International Journal of Educational Studies
ISSN: 2641-533X
Volume 9, Issue 1, pp. 1-8
2026
DOI: 10.53935/2641-533x.v9i1.1151
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On Becoming a Leader: Impact of Criminology Intern Leadership Training

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the impact of a seven-day leadership training program on 45 criminology interns at De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College in the Philippines, using convenient sampling to select participants. Employing a descriptive correlational research design, the research assessed the program's effectiveness in developing three core competencies: personality, discipline, and leadership skills - through pre- and post-training survey questionnaires and quantitative analysis of measured changes. The analysis was anchored in key leadership frameworks, including Kurt Lewin's Autocratic Leadership Style, James MacGregor Burns's Transformational Leadership Theory, and Fred Fiedler's Contingency Leadership Theory. Findings indicate that the training program contributed meaningfully to improvements in interns' personality-related attributes and discipline. However, leadership skills showed comparatively limited gains, suggesting the need for more focused and skills-based training components. In response, the study proposes an Enhanced Criminology Intern Leadership Program that emphasizes applied leadership tasks using real-world scenarios, structured mentorship, and continuous monitoring and evaluation to strengthen leadership competency development. Overall, the research offers practical evidence on the value and limitations of short-term leadership interventions for criminology interns and supports the design of more responsive leadership development initiatives in criminal justice education and training.*

Key words*: A leader, criminology intern, leadership training.*

1. Introduction

Leaders are not just born with their abilities; they can be shaped and improved through targeted training (Northouse, 2021). A recent example of this was a seven-day criminology intern leadership training program held at De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College, facilitated by retired Police Captain Wilfredo Pulvera with the support of the Criminology Department's instructors and alumni. The program, which involved 60 participants, exemplified the effectiveness of practical and focused leadership development. According to Jacobsen et al., (2022), leadership training addresses existing weaknesses in leadership, preparing leaders to manage public scrutiny and accountability in their roles. In criminology, building trust while addressing community safety concerns is a challenge (Wang & Huang, 2022). Leadership training equips aspiring leaders with the knowledge and skills needed for effective leadership, as well as building trust to enhance community relations (Berry, 2023). Additionally, Tafvelin et al. (2019) stated that such training is especially important in crisis management and crime prevention strategies, as it develops essential skills for high-pressure situations.

Furthermore, these programs enhance well-being and emotional intelligence, which are crucial for handling the demands of law enforcement roles (Nadler et al., 2020), while promoting confidence, discipline,

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and a strong personality to address complex challenges (Niles et.al., 2024). According to Houghton et al. (2020), UK police recruits who have completed leadership training exhibit notable increases in confidence, empathy, and community involvement. Targeted leadership training helped police interns in South Korea become more responsible and better at communication (Choi et al., 2022). Mentorship and leadership training in New York State Police stressing its value in developing confidence and cooperation as well as promoting discipline and team spirit in the law enforcement setting (Fiegl et al., 2025).

Autocratic leadership emphasizes that the leader is the center of decision-making, leading to quick outcomes (Kurt Lewin,1939). However, it potentially limits creativity and input from team members (Du et al., 2021). In contrast, James MacGregor Burns's transformational leadership theory focuses on inspiring followers to achieve collective goals, fostering collaboration and significant change (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders positively influence the motivation and organizational commitment of members (Ojo, 2021). Another leadership theory introduced by Fred Fiedler (1967) is contingency theory, which asserts that the effectiveness of a leader depends on situational factors, suggesting that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership (Ary, 2021). A study by Cormican et al. (2018) supports this by demonstrating that adaptable leadership styles in varying contexts lead to better team performance. The aforementioned studies on leadership styles and theories will guide the researchers in assessing the impact of criminology intern leadership training in shaping future leaders.

To address the gap in the present study, the researchers will use Kurt Lewin's Autocratic Leadership Style, James MacGregor Burns's Transformational Leadership Theory, and Fred Fiedler's Contingency Leadership Theory to assess how intern leaders are shaped during criminology intern leadership training. The output of the study will be an enhanced training program for interns in which core competencies such as leadership skills, personality, and discipline are equally developed.

