

## Lived Experiences of Fraternity-Affiliated Criminology Students: A Phenomenological Study

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**ABSTRACT:-** Fraternities and sororities are social organizations commonly found in both state and private universities and colleges. They often play a significant role in college life, providing students with opportunities to meet new people, build friendships, and participate in social events. This study explored the lived experiences of criminology students who are active fraternity members in Misamis Occidental, focusing on how they manage and balance academic responsibilities, fraternity obligations, and personal commitments. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, data were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews with ten fraternity-member criminology students. The data were analyzed using Moustakas' phenomenological reduction, which resulted in the emergence of key themes including time management and prioritization, task management and personal discipline, academic and scheduling challenges, fraternity expectations and pressure, discipline and motivation, stress relief and emotional support, and guidance for future members. Findings revealed that while fraternity involvement presents challenges such as fatigue, overlapping schedules, and organizational pressure, it also provides motivation, peer support, discipline, and a sense of belonging that help students prioritize academics and persevere. The study concludes that fraternity membership, when supported by effective self-management strategies and a culture that values education, can contribute positively to students' academic performance and personal development. The results offer valuable insights for students, fraternities, and educational institutions in promoting a balanced and supportive academic environment. It is recommended that fraternities and educational institutions foster a culture that emphasizes personal responsibility, where students are expected to balance their organizational involvement with their academic commitments through effective time management and peer support. Universities can send one short weekly reminder to students involved in fraternities or organizations, listing key academic deadlines, upcoming meetings, and a tip to plan priorities for the week. This doesn't require extra meetings or long workshops—just a quick digital notification that helps students stay aware of their responsibilities and manage time effectively.

**Keywords:** academic–fraternity balance, fraternity membership, self-discipline, student engagement, time management.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Fraternities and sororities are long-standing social organizations present in many universities worldwide, including the United States and the Philippines (Bello & Palarisan, 2022; McCabe, 2024). In the Philippine context, these organizations operate under the Anti-Hazing Act of 1995 (Republic Act No. 8049), which regulates initiation practices to ensure member safety (Lawphil, 2023). Beyond common stereotypes, research highlights that fraternities provide structured environments that foster social support, leadership development, mentoring, and academic engagement (Dixon et al., 2023; Coleman, 2024; Gibson et al., 2024). Members are often given responsibilities such as organizing events and participating in community service, which enhance discipline, teamwork, and time management skills (Garret et al., 2021; Cress et al., 2023). Studies further indicate that peer support within fraternities can positively influence academic persistence, confidence, and overall student development (Estoce et al., 2024; McNair et al., 2022).

Despite these documented benefits, students—particularly those in demanding programs such as criminology—often face challenges in balancing academic responsibilities with organizational commitments (Estoce et al., 2024). While prior research has examined fraternities in terms of leadership, discipline, and social

involvement, there remains limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on the lived experiences of criminology students and how they practice self-management in balancing academics, fraternity duties, and personal life (Claiborne, 2022; Folsom, 2024). This gap underscores the need to investigate how fraternity affiliation shapes students' discipline, accountability, leadership, and academic focus within rigorous academic environments (Von Lampe & Blokland, 2020; Tad-awan et al., 2024). By exploring these dynamics, the present study contributes to a more balanced and evidence-based understanding of fraternity life, positioning it not merely as a social organization but as a potential platform for structured growth, responsibility, and holistic student development.

### 1.1 STUDY OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to:

1. Explore the lived experiences of Criminology Students Fraternity members in managing themselves.
2. Determine the challenges of the participants in making themselves as a member of fraternity.
3. Explore the coping mechanisms used by the participants in addressing the challenges they faced as members of the fraternity.

## II. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of criminology students who are fraternity members in universities within Misamis Occidental. The study aimed to understand how these students balance their academic responsibilities, fraternity involvement, and personal commitments. A total of ten (10) purposively selected criminology students who had been active fraternity members for at least one academic year participated in the study. Data were gathered using a semi-structured interview guide, allowing participants to freely share their experiences while ensuring that the objectives of the study were addressed. The interviews lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and were conducted in person or online with the participants' consent. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and treated with strict confidentiality, following the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10173). The collected data were analyzed using Moustakas' phenomenological reduction, which involved bracketing, horizontalization, clustering into themes, textural description, structural description, and textural-structural synthesis to identify the common themes and meanings derived from the participants' lived experiences.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Managing Time and Balancing Priorities

Criminology students who are active members of fraternities found out that they have experienced difficulties in coping with their academics when endeavors in their respective fraternities are going on at once. According to Baumgartner (2021), programs might present positive (Leadership) and challenging experiences (time management) for students. However, imploring good time management also helped them reduce stress and prevent academic failure despite the added responsibilities of fraternity life. By planning, monitoring their time, and adjusting daily routines, students are able to perform well in school, attend classes regularly, and submit assignments on time.

