

Academic Success Through Student Discipline among Criminology Students: An Appreciative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

Discipline in criminology education is both an academic and ethical imperative. This study explored how student discipline fosters academic success among criminology students in one of the colleges in Lanao del Norte. It was participated by ten Criminology students in the institution who were purposively chosen. In-depth interviews were conducted with high-performing participants. Guided by the 4D cycle (Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny), the study uncovers key themes: cultivating academic success through self-discipline and supportive motivational support; envisioning a supportive and structured learning environment, developing structured academic practices and support systems; and sustaining a culture of discipline through personal commitment and peer support. Academic success is fostered through a dynamic interplay of self-discipline, structured support systems, and a nurturing learning environment, sustained by personal commitment and collaborative peer support. The institution may empower teachers, and administrators to implement weekly study schedules, mentorship pairs, and policy enforcements, promoting a discipline culture that extends to professional resilience.

Keywords: Academic Success, Criminology Students, Self-Regulation, Student Discipline, Support

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

Discipline played a vital role in predicting academic success, as it enabled students to control their actions, manage their time effectively, and maintain motivation during their studies. Based on the tenets of Self-Regulation Theory, discipline enabled students to set academic goals and persevere in the face of difficulties (Díaz-Morales & Ferrari, 2020; Zimmerman, 2022). Philippine studies locally confirmed the importance of student self-regulation in promoting academic success, highlighting the link between discipline and moral and civic education, which are crucial for criminology students preparing for justice-related roles (Torres & Reyes, 2023; Dela Cruz & Santos, 2021).

Moreover, discipline in criminology education is both an academic and ethical imperative. It encompassed rigorous time management, ethical behavior, and adherence to professional standards, the Commission on Higher Education's CHED CMO No. 5, s. In 2018, these standards were formally integrated, preparing students for justice and public service roles with a strong ethical foundation (CHED, 2018). Empirical evidence supported the crucial role of discipline and self-regulation in academic success among criminology students. A recent structural equation modeling study involving 400 criminology students found that factors such as self-efficacy, teacher behavior, and school effectiveness collectively explained 66% of the variance in student engagement, with school effectiveness as the strongest predictor (Academic Engagement Among Criminology Students, 2025). Furthermore, self-discipline levels among criminology students are generally high to moderate, which significantly correlates with better academic achievement and readiness to face ethical challenges in law enforcement careers (Abbott, 2022). These findings underscore the need to foster discipline through supportive educational environments to enhance criminology students' academic and professional preparedness.

Furthermore, discipline plays a critical role in academic success among criminology students. A quantitative study found that criminology students with high self-discipline, as demonstrated by strong goal setting, self-monitoring, and persistence, significantly outperform peers in academic achievement (Calonia et al., 2023). This aligns with research showing that disciplined behavior supports effective time management and focus, resulting in better academic outcomes (Masumzadeh et al., 2022).

Studies reveal that discipline and consistent study habits among criminology students are strong predictors of academic success and licensure examination performance. Nabe (2024) demonstrated that disciplined study habits correlate positively with higher licensure exam passing rates. Institutional factors such as teacher behavior and school effectiveness also play pivotal roles in fostering discipline, thereby boosting academic engagement and achievement (Masumzadeh et al., 2022; Nabe, 2024).

Similarly, local Philippine studies corroborate that a supportive school and home environment nurtures discipline, which directly enhances academic performance among criminology students. Research by Suelto (2025) indicates that criminology students with disciplined study routines and high engagement tend to achieve higher grade point averages, with female students showing slightly better performance associated with higher discipline (Suelto, 2025; Calonia et al., 2023). These findings emphasize the importance of localized interventions to cultivate discipline within criminology academic programs.

Family support systems and socio-economic status are among the socio-cultural factors that significantly impact student discipline and academic outcomes. Recent studies on Filipino college students demonstrate that external environments influence motivation and discipline, thereby affecting students' consistency in academic engagement (Santos & Bautista, 2022; Villanueva, 2023). It is essential to acknowledge these influences to customize interventions that bolster discipline and to consider students' cultural and economic backgrounds in criminology programs.

