



LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CRIMINOLOGY STUDENT INTERNS DURING ON-THE-JOB TRAINING: A PHENOMENOLOGY OF SACRIFICE AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract:

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to unfold the lived experiences of Criminology student-interns of Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges General Santos City. Table one reflects the emergent themes on the experiences of the Criminology student-interns amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, namely: gaining new lessons, being able to extend help, challenging, exciting, limited learning, expectation gone wrong, and developing community involvement. Moreover, four essential themes emerged for the first part, which are about the challenges; these were financial, dealing with people, health issues due to exhaustion, and inability to manage time. On the other hand, five emergent themes emerged for the second part, which is about coping mechanisms: prayer, being optimistic, strategic, self-motivation, and balance time. Lastly, the insights of the Criminology student-interns covered nine emergent themes, these were: create a schedule, cherish every moment, set priorities, invest time for physical activity, be flexible, be ready always, productivity matters, follow instructions, persevere.

Keywords: Criminology, students-interns, lived experiences, On-the-Job Training (OJT), phenomenology, Philippines

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1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale

“Some things cannot be taught; they must be experienced. You never learn the most valuable lessons in life until you go through your own journey.” (Roy T. Bennett)

Life is a series of training and development. It is not just about learning but also about practical application. The quote signified that there is a debate about what is essential in life, both in knowledge and experience. While knowledge is integral to everyone's life, it is only very sensible if applied. Thus, using the experience is necessary for people to achieve their goals and objectives. When someone has experience with something, it means they have gained the essential understanding of what the job entails and have faced every reality required to begin and complete the task. The more experience you have, the closer you are to reality and the opportunities to learn new skills. When you say you have experience, it means you have already gone through the reality side of the task.

The COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed a global emergency, profoundly altering the lives of countless individuals across the globe, with college students being particularly affected. Internships, which have traditionally served as invaluable avenues for students to gain hands-on experience in their chosen fields of study, have drastically transformed in response to the pandemic. COVID-19 has reshaped the landscape of internships, necessitating new ways for students to discover opportunities, engage in meaningful work, and acquire knowledge and skills. At California State University, San Marcos, students have been granted permission to partake in on-site internship activities within the state of California. However, due to the ongoing circumstances, they are limited to projects that solely operate in the digital realm, adapting to the digital platform for project engagement and learning experiences. This unprecedented shift has challenged students to adjust to the virtual environment, demonstrating resilience and resourcefulness in their pursuit of development (Castillo, 2020).

Many graduating students remain in limbo because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which altered the education system and impacted how college students completed their On-the-Job Training requirements. Workers and students have been compelled to stay at home due to the pandemic. When classes began, the Commission on Higher Education advised institutions and colleges to relocate or postpone on-site or face-to-face internships for the student's health and safety. This complies with Republic Act No. 7722, often known as the "Higher Education Act of 1994," was passed in 1994; also known as "Bayanihan to Heal as One Act" and under Commission en Banc (CEB) Resolution No. 412-2020, series of 2020, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) at this moment adopted and promulgated the following Guidelines on Flexible Learning (FL) to be implemented by public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). As a result, the concept of a home-based internship was established. Some supported the proposal, while

others opposed claiming that an internship from home adds nothing to students' skills and deprives them of the opportunity to work in a genuine work environment. Adamson University student Michael Angelo Fesalbon, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in communication, stated that he would rather learn on the job than at home in an interview with The POST (Soriano, 2020).

From a local perspective, students in General Santos City experienced stress and anxiety because of the pandemic, which decreased their level of concentration and focus on their studies, specifically on their On-the-Job Training. The educational momentum of these students in their academic field, like their internship, declined due to unprecedented educational transitions, decreased motivation for their studies, complexities experienced in the emergency online learning environments, and multiplex health and digital issues (Toquero *et al.*, 2021). Specifically, this study highlighted what transpired at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges General Santos City, one of the HEIs in Region 12 that changed its On-the-Job Training program because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This research aimed to learn about the lived experiences of Criminology student interns during their On-the-Job Training. In this study, I explored the lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights that these students have during their OJT and how they dealt with them. As a criminologist and college instructor who was once a Criminology intern, this research will serve as a guide to the incoming Criminology student intern and even to the entire College of Criminal Justice so that be able to prepare for the possible scenarios that may arise during the internship program. The difficulties also faced by the Criminology student intern will undoubtedly inspire other students if they can learn what specific coping mechanism the student used. Also, this research can allow Criminology students to realize the importance of experiencing an OJT.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to unfold the lived experiences of Criminology student interns of Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges General Santos City, wherein we will discover their sacrifices in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) during the time of Covid19 pandemic. Following Morse's (1994) recommendation that a phenomenological study include at least six participants, semi-structured interviews will be used to unfold the sacrifices of Criminology intern students during their OJT during the time of the pandemic. Regarding the betterment outcome of this research, there will be at least ten participants for the in-depth Interview (IDI) and ten participants for the focus group discussion (FGD). The methodology was used to divide the interview protocols.

This phenomenological study was grounded in the theoretical lens of the Social Learning Theory of Albert Bandura (1997). A recorder was used extensively during the in-depth interview to collect the data. The participants shared experiences, and themes were developed by mixing several assumptions about the story that they intended to tell.

They could recall stories that were used and recorded because of the in-depth interview. These themes were interpreted into a detailed description of the phenomenological experiences of sacrifices of the Criminology student interns during the time of the pandemic.

Moreover, the results of this qualitative research may be utilized by school administrators and Criminology students to unfold the phenomenological experiences of Criminology student interns in their OJT during the pandemic and discover their sacrifices and how they overcame them.

2.1 Research Questions

Research questions were formulated to achieve the purpose of the study. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) How do the participants describe their On-the-Job Training (OJT) experiences amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - 1.1 What are the participants' experiences in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - 1.2 What are the challenges that they have experienced, and how do they cope with these experiences?
 - 1.3 What insights or realizations do the participants have to share with the incoming 4th year Criminology students who will be undergoing the OJT?

3. Theoretical Lens

This research was based on Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1997), which emphasizes the importance of observing, modelling, and mimicking other people's behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions. According to social learning theory, environmental and cognitive factors interact to impact human learning and behavior. In addition, On-the-Job Training is a potent combination of observational and experience learning that is profoundly based in the setting of Social Learning Theory pioneered by psychologist Albert Bandura. Through On-the-Job Training, Criminology student interns will be able to get valuable work experience in preparation for their future professional careers.

Another theory that supported this study is the Constructivist Theory proposed by Bruner (1966), which asserted that learning is an active process in which students enter the process of building knowledge by attempting to clarify the events of the world environment. Constructivists believed that learning occurs only when information is actively processed, so they asked students to be encouraged to build their own motifs by connecting new information to those motives. As a result of this, they can constantly improve their post-cognitive skills. Simultaneously, the educator serves as an assistant supporter of the learning process and their students, encouraging them to develop their own thoughts and conclusions (Weegar & Pacis, 2012).

Moreover, this theory emphasizes that while the mind plays an essential role in learning, the environmental stimulus and students' response indicate learning success. In

this study, I will unfold the sacrifices of Criminology student interns during their On-the-Job Training during the pandemic and how they responded, coped with, and adjusted to it.

This study is also supported by Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory. Experiential learning is defined as "*the process through which knowledge is generated by transforming experience; knowledge results from the combination of experience grasping and transforming experience*" by Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory.

Additionally, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) proposed a four-part cycle. The cycle began with a student's experience, followed by an opportunity to reflect on that experience. The students may then conceptualize and conclude what they experienced and observed, which may lead to future actions in which they experiment with different behaviors. This restarts the cycle because students gain new experiences because of their experiments.

This study reflected the lived experiences of Criminology student interns in their On-the-Job Training during the pandemic. The participants encountered a dilemma with their OJT, though they could still overcome it. In this study, we will learn about their phenomenological sacrifices and ways of successfully conquering the hurdles in their OJT.

3.1 Delimitations and Limitations

The main thrust of this study is to discover the lived experiences of Criminology student interns and uncover their sacrifices during their internship during the pandemic. The researcher utilized purposeful sampling to determine the study's respondents. This research involved Criminology Intern student participants, of whom at least ten were for the in-depth interview (IDI) and ten for the focused group discussion (FGD).

The participants of this study were delimited to the Criminology intern students at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges General Santos City who were enrolled in the academic year 2021-2022 and underwent their internship during the pandemic. These students must be able to fully comply with all the educational requirements set forth by the curriculum. They must be a full-time intern without back subjects. When choosing the participants, it must be considered that they can articulate their experiences and respond to interview questions, regardless of their age, gender, and academic performance. The data will be acquired through in-depth interviews, wherein the study's success hinges on the participants' responses during the interview.

4. Review of Related Literature

This chapter presented literature related to the study under investigation. This section highlighted literature that provided relevant and similar insights for the development of this study.

4.1 Lived Experiences of Criminology Student Intern during On-the-Job Training

Many baccalaureate degree programs in Criminal Justice (CJ) encourage student participation in experiential (or field) learning activities, like finishing an internship or practicum. The On-the-Job Training (OJT) program is an example of such a program. Most schools in the Philippines have adopted this policy. Previous experiences show that students in OJT faced difficulties, challenges, and conflicting situations. The students are in situations that will either make or break them. They require assistance and direction as they apply what they have learned at this stage or level of their lives. However, with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, the trend toward online internships became a torrent, with some estimating that 50 per cent of college internships in 2020 will be cancelled due to the closure of many businesses across the country (Murphy & Gibbons, 2017; McGregor, 2020; Nietzl, 2020).

Through internships, students can spend time in a professional field setting to observe criminal justice practitioners and, in some cases, directly participate in specific pre-professional level activities. Interns in criminal justice typically complete unpaid volunteer internships at public or nonprofit organizations. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), internships combine knowledge experience and classroom theory with practical application and skill development in a professional setting. Faculty worked frantically to develop online learning opportunities that satisfied both the objectives of the criminal justice students enrolled in these courses and the academic learning outcomes (Murphy & Gibbons, 2017; Española, *et al.*, 2018; Shine & Brown, 2021).

Moreover, students can use their knowledge and skills in the workplace. Universities and Colleges typically require students to submit a written report on their tasks, learning experiences, and hours worked. Their direct managers will evaluate their work performance and report to their respective OJT coordinators. The number of hours required at each university or college may differ. An OJT allows you to practice the actual methodologies of a specific job while using fundamental tools, equipment, and documents. Difficulties arise in monitoring students by their advisers, mainly if the OJT establishment is located far from the university. Many students received the news that their internships with the organizations, divisions, and courts where they had been placed would come to an end. This is critical because monitoring allows advisers to ensure that the student is progressing in their job duties in a company. The Commission on Higher Education requires the various programs to complete internships because they will help students explore the relationships between the knowledge and skills acquired in college and those needed in working situations. In fact, the department is constantly updating its policies and guidelines for a student internship program in the Philippines (Aydinan & Mina, 2019; Bouchrika, 2022; Española, *et al.*, 2018).

All over the world, post-secondary institutions were devastated by the COVID-19 crisis. Faculty had to convert traditional classroom instruction into online courses almost immediately. This presented many difficulties, especially for the academics in charge of internship supervision. This change resulted from a combination of factors, including

agencies' restriction to only hiring essential personnel and universities' reservations about continuing internships despite agency approval due to the elevated risk to students' health and well-being On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs expose students to work in the field of their choice and prepare them for life after they graduate from university or college (Aydinan & Mina, 2019; Bouchrika, 2022; Shine & Brown, 2021).

Furthermore, the internship or field faculty collaborated closely with agency supervisors to create authentic and meaningful activities. One internship placement in Criminology wanted students to read their policy and procedures manual and case files to better understand the same. Furthermore, an internship is an essential component of an academic curriculum in higher education institutions because it allows undergraduate students to incorporate work-related experience and knowledge into their formal education at a university by participating in supervised and planned work in a real-world professional environment. It is appropriate for developing proficiency skills specific to an employee's job, especially jobs requiring locally owned equipment and facilities. Most of the work that participants in On-the-Job Training performed was unspecialized or semi-specialized and did not call for specialized knowledge (Aydinan & Mina, 2019; Bivens & Byrd, 2020; Pastore & Pompili, 2020).

