the null hypothesis. This implies that the result is not statistically significant, meaning there is no significant difference between the impact of online ROTC programs and the perceptions of fourth-year criminology interns. This means that both the respondents' impact and perceptions have no difference.

The following are the highlights of the findings:

Based on the analysis of the data collected through the survey questionnaire distributed to fourth-year intern students at Trinidad Municipal College in Trinidad, Bohol., the following key findings emerge:

1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals a notable predominance of female participants, comprising 52.31% of the sample. This suggests a significant representation of women in the study population. Furthermore, most respondents fall within the age bracket of 22 and above, indicating a mature demographic among the participants. Additionally, the equal representation of students across each block number implies a balanced distribution across different groups, contributing to the diversity and representativeness of the sample.

2. Impact of Online ROTC Programs

In terms of the impact of online Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs, respondents express notable concerns regarding their efficacy. Specifically, they highlight challenges related to the hindrance of physical fitness programs and feelings of isolation

from peers and instructors in the online format. Additionally, respondents perceive in-person training as more effective than online alternatives, emphasizing the limitations of virtual learning methods. Overall, participants have a consensus regarding the high impact of challenges associated with online ROTC programs. This suggests a need for further examination and potential improvements in virtual training approaches.

3. Perceptions of Online ROTC Programs

In terms of respondents' perceptions of online Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs, there is a notable consensus regarding several key concerns. Participants strongly agree that these programs lack the hands-on training necessary for effective learning, highlighting a significant gap in practical skill development. Additionally, respondents' express concerns about feelings of disconnection or isolation during online sessions and emphasize the program's failure to simulate real-life scenarios adequately. These perceptions collectively underscore the challenges and limitations of virtual ROTC training, suggesting areas for potential improvement and enhancement in program delivery.

4. Comparison between Impact and Perceptions

Upon comparing the impact of online Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs with the perceptions of fourth-year criminology interns, it becomes evident that there is no significant difference between the two. This suggests the respondents' uniform perception of challenges and limitations associated with virtual training methods. Such consistency underscores the need for further exploration and potential interventions to address the identified concerns and enhance the overall effectiveness of online ROTC programs.

Conclusion

Based on the study results, the researchers concluded that online Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs for fourth-year criminology interns at Trinidad Municipal College in Trinidad, Bohol, present significant challenges and limitations. The findings indicate that participants perceive online ROTC programs to hinder physical fitness activities and foster feelings of isolation from peers and instructors.

Moreover, respondents strongly agree that online ROTC programs lack the hands-on training necessary for effective learning and fail to adequately simulate real-life scenarios. Despite these concerns, the study found no significant difference between the impact of online ROTC programs and the perceptions of the fourth-year criminology interns, suggesting a consistent perception of challenges associated with virtual training methods. These conclusions underscore the need for further research and potential interventions to address the identified limitations and enhance the effectiveness of ROTC training in the digital age.

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations can be made to address the identified issues surrounding online Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs for fourth-year criminology interns:

1. Enhance Hands-On Training. Implement strategies to incorporate more hands-on training components into online ROTC programs, ensuring participants have practical experience relevant to their field of study.

2. Improve Communication and Collaboration. Develop protocols and tools to enhance communication and collaboration among participants and instructors in online ROTC sessions, mitigating feelings of isolation and fostering a sense of community.

3. Simulate Real-Life Scenarios. Integrate simulations and case studies into online ROTC curricula to better simulate real-life scenarios and provide participants with practical problem-solving skills applicable to their future roles in law enforcement.

4. Evaluate Program Flexibility. Assess the level of flexibility in online ROTC programs to ensure that they promote discipline and commitment among participants without compromising the quality of education and training provided.

5. Enhance Instructor Training. Provide additional training and support for instructors to effectively convey information and engage participants online, optimizing the learning experience for all involved.

6. Conduct Regular Evaluations. Establish a system for regular evaluations and feedback collection to monitor online ROTC programs' effectiveness and identify improvement areas based on participant experiences and perceptions.

Action Plan in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Online ROTC Programs

Rationale:

The proposed action plan responds to the findings of the research conducted in Poblacion, Trinidad, Bohol, focusing on the challenges identified within online Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs for fourth-year criminology interns at Trinidad Municipal College (TMC). By addressing these challenges, the plan aims to optimize the efficacy of online ROTC training, ensuring it aligns with the educational needs and objectives of the participants. Through targeted interventions and enhancements, the plan seeks to overcome limitations in virtual training methods and foster a more conducive learning environment that is conducive to the development of practical skills and knowledge essential for future roles in law enforcement.