2. Literature Review

The researchers reviewed and synthesized related literature to strengthen the study's theoretical foundation, identify gaps in earlier methodological approaches, and clarify the variables relevant to the inquiry, "On Becoming a Leader: Impact of Criminology Intern-Leadership Training." The study seeks to examine how the identified variables relate to one another and to explain how challenges and obstacles may emerge throughout leadership development, including ways these difficulties can be addressed or prevented. The discussion highlights three core competencies: personality, discipline, and leadership skills - as central variables that influence leadership readiness and overall effectiveness among criminology interns.

Personality refers to the distinctive patterns through which individuals think, feel, and behave, and greater understanding of personality has been associated with improved relationships, behavioral insight, and personal growth (Castillo et. al., 2025). Moreover, Connelly and Torrence (2019) claimed that that leadership training can support personality-related development, particularly by strengthening emotional intelligence and emotion regulation, which improves interpersonal interactions and aligns with the view that effective leaders manage both their own emotions and the emotions of others. Leadership training has also been linked to positive shifts in personality that enhance engagement and organizational commitment, suggesting that individuals who experience personality development during training may demonstrate stronger involvement and improved outcomes for their teams (Lee & Carsten, 2021). Discipline is similarly recognized as a key foundation of effective leadership because it promotes consistency, accountability, and ethical decision-making (Halbusi et. al., 2019), and leadership initiatives can further strengthen responsibility and ethical conduct that are essential in law enforcement contexts (Harris, 2021). Supporting studies connect discipline to resilience and ethical leadership, showing that disciplined leaders remain focused under pressure while fostering trust and loyalty through strong moral standards (Onsori et. al., 2025). Moreover, structured training programs have been shown to enhance self-control, reinforce commitment to organizational values, and build accountability and supportive team culture (Jansen et al., 2023). Leadership skills, meanwhile, are defined as the competencies that enable individuals to influence others, promote collaboration, and guide teams toward goals in complex settings (Hoch & Kozlowski, 2022). The literature consistently emphasizes that leadership skills such as communication, decision-making, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and self-awareness, are developed through training and experiential learning, particularly when interns take active leadership roles in real or simulated contexts (Randel et al., 2020; Vickers et al., 2021). Overall, the reviewed studies support the view that leadership is developed rather than purely innate, and that leadership training strengthens personality,

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discipline, and leadership skills competencies that are essential for criminology interns as they prepare for demanding, dynamic, and ethically complex environments in the criminal justice field.

3. Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to describe the impact of the Intern Leadership Training to the 4th year Criminology Interns of De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College for S.Y. 2024-2025.

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age and gender?
2. What is the respondents' level of perception before the Intern Leadership Training in terms of:
   - 2.1 personality,
   - 2.2 discipline, and
   - 2.3 leadership skills?
3. What is the respondents' level of perception after the Intern Leadership Training in terms of:
   - 3.1 personality,
   - 3.2 discipline, and
   - 3.3 leadership skills?
4. Is there a significant difference between the respondents' level of perception before and after the Intern Leadership Training?

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Research Design

This study used a one-group pretest–posttest design to assess the outcomes of a seven-day intern leadership training program for criminology interns at De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College (DLSASMC). A total of 45 criminology interns in the academic year 2024–2025 participated in the study. Before the training, a pretest was conducted to establish their baseline leadership skills and perceptions. After completing the program, the same group were given a posttest to determine improvements or changes. This design was selected because it allows direct comparison of pre-intervention and post-intervention results within one group. However, it must be noted that the absence of a control group limits the ability to conclude that all observed changes were solely due to the training program. This research utilized quantitative methods through surveys to collect measurable data on the interns' leadership skills and program effectiveness.

4.2. Environment

The De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College (DLSASMC) is located in Don Andres Soriano, Toledo City, Cebu, Philippines. The institution has a variety of facilities, including classrooms, labs, libraries, and administrative offices, as well as green places for students to relax and study. De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College principally offers Bachelor of Science of Criminology and Bachelor of Science in Education programs, providing opportunities for specialized research and growth in these subjects. The college department emphasizes values education and incorporates moral growth into its curriculum, with the goal of producing well-rounded persons who possess both knowledge and ethical ideals. The college is conveniently accessible via public transportation, including motorcycles and jeepneys, making it ideal for students commuting from adjacent locations. Overall, De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College is a thriving educational institution located in the center of Toledo City that promotes academic success and personal growth.