4.2 Challenges Encountered by Criminology Student Interns during On-the-Job Training in the Time of Pandemic

Taking On-the-Job Training is challenging. The students must complete the task assigned to them by their superiors. The superior must demonstrate and teach the specific skills or tasks. One of the best methods is On-the-Job Training, which is organized, planned, and carried out at the employee's place of employment. It is frequently the primary strategy for expanding skill sets. It is also known as direct instruction, and it is one-on-one training on the job site where someone proficient in a task demonstrates how to do another. It is especially appropriate for developing proficiency skills specific to an employee's job, especially jobs that require locally owned equipment and facilities. It is also known as "direct instruction." It is one-on-one training on the job site where someone who knows how to do a task demonstrates how to do another (Anoyo *et al.*, 2015; Pastore & Pompili, 2020; Villamis, 2021).

Moreover, the trainee was assigned to various units to improve their skills. Carrying out the task Superior inter-student communication is one of the fundamental requirements for increasing and developing each student's productivity. Moreover, the COVID-19 outbreak has hurt almost every aspect of our society. Higher education is no exception. Anecdotal evidence paints a bleak picture for both students and universities. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted internship activities in Saudi Arabia. Because of the lack of approved vaccines and the rapid spread of COVID-19, health organizations have taken a variety of actions regarding the issue of conducting internships during the COVID-19 pandemic (Aucejo, *et al.*, 2020; Bugis, 2021; Pastore & Pompili, 2020).

Additionally, as cited in the studies conducted by Anoyo *et al.*, 2015; Bugis, 2021; Human Resource, 2022), On-the-Job Training is one of the best methods because it is planned, organized, and carried out at the employee's workplace. It is typically the primary method for broadening skills. The type of work that people did during their On-the-Job Training was unskilled primarily or semiskilled work that did not require specialized knowledge. In fact, it is the most popular training method because it only requires a person who knows how to do the task and the tools that person uses to do the task. It consists of both verbal and written instructions: hands-on practice and imitation, demonstration, and observation. Future research should investigate how health organizations perceive their roles and responsibilities regarding training, education, and internship programs during pandemics. Furthermore, studies on how internship practices should be delivered during pandemics are recommended for healthcare university programs.

However, faculty had to explain that this was not an appropriate assignment because there was no way to assess whether students had learned or could demonstrate mastery of the associated skills. However, the agencies were able to reach an agreement with internship faculty on meaningful assignments and projects that students could complete remotely. In one agency, using Zoom enabled staff and interns to continue working with their population. This study adds to the literature on healthcare organization behaviors during pandemics, particularly those involving internships during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, wearing facemasks or even personal protective equipment (PPE) as a public health intervention would most likely intercept the transmission link and prevent infectious infections (Bivens & Byrd, 2020; Bugis, 2021; Greenstone & Nigam, 2020).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a state of emergency was declared, forcing universities nationwide to close in March 2020. Faculty abruptly switched classes from face-to-face instruction to entirely online learning. This situation presented numerous challenges, especially for the faculty members who were instructing and supervising interns. They are also the people in the organization who teach the students the necessary knowledge and skills. Problems between students and superiors must be avoided for them to have a good relationship and complete all the required assignments. The intern should always be available. When they are employed, they must be active in learning new skills whenever their superior is teaching them to understand the importance of the job (Bugis, 2021; Shine & Brown, 2021; Villamis, 2021).

This idea resonates with the American Council on Education, which emphasized that enrollment is expected to drop by 15% in the fall of 2020, while many institutions may face demands for significant tuition cuts if classes remain virtual. In a similar vein, students face an increasingly uncertain environment in which financial and health shocks as well as the transition to online learning, are all. COVID-19's rapid and unplanned change to online teaching and learning has impacted many if not all, aspects of university students' lives worldwide. This study focuses on the impact of the pandemic on student well-being, which is as essential to student lifelong success as academic achievement in

contributing to investigating this change. Engagement and performance in curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, intrinsic motivation, satisfaction, meaning-making, and mental health have all been linked to student well-being (Aucejo, *et al.* 2020; Plakhotnik *et al.*, 2021).

Moreover, an analysis of private existing data was performed in this study. The impact of COVID-19 on active internship activities at Saudi health organizations and the reasons for these organizations' actions were described, tested, and assessed. They must also follow strict hygiene procedures, health regulations, and other preventative measures such as contact tracking, foot baths, sanitation, and frequent hand washing. With this pandemic virus has spread worldwide, the absence of a scientifically proven cure, and the difficulty in controlling it, the resulting situation has led to devastating economic, social, and psychological effects (Bugis, 2021; Greenstone & Nigam, 2020; Talabis, *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, The Philippine government enforced many measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, such as enforcing months-long community quarantine, social distancing, the use of medical face masks and face shields, closing schools, encouraging self-isolation, work-from-home schemes, and quarantining individuals returning from abroad. With the onset of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) sweeping the globe, all schools chose to use the online platforms available in their respective countries. Some of the online platforms that have been used as a medium of education around the world during this pandemic include Zoom, Google Meet, and Facebook (Magsambol, 2020; Talabis *et al.*, 2021).

Online education provides virtual classes that require proper online equipment, such as a smartphone that can support calls or videos, as well as a stable and uninterrupted internet connection to ensure a smooth flow of interaction between students and instructors in the 2020-2021 school year between the students and the instructor. Lowering the student-teacher ratio is one of the challenges facing schools, which will result in issues such as a lack of classrooms and other physical plants and facilities and a shortage of teachers and instructional materials. Only in this way can students gain confidence in the face of drastic changes during a pandemic (Greenstone & Nigam, 2020; Magsambol, 2020; Santamara *et al.*, 2021).

In addition, research carried out at the start of the pandemic in China showed that the symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress, and panic disorders had increased compared to during the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, the importance of psychological protective factors regarding the fear of coronavirus 2019 cannot be understated. According to the findings of this study, postgraduate students whose internships were cancelled due to the pandemic experienced severe anxiety, depression, and psychological health risks. Under China's current postgraduate training scheme and employment situation, individuals whose internship program was cancelled face reduced employment competitiveness and the risk of failing to complete graduation requirements. Furthermore, employers and post-secondary institutions scrambled to find solutions to the massive disruption in the functions of our daily lives, workplaces, post-secondary

institutions, and plans for student internships (Hora, *et al.*, 2021; Qiu, *et al.*, 2020; Santamara *et al.*, 2021).

Moreover, one of the severe problems college students encounter is adjusting and coping with their new environment right after secondary school. As a result, universities should consider the practical difficulties faced by academic degree postgraduate students during the pandemic, adjust course arrangements appropriately, maintain open and direct communication channels, and guide postgraduate students. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges to students, educators, and parents. A person's transition from school to work is a critical adjustment period. School-to-work transition programs are available to students to assist with the transition (McGregor, 2020; Nietzl, 2020; Santamaria *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, the impact of the crisis on the study plan and clinical training may have caused anxiety among medical students. It may gradually affect their physical, emotional, and mental well-being, particularly if the situation persists. We compared the stress levels experienced by study participants during the first three months of the pandemic to those experienced by medical students under "normal" conditions. While our study found that our students experienced lower, similar, or higher levels of stress when compared to "normal" conditions at medical school, these levels were lower than those reported during the COVID-19 outbreak. While some companies cancelled internships, many others moved to create online experiences where students could participate remotely. Humana, for example, has long had an active internship program, hiring college students in information technology, actuarial, analytic, finance and accounting positions. The effects of the COVID-19 panic have caused massive changes to our daily lives, often happening rapidly and abruptly. Life adjustments usually come with a wide range of experiences and emotions. Sometimes, that transition can feel smooth, and the journey to the new normal is choppy or downright bumpy (Hora *et al.*, 2021; Valladolid, 2021; Verma & Kumar, 2021).

Additionally, to help students finish their degrees, most universities encourage them to conduct research rather than internships, but some problems still need to be solved. Because getting a respectable job is essential for South Asian students for various reasons, many students want to complete internships. The COVID-19 pandemic raised numerous concerns among academics at all levels. One such worry was the impact of university campus closures and requiring students and faculty to learn and work remotely. In the middle of the semester, faculty, many of whom had no prior online teaching experience, were instructed to convert their on-campus classes to a remote/online format. During the COVID-19 situation, most universities assisted their final-year students. The university's administration emailed information about various companies that offered internships. Universities did not pressure their students not to take internships but rather encouraged them to do things other than internships. Finding a job is the next priority for final-year students (Banna *et al.*, 2020; Rakib *et al.*, 2021; Zaman *et al.*, 2021).

As a result, many students want to complete an internship to gain practical experience. Students learn how to work in a team, how to solve problems at work, and—most importantly—they want a certificate as they gain experience in the corporate world. Due to the new normal of learning, the United School of Science and Technology (USST), a private institution in San Isidro, Tarlac City, requested TSU experts to assist and prepare professional teachers in conducting internship programs for Criminology students during this pandemic. On March 16, 2021, the Webinar on Criminology OJT during the pandemic was held by the College of Criminology Justice Education (CCJE). Dr. Theodore M. Timpac, Dean of the CCJE, served as the resource speaker. He discussed the CHED's Memorandum Orders concerning Criminology students' OJT, including the nature of training for the old and new curriculum, as well as the requirements before deployment in the field of assignment (Banna *et al.*, 2020; Carmen, 2021; Hora, *et al.*, 2021; Rakib, *et al.*, 2021; Valladolid, 2021; Zaman *et al.*, 2021;).

Moreover, given the gravity of the situation and the fact that the events unfolding were not the result of the instructors', university administrators, or internship-site practitioners' choices, most students were especially understanding. Students recognized that the COVID-19 crisis had abruptly and severely disrupted our academic and personal lives in ways that were largely unforeseeable in the lead-up to the crisis, and they were willing to collaborate with faculty to achieve their educational goals in ways other than those initially planned. In short, students were primarily cooperative and understanding of the changes that instructors had to make to their classes, rather than resentful and critical (Shine & Brown, 2021; Times Higher Education, 2021; Valladolid, 2021).

Fortunately, educators, like criminal justice practitioners, are given some leeway in our work. During the COVID-19 crisis in mid-March 2020, faculty were able to work creatively with colleagues to identify course revisions that addressed academic concerns about maintaining course learning objectives as well as students' (particularly graduating seniors') natural concern and trepidation about losing valuable experience that enhanced their understanding of the field and provided many practical benefits toward achieving their career goals. This could be due to poor Internet connectivity at some students' homes, preventing them from occasionally accessing the portal. Similarly, some professors stated that the quality and reliability of Internet connections posed a significant barrier to online teaching. Most students believe that getting a desired job in the Covid-19 situation will be difficult because many institutions have already reduced their offers of new employees and also cut off some percentage of salaries for the Covid-19 situation (Asio *et al.*, 2021; Banna *et al.*, 2020; Shine & Brown, 2021).

Moreover, the shift to online learning has highlighted the digital divide between those without reliable Internet infrastructure, laptop computers, and smartphones. Internet speed and reliability vary by neighbourhood and household income, particularly in developing countries like Egypt. In their survey and interview responses, both students and professors raised the issue of students being denied access to some on-campus support mechanisms, such as the Mentoring Unit's assistance to students with learning difficulties. This finding supports another study [23] that found COVID-19 has

a more significant negative impact on learners with learning difficulties. These students can no longer benefit from support services that are only available in person. Furthermore, the pandemic's effects hampered the economy, industry, and postgraduate studies, research, internship, and employment opportunities. Such stresses also cause psychological issues such as anxiety and depression (Asio *et al.*, 2021; Kang & Quan, 2022; Said, 2021; Zhang, *et al.*, 2022).

