

Juggling Demands: Exploration of Time Management Among Criminology Interns

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study explores the time management experiences of criminology interns as they balance academic and internship responsibilities. Through in-depth interviews with ten participants, four major themes emerged: emotional stress, transportation challenges, time management strategies, and academic workload pressures. The findings reveal how interns utilize strategic planning, self-discipline, and support systems to overcome obstacles and meet deadlines. This study offers insights for educators and program coordinators to support effective time management and improve internship outcomes.

Keywords: Time Management; Criminology Interns; Emotional Stress; Academic Workload; Internship Challenges; Transportation Challenges; Self-Discipline; Coping Strategies; Strategic Planning; Support Systems.

1. Introduction

Criminology education equips students with theoretical and practical knowledge to understand crime and the criminal justice system (Joyce & Laverick, 2022; Jones, 2021). Internships play a crucial role in bridging academic theory with practical experience, enhancing skills such as problem-solving, communication, and ethical decision-making (Sutton et al., 2021; Lumingkit et al., 2024). Despite these benefits, criminology interns face challenges balancing academic and field responsibilities, resulting in time constraints, emotional stress, and workload pressures (Solis et al., 2024; Suwarsi et al., 2025). Effective time management is key to prioritizing tasks, reducing anxiety, and maintaining productivity (Yadav et al., 2023; Marais et al., 2020). However, criminology students experience unique stresses owing to the demanding law enforcement environment, necessitating tailored interventions to improve well-being and academic performance (Mapangdol, 2024; Lumingkit et al., 2024). This qualitative study aims to explore the time management challenges among criminology interns and their coping mechanisms to inform educators and policymakers in enhancing internship experiences and student outcomes.

1.1. Study Objectives

- To identify common time management challenges faced by criminology interns during their internship.
- To examine the strategies used by criminology interns in balancing their internship duties, academic responsibilities, and personal life.
- To analyze the impact of time management on the performance and productivity of criminology interns.
- To explore the coping mechanisms and adaptive behaviors used by interns in response to time-related stress.
- To gain insights into the learning experiences and personal growth of criminology interns in relation to time management.

2. Methods

It employed Moustakas' transcendental phenomenological method, which methodically studied criminology interns' daily life experiences via bracketing, transcendental reduction, and imaginative variation to uncover the essence of their time management issues and solutions (Garrincha, 2022). This research had ten (10) criminology interns from a university in Misamis Occidental as participants. In-depth interviews featuring open-ended questions were conducted, recorded digitally, and transcribed for analysis. Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the research process, ensuring that participant consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were maintained. Data analysis involved bracketing, horizontalization, and clustering to synthesize a narrative of the participants' shared experiences. This study explored time management practices of criminology interns on several levels of responsibility such as academic obligation, internship duties, personal engagement, and social commitments.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Profile of the Participants

Ten students participated in face-to-face interviews for the study, aged 22 to 24. The participants included criminology students.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

Code Name	Age	Course
P1	23 years old	BS Criminology
P2	22 years old	BS Criminology
P3	23 years old	BS Criminology
P4	22 years old	BS Criminology
P5	23 years old	BS Criminology
P6	24 years old	BS Criminology
P7	23 years old	BS Criminology
P8	23 years old	BS Criminology
P9	23 years old	BS Criminology
P10	24 years old	BS Criminology

3.2. Balancing Multiple Responsibilities

Criminology interns usually struggle to balance academic responsibilities, internship tasks, and family life (Lumingkit et al., 2024; Solis et al., 2024; Hilinski-Rosick et al., 2023). The situational nature of the internship work like unexpected case file evaluations, assignments at the eleventh hour, or activities involving the community often clashes with school schedules and personal commitments (Baird & Mollen, 2023; Hite, 2022; Hodges, 2024).

"The largest time management issue I have encountered during my internship is coordinating my academic obligations, personal life, and internship responsibilities, particularly because each rotation demands perpetual adjustment to various settings and the professional requirements of each bureau or station." (P2)

"The most significant time management challenge I have faced during my internship was finding enough time to balance schoolwork, social life, and internship responsibilities, which often require me to make compromises and set priorities very carefully." (P3)

"One of the greatest time management hurdles that I encountered during my internship was coordinating work and personal life, specifically getting enough time to rest and recuperate from physically and mentally draining activities and performing school obligations at the same time." (P9)

"One of the greatest time management dilemmas I experienced throughout my internship was prioritizing work, school obligations, and minimal monetary sources, as I was unable to constantly work while maintaining academic responsibilities." (P10)

The balancing of numerous duties constitutes a core time management dilemma in criminology internships since interns need to, at the same time, perform academic duties, fieldwork, report writing, research activities, and personal duties (Lumingkit et al., 2024; Solis et al., 2024; Baird & Mollen, 2023). The chaotic and changing nature of the internship landscape attended by instant case reviews, unexpected assignments, and community duties typically interrupts formal schedules, compelling interns to continuously redefine priorities and make compromises (Baird & Mollen, 2023; Ishola, 2024; Stevens, 2025).