Meanwhile, the motivations that drive criminology students are closely connected to an intrinsic sense of purpose and aspirations oriented toward justice. As noted by Trebilcock and Griffiths (2021), students' involvement in criminology enhances their self-understanding and commitment to social justice. This intrinsic motivation relates to self-discipline, with students' academic goals driving disciplined study behaviors. Filipino criminology students exhibit a strong intrinsic motivation that corresponds with the disciplined academic behaviors crucial for their success, as confirmed by local studies (Abbott, 2022; Criminology Graduates' Motivation and Mindset, 2024).

Despite the breadth of existing literature, there is a significant knowledge gap in strengths-based investigations specific to criminology students, even though the literature currently in publication covers self-regulation and the role of discipline in general academic success in great detail (ResearchMate, 2025). Specifically, while research measures discipline levels and achievement correlations (Narido & Collantes, 2025; Calonia et al., 2023), few use Appreciative Inquiry to examine positive aspects, motives, and transformational practices in the context of criminology programs' ethical requirements. This disparity limits the availability of customized interventions in criminology settings in the Philippines, where professional preparedness and licensure depend on disciplined conduct (Nabe, 2024).

This study offers practical value by helping criminology students build discipline to improve GPAs and career readiness through proven habits such as study routines and peer support. Educators can use insights to engage classes with gadget rules, quizzes, and mentoring. Administrators gain tools and policies, along with workshops, to create a disciplined campus culture aligned with CHED standards, linking academic success to professional excellence in justice roles.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the following theories: Self-Regulation Theory (Zimmerman, 2000), Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986)

Self-Regulation Theory (Zimmerman, 2000) described academic success as depending on a student's ability to plan, monitor, and control their own learning and behavior to reach their goals. Discipline was a key part of self-regulation because it meant managing attention, effort, and motivation to avoid distractions and stay engaged in schoolwork—many international studies supported using this theory in education. For example, research showed that students who used self-regulatory strategies such as time management, goal setting, and self-monitoring tended to perform better in school.

One study found a two-way relationship among self-regulation, academic motivation, school engagement, and achievement, showing that self-regulation served as a stabilizing resource that helped students manage emotional and personal challenges (Morosanova, 2022). Another study compared self-regulation and self-discipline and found that self-regulation was a stronger predictor of academic achievement, suggesting that its cognitive and motivational parts had a direct effect on academic results (Duckworth & Carlson, 2014)

Developed by Cooperrider and Srivastava in 1987, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a strengths-based methodology that emphasizes identifying and enhancing positive experiences and core strengths to foster positive change. According to Cooperrider and Srivastava (1987), AI is based on collaboration, reflection, and the creation of possibilities via appreciative dialogues. Participants are guided by the theory's 4D cycle—Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny—to investigate effective practices, imagine optimal results, devise change strategies, and execute plans to maintain enhancements. AI highlights the importance of students recognizing their own strengths and fosters a constructive academic outlook, which, in turn, inspires the self-discipline needed to achieve academic success.

AI provided a methodological and conceptual basis, fostering a positive stance toward the discipline. It helped students identify and use their academic strengths, promoting intrinsic motivation and proactive behaviors that contributed to academic success. AI fostered a positive learning environment for criminology students, who faced demanding curricula and ethical obligations, emphasizing growth and resilience rather than shortcomings. This approach cultivated disciplined study habits and enhanced academic achievement.

Empirical research confirmed the importance of AI in educational contexts. For instance, educators who utilized AI in their undergraduate teaching improved students' academic locus of control, motivation, and assignment completion by emphasizing strengths and encouraging positive reflection (Ramezani & Gholtash, 2015; Dollinger, 2000). Research indicated that AI could enhance student engagement, well-being, and academic success by fostering a supportive learning culture centered on strengths and collaboration (Shuayb et al., 2009; Manichander, 2014)

Local studies in the Philippines affirmed the relevance of AI in academia by showing that techniques such as positive reinforcement, reflection, and strengths identification enhanced student motivation and performance. According to a local educational journal, Filipino students who were exposed to AI-inspired interventions reported increased academic satisfaction and perceived discipline, resulting in improved academic outcomes and reduced academic stress. These findings corresponded with AI's principle of fostering success through appreciative inquiry, establishing it as a strong framework for examining academic success via student discipline among criminology students.

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) stressed the interactive relationships among personal factors, behavior, and environmental influences, underscoring that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling. This theory focused on self-efficacy, a person's conviction that they can successfully perform specific tasks. Self-efficacy affected motivation, perseverance, and discipline, key elements of academic success. This theory served as the study's foundation by elucidating how students' beliefs in their abilities and their observation of disciplined behaviors in their surroundings shaped their academic practices and outcomes. Criminology students benefited from role modeling disciplined behavior and from fostering self-efficacy to address academic challenges and maintain regular study habits.