In addition, given the situation's urgency, this was a massive challenge for all instructors and courses across campus; however, internships presented unique challenges. Most students completing internships during the spring semester of 2020 were informed that they would be unable to complete their internships on-site; as a result, faculty and administrators were required, with little notice, to determine how to revise field-placement internships into online learning experiences that met student learning goals, fulfilled HIP requirements, and kept students engaged. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic's final year, students suffered more from a lack of internship opportunities, which caused their graduation to be delayed. However, after some time, some alternatives appeared, such as research, which benefited final-year students the most, and remote internships, in which a student could work from home for his or her internship institution (Banna *et al.*, 2020; Kang & Quan, 2022; Rakib, *et al.*, 2021; Zaman *et al.*, 2021; Zhang, *et al.*, 2022).

4.3 Coping Strategies of Criminology Students Intern during On-the-Job Training in the Time of Pandemic

Criminology intern students appeared to be resilient in the face of these challenges. Remarkably, such young students feel a strong desire and responsibility to provide care under challenging circumstances. Students who were doing internships during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated tremendous personal resilience. Peer support is an essential source of resilience. Structured On-the-Job Training (SOJT) is not a new or revolutionary concept. It has, in fact, been around for generations and has proven to be effective in fields such as medicine, where it thrives (Garderen & Leeuwen, 2021; Leigh *et al.*, 2021; Smith, 2021).

Additionally, sharing their experiences with others is assisting them in processing what they have gone through. Another explanation for the relatively good coping with the situation by medical students at the University of Geneva during the first three months of the pandemic could be the local and generally privileged context in Switzerland, where the majority of students live with their parents and benefit from a well-functioning social system as well as financial assistance programs from the university. However, while the majority of organizations claim to have an On-the-Job Training (OJT) program, the majority of such programs lack guidance, consistency, defined expectations, tracking, identifiable competencies, or fundamental structure. In many cases, participants receive training as they begin a new role and are then "evaluated" when they are told what they did wrong. In short, the traditional OJT

program is more like an episode of "Survivor" than training (Garderen & Leeuwen, 2021; Smith, 2021; Wurth *et al.*, 2022).

Moreover, career services offices must ensure their student interns are included in coronavirus response planning during these challenging times. These are the students who work in your own office, and many of them rely on these wages to cover their living expenses and to pay the rent. Working in a clinical setting during the COVID-19 outbreak was described as an active coping strategy for psychological well-being in a cohort of French undergraduate medical students. While most students praised the online portal's ease of use, it was also reported that the current portal could have been more helpful in the overall learning experience. Criminology student interns' mental health conditions have been especially vulnerable to changes, and now we are learning about broad impacts on students because of schools being closed, physical distancing guidelines and isolation, and other unexpected changes to their lives (Jones, 2021; Wurth *et al.*, 2022).

Communication ability is essential in OJT because one of its objectives is for students to be able to communicate effectively at all stages. If the communication problem persists, students will need help receiving guidance from the industry. As a result, the supervisor should assess communication skills and include them in the OJT assessment rubric. Furthermore, the study's "Student Internship Experiences during the COVID-19" findings show that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacts how care is perceived, organized, and delivered. The effect on interpersonal functioning is mentioned strongly at both levels. These complications are about the connection between nurse and patient and between patient and their social environment. Students report that providing person-centred care is more complicated. This critical value of the nursing profession appears to be threatened by extinction (Garderen & Leeuwen, 2022; Jones, 2021; Musid, *et al.*, 2018).

Additionally, some researchers define well-being as equilibrium, claiming that everyone has a happy baseline. Resources, psychic income, and subjective well-being are all in a state of flux. This equilibrium includes "*physical well-being, plenty of physical resources, absence of fatigue, psychological well-being and evenness of temper, freedom of movement and effectiveness in action, and good relationships with others.*" From this vantage point, well-being could be defined as the equilibrium point between an individual's resource pool and their challenges. Furthermore, the regulatory fit framework proposes that coping strategies are most effective at regulating a stress response when individuals employ the approach that they perceive as optimal (Bendezú *et al.*, 2019; Plakhotnik, *et al.*, 2021; Wurth, *et al.*, 2022).

Moreover, students face various challenges, demands, and turbulences as they complete their programs under the influence of COVID-19. For example, they face a variety of social and economic pressures, must balance education, family, and work responsibilities, and face social isolation, discrimination, language barriers, and cross-cultural differences. Students at all levels of education and across all disciplines must have timely and adequate resources to address these demands and succeed in their pursuit of education and a profession. It is essential to think about the students interning with employers as part of your various internship programs but remember the ones who

help make your office run smoothly. The COVID-19 response plan at the Rutgers Office of Career Exploration and Success includes having its student supervisors develop a remote project list for their interns (Jones, 2021; Li *et al.*, 2020; Plakhotnik, *et al.*, 2021).

Another aspect that should be included in OJT is discipline. assessment rubric because one of the goals of OJT is for students to be capable of adhering to policies professionally and ethically, as well as organizational procedures and methods. The COVID-19 response plan at the Rutgers Office of Career Exploration and Success includes having its student supervisors develop a remote project list for their interns. However, in stressful situations, having suitable coping mechanisms to deal with these stressors and setting priorities can guard against psychological harm. In fact, coping mechanisms are considered crucial protective factors during periods of high levels of societal stress, such as during epidemics, natural disasters, and wars (James *et al.*, 2019; Jones, 2021; Musid, *et al.*, 2018).

According to him, in the workplace, there are instances where fear holds us back from volunteering to try something new due to uncertainty about our chances of success. However, prayer can serve as a catalyst, encouraging us to take a leap of faith and step up to new challenges. It provides a sense of guidance and reassurance, empowering us to overcome doubts and hesitations. When engaged in long-term on-the-job projects, it is common to experience moments of discouragement and a loss of momentum. During such times, prayer is crucial in maintaining our energy levels and resilience, enabling us to persevere even when progress seems slow. It serves as a source of inspiration and strength, helping us stay focused and motivated, ultimately contributing to our ability to continue working towards our goals (Spruell, 2015).

4.4 Realization of Criminology Student Interns during On-the-Job Training in the Time of Pandemic

These findings are encouraging, and they support the general impression that students fared well during the first wave. Researchers hypothesize that one of the main reasons for this positive response is that many students took an active role during the crisis, as evidenced by the high proportion of students who volunteered and felt useful. This provided a highly enriched extracurricular learning opportunity and most likely contributed to the altered daily life, providing sense and structure. According to a study titled "The Impact of Postgraduate Student Internships during the COVID-19 Pandemic in China", 20.91 and 33.88 percent of postgraduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic had anxiety and depression symptoms. They had significantly higher anxiety and depression scores than Chinese norms. When compared to pre-pandemic data, postgraduate students' mental health problems are worsening (Banna *et al.*, 2020; Garderen & Leeuwen, 2022; Kang & Quan, 2022; Zhang, 2021).

The view advanced by Bouchrika (2023) that On-the-Job Training provides an opportunity to broaden one's professional network is consistent with the study's findings. Building a solid professional network is critical for job advancement. Being kind, friendly, sensitive, and helpful to co-workers and peers during the internship increases

the possibility of making significant connections and developing beneficial relationships. You may make a good impression by showing these attributes and creating doors for future partnerships, mentorship, and career prospects. Cultivating a supportive and collaborative work environment promotes your professional development and contributes to a positive and productive workplace for everyone involved. Thus, the notion of expanding your professional network through On-the-Job Training emphasizes the importance of interpersonal skills and cultivating positive relationships in the workplace.

The related literature and studies mentioned above are about the lived experiences, challenges, coping strategies, and realizations of Criminology student interns during their on-the-job training. The studies are taken from different research studies around the globe; many researchers are studying on-the-job training.

The description of internships faced numerous difficulties and modifications during the epidemic era. Internships, which previously involved on-site experiences and direct interaction, have shifted to remote and virtual formats. As a result, interns have had to be resourceful in looking for virtual learning opportunities, utilizing online training, and figuring out how to network and connect with professionals in their field. Despite the drawbacks, working remotely promoted independence, adaptability, and resilience. During the epidemic period, the internship experience changed, requiring interns to maneuver through virtual worlds while still learning essential skills and insider knowledge about their topic of study.

5. Method

This chapter describes the research methodologies used in this study. These include the research design, researcher's role, research participants, data collection, data analysis methodology, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

5.1 Research Design

This study used qualitative research, specifically the phenomenological design. Qualitative research involves a comprehensive and exploratory approach to understanding and interpreting phenomena by collecting and analyzing non-numerical data. It focuses on capturing the subjective experiences, perspectives, and meanings individuals or groups attribute to a particular phenomenon.

In this study, the researcher aimed to delve into the essence and lived experiences of the participants regarding a specific topic or phenomenon. The phenomenological design specifically aims to uncover the essence and structures of human experiences, exploring the nature of lived experiences and exposing the underlying meanings and patterns. Although there are numerous ways to conduct qualitative research, most of them are adaptable and strongly emphasize preserving a rich sense when analyzing the data. Grounded theory, ethnography, action research, phenomenological research, and narrative research are examples of standard methodologies. While they emphasize

different goals and perspectives, they do have certain commonalities. Because all observations, interpretations, and analyses are mediated independently, they frequently consider themselves "instruments" in this study (Tenny *et al.*, 2022).

Qualitative research also involves the methodical investigation of social phenomena in unstructured settings. These phenomena include, but are not limited to, how people view different aspects of their lives, how people behave either individually or in groups, how businesses run, and how interactions affect interpersonal relationships. This type of research investigates and provides more detailed insights into real-world issues. Rather than collecting numerical data points or intervening or introducing treatments, as in quantitative analysis, qualitative research aids in the generation of hypotheses as well as the further investigation and understanding of quantitative data; it collects participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavior and answers the how and whys rather than how many or how much (Brannan *et al.*, 2017; Teherani, *et al.*, 2015).

Moreover, given that one of the main characteristics of qualitative research is the investigation of characteristics and interpretations addressed by the subject of study, it is entirely appropriate to say that all qualitative research contains a phenomenological component. This study explicitly demonstrated the phenomenological philosophy that gave rise to and permeated all qualitative research; qualitative research explores the complexity of human complexity. Second, although the statement suggests that phenomenological focus need not be used as a data collection strategy in all qualitative research, it does imply that qualitative inquiry is concentrated on the methodical investigation of a problem interpreting of its informants. However, it is only used in specific circumstances depending on the research topic (Darden *et al.*, 2019; Lichtman, 2021).

On the other hand, phenomenology is a research methodology that aims to capture the essence of a phenomenon by looking at it from the viewpoint of those who have experienced it. In terms of what was experienced and how it was experienced, phenomenology seeks to explain the significance of this experience. Different phenomenological approaches have their roots in various conceptions of what and how of human knowledge. In other words, each phenomenological approach originates in a distinct school of philosophy. The scholar must consider their philosophy before selecting a phenomenological research methodology. It is not surprising that a researcher can draw from a wide range of phenomenological traditions, given the variety of philosophies that a scientist can adopt. The transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenological approaches are highlighted in this manuscript, but there is a broader phenomenological landscape (Neubauer *et al.*, 2019).

Furthermore, phenomenology seeks to understand people's actual experiences. In this study, the experiences of student interns during their On-the-Job Training were explored. Additionally, phenomenology is centered on examining people's lived experiences in their worlds. The lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights of the student interns about their On-the-Job Training were denied. The primary

strength of phenomenological analysis was its thorough descriptions of the phenomenon under study (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Roofed, 2022; NeRoofed *et al.*, 2019).

Moreover, the researcher used the phenomenological approach to qualitative research to collect the data. In connection with this, the researcher examined what transpired, why things happened, and what those events meant to the study subjects. As a result, people may learn about the unique experiences and sacrifices these Criminology student interns made to survive their professional course.