The responses emphasized time management and prioritization as the main strategies used by participants to balance academic work and fraternity involvement. Participants shared that focusing on important tasks, planning schedules, and maintaining discipline helped them manage competing demands (P1, P2). Academics are consistently prioritized, with students adjusting study time, limiting leisure activities, and completing school tasks before engaging in fraternity duties (P3, P4, P5). Proper time management was seen as essential in handling both commitments, with support and understanding from fraternity members reinforcing this academic focus (P6, P8).

These are evident in the results of the interview conducted.

*"Through proper time management and by focusing on what is important, I prioritize tasks that must be done at the correct time and within the given period." (P1)*

*"I really need to balance attending classes, studying, and fulfilling fraternity duties through proper planning and discipline. At times, I sacrifice sleep or social activities in order to meet both academic and fraternity obligations." (P2)*

*"I balance my studies and my involvement in an organization. I have learned how to identify which responsibilities should be prioritized. I learned how to say no when I can no longer handle additional responsibilities." (P3)*

*“It is always about time management. I always prioritize important things such as school and academics first. Then, if I still have free time, that is when I allocate time for other things, including fraternity activities.” (P4)*

*“I study earlier or later in the day to finish my academic requirements. I also limit my leisure activities so that I can manage everything properly.” (P5)*

*“In balancing academics and fraternity activities, proper time management is necessary.” (P6)*

*“It is really about time management. I prioritize my academics more. Academics are more important, and my fraternity group understands this.” (P8)*

A study by Nurangraeni et al. (2024) supported the interpretation that time management and prioritization functioned as key coping mechanisms for students balancing academic demands and organizational involvement. A supporting study by Septiyaningrum and Wajdi (2024) showed that time management, along with motivation and self-efficacy, significantly enhanced academic achievement among students active in organizations, confirming the role of planning and organization in balancing multiple responsibilities. Previous studies emphasized that effective time management enabled students to allocate limited time and energy across multiple roles, thereby reducing academic strain and role conflict. Similarly, Calonia et al. (2023) found that effective time management encompassing prioritization, overcoming procrastination, and balancing socialization was crucial for academic success, as it allowed students to optimize productivity, focus on important tasks, and maintain a healthy work–life balance, ultimately leading to improved academic achievement. This only entailed that students who consciously prioritized academic tasks and planned their schedules demonstrated better academic performance and lower stress levels.

Furthermore, the responses suggested that students developed important life skills, including discipline, time management, and boundary-setting (Carrier, 2025). Learning to say no to additional responsibilities reflected growing self-awareness and maturity in handling workload limits (Ulfah, 2023). However, the need to sacrifice rest also implied potential risks to well-being, indicating that while students were capable of balancing responsibilities, institutional and organizational support might have been necessary to promote healthier and more sustainable academic–organizational balance (Celestin, 2025; Alloui & Mourdi, 2023; Khan et al., 2024). In the context of student organizations, Astin’s Theory of Student Involvement explained that meaningful engagement, when balanced with academic priorities, enhanced learning and personal development rather than hindering it. Moreover, research on fraternity and sorority involvement indicated that organizational cultures that recognized and supported academic priorities helped members manage competing responsibilities more effectively (Nownes, 2024). These studies anchored the participants’ experiences by showing that deliberate prioritization, disciplined planning, and peer understanding contributed to students’ ability to cope with the challenges associated with fraternity membership while maintaining academic focus.

The findings of this study were significant as they highlighted time management and prioritization as essential coping strategies for criminology students who were active members of fraternities. Despite the added demands of organizational involvement, students demonstrated a strong commitment to their academic responsibilities by deliberately planning their schedules, prioritizing schoolwork, and exercising self-discipline. This underscores the capacity of student leaders to manage multiple roles effectively when they possess strong self-regulation skills. Additionally, the findings contributed to existing literature by showing that fraternity involvement did not necessarily hinder academic performance when students maintained clear academic priorities. The study also highlighted the importance of peer support and a positive fraternity culture that valued academics, as these helped students balance responsibilities. However, sacrificing rest and leisure pointed to possible risks to well-being, showing the need for guidance and support to maintain a healthier balance.