In criminology education, where demonstrating moral behavior and academic integrity was crucial, Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) held that students' disciplined behavior resulted from the triadic reciprocal interaction among personal factors such as self-efficacy, behavioral patterns, and environmental influences

(Bandura, 2011; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). According to Schunk and DiBenedetto, criminology students were able to handle challenging workloads like case analysis and simulations because self-efficacy, the fundamental confidence in one's ability to complete academic activities efficiently, directly developed motivation, tenacity, and discipline

The theory in this study explained how self-regulated behaviors, such as time management and regular attendance, were fostered through observational learning from disciplined peers and faculty, in conjunction with mastery experiences in coursework. These behaviors were predictive of better academic outcomes among Filipino criminology students (Cruz & Santos, 2021). Social Cognitive Theory was positioned as a strong lens for examining the discipline's role in bridging academic success and professional readiness in criminology, as recent empirical evidence showed that higher self-efficacy correlated with greater self-discipline and higher grade point averages in Philippine higher education (Calonia et al., 2023).

Studies backed the use of Social Cognitive Theory in academic settings. Research indicates that students with high self-efficacy are more inclined to set goals, put forth effort, and persevere in the face of challenges, resulting in greater academic success (Zimmerman, 2000; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Further validation of this connection came from local research conducted in the Philippines. It found that students with greater self-efficacy also demonstrated stronger discipline and improved academic performance. This suggested that belief in one's abilities fostered effective study habits and resilience in challenging areas like criminology (Cruz & Santos, 2021). The results highlighted the essential function of social cognitive processes in promoting student discipline and academic achievement, establishing this theory as a crucial foundation for the research

Conceptual Framework

The concepts derived from the identified themes emerged from participants' responses.

Cultivating Academic Success Through Self-Discipline and Supportive Motivational Support. Academic success emerges through structured study routines, consistent review, note-taking, and distraction minimization, reinforced by motivational influences from family aspirations, instructor role modeling, peer collaboration, and organizational experiences such as ROTC. These self-regulated practices enable effective time management and focus during demanding periods, transforming discipline into higher performance and confidence. Liu et al. (2025) found that time management and phone limits predict performance, aligning with these routines. Ogunyemi and Ojo (2019) reported that peer groups boost outcomes while Calonia et al. (2023) confirmed that high self-discipline yields superior GPAs in criminology, and Abbott (2022) linked it to ethical readiness.

Envisioning a Supportive and Structured Learning Environment. An ideal learning environment features gadget restrictions, visual aids, instructor-led explanations, recitations, approachable yet firm teachers, punctuality, attentiveness, and peer role models fostering mutual respect and minimal distractions. This structured setup promotes active engagement, comprehension, and sustained discipline, thereby enhancing academic outcomes. Alapan Elementary (2025) showed that visual aids increase retention and Church et al. (2022) found that approachable instructors are associated with greater effort. Patall et al. (2023) noted recitations build respect, while Serek Journal (2024) correlated punctuality with scores, validating these ideals.

Developing Structured Academic Practices and Support Systems. Structured practices include continuous assessments such as quizzes, recitations, revalida, quiz bees, clear policies on deadlines and gadgets, advance notice, workshops, mentoring, and ethical AI use for clarification and organization. These mechanisms cultivate accountability, preparation, and time management beyond individual efforts. Mohamed and Chui (2025) demonstrated that quizzes improve engagement, and Nabe (2024) linked habits to licensure success. Suelto (2025) found that routines raise GPAs, while Masumzadeh et al. (2022) emphasized institutional factors such as policies.