5.2 Role of the Researcher

In this study, I ensured research integrity and respect for our participants by anticipating ethical issues at all stages of our research design. It was critical to follow ethical norms in the study to promote the goals of the research study. These values were essential in collaborative work, as well as social and moral values and a good rapport between the participant and the researcher. More interested in comprehending and interpreting the socially constructed world around us were qualitative research questions. This meant that information was gathered from documents, observations, and interviews, frequently coded for analysis as documents (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2018).

Inquiring people about how they performed their typical tasks in their environment was known as contextual inquiry. The principal value was in asking how they typically carried out their tasks. Research participants ran their sessions and ingrained they did (Ross, 2018).

As an inquirer, I worked with others to gain access to the location and potential research participants. Before the study began, we obtained permission from the school administrators. Using the criteria mentioned in this research, I ensured that the participants had experiences and stories pertinent to the study.

Further, interviewers aided participants in understanding research subjects' opinions, behavior, experiences, phenomena, etc., and explored these with them. Open-ended questions were frequently used in interviews to gather comprehensive data.

As an interviewer, I had to receive a written agreement from each participant before conducting an interview. All interviewees received a copy of the consent during the interview. I was responsible for ensuring that interviews were done inside, outlining the projects that would be covered. I informed the participants of the study's objectives and obtained their consent before recording their replies. I assured the participants that their answers would be kept entirely confidential and private under the Data Privacy Act. The most suitable and convenient venue for the participants was chosen for the interview (Newman, 2022).

The information people disclosed during interviews was only sometimes accurate or reliable, even though interviewing was also very important—research participant's knowledge about their motivations, needs, potential future behaviours, and design flaws. Researchers must observe people understand what they did, not just ask them to override. They had to maintain a fair and personal disposition to ensure the study's accuracy. Additionally, I emphasized that participation in the survey was voluntary and

subjects could be withdrawn at any moment. By using this, this research could shield the participants' identities and themselves from prying eyes (Ross, 2018).

Depending on typing speed, transcription was a notoriously time-consuming and tedious task that could take anywhere from three to more than eight hours for one hour of audio. Although written text differed from spoken word in terms of syntax, word choice, and accepted grammar, transcription was not a mechanical process where the written document became an objective record of the event. As a result, the transcriber had to make subjective choices about what to include, whether to correct errors and how to edit grammar and repetitions. My obligation as a transcriber was to transcribe the raw data gathered throughout the studies. Transmitted careful observation of data through record data observation is a necessary first step in data analysis. This familiarity with data and a focus on what was present rather than what was expected might have assisted in developing realizations or ideas that occurred during analysis (Bailey, 2008; Parameswaran *et al.*, 2020).

As an advocate, my main aim was to solve local problems. In other words, the purpose of my qualitative study was to serve as an advocate for the participants in this research. The research participants of my study represented the communities. My research aimed to give readers insight into the essential preparation and strategies they had to use to pass the criminologist's license examination (Wa-Mbaleka, 2020).

As an analyst, I ensured that the data gathered were treated systematically to generate accurate data to support the study. Data analysis began after I collected all the relevant data for the study. In this regard, I followed the Colaizzi Method steps of qualitative data analysis. After assessing the data, it was verified to confirm the conclusions' dependability, generalizability, and validity.

As a researcher, I ensured the study's integrity and respect for our participants by anticipating ethical difficulties at all phases of the research process. Following ethical standards was necessary to support the study's aims and values, which are essential in collaborative work, as well as social and moral values, and to create a constructive relationship between the participant and me (Creswell, 2018).

5.3 Research Participants

The researcher selected participants using a purposive sample strategy. The research participants in this study were Criminology intern students of the Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges General Santos City. In connection with this, semi-structured interviews were utilized to determine the participants' experiences in this phenomenological study. Ten (10) participants were gathered for the in-depth interview (IDI) and ten for the focus group discussion to improve the outcome of this research (FGD). The study's primary goal was to understand the lived experiences of Criminology student interns and their sacrifices during their On-the-Job Training during the pandemic.

In connection with this, the following were the inclusion criteria in selecting the participants of this study: the participant had to be a Criminology student at Ramon

Magsaysay Memorial Colleges General Santos City, the participant had to be enrolled in the academic year of 2021-2022, and the participant had to have undergone internship (On-the-Job Training) during the time of the pandemic.

On the other hand, for the exclusion criteria, it was ensured that no participants were located outside Region 12. Additionally, participants who were not Criminology intern students were excluded from the study. These criteria were implemented to maintain a focused and relevant sample for the research.

5.4 Data Collection

In qualitative research, interviews were used to uncover meaning structures that people used to organize their experiences and make sense of their surroundings. A qualitative research interview was a conversation in which the goal was to collect descriptions of the interviewee's life to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena. The interview aimed to see the study issue through the interviewee's eyes and learn how and why they arrived at that point of view (Hatch, 2012; King, 2014; Kyle, 2013).

The data was gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Interviews enabled the researcher to better understand the phenomenon by asking questions from the perspective of the person being questioned. The researcher was the most essential instrument in the data-gathering process, and interview questions were at the heart of interviewing.

Furthermore, an in-person interview was widely recognized as an excellent method for gaining information from persons who had witnessed or were seeing the situation (Majid *et al.*, 2017).

The researcher obtained permission to conduct the study through a letter from Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges in General Santos City ethics and review committee. The researcher then interviewed the participants as soon as the study's conduct was permitted, and it was conducted during the participants' spare time. In this regard, an in-depth interview guide was developed to promote a complete comprehension of former Criminology student interns' experiences. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, and participants were encouraged to express themselves freely and in their own words.

The researcher then read the questions to the participants twice during the interview. To avoid confusion, the researcher read the questions aloud. Participants were given enough time to think about their replies. Furthermore, the researcher verbally summarized participants' responses to each topic to ensure their views were understood. The researcher obtained permission from the participants to record the interview on audiotape so that the recording would be trustworthy. The recorded discussions were manually transcribed, and the researcher transferred the research findings captured by audio or visual techniques into text format for further analysis. The interview transcript was provided to the participants so that they could depict their thoughts appropriately.

The researcher evaluated the data by looking for patterns in the acquired data and discussing the relevance of the patterns found.

Finally, the researcher suggested keywords and codes for developing subjects. The data were evaluated to uncover themes. Emergent themes encapsulated a significant data component in connection to the research goal. They followed the transcription and reporting of topics, results, and conclusions that could be useful to former Criminology student interns.

5.5 Analysis of Data

The data were read and analyzed individually and carefully. Each narrative response was analyzed in relation to each questionnaire scenario. To answer the research questions section, the researcher attempted to extract various responses and emotions felt by the students through elucidating questions.

Regarding this, the Colaizzi Method for phenomenological data analysis was applied in the following phases. Colaizzi's (1978) data analysis method was a thorough and solid qualitative method that we, as researchers, used to find, understand, describe, and depict the experiences of the participants during their On-the-Job Training, as well as reveal emergent themes and their interwoven relationships. The first step we took was to go through each transcript and reread it to gain a feel for the general topic. In the second stage, we extracted compelling testimonials from the transcript that were related to the issue under research. We recorded these statements on a separate sheet with page and line numbers. The final stage involved interpreting the relevance of these key sentences. In the fourth phase, we organized the produced meanings into categories, clusters of themes, and themes. The fifth phase also included combining the findings to describe the phenomena under research thoroughly. As a result, we utilized a narrative account to offer a detailed presentation of the complete explanation.

Furthermore, the researcher included the emerging themes and topic clusters and formed meanings into the description to build the overall framework and confirm that the study incorporated the experiential aspects. Meanwhile, the sixth phase characterized the phenomenon's essential structure. Finally, study participants confirmed the findings by comparing their descriptive outcomes to their own experiences.

6. Results

This study explored the lived experiences of Criminology student-interns during their On-the-Job Training. This is research about the phenomenology of sacrifice. This chapter includes the description of the study participants, categorization of data, and analysis of the themes for the description, difficulties, coping mechanisms, and insights of Criminology student interns.

6.1 Description of the Participants

The participants in this study who voluntarily underwent in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were all Criminology student interns for the school year 2022-2023. These students were identified as qualified to undergo On-the-Job Training. There are a

total of twenty (20) participants in this study, ten for in-depth interviews and another ten for focus group discussion; the said participants are willing to share their experiences and perspectives about the study.

Additionally, for the in-depth interview of the criminology student interns, the participants are coded as IDI-CSI1, IDI-CSI2, IDI-CSI3, IDI-CSI4, IDI-CSI5, IDI-CSI6, IDI-CSI7, IDI-CSI8, IDI-CSI9, IDI-CSI10, on the other hand, for the focus-group discussion, participants are coded as FGD-CSI1, FGD-CSI2, FGD-CSI3, FGD-CSI4, FGD-CSI5, FGD-CSI6, FGD-CSI7, FGD-CSI8, FGD-CSI9, FGD-CSI10.

Table 1 reflects the emergent themes about the description of the participants on their lived experiences during the On-the-Job Training; the themes are gaining new lessons, being able to extend help, feeling excited about limited learning, expectation gone wrong, and developing community involvement.

Table 1: The Experiences of the Criminology Student Interns in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Criminology student interns can perform in the field. Affect student interns' perspectives. Help student interns to enhance leadership skills. Gain knowledge about barangay meetings.	Gain New Lesson
Assist people with vaccination. Facilitate vaccination program. Student-intern experienced being officer-on-charge and handling group members.	Able to Extend Help
Became excited with the difficult training. Being motivated by others. Felt happy and excited to experience OJT finally. I am excited because, finally, the four years of waiting are already happening. They are excited to share what they have learned from school.	Feeling Excited
It didn't felt very pleasant to only learn a little. Learning cannot be manifested to some students. OJT feels lacking. Actions and work are limited. Limited learning due to poor connection. Unable to use online platform. A slow internet connection frustrates them.	Limited Learning
I was disappointed due to the high expectations. Unsatisfied because of lack of experience. All of the expectations turn into nothing. Expectations were not met. I felt sad due to the wrong expectations.	Expectation Gone Wrong
Able to help the community. Develop camaraderie. Showed teamwork. Help those who are in need. Accommodate people for vaccination.	Develop Community Involvement

Table 2: The Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of the Criminology Student Interns in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
I. Challenges	
There are expenses every day. Need for money to support oneself every day. Need to earn money and work even after OJT. Do not know where to get money.	Financial Constraints
Dealing with people is difficult for them. Some people do not listen when they are asked to fall in line during vaccination. It is hard to facilitate hard-headed people. Find it difficult to interact with diverse people.	Dealing People
Experienced fatigue because work is exhausting. Health issues due to being paranoid about COVID-19. Afraid to be infected with the virus. Dealing with many people makes them feel tired. They feel very tired from work. The work and classes are draining.	Health Issues Due to Exhaustion
Encounter time management issues. Turn between OJT and online classes. Find it hard to manage time since they have classes after work. Conflict of time between academic and OJT.	Unable to Manage Time
II. Coping Mechanisms	
Prayer develops character. Prayer strengthens the student-interns. Put prayer first in everything. Prayer helps to overcome problems.	Being Prayerful
Think positive no matter how difficult the situation is. Avoid thinking negative thoughts. Strive hard and never give up. Keep the positivity and being motivated.	Being Optimistic
Find ways to solve problems. Think of possible solutions to every problem. Look for strategies to overcome bad situations. Coping techniques are very useful.	Strategic Solutions
Motivate oneself and do not rely on others. Become more flexible and equip oneself with new learning. Develop oneself every day. Discipline oneself to do the task.	Self-Motivation
Manage time properly. Make yourself ready. Prepare ahead of time. Know when to take a break.	Balancing Time

Table 2 shows challenges and coping mechanisms for Criminology student-interns in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. It consists of two parts: the challenges and the coping mechanisms. Four essential themes emerged for the first part, which is about the challenges: financial constraints, dealing with people, health issues due to exhaustion, and inability to manage time. On the other hand, for the second

part, which is about coping mechanisms, five emergent themes emerged, namely: being prayerful, being optimistic, strategic solutions, self-motivation, and balancing time.