The statements implied that time management was a key way criminology students in fraternities coped with their academic and organizational responsibilities. Although fraternity involvement made balancing schoolwork more challenging, students made a clear effort to prioritize their academics, showing strong awareness of their role as students. Through careful planning, discipline, and setting priorities, they were able to reduce academic difficulties even when they experienced physical and mental fatigue. To manage both roles, students adjusted their study schedules, limited leisure activities, and sometimes sacrificed rest or social time. Overall, these responses suggested that fraternity involvement and academic responsibilities could coexist when students practiced effective time management and received understanding and support from their organizations.

### **Academic and Scheduling Challenges**

This theme highlights how overlapping schedules, tight deadlines, and competing responsibilities limit students’ available time for studying, rest, and personal care (Matthews, 2022; Parks et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2020). As a result, students often experience fatigue, sleep deprivation, and mental exhaustion, which negatively

affect their concentration, comprehension of academic lessons, and overall learning efficiency. Students who are subjected to these conflicting demands for extended periods of time experience higher levels of stress and are more likely to burn out (Johnson & Griffin, 2024). Reduced academic engagement, low motivation, and trouble maintaining consistent performance can result from the pressure to meet both academic requirements and fraternity expectations (Von Lampe & Blokland, 2020). These difficulties show how students' cognitive and emotional resources can be strained by structural conflicts, such as concurrent class deadlines and organizational tasks (Ohara, 2023).

The participants reported several challenges in balancing academic and fraternity responsibilities. P1 noted that overlapping schedules and limited time make tasks difficult to manage. P2 shared that lack of time, exhaustion, and stress affect their ability to focus on studies, while P3 emphasized that fatigue and lack of sleep hinder understanding of lessons. Similarly, P5 highlighted the difficulty of balancing academic deadlines with fraternity duties and added that fatigue, time pressure, and stress are commonly experienced.

These are evident in the results of the interview conducted.

*"Its very difficult to handle such tasks having scheduled at the same time, overlapping activities, conflicts, and very limited time." (P1)*

*"Common problems include lack of time, physical and mental exhaustion, and stress due to numerous tasks. Sometimes, it is difficult to focus on studying when there are ongoing fraternity activities." (P2)*

*"My common problems are fatigue and lack of sleep. Because of this, it is sometimes difficult for me to understand the lessons." (P3)*

*"It is sometimes difficult to balance the two because I have class projects and deadlines, while I also have fraternity meetings, activities, and responsibilities." (P5)*

*"We commonly experience fatigue, lack of sleep, and time management issues. At times, I also feel pressure." (P5)*

A study conducted by Parks et al. (2021) stated that overlapping schedules and competing responsibilities significantly affected students' ability to balance academics and fraternity involvement. Students often found it difficult to maintain balance and well-being when academic schedules and organizational obligations were not properly aligned. To reduce these difficulties, supportive academic policies, accommodating fraternity practices, and consideration of students' workloads were found to be crucial (Papaioannou et al., 2022). Resolving scheduling and academic conflicts allowed students to protect their academic well-being while continuing to participate actively in fraternity life (Khan et al., 2024). The recurring issues of fatigue and lack of sleep suggested that students often pushed themselves beyond healthy limits to meet expectations from both areas (Quinn-Henry, 2024).

In the context of competing responsibilities, Role Conflict Theory, primarily associated with Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964), explains how individuals experience stress and tension when facing conflicting expectations from multiple roles, such as being a student, employee, or family member. According to the theory, stress and negative outcomes arise when individuals encounter pressures from competing demands or lack sufficient resources to meet expectations. A recent study by Tad-awan et al. (2024) supported this theory, revealing that criminology students experienced significant role conflict as they attempted to balance their academic responsibilities with fraternity obligations. The study found that students struggled to manage tasks such as attending meetings, completing projects, and fulfilling leadership roles, which often overlapped with academic deadlines and personal commitments. Another supporting studies of Samaratunga & Kamardeen (2025) revealed that role conflict created stress, fatigue, and challenges in maintaining academic performance, illustrating how competing demands from multiple roles can negatively affect students' well-being and efficiency.

The overlap of schedules, tight deadlines, and multiple responsibilities led to stress, fatigue, and potential burnout, reflecting the strain caused by conflicting role demands. Role Conflict Theory further helps explain why students struggled to maintain academic performance and well-being under these pressures. Together, these frameworks underscore the importance of effective coping strategies, supportive policies, and time management to alleviate the stress associated with managing multiple roles.