Objectives:

- To enhance hands-on training in online ROTC programs.
- To improve communication and collaboration among participants and instructors.
- To simulate real-life scenarios in online ROTC curricula.
- To evaluate program flexibility and effectiveness.
- To enhance instructor training for online ROTC delivery.
- To establish a system for regular evaluations and feedback collection.

Mechanics of Implementation

In implementing the plan, several key steps will be undertaken to enhance the effectiveness of online Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs for fourth-year criminology interns at Trinidad Municipal College (TMC):

Modules for hands-on training exercises will be developed and integrated with practical components relevant to criminology studies.

Communication tools and platforms will be implemented to facilitate interaction and collaboration among participants and instructors, fostering a conducive learning environment.

Simulations and case studies will be incorporated into online ROTC curricula to provide practical problem-solving experiences for participants. The structure and requirements of online ROTC programs will be continuously evaluated and adjusted to ensure flexibility while maintaining educational standards.

Instructors will receive additional training and resources to enhance their effectiveness in delivering online ROTC courses.

Feedback mechanisms and evaluation protocols will be established to gather input from participants and instructors regularly, enabling continuous improvement and refinement of the program.

Schedule of Implementation

The implementation schedule is structured to address the identified issues and enhancements within the online Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs systematically. During Months 1-3, the focus will be on developing hands-on training modules and communication tools tailored to the needs of criminology studies. Subsequently, Months 4-6 will see efforts to integrate simulations and case studies into the online ROTC curricula, providing participants practical problem-solving experiences. In Months 7-9, the program's flexibility and effectiveness will be evaluated to ensure it meets educational standards while remaining adaptable to participants' needs. Months 10-12 will provide additional training to instructors to enhance their effectiveness in delivering online ROTC courses, alongside establishing feedback mechanisms to gather input from participants and instructors. Ongoing efforts will involve monitoring the implementation progress and collecting feedback continuously to facilitate adjustments and improvements to the program as needed.

Monitoring and Evaluation System

Regular evaluations will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of hands-on training modules and communication tools, ensuring they meet the program's educational objectives. Additionally, participation and engagement levels will be monitored to gauge the impact of simulations and case studies on learning outcomes, providing insights into the effectiveness of the curriculum. Surveys and feedback sessions with participants and instructors will be used to evaluate program flexibility, ensuring it meets participants' evolving needs while maintaining educational standards. Furthermore, instructor performance and effectiveness in online delivery will be assessed through peer evaluations and self-assessments, contributing to ongoing professional development. Feedback from participants and instructors will be collected through surveys, focus groups, and interviews to identify areas for improvement and refinement of online ROTC programs. Finally, evaluation data will be reviewed and analyzed to inform adjustments and enhancements to the implementation plan, ensuring continuous improvement in program delivery and outcomes.

Action Plan in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Online ROTC Programs

Areas of Concern	Objectives	Strategies	Person Involved	Time Frame	Success Indicators
Challenges within online ROTC programs	To enhance hands-on training in online ROTC programs	Develop hands-on training modules integrated with criminology studies	Curriculum developers, instructors	Months 1-3	Improved practical skill development among participants
Communication and collaboration among participants	To improve communication and collaboration among participants and instructors	Implement communication tools and platforms	IT specialists, instructors	Months 1-3	Increased interaction and collaboration within the online learning environment

Simulation of real-life scenarios in curricula	To simulate real-life scenarios in online ROTC curricula	Incorporate simulations and case studies	Curriculum developers, instructors	Months 4-6	Enhanced problem-solving abilities demonstrated by participants in simulated scenarios
Program flexibility and effectiveness	To evaluate program flexibility and effectiveness	Continuously evaluate and adjust program structure and requirements	Program evaluators, administrators	Months 7-9	Maintained educational standards while adapting to participants' needs
Instructor training for online delivery	To enhance instructor training for online ROTC delivery	Provide additional training and resources for instructors	Training specialists, instructors	Months 10-12	Improved effectiveness in delivering online ROTC courses among instructors

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