Table 3: The Insights of the Criminology Student-Interns in Their On-the-Job Training (OJT) amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Make a weekly planner wherein all the incoming works are written. Specify what you need to do in the planner. Set a due date. Make a time frame for all the tasks to be accomplished. Achieve what you have written in the schedule.	Create a Schedule
Give importance to your life every day. Do your best all the time. Appreciate the days given by the Lord.	Cherish Every Moment
Avoid what is not suitable for you. Work ahead of time. Manage time very well. What you can do at the moment, do it right away. Prioritize important things first.	Set Priorities
Engage with activities like jogging. Keep yourself healthy. Do some exercise. Prioritize your health.	Invest Time for Physical Activity
Always be flexible. Be available all the time. Do your task without complaining. Be prepared physically, financially, mentally, and spiritually.	Be Flexible
Prepare for the next journey. Whatever happens, be prepared always. Be ready for the things that might happen to you. Prepare for the worst and have a contingency plan.	Be Ready
Follow the instructor's instructions. Always follow instructions, and do not be lousy. Obey first before you complain. If you are given a task, follow it.	Follow Instructions
Do not rely on other people for your success. Strive harder in life and keep on fighting. Keep your faith and never give up despite how hard life is. Have a mental fortitude in addressing problems.	Always Persevere

Table three shows the insights of the Criminology student interns in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eight essential themes emerged from their insights: create a schedule, cherish every moment, set priorities, invest time in physical activity, be flexible, be ready, follow instructions, and persevere.

7. Discussion

This section of the study presents the discussion of the study together with the related literature that will support the present study, its implications for practice and future researchers, and the concluding remarks of the survey of the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights of Criminology student interns doing their On-the-Job Training (OJT).

The study sought to describe the experiences of the student-interns undergoing On-the-Job Training (OJT), especially their views, feelings, and how these affect them. As a result, during the in-depth interview and focus group discussions, this study gathered pertinent data from the participants. The following are the emergent themes under the experiences of the Criminology student interns; gaining new lessons, being able to extend help, challenging experiences, feeling excited, limited learning, expectations that went wrong, and developing community involvement. based on the challenges of the Criminology student interns during OJT, the following are the emergent themes; financial constraints, dealing with people, health issues due to exhaustion, and unable to manage time. coping mechanisms; being prayerful, being optimistic, strategic solutions, self-motivation, and balancing time. The emergent themes on the insights of the Criminology student intern on their OJT are the following: create a schedule, set priorities, invest time for physical activity, be flexible, be ready, productivity matters, follow instructions, and remain perseverant.

7.1 The Experiences of the Criminology Student Interns in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

The results for Table 1 reflect the emergent themes of the experiences of the Criminology Student-Interns in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic, namely: learning a new lesson, being able to extend help, excitement, limited learning, expectations gone wrong, and developing community involvement.

Internships are experiential learning that blends knowledge and experience, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Internships help students to get significant applied experience and create connections in professional sectors of interest by combining classroom theory with practical application and skill development in a professional context. They are interested in future career paths while also providing employers with the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. An OJT allows you to practice the actual methodologies of a specific job while using real tools, equipment, and documents. Difficulties arise in monitoring students by their advisers, mainly if the OJT establishment is located far from the university. This is critical because monitoring allows advisers to ensure that the student is progressing in their job duties in a company (Española *et al.*, 2018).

A. Gain New Lesson

The Criminology student interns can carry out fieldwork; their OJT has a significant impact on their perspectives, and it has helped them develop their leadership abilities and learn about barangay meetings, objectives, and memorandum of the barangay upon conducting activities, information about vaccination and learning about dealing with people in our community. The said result can be supported by the notion of Murphy & Gibbons (2017), which states that many baccalaureate degree programs in Criminal Justice (CJ) encourage students' participation in experiential or field learning activities, like finishing an internship or practicum. He further studies that through internships, students can spend time in a professional field setting such as a police department, probation office, prison, or social service agency, where they can observe criminal justice practitioners and, in some cases, directly participate in specific pre-professional level activities—the interns in the field of criminal justice typically complete unpaid volunteer internships at public or nonprofit organizations.

B. Able to Extend Help

The opportunity to assist those assigned to the specific barangay was given to the intern students. In fact, they facilitate vaccination programs and help people get immunized. They also help various people every day inside the barangay hall. In connection with this, Española *et al.* (2018) shed light on the fact that internships provide students with significant applied experience and connections in the professional domains in which they are interested in future career paths while also providing employers with the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. An OJT allows you to practice the actual methodologies of a specific job while using fundamental tools, equipment, and documents.

The notion put forth by Bouchrika (2023) that On-the-Job Training provides an opportunity to expand one's professional network aligns with the study's findings. Building a solid professional network is critical for job advancement, growth and development. Being polite, friendly, sensitive, and helpful to colleagues and peers during the internship enhances the chances of creating meaningful connections and fostering positive relationships. Demonstrating these qualities can establish a favourable impression and open doors for future collaborations, mentorship, and career opportunities. Cultivating a supportive and collaborative work environment benefits your professional growth and creates a positive and productive atmosphere for everyone involved. Thus, the notion of expanding your professional network through On-the-Job Training emphasizes the importance of interpersonal skills and cultivating positive relationships in the workplace.

C. Challenging Experiences

Students from different schools have characterized their experiences as complex Villamis (2021), and they faced difficulties because a pandemic was in progress, and they might contract the virus. The intern students faced various challenges during their OJT, primarily due to the meagre tasks assigned to them. The limited scope of responsibilities

may have hindered their ability to engage and apply their skills and knowledge fully. Furthermore, the interns expressed concerns about their risky environment and their health being at stake. Given the nature of their OJT, which involved interacting with numerous people, they felt exposed to potential health risks, including the possibility of contracting viruses from entertaining strangers. These concerns about personal safety and well-being add an additional layer of difficulty and stress to their internship experience.

D. Feeling Excited

There was a palpable sense of passion and excitement among the intern students about their training. They expressed gratitude for the opportunity to actively participate in On-the-Job Training (OJT) and share the knowledge and skills they gained throughout their academic journey. The thought of undertaking complex tasks during training piqued their interest, seeing it as an opportunity to improve their skills. Furthermore, their peers inspired the students, who acted as role models and encouraged them to make the most of their training experience. This collective passion fostered a positive and energetic environment, generating a conducive learning setting in which the intern students were eager to embrace the difficulties and opportunities given by OJT (Lorbes, 2019).

Lorbes (2019) provided support for the result. There was a noticeable sense of passion and excitement among the intern students about their instruction during her OJT. They were intrigued by the prospect of completing challenging tasks during training because they saw it as an opportunity to develop their skills. In addition, the students were motivated by their peers, who served as role models and urged them to make the most of their training experience. This shared enthusiasm created a positive and vibrant environment, resulting in a conducive learning environment in which intern students were eager to embrace the challenges and opportunities provided by OJT.

E. Limited Learning

Limited learning was another theme that emerged from the descriptions of intern students with their OJT. They found it disappointing that they only learned a small amount, that some students' learning cannot be seen, that OJT feels inadequate and that the scope of their actions and work is restricted. The participants also viewed their experiences as they encountered poor connections; they could not use the online platform, and a slow internet connection frustrated them. Also, the internet provided is not consistent. All over the world, post-secondary institutions were devastated by the COVID-19 crisis. It was highlighted by Shine & Brown (2021) that faculty had to convert traditional classroom instruction into online courses almost immediately. This presented many difficulties, especially for the academics in charge of internship supervision. Many students received the news that their internships with the organizations, divisions, and courts where they had been placed would come to an end. This change resulted from a combination of factors, including agencies' restriction to only hiring essential personnel

and universities' reservations about continuing internships despite agency approval due to the elevated risk to students' health and well-being.

While most students praised the online portal's ease of use, it was also reported that the current portal was not helpful in the overall learning experience. Emphasized in the research of Asio *et al.* (2021) that this could be due to poor Internet connectivity at some students' homes, which prevented them from occasionally accessing the portal. Similarly, some professors stated that the quality and reliability of Internet connections posed a significant barrier to online teaching. The move to online learning has underlined the importance of the digital divide between those who have reliable Internet infrastructure, laptop computers, and smartphones and those who do not. Internet speed and reliability vary by neighbourhood and household income, particularly in developing countries like Egypt.

F. Expectation Gone Wrong

One of the joys of a student's life is On-the-Job Training (OJT). This experience will teach you vital life skills that you may apply to your future profession and life. If you have not participated in an OJT before, you probably base your expectations on movies or a friend's narrative. However, it may be a completely different tale in the real world. (Sigue, 2019). Regarding their OJT, the intern students' expectations were not met. They had high expectations because they had been waiting so long for it, but because of their high expectations and lack of experience, they were left feeling unsatisfied. They could not have the OJT in the stations they liked. Instead, they were sent to barangays.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a state of emergency was declared, forcing universities all over the country to close in March 2020, and it was supported in the study by Shine and Brown (2021). Faculty abruptly switched classes from face-to-face instruction to entirely online learning. This situation presented numerous challenges, especially for the faculty members who were instructing and supervising interns. Agencies and departments abruptly terminated interns from their positions as they switched to using only essential personnel. Faculty worked frantically to develop online learning opportunities that satisfied both the objectives of the criminal justice students enrolled in these courses and the academic learning outcomes.

G. Develop Community Involvement

The intern students were able to support the neighbourhood, foster camaraderie, sow teamwork, assist those in need, and provide space for vaccinations.

One of the best methods is On-the-Job Training, which is organized, planned, and carried out at the employee's place of employment. It is frequently the primary strategy for expanding skill sets. It is also known as "direct instruction," and it is one-on-one training on the job site where someone proficient in a task demonstrates how to do another. According to Pastore & Pompili (2020), it is particularly appropriate for developing proficiency skills specific to an employee's job, especially jobs that require locally owned equipment and facilities. Most of the work that participants in on-the-job

training performed was unspecialized or semi-specialized and did not call for specialized knowledge.

On-the-Job Training is one of the best methods because it is planned, organized, and carried out at the employee's workplace. It is typically the primary method for broadening skills. It is especially appropriate for developing proficiency skills specific to an employee's job, especially jobs that require locally owned equipment and facilities. It is also known as "direct instruction." It is one-on-one training on the employment location where someone who knows how to do one duty shows how to do another. Anoyo *et al.* (2015) verified that most of the work done during On-the-Job Training was unskilled or semiskilled employment that did not need specialist expertise. In fact, it is probably the most popular training method because it only requires a person who knows how to do the task and the tools that person uses to do the task. It consists of both verbal and written instructions: hands-on practice and imitation, demonstration, and observation.

According to the research of Aydinan and Mina (2019), the Commission on Higher Education requires various programs to complete internships because they help students explore the relationships between the knowledge and skills acquired in college and those required in working situations. In fact, the department is constantly updating its policies and guidelines for a student internship program in the Philippines.

7.2 The Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of the Criminology Student-Interns in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

The challenges and coping mechanisms of the Criminology student-interns in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic consist of two parts: the first part is the challenges, and the second part is the coping mechanisms. Five essential themes emerged for the first part, which are about the challenges; these are financial, dealing with people, health issues, inability to manage time and exhausting work. On the other hand, six emergent themes emerged for the second part, which is about coping mechanisms, namely: prayer, being optimistic, strategic, self-motivation, self-discipline, and balance time.