These challenges also indicated that prolonged exposure to physical and mental exhaustion had significantly negatively impacted students' academic performance and ability to understand lessons. Students reported difficulties in concentrating, retaining information, and completing assignments on time, which

suggested that ongoing fatigue had interfered with effective learning. The constant pressure to meet both academic and fraternity obligations had increased stress levels, making it harder for students to maintain consistent performance. This combination of mental strain and physical tiredness highlighted the risk of burnout among active fraternity members, as they had been forced to balance competing demands without adequate rest or recovery. Such experiences suggested that, without proper time management, support, and understanding from their organizations, students' academic outcomes and overall well-being had been vulnerable to decline (Ramos Salazar & Meador, 2023).

The findings of this study were significant because they showed that overlapping schedules, limited time, and competing academic and fraternity responsibilities placed considerable physical and mental strain on students. Fatigue, lack of sleep, and stress were commonly experienced and were found to negatively affect students' concentration, understanding of lessons, and ability to meet academic deadlines. These challenges demonstrated how prolonged exposure to conflicting demands reduced students' cognitive and emotional capacity, increasing the risk of academic burnout. When academic work and fraternity activities were not well planned, students pushed themselves too hard to meet all the demands. This showed the need for fair workloads, better time management, and support from both schools and fraternity groups. Handling these issues was important for keeping students' grades, learning, and well-being while still allowing them to take part in fraternity activities.

The findings implied that overlapping schedules, tight deadlines, and competing responsibilities placed significant strain on students' physical and mental well-being. Fatigue, sleep deprivation, and stress were common, which negatively affected concentration, lesson comprehension, and overall learning performance. Students often struggled to balance academic work and fraternity obligations, and prolonged exposure to these demands increased the risk of burnout. These results suggested that students needed to develop strong time management, prioritization, and self-discipline skills in order to handle multiple responsibilities effectively. These implications emphasize the need for better time coordination, realistic workload distribution, and supportive policies from both academic institutions and fraternity organizations to help students maintain well-being while meeting their responsibilities (Choirunisa & Madrid, 2023).

The study also implied that institutions and fraternity organizations had a role in supporting students' well-being. Schools could provide realistic workload distribution, clear scheduling, and guidance to help students manage academic requirements, while fraternities could adopt practices that recognized the importance of academics. By improving time coordination and offering supportive policies, both academic institutions and organizational groups could help students maintain learning performance, reduce stress, and participate in fraternity activities without compromising their health or academic success.

### **Fraternity Expectations and Pressure**

This theme highlighted how pressure emerged when fraternity obligations competed with academic priorities, particularly during periods of high academic workload, such as examinations, project deadlines, and practicum requirements. The participants expressed various pressures related to fraternity involvement. Fraternity expectations and pressure were experienced as continuous demands to comply with organizational rules, attend mandatory activities, and meet performance standards, often alongside academic responsibilities. Operationally, these pressures manifested in time conflicts, mental strain, and the need to constantly balance loyalty to the fraternity with personal well-being and academic priorities.

P2 expressed that organizational expectations and leadership roles add stress, particularly when combined with academic demands. P3 shared that handling many tasks creates significant pressure, while P4 noted that limited time due to academic work sometimes prevents participation in fraternity activities. On the other hand, P5 highlighted conflicts that arise when fraternity demands exceed available time, and P8 mentioned that internal issues with problematic members can also create challenges and require disciplinary action.

These are evident in the results of the interview conducted.

*"There is pressure to meet organizational expectations such as attending meetings, activities, and taking on leadership roles. This can sometimes add more stress, especially when it coincides with academic requirements." (P2)*

*"At times, I feel pressure, especially when there are many tasks to do." (P3)*

*"So far, based on my experience, the main issue is time availability. Sometimes, I cannot join fraternity activities because I am busy with academics and schoolwork." (P4)*

*“There is pressure to attend events even when I am already tired or have many academic tasks. Sometimes, conflicts arise when fraternity expectations are too demanding and do not match my available time.” (P5)*

*“Problems in a fraternity cannot be avoided, especially with members who are stubborn, particularly when alcohol is involved. Those members are given disciplinary action so they will learn their lesson.” (P8)*

According to the study of Wulansari and Affandi (2024), students involved in organizations often experienced role conflict, stress, and reduced academic performance due to competing demands. In the context of student organizations, Role Conflict Theory explained that stress, tension, or pressure arose when individuals faced incompatible demands from different roles they occupied (Kahn et al., 1964). Fraternity-affiliated criminology students experienced competing expectations from academics and fraternity obligations, such as attending meetings, participating in events, and fulfilling leadership roles, and explicitly described the stress of trying to meet both sets of expectations, which reflected classic inter-role conflict. The theory explained why students felt stress, fatigue, or difficulty prioritizing—because fulfilling the responsibilities of one role (e.g., academics) could interfere with another role (e.g., fraternity leadership). This aligned with the findings of Estoce et al. (2024) regarding role conflict, stress, and reduced academic performance.