3.3. Prioritization and Planning Under Pressure

Criminology interns are frequently put in high-stress situations where several tasks and deadlines overlap, necessitating meticulous planning and prioritization (Zaportiza & Cuevas, 2025; Pepper, 2024; Perez, 2024). Interns need to identify the most critical or urgent tasks, allocate time efficiently, and revise schedules in case of sudden assignments (Werner & Jeske, 2021; Baird & Mollen, 2023; Enciso et al., 2025).

"In order to maintain organization, I prioritize tasks based on the urgent/important matrix, record difficult projects in smaller steps, and insert buffer time for unforeseen adjustments... I ensure effectiveness by establishing clear daily and weekly objectives, assessing priorities every morning, dividing substantial work into smaller amounts, employing time limits to concentrate, and assessing progress during the evening to plan for tomorrow." (P3)

"To remain well-organized, I tend to start the day by tackling the most urgent task first and creating a list of activities to do, but I also have the tendency to waste time on unimportant issues after exhausting tasks, which breaks my habit and makes me get up late and rush the following day." (P5)

"To remain efficient, I create a list of all the tasks, address the most critical and pressing ones first, and utilize both planner and phone reminders to ensure timely completion... I have since then implemented measures such as time blocking and concentrating on one task at a time until its completion." (P8)

"To organize my time, I initially employed a planner but eventually added to-do lists, sticky notes, and reminders to determine which tasks needed to be tackled immediately and which ones could be postponed... I also prioritized tasks by importance and urgency, divided larger tasks into smaller steps, and allocated precise time slots, keeping a calendar to monitor deadlines and progress." (P9)

Prioritization and planning under tight deadlines are essential aspects of criminology internship time management because interns are often faced with simultaneous tasks, urgent deadlines, and surprise assignments (Lumingkit et al., 2024; Solis et al., 2024; Zaportiza & Cuevas, 2025). Proper management entails the prioritization of most critical or exigent tasks, assigning certain time intervals for their execution, and dividing large assignments into successive, bite-size steps to facilitate systematic advancement (Lee-Feidler, 2021).

3.4. Strategic Use of Planning and Organizational Tools

Criminology interns organize their internship tasks, academic work, and personal obligations using a range of planning and organizational devices (Lumingkit et al., 2024; Solis et al., 2024; Kratcoski, 2021). These are planners, calendars, to-do lists, sticky notes, digital reminders, and charts, which assist interns in keeping track of deadlines, monitoring progress, and planning the day effectively (Werner & Jeske, 2021; Enciso et al., 2025 ; Sheets, 2022).

"To manage, I lean on methods such as the Eisenhower Matrix for prioritization, computer calendars and clock apps for planning out my day, and a physical calendar for daily to-do lists, while also engaging in time blocking, breaking down big tasks into little steps, and working during my high productivity window between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m." (P1)

"To keep myself well-organized, I usually begin the day by confronting the most important thing first and making a list of things to do... I also make use of planners to stay on top of tasks." (P5)

"To stay effective, I make a list of all the tasks, tackle the most important and urgent first, and use both planner and phone reminders to get them done on time. I have since then also used strategies such as time blocking and focusing on a single task at a time until its completion." (P8)

"To manage my time, I originally used a planner but later incorporated to-do lists, sticky notes, and reminders to ascertain what needed to be done urgently and what could be left until later. I also sorted tasks in terms of importance and urgency, broke down larger tasks into discrete steps, and scheduled specific time slots, keeping a calendar to track deadlines and progress." (P9)

Strategic application of planning and organizational tools is a primary method for coping with the multiple responsibilities in criminology internships (Lumingkit et al., 2024; Malbuayo et al., 2024; Solis et al., 2024).

3.5. Cultivation of Self-Discipline and Routine

Criminology interns also learn self-control and organized routines to efficiently cope with internship duties, study, and personal life (Zaportiza & Cuevas, 2025; Putro & Sholahuddin, 2025). Through fixed daily routines,

organizing highpriority tasks, rescheduling waking times and work hours, and including short break periods, interns are able to stay focused, keep stress low, and maintain productivity.