A. Financial Constraints

Student interns discuss their struggles with money because they have daily expenses, and they need financial support to earn money to meet their daily needs. They shared that it is challenging for them since they travel every day going to their assigned working place, and it added to their expense considering that it was the COVID-19 pandemic and the crisis is high. Moreover, the COVID-19 outbreak has hurt almost every aspect of our society, as cited by Aucejo *et al.* (2020), who state that higher education is no different. For both students and colleges, anecdotal evidence presents a grim picture. According to the American Council on Education, enrollment is predicted to decline by 15% in the autumn of 2020, and many schools may face requests for significant tuition reductions if classes stay virtual. Similarly, pupils are confronted with an increasingly unpredictable world. Financial and health shocks (for example, a lack of resources to complete their

studies or the fear of becoming seriously ill), as well as the transition to online learning, are all factors.

B. Dealing People

Since it was the COVID-19 pandemic, the student interns find hard to manage some people, especially during vaccination; dealing with people is difficult for them because some people do not listen when they are asked to fall in line to get vaccinated; for them, it was hard to facilitate hard-headed people, and they find it difficult to interact with diverse people. One of the severe problems college students encounter is adjusting and coping with their new environment right after secondary this was assisted by McGregor & Nietzl (2020), who stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges to students, educators, and parents. A person's transition from school to work is a critical adjustment period. School-to-work transition programs are available to assist students with the transition. The On-the-Job Training (OJT) program is an example of such a program. Most schools in the Philippines have adopted this policy. Previous experiences show that students in OJT face difficulties, challenges, and conflicting situations. The students are in situations that will either make or break them. They require assistance and direction as they apply what they have learned at this stage or level of their lives.

C. Health Issues

Some health issues arose during their OJT; student interns experienced fatigue because they were exposed to many people, they also have health issues due to COVID-19, and they are afraid to be infected with the virus. The results can be supported by Bugis's (2021) literature, which states that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted internship activities in Saudi Arabia. Because of the lack of approved vaccines and the rapid spread of COVID-19, health organizations have taken various actions regarding the issue of conducting internships during the COVID-19 pandemic. An analysis of existing private data was performed in this study. The impact of COVID-19 on active internship activities at Saudi health organizations and the reasons for these organizations' actions were described, tested, and assessed. The emotional reactions of interns to the impact of COVID-19 on the continuation of their internships and their satisfaction levels with these internships were investigated and measured.

D. Unable to Manage Time

Student-interns have encountered time management issues; they were turned between OJT and online classes, and they find it hard to manage time since they have classes after work. Taking On-the-Job Training is challenging. The students must complete the task assigned to them by their superiors, e. The trainees were assigned to various units in order to improve their skills. In carrying out the task, superior inter-student communication is one of the fundamental requirements for increasing and developing each student's productivity. The superior must demonstrate and teach the specific skills or tasks. They are also the people in the organization who teach the students the

necessary knowledge and skills. Problems between students and superiors must be avoided for them to have a good relationship and complete all of the necessary assignments. The intern should always be available. When employed, they must be active in learning new skills whenever their superior is teaching them to understand the importance of the job. It was explained in the study of Anoyo *et al.* (2015) that On-the-Job Training is one of the best methods because it is planned, organized, and carried out at the employee's workplace. It is typically the primary method for broadening skills. It is especially appropriate for developing proficiency skills specific to an employee's job, especially jobs that require locally owned equipment and facilities. It is also known as "direct instruction." It is one-on-one training on the location of someone who knows how to do a task and demonstrates how to do another. The type of work that people did during their On-the-Job Training was unskilled primarily or semiskilled work that did not require specialized knowledge. In fact, it is probably the most popular training method because it only requires a person who knows how to do the task and the tools that person uses to do the task. It consists of both verbal and written instructions: hands-on practice and imitation, demonstration, and observation.

E. Exhausting Work

Dealing with many people makes them feel very tired; they said that they also feel exhausted from work, and the work and classes are draining. Research carried out at the start of the pandemic in China showed that the symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress, and panic disorders had increased compared to during the COVID-19 outbreak (Qiu *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, the importance of psychological protective factors regarding the fear of coronavirus 2019 cannot be understated.

Students suffered more from a lack of internship opportunities at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic's final year, and their graduation was delayed. However, some alternatives emerged after a while, such as remote internships, where a student could work from home for his or her intern institution, and research, which aided final-year students the most. Most universities encouraged their students to conduct research rather than internships, which helped students complete their degrees, but some issues arose. All the students were unwilling to conduct research. They believed that an internship was more beneficial to professional working life than research. Many students want to do internships because getting a respectable job is essential for students in South Asia for various reasons. As a result, many students want to do an internship, which allows them to gain real-world experience. Students gain corporate life experience; they learn how to work in a team, how to solve problems in the workplace, and, most importantly, they want a certificate. However, due to safety concerns, most companies stopped offering internships during the pandemic. Some companies offer remote internships where anyone can work from home, but students say that a remote internship lacks the authentic feel of an internship. Because of the COVID-19 issue, many companies rejected the internship proposal.

7.3 Coping Mechanisms of the Criminology Student Interns in Their On-the-Job Training (OJT) amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

A. Being Prayerful

During their internship, student interns cultivate a sense of trust in God through the practice of prayer. They firmly believe that the Lord is attentive to their requests and that He considers all aspects of their experiences within the greater context that only He can perceive. Prayer becomes a transformative process for the interns, shaping their character and strengthening their faith. They recognize the importance of prioritizing prayer in every aspect of their lives, acknowledging its profound impact on their journey. By placing prayer at the forefront, the student interns seek to align their actions and decisions with their faith, fostering a deeper connection with God and grounding themselves in His guidance and wisdom. This reliance on prayer reinforces their spiritual beliefs and influences their perspectives and approach to their internship, promoting a sense of purpose and trust in the path laid before them.

The findings align with Spruell's (2015) literature, which suggests that fear often inhibits individuals from volunteering for new endeavours due to uncertainties surrounding their likelihood of success. Nonetheless, prayer can serve as a catalyst, motivating individuals to embrace challenges by instilling a sense of guidance and reassurance. It empowers individuals to overcome doubts and hesitations, encouraging them to take a leap of faith. In the context of long-term on-the-job projects, it is expected to encounter discouragement and experience a loss of momentum. During such periods, prayer is vital in sustaining energy levels and resilience, enabling individuals to persevere even when progress appears sluggish. Prayer helps individuals remain focused, motivated, and determined to continue progressing toward their goals by providing inspiration and strength.

B. Being Optimistic

Optimism plays a vital role in the lives of intern students, influencing their outlook and approach to obstacles. It entails the confidence that positive outcomes are feasible, especially in the face of problems or barriers, and that their objectives will be fulfilled in the end. Those who embrace optimism firmly believe in their ability to succeed through a lucky break, dedicated effort, or unflinching determination. Maintaining a positive perspective is critical for the pupils, regardless of the severity of the issue. They deliberately work to keep an upbeat outlook and actively avoid negative ideas. By cultivating this optimistic view, people are motivated to put up their best effort because they are determined to never give up on their goals. This positive outlook equips individuals to overcome obstacles with resiliency and inspires hope and inspiration, advancing them on their path to achievement.

In seeking guidance on managing stressors related to the pandemic, individuals may find value in exploring coping mechanisms that have proven successful for others. Li *et al.* (2020) highlight the significance of understanding the coping strategies employed

by individuals during challenging times. Among these strategies, two noteworthy examples are prayer and maintaining a positive outlook. These tactics offer potential avenues for individuals to navigate the difficulties brought about by the pandemic. Additionally, these coping mechanisms can be integrated into outreach initiatives and mental health education programs, serving as valuable tools to promote community resilience and well-being. By sharing experiences and insights regarding these coping strategies, individuals can find solace and inspiration, ultimately fostering a collective effort to address and overcome pandemic-related stressors.

C. Strategic solutions

Intern students know the value of investing extra time and energy in developing a sense of cohesion and openness in the academic community. By actively participating in this process, they boost their chances of succeeding throughout their On-the-Job Training. Because of how tough their training is, they are forced to cultivate strategic thinking abilities and learn how to perform well under pressure. Additionally, the intern students show that they have problem-solving skills by actively looking for answers to every difficulty they face and coming up with plans to deal with challenging circumstances. By being proactive, they hope to improve how the academic community functions as a whole and foster an atmosphere of cooperation and support that will help everyone engage, grow, and succeed.

Bendez *et al.* (2019) emphasize the significance of the regulatory fit framework in their study, which suggests that individuals who employ coping mechanisms they perceive as most effective are more successful in managing their stress response. This framework underscores the importance of aligning one's chosen coping strategies with one's personal preferences and beliefs. When individuals feel that their coping mechanisms are congruent with their own values and goals, they are more likely to experience a sense of control over their stress levels. By understanding and selecting coping strategies that resonate with them, individuals can enhance their ability to navigate stressful situations and maintain their overall well-being. This insight highlights the value of self-awareness and individualized approaches to managing stress. It underscores the potential impact of choosing coping mechanisms that align with one's personal preferences and perceptions of effectiveness.

D. Self-Motivation

For intern students, the belief in self-motivation holds significant importance. They recognize the need to rely on their drive and determination rather than on external sources for motivation. This self-motivation enables them to cultivate flexibility and adaptability during their On-the-Job Training (OJT), allowing them to embrace new learning experiences and apply them to real-life situations. Moreover, intern students exhibit self-discipline in their work, even when faced with tasks that may not align directly with their field of expertise. This discipline empowers them to manage their time and develop a strong work ethic effectively. By embodying self-discipline, intern

students actively shape their character and foster personal growth, equipping themselves with valuable skills that extend beyond their OJT experience.

Criminology intern students appeared to be resilient in the face of these challenges. Remarkably, such young students feel a strong desire and responsibility to provide care under challenging circumstances. According to Leigh *et al.* (2021), student interns who did internships during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated tremendous personal resilience. It was supported in the literature of Garderen and Leeuwen (2021) that peer support appears to be an essential source of resilience. Sharing their experiences with others assists them in processing what they have gone through. It is striking that none of the students mentions their faculty as a source of support. In these extraordinary circumstances, this is most likely not their first source of assistance or support.

E. Balancing Time

As intern students handle the rigors of their On-the-Job Training (OJT) alongside their academic commitments, managing their time becomes vital. They prioritise excellent time management methods since they understand the necessity of managing time properly. They recognize the value of planning ahead, enabling them to maximize productivity and reduce conflicts between their OJT and classes. Intern students ensure they are prepared to take on both tasks by effectively planning their schedules, and they do it without sacrificing the standard of their work or academic success. This approach to time management displays their capacity for multitasking and their commitment to professional development. Overall, intern students manage their OJT and academic commitments successfully thanks to their adept time management. Some researchers define well-being as equilibrium, claiming everyone has a happy baseline. Resources, psychic income, and subjective well-being are all in a state of flux. It was emphasized in the research of Plakhotnik *et al.* (2021) that this equilibrium includes "*physical well-being, plenty of physical resources, absence of fatigue, psychological well-being and evenness of temper, freedom of movement and effectiveness in action, and good relationships with others.*" From this vantage point, well-being could be defined as the equilibrium point between an individual's resource pool and their challenges. Students face various challenges, demands, and turbulences as they complete their programs under the influence of COVID-19. For example, they face a variety of social and economic pressures, must balance education, family, and work responsibilities, and face social isolation, discrimination, language barriers, and cross-cultural differences. Students at all levels of education and across all disciplines must have timely and adequate resources to address these demands and succeed in their pursuit of education and a profession. These resources help to address students' needs and, thus, reduce burnout and stress while increasing engagement in learning activities, meaning-making, and life satisfaction.

7.4 The Insights of the of the Criminology Student Interns in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

The insights of the Criminology student interns in their On-the-Job Training (OJT) during the COVID-19 Pandemic cover eight essential themes that emerged: create a schedule, cherish every moment, set priorities, invest time in physical activity, be flexible, be ready always, productivity matters, follow instructions, and persevere.