The findings were significant because they showed that fraternity obligations created additional pressure for criminology students, especially when these demands overlapped with academic responsibilities. Students experienced stress, fatigue, and time constraints while trying to meet both sets of expectations, which sometimes led to difficulty prioritizing tasks and reduced engagement in either area. These results highlighted how competing demands from academics and fraternity roles could create role conflict, as described by Role Conflict Theory, and emphasized the impact of inter-role tension on students’ well-being and academic performance.

The study also demonstrated the influence of organizational culture and leadership on students’ experiences. Problems such as demanding fraternity expectations, leadership responsibilities, and conflicts with problematic members further increased stress and challenged students’ ability to focus on academics. These findings underscored the importance of supportive fraternity structures, responsible leadership, and policies that balance organizational discipline with respect for academic priorities. Proper management of organizational pressures was shown to be essential in helping students maintain academic performance, reduce stress, and achieve a healthier balance between fraternity involvement and personal well-being.

The findings implied that organizational pressure within fraternities significantly contributes to students’ stress and time constraints, particularly when expectations overlap with academic responsibilities. The demand to attend meetings, events, and leadership roles—despite fatigue or heavy coursework intensifies pressure and forces students to make difficult choices between academic priorities and fraternity commitments. This highlights a persistent conflict between institutional academic demands and organizational expectations, which can negatively affect students’ well-being and performance.

Furthermore, the presence of internal fraternity issues, such as problematic member behavior and the need for disciplinary actions, suggests that organizational culture and governance play a critical role in shaping students’ experiences. Poorly managed expectations and interpersonal conflicts can further increase stress and distract members from their academic focus. These implications emphasize the importance of flexible fraternity policies, responsible leadership, and supportive organizational structures that respect academic priorities while promoting discipline, accountability, and a healthier balance for student members.

### **Discipline and Motivation**

Self-discipline played a crucial role as well (Djazilan, 2022). It involved the ability to control one’s actions, stay focused on tasks, and avoid distractions. The participants showed a positive outlook when facing the challenges of balancing fraternity responsibilities and academic requirements. They believed that having discipline and strong motivation helped them handle these difficulties more easily. By training themselves to be disciplined, they learned how to manage their time better and stay focused on their goals. Motivation encouraged them to keep going even when they felt tired or pressured by multiple responsibilities. Instead of seeing these challenges as obstacles, they viewed them as opportunities to grow and improve themselves. This mindset helped them remain committed to both their studies and fraternity duties. Thus, discipline and motivation played an important role in helping the participants adjust their perspective and successfully overcome the challenges they encountered.

The participants shared that fraternities played a role in supporting academic performance. P1 and P4 explained that regular grade monitoring was enforced, with disciplinary actions given for failing grades to encourage improvement. P2 noted that discipline and support from fellow members increased responsibility and motivation in their studies. Similarly, P5 emphasized that the fraternity provided motivation and support,

prompting better planning to maintain grades, while P6, P9, and P8 highlighted that seniors and the fraternity consistently reminded members to prioritize academics while offering understanding and support.

These are evident in the results of the interview conducted.

*“By regularly checking grades, because failing grades are not allowed. Once a failing grade occurs, they are given a DA or disciplinary action to correct and improve their academic performance.” (P1, P4)*

*“Through discipline and support from fellow fraternity members, some become more responsible and motivated in their studies.” (P2)*

*“The fraternity helps with motivation because it provides a support system. I really need to plan properly to avoid affecting my grades.” (P5)*

*“The fraternity influences me to stand firm and not give up easily. In our fraternity, seniors always remind us that academics should come first, and the brotherhood will always understand.” (P6, P9)*

*“Our fraternity motivates us to prioritize academics because the fraternity is always there to support us.” (P8)*