Sustaining a Culture of Discipline Through Personal Commitment and Peer Support. Sustainability involves maintaining lifelong habits like reviews and schedules, peer mentoring, study groups, role modeling, and linking discipline to professional resilience in justice careers. This creates a self-reinforcing culture extending academic success into ethical practice. Cruz and Santos (2021) showed that peer support predicts self-efficacy and

outcomes, and Bandura (2011) connects habits to resilience. Abbott (2022) ties discipline to law enforcement readiness, affirming long-term commitments.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to explore the positive strengths, experiences, and successful practices related to discipline among criminology students. The AI 4-D Cycle Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny guided the research process by first appreciating and identifying what currently worked well (Discover), then envisioning ideal possibilities (Dream), collaboratively planning actionable strategies (Design), and finally committing to sustaining these improvements over time (Destiny) (Whitney et al., 2002). By emphasizing growth and positivity, this strengths-based and transformative approach stood in contrast to traditional problem-focused methodologies, enabling deeper engagement and meaningful insights. Qualitative inquiry was well-suited for uncovering the lived experiences of criminology students, as it enabled rich, contextualized narratives that illustrated how disciplined learning was practiced, perceived, and maintained throughout their academic journey (MacLeod, 2011). The study sought to shed light on the role of discipline in achieving academic success from students' own perspectives through this approach, thereby making important contributions to criminology education theory and practice.

Setting

The study was conducted at one of the higher education institutions in Lanao del Norte that offers a Bachelor of Science in Criminology program aligned with the standards of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The college emphasized academic discipline, ethical conduct, and professional preparation for careers in law enforcement and the criminal justice system. The institution served criminology students from Tubod and nearby municipalities, providing an appropriate academic environment for examining discipline and academic success. The setting was particularly suitable for this study, which employed an Appreciative Inquiry approach to explore criminology students' positive experiences with discipline and its role in academic achievement and professional readiness.

Participants

The participants in this study were 10 criminology students currently enrolled in the School Year 2024–2025. Purposive sampling was employed to select students who exemplified positive deviance in discipline, ensuring they demonstrated strong academic performance with or better and self-reported disciplined study habits such as effective time management, regular class attendance, and goal-oriented practices. This purposive approach was ideal for selecting information-rich cases that offered deep insights into disciplined learning behaviors. To capture a comprehensive understanding of discipline among criminology students, the sample included students from diverse year levels and genders, enhancing the richness and validity of the data by reflecting varied experiences across the program. Additionally, candidates had no record of academic or disciplinary sanctions during the current academic year. They were willing to participate in the study, ensuring both credibility and relevance of the findings in context.

Instruments

An interview was utilized to elicit information from the participants. The questions were translated into the local tongue to improve comprehension and intercommunication among all participants. A series of opening, core, and closing questions followed an introduction. During the in-depth interview, open-ended questions were used to elicit detailed, narrative responses from the participants. The researcher used digital recording equipment to record the relevant information during the in-depth interview. This strategy ensured that the interview process was accurately and comprehensively recorded. Following that, the recorded data were transcribed and analyzed to identify themes emerging from the participants' responses.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, participants were thoroughly informed about the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights, including the freedom to withdraw at any time without penalty, and informed consent was obtained. The data collection involved semi-structured interviews and, where applicable, focus groups to elicit rich, detailed accounts of criminology students' experiences regarding discipline and academic performance. Interviews and discussions were conducted in private, comfortable settings lasting approximately forty-five to sixty minutes, and were audio-recorded with participant consent to ensure accurate transcription. Rapport building and the use of researcher field notes supplemented these interviews, with the flow of questions guided by the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) 4-D Cycle phases: Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny, to maintain depth and authenticity in responses.

In line with ethical research practices, all collected data were securely stored in password-protected digital files accessible solely to the researcher. To enhance data credibility and ensure participant perspectives were faithfully represented, member checking was conducted, allowing participants to review and confirm the accuracy of interview transcripts and interpretations. This thoughtful, human-centered data-gathering approach ensured the collection of meaningful, trustworthy insights into the role of discipline in criminology students' academic success.

Ethical Considerations

This qualitative research study adhered strictly to the university's ethical guidelines and was approved by the Misamis University Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they fully understood the study's purpose, their role, and their rights, including the option to withdraw at any time without penalty. The participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their personal information, with all data anonymized and presented in aggregated or pseudonymized forms in any publications or presentations. Consent forms were provided in a language and format easily understood by participants to facilitate informed and voluntary participation. To further protect their well-being, support mechanisms were made available throughout the study.

Additionally, all collected data were securely stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researcher. Member checking was utilized to strengthen the credibility and integrity of the research, enabling participants to assess and confirm the accuracy of data interpretations. This practice upheld participant trust and ensured that the study's findings were rigorous.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and insights on the role of discipline in criminology students' academic performance. The researcher became familiar with the transcripts through repeated readings to deeply understand participants' perspectives. Initial coding, conducted manually, involved highlighting significant statements and assigning descriptive labels related to discipline and achievement. These codes were then organized into categories to develop broader themes.