A. Create a Schedule

Creating daily and weekly plans for their tasks demonstrates a proactive attitude to time management for intern students. They know the organization's value and use tools like planners and calendars to handle their responsibilities efficiently. They establish defined objectives and prioritize their responsibilities by outlining tasks, establishing due dates, and allotting time frames for each activity. This organized strategy enables intern students to maintain concentration, adhere to deadlines, and monitor their advancement toward attaining their goals. Additionally, by sticking to their routines, students learn responsibility and discipline, enabling them to utilize their time as effectively as possible. Intern students maximize their productivity and improve their chances of successfully completing their objectives and goals via careful planning and adherence to their timetables.

Career services offices are essential in ensuring that student interns are actively involved in crisis planning and responding to the ongoing issues brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic. By describing the COVID-19 response strategy put in place at the Rutgers Office of Career Exploration and Success, William Jones (2021), they have emphasized the importance of this inclusion. As part of this strategy, student supervisors are tasked with creating a list of remote projects specially tailored for their interns. This strategy enables the continuation of internships by giving participants duties that are both meaningful and pertinent and that can be done remotely. The career services office fosters a collaborative environment where the internship experience is tailored to the requirements and circumstances of each intern by incorporating student supervisors in this process. This proactive strategy ensures that student interns are not left behind in the face of the epidemic but are offered worthwhile opportunities to advance their knowledge, careers, and communities.

B. Cherish Every Moment

The intern students stress the value of savouring each moment of life. They contend that people must appreciate the importance of each day and live fully during it. They encourage people to continually put forth their best efforts and start each day with gratitude and appreciation. The intern kids credit their outlook on life and the blessings given to them by a higher power for helping them develop this attitude. By loving the present and accepting the possibilities and challenges that come their way, they inspire others to adopt a similar outlook. The intern students believe that people can live more purposeful, rewarding lives by appreciating each day and acting with appreciation.

In their study, "Student Internship Experiences during the Covid-19," Garderen and van Leeuwen (2022) discussed the tremendous effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on how care is seen, organized, and provided. Their findings highlight how the epidemic has drastically changed many facets of the caring process. As people and institutions had to adjust to new difficulties and uncertainties, the pandemic called for adjustments in how care is regarded. Significant changes have also been made in how healthcare is managed, with the use of remote and virtual methods becoming more common to guarantee service continuity and safety. Additionally, the epidemic has caused healthcare professionals and interns to adapt their techniques while considering the enormous challenges they face while providing care. Overall, the study emphasizes the crucial part that the COVID-19 epidemic plays in changing the landscape of care and underlines the necessity for continual research and adaptation to deal with new problems that are coming up in the industry.

C. Set Priorities

Students doing their internships know how important it is to refrain from harmful actions or attitudes that affect their own well-being. They know how important it is to make decisions that will advance their general well-being. They also stress the significance of excellent time management, forward planning, and work prioritization. They may maximize their time and guarantee that crucial tasks are completed on time by working effectively and proactively. These observations demonstrate the intern students' dedication to personal development and proactive strategy for achieving their objectives. It is crucial to have reliable coping techniques ready for when things get difficult or stressful. Having such processes can help shield people from suffering psychological harm, claim James *et al.* (2019). Coping mechanisms are fundamental when societal stress increases, such as during epidemics, natural catastrophes, or conflicts. They work as protective elements that help people endure challenging situations and maintain their mental health. People can prioritize their well-being, manage stress effectively, and increase their overall resilience by learning and using suitable coping methods.

D. Invest Time for Physical Activity

The Criminology student interns understand how important it is to prioritize their health, well-being, and physical activity. They have discovered the importance of making time for physical activity like jogging to maintain good physical health. They realize that by including regular physical activity in their routine, they can gain various advantages, including improved fitness, vitality, and general well-being. For them, maintaining good physical health is essential to their success and happiness in the long run, as well as their current well-being. The Criminology student interns highlight the value of self-care and acknowledge that a healthy body leads to a healthy mind and a more productive and meaningful life by prioritising physical activity.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs expose students to work in the field of their choice and prepare them for life after they graduate from university or college.

Furthermore, in the findings of the study by Aydinan & Mina (2019), an internship is an essential component of an academic curriculum in higher education institutions because it allows undergraduate students to incorporate work-related experience and knowledge into their formal education at a university by participating in supervised and planned work in a real-world professional environment. The Commission on Higher Education requires the various programs to complete internships because they will help students explore the relationships between the knowledge and skills acquired in college and those required in working situations. In fact, the department is constantly updating its policies and guidelines for a student internship program in the Philippines.

E. Be Flexible

Intern students understand the value of flexibility in Criminology internship roles. They know that unforeseen events and changes could occur, necessitating modifications to their plans and strategies. They are ready to accept jobs and responsibilities without reservation or complaint, acknowledging the need to be accessible and responsive whenever necessary. Additionally, they stress how important it is to be organized on all fronts, including financial, emotional, spiritual, and physical ones. By developing a well-rounded level of readiness, they hope to overcome obstacles more skillfully and enhance their internship experience. Through internships, it was highlighted by Murphy & Gibbons (2017) that students could spend time in a professional field setting (such as a police department, probation office, correctional facility, or social service agency), where they can observe criminal justice practitioners and, in some cases, take part in specific pre-professional level activities directly. The interns in the field of criminal justice typically complete unpaid volunteer internships at public or nonprofit organizations.

F. Be Ready Always

Students doing Criminology internships know the value of being ready for their future endeavours. They value preparing for different scenarios since they know that unpredictability and unexpected events can happen. They see the importance of proactively arming themselves with the abilities, information, and resources needed to handle any obstacles or chances that may come their way. They want to accelerate their professional development, make the most of their educational opportunities, and set themselves up for future job success by adopting a preparation and preparedness mindset. These findings are encouraging, and they support the general impression that students fared well during the first wave. Cited by Garderen & Leeuwen (2021), one of the main reasons for this positive response is that many students took an active clinical role during the crisis, as evidenced by the high proportion of students who volunteered and felt useful. The University of Geneva coordinated and organized opportunities for its medical students to actively participate in handling the COVID-19 crisis from the start. This provided a highly enriched extracurricular learning opportunity and most likely contributed to the altered daily life, providing sense and structure.

G. Follow Instructions

During their training, intern students are expected to follow instructions to the letter. They are aware of the significance of following the guidelines set forth by their lecturers and managers. By obeying instructions, they show their dedication to studying and doing things well. They intentionally avoid being sloppy or neglectful in their work because they understand how crucial accuracy and attention to detail are to getting the job done well. During the OJT time, they place a high value on obedience and see it as a crucial part of their professional development.

Internships enable students to get significant applied experience while also making contacts in professional domains of interest. They are interested in future career paths while also providing employers with the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. It was explained in the study of Española *et al.* (2018) that an OJT allows you to practice the actual methodologies of a specific job while using fundamental tools, equipment, and documents. Difficulties arise in monitoring students by their advisers, mainly if the OJT establishment is located far from the university. This is critical because monitoring allows advisers to ensure that the student is progressing in their job duties in a company.

H. Persevere

Criminology student interns exhibit a strong feeling of independence and tenacity. They realize that their success depends more on their own efforts and resolve than it does on those of others. They are motivated by a constant desire to accomplish their objectives and get beyond challenges. They retain a resilient mindset despite the difficulty, holding fast to their faith and refusing to give up. They are motivated and propelled forward by their unflinching dedication to ongoing progress and growth, which keeps them focused on the road to success.

According to the findings of the study titled "Student Internship Experiences During the Covid-19, the Covid-19 pandemic" has significantly impacted how care is perceived, organized, and delivered. We can distinguish between an impact on a professional and a personal level. The impact on interpersonal functioning is mentioned strongly at both levels. The COVID-19 contamination prevention measures have complicated the communication process in various ways. These complications concern the connection between nurse and patient and between patient and their social environment. Students report that providing person-centred care is more complicated. This critical value of the nursing profession appears to be under threat of extinction.

8. Implication for Practice

This study covers the participants' lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights about their On-the-Job Training during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has the following implications and recommendations.

The findings of this study, which capture the experiences and descriptions of Criminology intern students during the COVID-19 pandemic, hold great potential in

aiding the school administration, particularly the school president, executive director for academic affairs, and college deans, in gaining a deep understanding of the challenges faced by these interns. Before the pandemic, comprehensive Programs of Instruction (POIs) were in place to guide Criminology interns during their off-campus, On-the-Job Training in various training establishments in General Santos City. However, the unforeseen impact of the pandemic necessitated deviations from these POIs due to the implementation of necessary restrictions and protocols.

The study's outcomes provide a valuable resource for school administrators to craft innovative strategies that ensure high-quality OJT experiences, even within the new regular learning modality. By drawing upon the insights garnered from this study, administrators can proactively adapt and create a supportive environment that facilitates compelling OJT experiences, considering the unique circumstances presented by the pandemic.

The findings of this research shed light on the experiences and challenges faced by Criminology student interns during their On-the-Job Training during the COVID-19 pandemic. By understanding their lived experiences, this research aims to provide valuable insights to these students, enabling them to comprehend the unique circumstances they encounter and the difficulties that arise. Moreover, it is a source of encouragement, fostering resilience and positivity among the interns, who may feel disheartened in the face of an unfavorable situation affecting everyone. This research offers a transformative platform through which students can reframe their perspectives, finding optimism and hope amidst adversity.

Future researchers who are planning to investigate the same or related studies will find the information offered in this research study to be of great use. They can deepen their awareness of the subject topic and add to the body of knowledge by exploring the study's findings and key conclusions. This research acts as a useful resource, offering a strong framework for follow-up studies and enabling researchers to broaden their viewpoints and delve further into the nuances of the topic. The information gained from this study will help the field develop and advance while encouraging a more thorough and informed exchange of ideas among academics and researchers.

8.1 Gain a New Lesson

During their On-the-Job Training (OJT), Criminology interns benefit greatly from participating in fieldwork, as it significantly contributes to their understanding of the discipline. By directly encountering real-world events, interns gain valuable insights and develop a more profound comprehension of the complexities inherent in Criminology. This hands-on training fosters the enhancement of critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills, enabling interns to handle responsibilities and navigate challenging situations effectively. To ensure a well-rounded training experience, the college dean and the host training establishment must collaborate on developing a revised memorandum of agreement (MOA) that explicitly outlines the incorporation of classroom instruction and practical activities.

8.2 Able to Extend Help

The opportunity for Criminology intern students to assist the designated barangay brings significant benefits. By actively engaging with the local community, interns can positively impact the lives of the individuals they interact with. This practical experience allows them to apply their knowledge and skills, develop empathy and a sense of responsibility, and gain a deeper understanding of the unique needs and challenges faced by the community. Moreover, it enhances their problem-solving abilities, fosters closer community relationships, and reinforces the importance of community engagement in their future professional pursuits.

8.3 Feeling Excited

The students' passion and eagerness for their education were evident as they embarked on their challenging training. They found certain aspects of the experience particularly exhilarating, which fueled their enthusiasm and instilled a sense of accomplishment. They were excited about their On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunity and were eager to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their academic courses. The optimization of the learning experience can be achieved by providing student interns with a stimulating, enjoyable, and engaging environment. Creating an atmosphere that sparks excitement and curiosity captures and sustains their attention, facilitating the absorption of new knowledge and skills. By fostering a positive and engaging learning environment, student interns are more likely to be motivated, actively participate, and achieve higher levels of learning and understanding.

8.4 Limited Learning

Criminology student interns' descriptions of their On-the-Job Training (OJT) experiences during the pandemic revealed limited learning opportunities. Some interns felt that their achievements were not effectively demonstrated, leading to a sense of limitation that hindered their growth and development. To address this issue, educational institutions should implement a strategic plan incorporating alternate learning methods, such as virtual or remote options, to ensure continuous and valuable training, even in challenging situations. This proactive approach enhances readiness, providing students with uninterrupted learning experiences and preparing the academic community for future disruptions.