A study conducted by Acompañado et al. (2024) stated that, by staying positive despite hectic schedules, the students still managed to surpass those challenges and cope effectively. This finding was also supported by the study of Musya (2023), which reported that, although there was a heavy workload, a common theme among students was overcoming challenges by maintaining a positive mindset focused on their future goals. Thus, discipline and motivation were the most effective strategies the participants used to cope and persevere despite hectic time management. In the context of this theme, the Model of Discipline Theory emphasized that discipline was a core component of effective leadership (Glasser, 1986). For fraternity-affiliated criminology students, discipline involved self-regulation, responsibility, and accountability in both academic and organizational contexts. The interviews revealed how this played out in daily practice: students regularly checked their grades, and when academic performance fell below standards, disciplinary actions (DA) were applied to guide improvement. These practices illustrated how discipline operated as both a personal and organizational mechanism, encouraging students to meet expectations and correct behaviors when necessary. Discipline within the fraternity is not purely punitive; it is also modeled and reinforced through peer support and mentorship.

Fraternities offer their members support networks and avenues for self-improvement, serving not just as social groups but as organized environments that promote discipline, responsibility, and time management (Coleman, 2024; Gibson et al., 2024; Estoce et al., 2024). Participants highlighted that observing senior members who consistently prioritize academics and personal responsibility motivates them to adopt similar habits. Statements such as, “through discipline and support from fellow fraternity members, some became more responsible and motivated in their studies,” illustrated this point. The fraternity provided a supportive environment where discipline and encouragement worked together to promote personal and collective growth. Discipline Theory, therefore, provided a lens to understand how structured discipline, combined with support and mentorship, was experienced and internalized in the lived experiences of fraternity-affiliated criminology students.

The findings were significant because they emphasized that self-discipline and motivation played an important role in helping criminology students balance academic work and fraternity responsibilities. Students used discipline to control their actions, focus on tasks, and manage their time effectively, even when facing heavy workloads and multiple demands. Motivation encouraged them to keep going despite fatigue and pressure. These practices helped students view challenges as opportunities to grow, rather than obstacles, which allowed them to stay committed to both their studies and fraternity duties.

The findings also showed that fraternity support strengthened students' academic focus. Regular grade monitoring, mentorship from seniors, and encouragement from peers provided a system of guidance and accountability. Disciplinary actions for failing grades and reminders to prioritize academics motivated students to plan better, take responsibility, and persevere in their studies. This suggested that when discipline and support worked together, students were better able to manage their time, maintain good academic performance, and handle organizational responsibilities effectively.

The findings implied that self-discipline and motivation were crucial for criminology students in managing both academic and fraternity responsibilities. Students who practiced discipline were able to control their actions, focus on tasks, and manage their time more effectively, which helped them cope with heavy workloads and multiple demands. Motivation encouraged persistence despite fatigue and stress, suggesting that fostering positive attitudes and personal responsibility enabled students to overcome challenges and maintain performance in both academics and organizational activities. The study also implied that fraternities played a significant role in supporting academic success. Regular grade monitoring, mentorship from senior members, peer encouragement, and the use of disciplinary actions for failing grades provided a structured environment that promoted responsibility, accountability, and perseverance. These findings suggested that when discipline

was reinforced through supportive organizational practices, students were better able to prioritize academics, plan their time efficiently, and balance organizational commitments with personal and academic goals.

### **Stress Relief and Emotional Support**

Stress relief and emotional support referred to the help fraternity members received in managing academic and personal pressures. Through brotherhood, encouragement, and shared experiences, members felt supported, which reduced stress and helped them cope with challenges more effectively. The participants shared different ways of coping with stress. P1 emphasized perseverance and not giving up, while P2 and P3 highlighted the importance of time management, open communication, and moral support from both fraternity members and family. These strategies help them manage stress and stay focused on their responsibilities. Meanwhile, P4 relaxes by resting and taking short breaks before continuing tasks. P5 copes by seeking support from co-members or friends, listening to music, and taking short breaks. P6 and P8, on the other hand, unwind by spending time with co-brothers to relax and refresh before returning to their duties.

These are evident in the result of the interview conducted.