"To remain well-organized, I tend to start the day by tackling the most urgent task first and creating a list of activities to do, but I also have the tendency to waste time on unimportant issues after exhausting tasks, which breaks my habit and makes me get up late and rush the following day. This experience taught me the need to balance rest with duties in order to remain healthy and productive." (P5)

"To overcome this, I broke down big assignments into bite-sized steps, which helped me remain in control, make consistent progress, and meet deadlines with reduced stress... To rectify this, I slowly conditioned myself to wake up earlier, changing my schedule from 4 to 5 a.m., making me more alert and prompt." (P7)

"To remain efficient, I create a list of all the tasks, address the most critical and pressing ones first, and utilize both planner and phone reminders to ensure timely completion... I have since then implemented measures such as time blocking and concentrating on one task at a time until its completion." (P8)

The development of routine and self-discipline is a key element of efficient time management among criminology interns (Colango et al., 2024; Solis et al., 2024; Zaportiza & Cuevas, 2025). Interns set routine daily timetables, compartmentalize high priority and high-urgency tasks, and logically sequence their work using tools like to-do lists, planners, memos, and electronic reminders (Pliam, 2022).

3.6. Enhanced Productivity and Task Completion

Good time management enables criminology interns to systematically manage numerous tasks, ensure timely delivery, and keep the quality of work intact (Lumingkit et al, 2024; Zaportiza & Cuevas, 2025; Solis et al., 2024). Through techniques like task prioritization, making checklists, dividing bigger tasks into smaller ones, and utilizing planning tools, interns ensure efficient completion of tasks without delays or hurried work (Enciso et al., 2025; Khan, 2023; Sandua, 2024).

"These methods have assisted me in upholding performance, dependability, and professionalism, although I am aware that careless time management would lead to hurried work, delays, tension, and even damage to my reputation." (P1)

"I developed my time management over time by making charts and checklists to organize my activities and monitor progress, which not only assisted me in completing my tasks in a systematic way but also provided me with room for entertainment and socialization, lowered stress, and enhanced my overall well-being." (P3)

"Good time management has enabled me to remain productive, meet or better targets, and have healthy working relations, whereas bad management can result in incomplete work, anxiety, and tense interactions." (P4)

"Good time management enabled me to meet deadlines, keep quality high, and find some time to unwind, while poor time management led to doing things in a hurry, late submission, and higher stress levels, impacting my performance adversely." (P10)

Improved productivity and task accomplishment are most directly affected by efficient time management skills in criminology internships (Lumingkit et al., 2024; Malbujo et al., 2024; Zaportiza & Cuevas, 2025). Interns who categorize work systematically, divide large assignments into smaller, manageable tasks, and apply tools for organization like charts, checklists, planners, and electronic reminders are able to accomplish tasks in a timely manner and reach deadlines consistently.

3.7. Reduced Stress and Improved Professionalism

Effective time management assists criminology interns in reducing pressure and being professional while juggling various responsibilities. By scheduling work, prioritizing critical and time-sensitive tasks, and giving sufficient time for rest and rejuvenation, interns are able to work without anxiety, avoid missing deadlines, and maintain the quality of their work.

"These methods have assisted me in upholding performance, dependability, and professionalism, although I am aware that careless time management would lead to hurried work, delays, tension, and even damage to my reputation." (P1)

"Good time management has enabled me to remain productive, meet or better targets, and have healthy working relations, whereas bad management can result in incomplete work, anxiety, and tense interactions." (P4)

"Successful time management enabled me to meet deadlines, ensure quality, gain confidence, and accept more responsibilities, while ineffective management resulted in late delivery, pressure, and substandard work." (P9)

"Good time management enabled me to meet deadlines, keep quality high, and find some time to unwind, while poor time management led to doing things in a hurry, late submission, and higher stress levels, impacting my performance adversely." (P10)

Less tension and increased professionalism are important benefits of successful time management during criminology internships (Lumingkit et al., 2024; Solis et al., 2024; Hilinski-Rosick et al., 2023). Interns who manage to schedule tasks, prioritize things that need to be done first, and optimize the use of time have fewer anxiety and pressure levels, which enable them to stay focused and work consistently (Enciso et al., 2025; Bin Abdulrahman et al., 2025; Luo et al., 2025).

3.8. Development of Practical Time Management Skills

Through their internship work, criminology interns gained real-life time management skills that allowed them to manage multiple tasks effectively (Lumingkit et al., 2024; Solis et al., 2024; Malbujo et al., 2024). They were able to prioritize, make todo lists and checklists, divide larger assignments into steps, and utilize organizational tools like planners, calendars, and electronic reminders (Higgins et al., 2023; Sandua, 2024; Martin, 2025).