4.3. Respondents

The respondents of this study are the 45 criminology interns for the academic year 2024-2025 from De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College, who underwent a seven-day intern leadership training program.

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Table 1. Profile of the respondents.

Profile	f	%

Age		
>25	4	8.89
23-24	12	26.67
21-22	29	64.44
Total	45	100.00
Gender		
Female	16	35.56
Male	29	64.44
Total	45	100.00

Table 1 illustrates the profile of the respondents according to age and gender. In terms of age, most of the criminology interns were between 21 and 22 years old, accounting for 29 or 64.44% of the total respondents. This suggests that most of the participants are in the typical age range of students completing their internship requirements. Meanwhile, 12 respondents (26.67%) were aged 23–24, while only 4 respondents (8.89%) were above 25 years old, indicating that older students formed a small proportion of the group.

As for gender distribution, most of the respondents were male, comprising 29 or 64.44% of the total, while 16 respondents (35.56%) were female. This reflects the common trend in criminology programs where male students outnumber female students, possibly due to the perception of criminology as a male-dominated field. Overall, the data reveal that the respondent group was largely composed of younger adults in their early twenties and predominantly male, which may influence their perspectives and experiences during the leadership training program.

4.4. Instrument

This study utilized a modified survey questionnaire adapted from the structure of the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) and Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (EI) assessment (Goleman, 1998). The modified content is to assess Personality, Discipline, and Leadership Skills relevant to the context of the seven-day intern leadership training program for criminology interns at De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College (DLSASMC). For the demographic information, descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage distribution were used. To measure the effectiveness of the leadership training, a paired t-test was employed to examine whether there is a statistically significant difference in students' self-assessed personality, discipline, and leadership skills before and after participating in the leadership training program. To assess which area shows the greatest progress, descriptive statistics, specifically the mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize the level of growth in personality, discipline, and leadership skills. For the proposed training enhancements, descriptive statistics in terms of mean and standard deviation were utilized to assess the overall impact of the leadership training. Furthermore, a paired t-test was applied to compare the levels of growth in personality, discipline, and leadership skills, and Cohen's d was calculated to measure the effect size to evaluate the practical significance of the findings. This analysis helped identify the area that exhibited the least improvement, which served as the foundation for proposing enhancements to the leadership training program.

4.5. Data Collection Process

The data gathering process for the research on the impact of the Intern Leadership Training aimed to understand how the program affects the personal and professional growth of criminology interns, and the study seeks to propose an enhanced criminology intern leadership training based on the findings. An approval letter was submitted to the OIC Dean of Criminal Justice Education for review, outlining the study's goals and methods, and once approved, respondents were informed about the study's objectives, received a brief overview, and consent was obtained to ensure their participation was voluntary and confidential. The questionnaire for gathering quantitative data was provided online through Google Form, with clear instructions for each section, including demographic questions. After data gathering, the findings were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the current training program and to propose enhancements for future trainings, and throughout the process, confidentiality was maintained to protect the respondents' identities and responses.

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4.6. Data Analysis

To analyze the data gathered from the modified survey questionnaire, the following statistical tools and methods were employed. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage distribution, were used to summarize the demographic profile of the criminology interns. Additionally, the mean and standard deviation were computed to determine the average scores and variability in personality, discipline, and leadership skills both before and after the leadership training program. A paired t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the interns' self-assessed levels of personality, discipline, and leadership skills before and after the seven-day leadership training program. To determine the practical significance of the results, Cohen's d was calculated to measure the effect size of the changes observed in each skill area, namely personality, discipline, and leadership. This helped determine the magnitude of improvement brought about by the training. Furthermore, the mean differences in scores before and after the training for each skill area were analyzed to identify which area showed the greatest and least improvement. These findings served as the basis for proposing enhancements to the leadership training program.