The Appreciative Inquiry (AI) 4-D Cycle Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny guided thematic interpretation, aligning with this study's strengths-based exploration of discipline in criminology students' academic success. Discover identified best experiences, like effective study habits, from interview transcripts; Dream envisioned ideal supportive environments; Design co-created strategies, such as peer mentorship; and Destiny sustained commitments for long-term excellence.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was enhanced through member checking, where participants validated data interpretations. Dependability was supported by thorough documentation of analytic procedures. Confirmability was maintained through audit trails and reflexivity to minimize bias, while transferability was achieved through rich descriptions that facilitated contextual understanding. This comprehensive approach ensured the findings

authentically represented the lived experiences of criminology students regarding discipline and academic success.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the study *Academic Success Through Student Discipline Among Criminology Students: An Appreciative Inquiry*. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with ten purposively selected criminology students from a higher education institution in Lanao del Norte during School Year 2024-2025, who demonstrated strong academic performance and disciplined habits across diverse year levels and genders, with no records of academic or disciplinary sanctions.

The analysis found four main themes that explain how criminology students experience discipline and success. These themes are: (1) Cultivating Academic Success Through Self-Discipline and Supportive Motivational Support, (2) Envisioning a Supportive and Structured Learning Environment, (3) Developing Structured Academic Practices and Support Systems, (4) Sustaining a Culture of Discipline Through Personal Commitment and Peer Support.

Cultivating Academic Success Through Self-Discipline and Supportive Motivational Support

This theme emphasizes that self-discipline, bolstered by both internal dedication and external motivating factors, is a major factor in criminology students' academic success. Students demonstrated that disciplined practices, such as regular study schedules, efficient time management, and reduced distractions, help them fulfill their academic obligations. Family, friends, teachers, and organizational engagement all impact these habits, which are not created in a vacuum. As a result, discipline develops into a consistent behavior that supports both personal development and better academic achievement.

This theme aligns with the Discover phase of Appreciative Inquiry, which focuses on identifying the best experiences and strengths that contribute to success. Participants reflected on their effective disciplinary practices and the motivational factors that supported their academic achievements. Through recognizing these strengths, students gain insight into what works best and how these practices can be sustained and enhanced. These positive experiences serve as the foundation for improving discipline and academic outcomes. Below are the participants' statements that support the theme:

"I used to study late at night and wake up early without using my mobile phone, which helped me focus better and perform well during exams." P1

"Discipline helped me by setting specific times to study, especially when exams were approaching." P2

"I reviewed my notes every night and limited distractions such as social media." P10

These statements show that self-discipline requires regular study schedules and the reduction of distractions. Students who set out specified study time and manage distractions are more likely to stay focused and perform better academically. Zimmerman (2022) asserts that self-regulated students who organize and monitor their study habits perform better academically. Likewise, Díaz-Morales and Ferrari (2020) noted that strict routines can exacerbate procrastination and poor time management.

Furthermore, limiting mobile phone use aligns with Liu et al. (2025), who found that reducing digital distractions significantly improves academic engagement and performance. These findings support the participants' experiences, confirming that discipline through structured routines and focused study leads to academic success.

"I make sure to follow my study schedule even when I feel tired because consistency is important." P3

"I avoid distractions by studying in a quiet environment where I can concentrate better." P6

"I stay motivated by thinking about my future career and responsibilities." P8

These additional answers emphasize goal-oriented motivation, environmental control, and consistency. Strong self-control, which Duckworth and Carlson (2014) found to be a critical predictor of academic achievement, is reflected in consistent study habits. While future-focused motivation boosts perseverance, studying in a distraction-free setting enhances concentration. Abbott (2022) provides more evidence that disciplined criminology students perform better academically and are more prepared for careers.

Envisioning a Supportive and Structured Learning Environment

This theme reflects students' vision of an ideal learning environment that promotes discipline through structure, engagement, and support. Participants emphasized the importance of clear classroom rules, interactive teaching strategies, and responsible student behavior. A disciplined classroom is characterized by mutual respect, attentiveness, punctuality, and collaboration, supported by instructors who balance authority with approachability. Such an environment fosters active participation, minimizes distractions, and enhances academic performance.