"To manage, I lean on methods such as the Eisenhower Matrix for prioritization, computer calendars and clock apps for planning out my day, and a physical calendar for daily to-do lists, while also engaging in time blocking, breaking down big tasks into little steps, and working during my high productivity window between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m." (P1)

"I developed my time management over time by making charts and checklists to organize my activities and monitor progress, which not only assisted me in completing my tasks in a systematic way but also provided me with room for entertainment and socialization, lowered stress, and enhanced my overall well-being." (P3)

"To remain well-organized, I usually start the day by tackling the most urgent task first and creating a list of activities to do, but I also have the tendency to waste time on unimportant issues after exhausting tasks, which breaks my habit and makes me get up late and rush the following day." (P5)

"To manage my time, I originally used a planner but later incorporated to-do lists, sticky notes, and reminders to ascertain what needed to be done urgently and what could be left until later. I also sorted tasks in terms of importance and urgency, broke down larger tasks into discrete steps, and scheduled specific time slots, keeping a calendar to track deadlines and progress." (P9)

The acquisition of functional time management skills is one of the major learning experiences for criminology interns, allowing them to effectively manage multiple responsibilities. Interns apply diverse strategies and tools to plan and order their tasks, such as using the Eisenhower Matrix, planners, calendars, charts, checklists, sticky notes, and reminders on digital devices.

3.9. Cultivation of Discipline, Adaptability, and Self-Regulation

With their internship experience, criminology interns gained discipline, flexibility, and self-control to effectively manage uncertain workloads and dual responsibilities. They became able to modify personal routines, adopt realistic calendars, divide tasks into doable steps, concentrate on one task at a time, and use short break times to maintain concentration and productivity.

"This experience taught me the need to balance rest with duties in order to remain healthy and productive." (P5)

"I also exercised splitting time equally between tasks and then taking brief rests to maintain concentration and efficiency." (P6)

"To rectify this, I slowly conditioned myself to wake up earlier, changing my schedule from 4 to 5 a.m., making me more alert and prompt." (P7)

"I have since then implemented measures such as time blocking and concentrating on one task at a time until its completion." (P8)

The acquisition of discipline, flexibility, and self-control is an essential learning activity for criminology interns, as it allows them to handle multiple duties and unstructured workloads (Lumingkit et al., 2024; Solis et al., 2024; Malbujo et al., 2024). Interns establish organized routines, change daily routines, and apply methods like breaking down activities into manageable segments, dealing with a single task at a time, and using short breaks to sustain focus and productivity.

4. Conclusion

The study highlights time management as a vital skill for criminology interns, enabling them to balance academic duties, internship tasks, and personal life effectively. Interns who prioritized, scheduled well, and maintained

routines showed better task completion, professionalism, and stress reduction. This skill not only supports academic success but also strengthens adaptability and work ethic, preparing interns for the demands of the criminal justice field. Overall, time management proves essential for holistic growth, resilience, and career readiness.

4.1. Future Suggestions

1. Incorporate technology tools (e.g., scheduling apps, digital planners) to streamline task organization, set reminders, and improve overall productivity.
2. Provide workshops or training sessions (e.g., advanced time management techniques for criminology settings) to enhance interns' preparedness and efficiency.
3. Encourage mentorship programs (e.g., pairing interns with experienced professionals) to share practical time management strategies and coping mechanisms.
4. Foster regular self-assessment (e.g., weekly reflection checklists) to help interns review and adjust their time management practices as responsibilities evolve.
5. Promote stress-reduction techniques (e.g., mindfulness exercises, brief physical activities) to maintain focus, reduce fatigue, and prevent burnout.
6. Develop collaborative project planning exercises (e.g., group task simulations) to improve interns' ability to coordinate time and work effectively in team settings.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that criminology programs provide structured, ongoing support to develop interns' time management skills through training, workshops, and mentorship. Schools should introduce practical tools like planners and scheduling software, and conduct regular progress checks to help interns balance academic, internship, and personal duties. These measures foster resilience, efficiency, and accountability, preparing interns for professional success.

Declarations

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This study received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no competing interests related to this work.

Consent for publication

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this study.

Authors' contributions

All the authors took part in literature review, analysis, and manuscript writing equally.

Availability of data and materials

Supplementary information is available from the authors upon reasonable request.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable for this study.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants and Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the research process, ensuring that participant consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were maintained.

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