*“Just keep fighting and working hard and never give up.” (P1)*

*“They practice time management and maintain open communication. Moral support from the fraternity and family also greatly helps in dealing with stress.” (P2, P3)*

*“My way of relaxing is by resting, chilling for a while, and enjoying myself briefly then moving forward.” (P4)*

*“Asking for support from co-members or close friends, listening to music or taking short breaks.” (P5)*

*“I go out with co-brothers to break the routine and relax. After feeling refreshed, I return to my responsibilities.” (P6, P8)*

According to the study conducted by Kim & Sa (2022) on the factors influencing a person's application based on percentage states that environmental factors were found in the order of family influence (38.2%), family environment (30.2%), peer group influence (24.6%), social atmosphere (14.6%), and media influence (7.5%). Among them, the influence of family (parents, siblings, relatives, etc.) followed by peer group appears to be the most important factors because families living together can directly influence individuals and how they interact with others. This influence can also be seen among peers, such as in fraternities, where brotherhood and sisterhood are practiced. In these groups, members often feel a sense of belonging and support similar to being part of a family. High levels of involvement from their organization, need fulfilment, and self-determined motivation (Raabe et al., 2020). A study conducted by Bergstrom (2022), stated that 93 percent of students say their fraternities have changed their opinions about being connected in goals and are now in support of each others participation. Their membership, along with guidance from their brotherhood, led them to exercise discipline both inside and outside the classroom, ensuring that schoolwork remained a priority while upholding fraternal obligations (Jett, 2022; Tshimilandou, 2024; Ardoin, 2023).

Social Support Theory posited that support from family, peers, and social networks reduced stress and enhanced coping, especially in challenging or high-demand situations (Cohen & Wills, 1985). The participants explicitly described how fraternity brotherhood, family, and peers provided emotional encouragement, moral support, and guidance, helping them manage academic and personal pressures. Statements such as “moral support from the fraternity and family also greatly helps in dealing with stress” (P2, P3) and “I go out with co-brothers to break the routine and relax” (P6, P8) reflected instrumental, emotional, and social support mechanisms consistent with this theory. Fraternity membership created a supportive environment where students felt a sense of belonging, which buffered against academic stress and fostered resilience. This aligned with Kim & Sa (2022), Bergstrom (2022), and Jett (2022), who emphasized family and peer influence as key factors in coping and maintaining motivation.

The findings were significant because they showed that fraternity members relied on resilience, persistence, and social support to cope with the pressures of balancing academics and fraternity activities. Students who practiced determination, such as “never giving up,” were able to stay focused on their responsibilities despite challenges. Support from fraternity brothers, family, and friends helped students manage stress, stay motivated, and maintain their academic performance. This highlighted the important role of emotional, moral, and social support in helping students handle difficult situations. The findings also showed that brief periods of relaxation, like resting, listening to music, or spending time with co-members, helped students recharge and stay productive. Fraternity membership created a sense of belonging, which reduced feelings of loneliness and academic pressure. Overall, the study suggested that both personal effort and a strong support system were key factors in maintaining students' mental well-being, motivation, and ability to succeed academically while participating in organizational activities.

The findings implied that resilience and persistence are key strategies for students to cope with the pressures of balancing academics and fraternity activities. Students emphasize the importance of “never giving

up” and continuing to work hard despite challenges, showing a strong sense of determination and personal responsibility. Additionally, students rely on support systems from their fraternity members, family, and friends to manage stress. Open communication, encouragement, and moral support help them stay motivated and navigate difficult situations more effectively. This indicates that social support plays a significant role in maintaining both mental well-being and academic performance. Just as significant, membership in a fraternity also provides a sense of belongingness that can alleviate the feelings of loneliness and academic pressure (Maldonado, 2020; Coulter, 2024).

Finally, students used relaxation and short breaks as coping mechanisms. Activities like listening to music, resting, or spending time with fellow members allowed them to recharge and maintain focus. These strategies suggested that balancing work with brief periods of relaxation were important for preventing burnout and sustaining productivity over time.

### Guidance for Future Members

This theme emphasized the importance of placing education as the primary priority, recognizing that academic achievement forms the foundation for long-term personal and professional success. Participants consistently advise prospective members to practice effective time management, develop self-discipline, and ensure that fraternity involvement does not compromise academic responsibilities (Matthews, 2022; Parks et al., 2021). The participants emphasized careful consideration and responsibility when joining a fraternity.

P1 highlighted that motivation and encouragement help achieve success, while P2 and P3 stressed prioritizing education and practicing good time management. P4 advised choosing a fraternity wisely, understanding its purpose, and assessing personal readiness. Similarly, P5, P7, and P8 expressed that balancing time, keeping academics first, and selecting a supportive fraternity, and P9 cautioned that joining should be a firm, thoughtful decision rather than trying to appear “cool” or tough.

These are evident in the result of the interview conducted.