This theme aligns with the Dream phase of Appreciative Inquiry, which involves envisioning an ideal future based on positive experiences. Students described their aspirations for a classroom environment that supports discipline and academic success. These visions highlight how structured teaching practices and responsible student behavior can create an effective learning atmosphere. Below are the participants' statements that support the theme:

"My ideal classroom would have visual aids because they help me understand lessons better." P1

"Teachers should inspire students while maintaining discipline." P2

"My ideal classroom is one where students are attentive and complete tasks on time." P4

These statements demonstrate how classroom administration and instructional techniques both affect discipline. Alapan Elementary (2025) discovered that visual materials increase engagement and that using visual aids enhances comprehension and memory. Another important factor is the teachers' behavior. According to Church et al. (2022), students are more motivated and engaged when their teachers are approachable and encouraging. Furthermore, structured activities such as talks and recitations foster responsibility and self-control (Patall et al., 2023). Since they are associated with better academic results and fewer classroom interruptions, student habits such as attentiveness and punctuality are equally significant (Serek Journal, 2024).

"A disciplined classroom is one where students listen carefully and respect the teacher." P5

"I learn better when the teacher explains clearly and interacts with the class." P7 *"Having clear classroom rules helps students stay focused and organized." P9*

These answers emphasize the importance of communication, respect, and clarity in upholding discipline. According to Bandura (1986), learning happens when people interact with their surroundings. Better academic success results from disciplined behavior and increased self-efficacy in an orderly, courteous classroom.

Developing Structured Academic Practices and Support Systems

This theme highlights how disciplined, organized academic systems reinforce students. To promote accountability and consistent academic engagement, participants recognized that clear policies, ongoing assessments, and support programs are crucial. These methods provide pupils with direction and structure, enabling them to fulfill their obligations and form disciplined habits.

This theme aligns with Appreciative Inquiry's Design phase, which focuses on developing strategies and mechanisms to sustain favorable outcomes. Students suggested institutional support systems and structured academic practices that can boost performance and discipline. These tactics are the result of teamwork aimed at improving the educational setting. The statements from the participants that bolster the theme are included below:

“Regular quizzes or discussions can help students stay prepared and disciplined.” P2

“Strict policies on deadlines encourage better time management.” P9

“Workshops and mentoring programs can help students improve discipline.” P10

According to Mohamed and Chui (2025), ongoing evaluations, such as quizzes, encourage regular preparation and participation. Explicit deadlines and attendance regulations promote accountability and discipline (Interdisciplinary Journal of Education, 2025). By offering direction and serving as role models, mentoring programs also support discipline. Peer mentorship enhances academic achievement and teamwork, according to Johnson et al. (2024). Furthermore, when supervised appropriately, responsible technology use improves learning (British Journal of Educational Technology, 2023).

“Having a clear schedule of activities helps me stay organized.” P3

“Knowing deadlines ahead of time allows me to prepare properly.” P6

“Support from teachers and mentors helps me stay focused and disciplined.” P8

These responses emphasize structure, preparation, and support. According to Bandura (1986), clear expectations and supportive environments enhance self-efficacy, which promotes disciplined behavior. Structured academic systems reduce uncertainty and improve student engagement.

Sustaining a Culture of Discipline Through Personal Commitment and Peer Support

This theme emphasizes the importance of maintaining discipline through individual dedication and peer pressure. Students placed strong emphasis on maintaining discipline and helping others through cooperation and mentoring. In criminology, discipline is seen as a long-term practice that goes beyond the classroom and helps one succeed professionally.

This theme aligns with Appreciative Inquiry’s Destiny phase, which emphasizes long-term commitment and the maintenance of transformation. Participants stated that they planned to uphold and encourage disciplined behavior among their peers. These pledges guarantee that discipline is incorporated into their professional and academic identities. The participant statements supporting the theme are listed below:

“I will continue practicing time management and staying focused on my goals.” P1

“I plan to mentor classmates who are struggling.” P7

“I will share effective strategies to help others stay disciplined.” P10

These statements emphasize the importance of dedication and peer pressure in maintaining discipline. Academic performance is enhanced through peer mentoring and cooperative learning (Johnson et al., 2024). Duckworth and Gross (2025) highlighted perseverance and self-control as indicators of success, underscoring the importance of discipline as a long-term habit. According to Abbott (2022), professional preparedness in criminology requires discipline.