5. Results and Discussion

This section presented, analyzed, and interpreted the data gathered from the pre-assessment and post-assessment of the leadership training of Bachelor of Science in Criminology interns of De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College. The presentation of data was divided into three parts. Leadership training develops personality, discipline, and leadership skills, which are essential abilities that a criminology intern must possess. It enhances communication, decision-making, problem-solving abilities, and collaborative work and effort, all of which are crucial in the field of criminal justice, particularly in leadership roles. In addition, leadership training cultivates discipline and resilience, which are especially helpful during high-pressure and unpredictable circumstances. Driven by a strong commitment to justice, the development of ethical decision-making shapes interns into respectable professionals who display excellence in their field of work. A strong personality developed through self-awareness, which was included in the training, further helps shape interns into effective leaders' worthy of public trust.

This table presents the respondents' level of perception before Intern Leadership Training in terms of: personality, discipline, and leadership skills.

Table 2. Respondents' Level of Perception before the Intern Leadership Training.

	WM	SD	Interpretation
Personality	3.97	0.62	Positive
Discipline	4.14	0.59	Positive
Leadership Skills	4.08	0.64	Positive
Aggregate Weighted Mean	4.07		Positive
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.62	

Note: Legend: 4.21-5.00-Very Positive, 3.41-4.20-Positive, 2.61-3.40-Neutral, 1.81-2.60-Negative, 1.00-1.80-Very Negative.

Table 2 illustrates the respondents' level of perception before the Intern Leadership Training in terms of personality, discipline, and leadership skills. The results indicate that all three dimensions were rated positively. Personality obtained a weighted mean (WM) of 3.97 with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.62, suggesting that the interns had a generally favorable perception of their personal traits prior to the training. Discipline received the highest mean score of 4.14 (SD = 0.59), which reflects that the respondents viewed themselves as having strong self-control and adherence to rules even before the program. Leadership skills also showed a positive rating with a mean of 4.08 (SD = 0.64), indicating that the interns perceived themselves as capable of leading and influencing others to a certain extent. The overall aggregate weighted mean was 4.07 with an aggregate SD of 0.62, interpreted as Positive. This implies that the respondents already had a strong and favorable self-perception regarding personality, discipline, and leadership skills before the start of the training. The findings show that before the training, the interns already viewed themselves positively in terms of personality, discipline, and leadership skills. This implies that they had existing strengths that could be further enhanced through the Intern Leadership Training Program (Day, 2021).

This table presents the respondents' level of perception after the Intern Leadership Training in terms of: personality, discipline, and leadership skills. Table 3 illustrates the respondents' level of perception after the

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Intern Leadership Training in terms of personality, discipline, and leadership skills. The findings reveal that all three dimensions were rated Very Positive, indicating that the training had a strong and favorable impact on the interns.

Table 3. Respondents' Level of Perception after the Intern Leadership Training.

	WM	SD	Interpretation
Personality	4.31	0.70	Very Positive
Discipline	4.29	0.63	Very Positive
Leadership Skills	4.24	0.71	Very Positive
Aggregate Weighted Mean	4.28		Very Positive
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.68	

Note: Legend: 4.21-5.00-Very Positive, 3.41-4.20-Positive, 2.61-3.40-Neutral, 1.81-2.60-Negative, 1.00-1.80-Very Negative.

Personality obtained the highest weighted mean (WM) of 4.31 with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.70, suggesting that the interns perceived a significant improvement in their self-confidence, behavior, and interpersonal relations after the training. Discipline followed with a mean of 4.29 (SD = 0.63), which reflects that the participants developed a stronger sense of responsibility and self-regulation because of the program. Leadership skills also received a high mean of 4.24 (SD = 0.71), showing that the interns gained greater confidence and competence in leading, guiding, and influencing others. The overall aggregate weighted mean was 4.28 with an aggregate SD of 0.68, interpreted as Very Positive. This demonstrates that, collectively, the criminology interns viewed the leadership training as highly effective in enhancing their personality, discipline, and leadership skills. The shift from a Positive rating before the training (Table 2) to a Very Positive rating afterward highlights the program's effectiveness in strengthening the interns' personal and leadership capacities. The findings indicate that the interns perceived clear improvements in their personality, discipline, and leadership skills after completing the training program. This suggests that the Intern Leadership Training was effective in enhancing both personal development and leadership capacity among criminology interns (Libradilla, 2025).