8.5 Expectations Have Gone Wrong

Criminology students were disappointed as their expectations for their On-the-Job Training (OJT) were unmet. Despite having high aspirations after a long wait, insufficient hands-on experience led to dissatisfaction with the internship outcomes. Maintaining a positive outlook is often seen as advantageous, particularly in challenging situations, as it enables individuals to cope effectively with stress, manage physical and emotional pain, and maintain an optimistic mindset. Embracing optimism enhances resilience,

problem-solving skills, and overall well-being, empowering individuals to confront challenges positively.

8.6 Develop Community Involvement

Criminology student interns had a significant societal impact by actively promoting community improvement. Their dedication and commitment enabled them to provide valuable assistance and support to the local population, address community needs, undertake meaningful projects, and foster positive change. These interns must develop friendships and foster teamwork, as it builds essential skills like effective communication, cooperation, and problem-solving while nurturing empathy and compassion. By actively helping others and embracing diversity, students acquire the necessary skills to succeed as professionals in the field.

8.7 Financial Constraints

The ongoing pandemic has exacerbated the financial struggles of Criminology students pursuing internships. Limited opportunities, reduced financial support, and increased expenses have made it challenging for students to cover basic living costs and engage in valuable internship experiences. To alleviate the financial burden, Criminology student interns are advised to seek support from their social network, including family, friends, and mentors. Exploring additional income sources, such as part-time work or remote job options, can provide the necessary resources to navigate these difficult circumstances, allowing students to focus on their academic goals and internship opportunities.

8.8 Dealing with People

Due to social distancing and remote work, Criminology student interns face challenges in connecting with relevant individuals during their internships. They must adapt and find creative solutions to gain real-world experience and enhance interpersonal skills. Prioritizing their well-being, students should follow recommended safety measures, such as wearing masks and practising social distancing, while participating in seminars or workshops to improve communication and interpersonal abilities.

8.9 Health Issues

They are participating in On-the-Job Training (OJT) during the pandemic, which poses health risks for Criminology interns. Close proximity and contact with individuals in various contexts, such as law enforcement or penal facilities, increase the likelihood of exposure to infectious diseases. To mitigate these hazards, strict adherence to safety protocols, including using personal protective equipment, practising social distancing, and maintaining cleanliness, is crucial. Criminology interns should prioritize their overall health and well-being during their internship by maintaining a balanced diet, staying hydrated, and engaging in regular exercise. These practices provide the necessary energy, nutrients, and physical fitness to cope with the demands of their internship, improve mood, manage stress, and enhance performance and resilience.

8.10 Unable to Manage Time

During their OJT, Criminology interns faced challenges in managing their time effectively, leading to various problems. Poor time management resulted in missed opportunities for valuable learning experiences, difficulty meeting deadlines, and increased stress levels. To succeed during their OJT, Criminology interns should prioritize balancing their academic responsibilities and OJT activities. Creating a weekly schedule in advance allows interns to anticipate their workload, manage their time efficiently, and make necessary adjustments when unexpected tasks arise. By effectively managing their time, interns can ensure the completion of both academic requirements and OJT responsibilities, resulting in a successful and well-rounded experience.

8.11 Being Prayerful

It is advantageous for Criminology interns to grow in their religion and rely on prayer for direction and comfort through trying situations. People can find solace, resiliency, and a sense of purpose by turning to a higher power, which helps cultivate a positive attitude. For interns to manage challenges throughout their internship and keep a happy attitude, connecting with their spiritual beliefs can provide them with the inner strength and drive they need.

8.12 Being Optimistic

Keeping a positive attitude when facing difficulties is essential for Criminology student interns since it reduces tension and worry. When things are tough, asking for help from family and friends can inspire and boost morale. Criminal justice interns can overcome challenges more successfully and maintain motivation throughout their internship experience by surrounding themselves with a solid support structure and practising positive thinking.

8.13 Strategic Solution

Given the demanding nature of the industry, stress management is essential for Criminology interns during their On-the-Job Training. Implementing a strategy plan is advised to handle this issue. Prior to the start of their OJT, Criminology student interns will attend a seminar on stress management. This will give them the knowledge and tools to identify and address potential stressors and empower them to develop practical solutions to reduce stress throughout their internship.

8.14 Self-Motivation

Being motivated is crucial for Criminology student interns because it improves their morale and productivity. To achieve exceptional results, interns must be motivated to put forth their best effort and persevere in facing obstacles. Criminal justice interns can improve their performance and produce outstanding outcomes in their internship attempts by developing a strong sense of drive.

8.15 Balancing Time

Effective time management is essential for Criminology interns to successfully handle the difficulties they face during their OJT. They can effectively manage their workload by setting priorities for tasks based on importance and urgency. To avoid long-term burnout and preserve their general well-being throughout the challenging internship period, it is also crucial to understand the significance of taking breaks and allocating time for relaxation and renewal.

8.16 Create a Schedule

Scheduling is essential for Criminology student interns to manage their workload and prevent cramming efficiently. They can ensure that nothing is forgotten by using a weekly planner to list all forthcoming assignments, projects, and deadlines. It is advised to be specific in the planner, detailing the tasks in detail and providing achievable due dates. A time limit for every task also aids in prioritizing and allotting enough time for its successful completion.

8.17 Cherish Every Moment

The Criminology student interns stress the importance of savouring each moment and ultimately engaging in life's adventures. It is advised that students keep in mind that tomorrow is a new day, and things can get better even when they are under stress, experiencing setbacks, or feeling down. By practising an attitude of thankfulness and delight, they can find value in life's offerings and appreciate the chances for development and learning that each moment offers.

8.18 Set Priorities

Setting priorities is crucial, as highlighted by the insights of Criminology student interns. Working ahead of time and effectively managing their schedules allows them to stay organized and avoid unnecessary stress. Future Criminology student interns should prioritize tasks and focus on what matters most, ensuring they allocate their time and energy to activities that contribute the most to their learning and development.

8.19 Invest Time in Physical Activity

For Criminology student interns, scheduling physical activity is beneficial. Jogging and other forms of exercise support physical health and improve mental well-being. Regular exercise improves concentration and productivity by enhancing focus, decision-making skills, and general cognitive function, allowing interns to pursue their objectives successfully and maintain a healthy posture.

8.20 Be Flexible

Criminology student interns understand the value of adaptability in all facets of their internship experience. By being adaptive, they can handle various duties and meet the various demands of people they may encounter. Students must take care of their physical,

financial, emotional, and spiritual well-being to be ready for such flexibility. By doing this, they may build their resilience and increase their ability to deal with unforeseen events and adjust to changing circumstances.

8.21 Be Ready Always

Criminology intern students should proactively prepare themselves for the next phase of their journey. They must anticipate potential challenges and equip themselves with new learnings and knowledge. By preparing and creating a strategic plan, they can effectively navigate obstacles and increase their chances of success in their future endeavours. It is recommended that they constantly prepare for the worst and have a contingency plan in place if things do not go as planned. By doing so, they may anticipate potential problems and boost their chances of satisfying all demands and expectations.

8.22 Follow Instructions

Intern students always follow the instructor's instructions and avoid being lousy. They need to obey first and then follow. It is recommended that the Criminology student intern follow every instruction in whatever activities they will have to avoid problems or conundrums. Additionally, this will prepare them as influential leaders for future professions, as having discipline while they are still followers will enhance these skills and character.

8.23 Persevere

It is strongly advised that Criminology interns develop perseverance as a valuable quality in facing challenges. If they maintain mental fortitude, they may face obstacles and challenges with resiliency and determination. Criminal justice interns can succeed in their goals by working hard and putting in their best effort.

9. Implication for Future Researchers

Researchers interested in studying the opinions and experiences of Criminology interns from diverse backgrounds can utilize the survey's findings as a valuable reference point. The methodology employed in this study can also serve as a foundation for future qualitative research conducted by student researchers, providing them with a starting point to explore similar topics in greater depth.

Furthermore, future studies can be conducted at different schools and across various educational levels to delve into broader issues surrounding the experiences of Criminology student interns during their On-the-Job Training. By conducting additional research, researchers can gather more insights and perspectives, ultimately aiding in enhancing OJT programs and helping students derive more excellent value from their internship experiences.

10. Concluding Remarks

The qualitative phenomenological study unfolds the lived experiences of Criminology student interns at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges General Santos City. The researchers cover the participants' lived experiences, views, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights during their On-the-Job Training (OJT) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conducting this qualitative study was a challenging endeavour that required dedicated effort and perseverance. As a researcher, I had to go the extra mile to pursue this study and ensure its successful completion. Interviewing 20 participants posed a significant challenge, as coordinating their availability with mine demanded careful time management and flexibility. However, the valuable insights gained from these interviews made the effort worthwhile and enriched the quality of the research.

Balancing the roles of a college instructor, a master's student, and a practicum site supervisor for the Criminology intern unit at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial College has undoubtedly brought significant pressure and stress. However, this challenging situation has not diminished my passion and dedication to the Criminology intern unit. Instead, this study has inspired me to continue advocating and working towards strengthening the Criminology internship program at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial College with the ultimate goal of making it recognized as SOCCSKSARGEN's premier institution for Criminology internships and the most exemplary Criminology school in Region 12 in terms of internship programs. My dedication and vision drive me to strive for excellence until I achieve my dreams for the program.

This research holds significance for the school administration and the wider community, as it provides valuable insights into the unique circumstances Criminology student interns face during the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding these challenges will enable the school administration to make informed decisions and implement strategies that ensure quality on-the-job experiences for the students. Moreover, by shedding light on students' determination and desire to work hard despite the adversities, this study can inspire and motivate students towards personal growth, leading to a brighter and more promising future for themselves and their communities.

Acknowledgements

This study owes its success to the invaluable contributions and unwavering support of the dedicated individuals involved, whose relentless efforts and dedication made it possible. Their collective commitment and assistance were pivotal in realising this research endeavour.

To Marnie J. Besas, PhD Crim, our college dean and my esteemed thesis adviser, for his generous time allocation and meticulous attention in reviewing my paper. His invaluable insights and suggestions have significantly contributed to the scholarly accomplishment of this work, and their guidance has been instrumental in shaping its quality and rigor.

To Geraldine D. Rodriguez, EdD, PhD, Executive Director for Academic Affairs, for her steadfast support and encouragement throughout this study. Her invaluable expertise and dedicated time have played a pivotal role in the success of this research.

To the esteemed panel members, Emie A. Genton, PhD, Noe P. Garcia, PhD, and German B. Guaza, PhD, for their unwavering support, invaluable teachings, and valuable suggestions throughout the completion of this paper.

To Lyndon A. Quines, PhD, and Sheryl Laine T. Caminade, PhD, for validating the interview guide questionnaire, analyzing the data, and giving priceless time to help me realize my study.

To Eden Stephanie B. Bolido, PhD, for her unwavering dedication, relentless support, and unparalleled commitment in assisting me throughout the completion of this study. Her sincere efforts have been invaluable and greatly appreciated, playing a vital role in the achievement of this research. Her expertise and guidance have genuinely made a significant impact on the overall success of this endeavor.

To the participants who graciously accepted my request and volunteered their time and efforts for this study. Their willingness to participate has been crucial in gathering the necessary data, and their invaluable contributions have greatly enriched the findings of this research.

To my dear buddies, Jerine A. Pueblo, RCrim, and Sheila N. Cuaresma, RCrim, who have been by my side throughout this entire journey of pursuing my master's degree. Their friendship, unwavering support and companionship have made this academic endeavour successful and enjoyable, and I am truly grateful for their presence in my life.

I want to convey my sincere thanks to my dear family, especially to my mother Rosemalyn L. Solis and my brother Engr Junel John L. Solis, for their constant support and steadfast faith in my abilities to accomplish my master's degree. I am extremely grateful for their unwavering love and support since their unfailing support and faith in me have been crucial to my journey. This success is a reflection not just of my own perseverance but also of my amazing family's resilience and love.

Above all, I humbly thank the Lord for His unwavering guidance and boundless blessings throughout this thesis journey. His divine presence has given me strength, wisdom, and inspiration, making this achievement possible.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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