*“Through motivation and encouragement to do good deeds so one can become successful in life.” (P1)*

*“The advice is to prioritize education, practice good time management, and choose a fraternity that values academics. It is important to know your limits and remain responsible in all aspects of life.” (P2)*

*“Always prioritize your studies. Do not forget that education is important for your future.” (P3)*

*“If you really want to join a fraternity, my advice is to choose wisely. First, do a background check on the fraternity. Second, understand the true meaning of fraternity. Third, evaluate yourself and determine whether you are truly fit to join a fraternity.” (P4)*

*“Make sure you can balance your time. Do not forget that academics should always be the priority. Choose a fraternity that is supportive and does not take advantage of you.” (P5, P7, P8)*

*“If you truly want to join a fraternity, you must be firm and decisive in your decision. Joining a fraternity is not about looking ‘cool’ or tough; this should never be your mindset.” (P9)*

According to Papazoglou et al., (2022) stated that future fraternity members were urged to carefully consider a fraternity’s ideals, culture, and standards, especially regarding discipline, academics, and member welfare. This theme emphasized the importance of making thoughtful and well-informed choices before joining a fraternity. Students were advised to do background research about the organization to understand its values and expectations. They were also encouraged to evaluate their own ability to handle multiple responsibilities. These steps were seen as essential to prevent future conflicts and reduce stress (Estoce et al., 2024).

The findings were significant because they showed that students consistently viewed academics as the top priority when joining a fraternity. Participants emphasized that education formed the foundation for personal and professional success. They reported that fraternity involvement should never compromise academic responsibilities. Students also highlighted the importance of time management and self-discipline in handling multiple tasks. Careful planning was seen as essential to balance schoolwork and organizational commitments effectively.

The findings also showed that making informed and thoughtful decisions before joining a fraternity was essential. Students advised researching the fraternity, understanding its values, and assessing their personal readiness to handle multiple responsibilities. They reported that choosing a supportive fraternity and being aware of their limits helped them maintain balance and focus on academics. Participants explained that these practices allowed them to have a positive experience in the organization while fulfilling both academic and

fraternity obligations. Overall, the study suggested that prioritizing education, practicing self-discipline, and making careful decisions were key factors for successful and meaningful fraternity involvement.

The statements implied that prioritizing academics was essential for future fraternity members. Students consistently stressed that education should come first, as it formed the foundation for success in life. Joining a fraternity should not have compromised academic responsibilities, and members had to be disciplined in managing both school and organizational commitments. The responses also highlighted the importance of making informed and thoughtful decisions before joining a fraternity. Future members were advised to research the fraternity, understand its values, and honestly assess their own readiness and capacity to handle responsibilities. This ensured that membership was a deliberate choice rather than an impulsive pursuit of social status or peer approval.

Finally, the statements suggested that supportive environments and self-awareness were key to a positive fraternity experience. Choosing a fraternity that encouraged growth, motivated members, and respected personal limits helped students maintain balance and responsibility. The guidance emphasized that joining a fraternity was about personal development, meaningful connections, and maintaining a healthy balance between academic and organizational life.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that criminology students who were active fraternity members encountered challenges in balancing their academic responsibilities and fraternity involvement. Despite these difficulties, many of the participants were able to maintain their academic performance through effective planning, personal discipline, and the support they received from peers and other support systems. Fraternity membership, when managed responsibly, contributed positively to the development of motivation, responsibility, and personal growth among students. However, when expectations and responsibilities were not properly managed, students experienced increased stress and the risk of burnout. Overall, the findings emphasized that proper time management, self-discipline, and supportive environments play a crucial role in helping students successfully manage their academic responsibilities while actively participating in fraternity organizations.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that students practice effective time management by prioritizing their academic responsibilities, planning their schedules ahead of time, and maintaining their physical and mental well-being by allowing adequate time for rest and seeking support when necessary. Schools and universities may strengthen student support systems by providing counseling services, mentoring programs, study centers, and workshops on time management and stress management to help students effectively balance academic and organizational responsibilities. Fraternity organizations are also encouraged to promote academic success as a priority, implement clear organizational guidelines, foster accountability among members, and provide peer support to ensure that fraternity activities do not negatively affect academic performance. In addition, fraternity leaders should create flexible schedules for organizational activities and minimize unnecessary pressures to help members manage their academic and personal commitments effectively. The community may also contribute by providing a safe and supportive environment that encourages responsible youth participation and values education. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to expand the study by involving larger and more diverse samples, exploring different academic programs, or utilizing mixed-methods and comparative approaches to gain deeper insights into how students successfully balance academic responsibilities with organizational commitments.

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