This table illustrates significant difference between the respondents' level of perception before and after the Intern Leadership Training. Table 4 presents the test of difference between the respondents' level of perception before and after the Intern Leadership Training, revealing significant improvements across all three dimensions; personality, discipline, and leadership skills; following the program. In terms of personality, the pretest mean of 3.97 increased to 4.31 in the posttest, with a mean difference of 0.338, and the computed t-value of 4.59 with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that the training significantly enhanced the interns' perception of their personality by promoting self-awareness, confidence, and positive personal traits essential for effective leadership in criminology (Galvez, 2025). Similarly, discipline showed a significant improvement, as the pretest mean of 4.14 rose to 4.29 after the training, yielding a mean difference of 0.150, a t-value of 2.77, and a p-value of 0.008, which resulted in the rejection of the null hypothesis and suggests that the program strengthened the interns' self-discipline, sense of responsibility, and adherence to rules, qualities that are critical in maintaining professionalism and effective performance in high-pressure criminology settings (Zaportiza, 2025). Leadership skills also demonstrated a statistically significant increase, with the pretest mean rising from 4.08 to 4.24 in the posttest and a mean difference of 0.160, supported by a t-value of 3.11 and a p-value of 0.003, indicating that the training positively influenced the interns' leadership abilities, particularly in decision-making, communication, and team management (Tad-awan, 2024). Overall, the findings clearly demonstrate statistically significant differences between the pretest and posttest results across all variables, confirming that the seven-day Intern Leadership Training was effective in improving the criminology interns' personality, discipline, and leadership skills and that measurable changes occurred in all three areas following the intervention (Coker, 2020).

Table 4. Test of difference between the respondents' level of perception before and after the Intern Leadership Training.

Variables	Source of Difference	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	t- value	p-value	Decision	Result
Personality	Pretest	3.97	0.62	0.338	4.59	0.000	Reject Ho	S

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	Posttest	4.31	0.70					
Discipline	Pretest	4.14	0.59	0.150	2.77	0.008	Reject Ho	S
	Posttest	4.29	0.63					
Leadership	Pretest	4.08	0.64	0.160	3.11	0.003	Reject Ho	S
	Posttest	4.24	0.71					

Note: *significant at p<0.05; NS = Not Significant; S = Significant.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the leadership training program for Bachelor of Science in Criminology interns at De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College is effective in fostering overall leadership development. The program demonstrated a significant positive impact on the interns' personality and discipline, suggesting that it successfully cultivates essential personal qualities necessary for the field of criminal justice. However, the observed improvements in leadership skills were less pronounced, as evidenced by the smaller effect size and higher p-value, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to strengthen this competency. Consequently, future iterations of the program should prioritize strategies aimed at enhancing leadership skills, including structured activities, practical applications, and mentorship opportunities tailored to participants' varying levels of prior leadership experience. By addressing these areas, the program can more effectively equip criminology interns with the comprehensive leadership capabilities required to excel in their professional roles.

7. Recommendation

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, several recommendations are proposed to address the observed limited growth in leadership skills and to optimize the leadership training program for future criminology interns. First, the program should consider tailoring training to accommodate participants with varying levels of prior leadership experience, which may involve developing separate modules or activities for interns with limited experience and those with more extensive backgrounds. Second, it should incorporate more targeted activities and strategies focused on developing leadership competencies, ensuring that interns have practical opportunities to strengthen their skills. Third, given the program's demonstrated effectiveness, its continued implementation is strongly recommended to sustain and further enhance leadership development among criminology interns. Fourth, pairing interns with experienced professionals in the field can provide guidance, constructive feedback, and role-modeling of effective leadership practices, thereby reinforcing practical learning and professional growth. Finally, incorporating group projects, discussions, and collaborative exercises can foster communication, conflict resolution, and shared leadership skills, all of which are essential in professional criminal justice settings.

By implementing these recommendations, the leadership training program can be further optimized to maximize its impact on the development of future criminology professionals, ensuring that interns are equipped with the comprehensive leadership skills necessary to excel in their careers.

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International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 1-8
2026
DOI: *10.53935/2641-533x.v9i1.1151*

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