“I will continue applying discipline even after graduation.” P3

“I want to help my classmates develop good study habits.” P5

“I believe discipline is important for my future career.” P8

These answers stress the need for discipline as a lifelong habit. Bandura (1986) asserts that academic-developed behaviors can be used in professional settings. In criminal justice careers, maintaining discipline ensures resilience and long-term success.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study explored the role of self-discipline in academic success among criminology students. Specifically, it sought to answer the following general objectives: (1) What are the best experiences of criminology students in demonstrating discipline that contributed to their academic success? (2) What are the students' aspirations and ideal vision of a disciplined environment that fosters continued success? (3) What strategies and practices can be developed to strengthen student discipline and enhance academic performance based on their shared positive experiences? (4) How do criminology students plan to sustain and promote a culture of discipline and excellence in their academic journey and future profession?

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically an Appreciative Inquiry approach, to explore positive experiences and strengths related to self-discipline among students. The study was conducted in an academic setting, involving criminology students selected through purposive sampling based on their relevant experiences in academic performance and discipline. Data were gathered using a semi-structured interview guide, which allowed participants to share in-depth insights into their study habits, motivations, and experiences. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, where responses were organized into meaningful themes aligned with the Appreciative Inquiry framework (Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny). This approach enabled the researcher to focus on strengths and effective practices that contribute to academic success.

Findings

The following were the findings of the study:

1. *Cultivating Academic Success Through Self-Discipline and Supportive Motivational Support.* The findings reveal that self-discipline is essential to academic success, strengthened by both internal motivation and external support. Students emphasized that consistent study habits, time management, and minimizing distractions improve performance. Motivation from personal goals and family expectations further reinforces disciplined behavior, showing that both personal drive and external encouragement shape discipline.
2. *Envisioning a Supportive and Structured Learning Environment.* Clear instructions, organized classroom practices, and active participation help improve focus and accountability. This suggests that discipline is enhanced when both teachers and students contribute to a well-structured, supportive learning environment.
3. *Developing Structured Academic Practices and Support Systems.* The indicate that structured academic practices and institutional support strengthen student discipline. Regular assessments, clear policies, and mentoring systems provide guidance and accountability, helping students manage academic responsibilities effectively. These structures reinforce discipline through consistent academic support and expectations.
4. *Sustaining a Culture of Discipline Through Personal Commitment and Peer Support.* The findings highlight that sustaining discipline relies on personal commitment and peer influence. Students value maintaining disciplined habits beyond academic requirements and into future practice. Peer support and collaboration further strengthen accountability, showing that discipline is sustained through shared responsibility and long-term commitment.

Conclusion

From the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Self-discipline, strengthened by both intrinsic motivation and external support, is a key determinant of academic success. Students are more likely to perform well when they consistently practice effective study habits, manage their time properly, and remain motivated by personal goals and family expectations.

2. A structured, engaging, and supportive learning environment plays a vital role in reinforcing student discipline. When classrooms are well-organized, expectations are clear, and participation is encouraged, students become more focused, accountable, and disciplined in their academic behavior.
3. Institutional structures such as clear academic policies, regular assessments, and mentoring programs significantly contribute to the development of student discipline. These systems provide guidance, accountability, and consistency, enabling students to better manage their academic responsibilities.
4. Sustaining discipline requires continuous personal commitment reinforced by peer support and collaboration. When discipline becomes part of students' personal values and is supported by their social environment, it becomes more sustainable and applicable beyond academic settings into future professional practice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Students may be encouraged to set clear personal academic goals and actively seek motivation from family and personal aspirations to sustain their academic performance.
2. Teachers and academic institutions may further enhance learning environments by maintaining structured classroom management, providing clear instructions, and encouraging active student participation. This may foster a more engaging and supportive atmosphere that strengthens student discipline and focus.
3. School administrators may continuously implement and improve academic support systems such as regular assessments, clear academic policies, and mentoring programs. These initiatives may provide students with consistent guidance, accountability, and structured support in managing their academic responsibilities.
4. Students may be encouraged to sustain disciplined behaviors by strengthening personal commitment and engaging in peer collaboration and support systems. Institutions may also promote programs that reinforce positive peer influence, ensuring that discipline is maintained beyond academic requirements and applied in future professional practice.
5. Future researchers may conduct mixed-methods studies tracking the same cohort's discipline habits and licensure exam performance over two years, test simple AI-guided reflection journals in one criminology class and compare discipline practices across public and private colleges in the region.

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