

Navigating Priorities: Balancing Academic and Extra-Curricular Activities among Silent Drillers

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DOI: 10.63941/DisKURSO.2026.1.2.08

Article Information

Received: September 2, 2026

Accepted: September 25, 2026

Published: October 15, 2026

Keywords

Academic; balance; extracurricular; navigating priorities; silent driller

ABSTRACT

The Criminal Justice Education students face different challenges and employ strategies in balancing academic and extracurricular activities. This study explored the conflicting time management experiences and struggles of silent drill cadets between trainings and academic requirements in the Municipality of Tagoloan. This study utilized a qualitative approach using a phenomenological design. The participants of the study were composed of 10 silent drill who were chosen using convenient sampling. An interview guide was used in the face-to-face interview. Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology was employed in analyzing the data to come up with the themes. Results revealed the following themes: discipline, camaraderie, and personal growth: stress and struggles of academic and silent drill commitments: strategic time schedule management and motivation. The Silent Drill organization promotes discipline, self-discipline, time management, and a strong work ethic. It enhances coordination, stamina, and precision, and provides opportunities for teamwork and recognition. Balancing academic and silent drill commitments is challenging due to scheduling conflicts, financial constraints, and time management difficulties. Effective time management and overcoming challenges can lead to better outcomes, such as improved academic performance, preventing burnout, and a sense of accomplishment. Extra-curricular activities not only develop leadership and life skills but also psychomotor domains, especially for criminology students, who need extensive training for law enforcement. Constant monitoring of students involved in extracurricular activities, especially silent drill organizations, is crucial to assess their ability to balance academic requirements and training commitments.

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of higher education involves more than just academic attainment; it is a holistic developmental experience often augmented by participation in extracurricular activities. Research consistently suggests that involvement in sports, clubs, and organizations can foster essential life skills such as leadership, teamwork, and time management, potentially leading to positive outcomes in academic performance and overall well-being (Witkowsky & Fuselier, 2023). However, this beneficial relationship is often contingent on the ability of the student to effectively manage the competing demands on their time and energy.

This balancing act becomes particularly acute for students in highly demanding professional courses, such as those pursuing Criminal Justice Education (CJE). CJE programs are distinct in that they require a blend of rigorous theoretical knowledge and the development of specific psycho-motor skills essential for future law enforcement and public safety professionals. These programs frequently incorporate mandatory or highly encouraged military-style training, drills,

and physical activities designed to instill discipline, precision, and physical stamina—qualities indispensable to the field.

In the context of Tagoloan Community College (TCC), the Silent Drill Organization stands as one of the most visible and demanding extracurricular groups within the College of Criminal Justice and Public Safety. Comprising 162 members, this organization accounts for approximately 12.2% of the Criminology student population. The Silent Drill is characterized by high-precision, intricate rifle and formation movements performed without verbal commands, requiring countless hours of practice and an absolute commitment to excellence. This level of dedication translates into a significant time commitment that directly encroaches upon the time required for classroom instruction, studying, and completing academic requirements.

The core problem, therefore, is the potential for conflicting time management experiences and profound struggles among these Silent Drill cadets. While the organization offers structure and discipline—essential resources—it also imposes severe demands that threaten academic stability. This creates a critical tension point that is currently under-explored in the local context. Understanding the nature of this struggle, and more importantly, how the students cope and succeed in navigating these pressures, is vital for designing effective institutional support systems. This study seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by providing an in-depth, lived perspective on the Silent Driller's journey.

Academic success often hinges on an individual's ability to prioritize and strategically allocate time and energy. For CJE students, the risk of burnout or academic failure is heightened by the dual pressure of rigorous academics and intense physical training. Studies on role conflict (Varpio et al., 2018) suggest that when the expectations of one role (e.g., student) clash with the expectations of another role (e.g., performer/trainee), the resulting strain can lead to psychological distress, diminished performance in one or both roles, and eventually, exhaustion. The Silent Drill environment, while fostering discipline, inherently sets the stage for such role strain and conflict.

Furthermore, while the benefits of extracurricular activities are often emphasized, the specific emotional and logistical toll on students in high-commitment, physically demanding activities is less documented. Are the lessons in discipline and time management learned in the field sufficient to overcome the academic hurdle of missed lectures and fatigue? Does the strong camaraderie within the organization serve as a psychological buffer against the stress? Answering these questions requires a qualitative approach capable of uncovering the deep, personal meanings ascribed to these experiences by the cadets themselves.

By focusing on the phenomenology of these experiences, this research aims to provide a rich, detailed, and context-specific understanding of the challenges and triumphs of TCC's Silent Drill cadets. The findings are expected to move beyond simple correlation, providing actionable insights for the CJE faculty, the Silent Drill organization leadership, and the college administration to implement supportive interventions that foster holistic student development without sacrificing academic standards.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in two major sociological theories that help explain the dynamic relationship between the conflicting demands and the internal coping mechanisms observed in the participants: Role Strain Theory and Conservation of Resources Theory.

Role Strain Theory (R.K. Merton)

Role Strain Theory, pioneered by Robert King Merton, posits that a person may experience difficulty in meeting the role obligations attached to two or more social statuses simultaneously.

When a person occupies two distinct roles whose expectations are incompatible, they experience role conflict. In the context of this study:

- Role 1: The Student. Expectations include attending classes, studying, completing assignments, and achieving high academic grades.
- Role 2: The Silent Driller Cadet. Expectations include attending mandatory, intensive training sessions, prioritizing organizational duties, achieving precision in drill performance, and demonstrating commitment to the group.

The intense time demands of training, which often overlap with class schedules or necessary study time, create an intrinsic role conflict. This theoretical lens explains the stress and struggles (Theme 2) experienced by the cadets, where the commitment to the drill often necessitates a reduction in effort or time dedicated to academics, leading to academic struggle or chronic fatigue. Merton's framework provides the explanatory power for the tension observed in the cadets' lived experience.

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (S.E. Hobfoll)

Conservation of Resources Theory (COR), developed by Stevan E. Hobfoll, argues that individuals are motivated to protect their current resources (objects, conditions, personal characteristics, and energies) and to acquire new ones. Stress occurs when resources are threatened, lost, or when there is a failure to gain resources following investment.

In this study, the COR theory explains the coping mechanisms and motivations (Themes 1 and 3):

- Investment: The cadets invest time and energy into the Silent Drill organization.
- Resource Gain: In return, they gain crucial personal characteristics (discipline, time management, self-esteem) and social resources (camaraderie, social support, recognition).

This theory suggests that the cadets endure the strain (Theme 2) because they are simultaneously conserving and gaining valuable resources (Theme 1). The high level of camaraderie and the resulting motivation act as critical social resources, providing a psychological buffer against the academic stress and fueling the determination to succeed in both roles. Thus, the COR theory helps explain why the students persist despite the role conflict.

Statement of the Problem

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of silent drill cadets from the College of Criminal Justice and Public Safety at Tagoloan Community College in balancing their academic pursuits with their highly demanding extracurricular commitments.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key motivations and positive experiences of silent drill cadets in participating in the organization?
2. What are the stresses and struggles encountered by silent drill cadets in balancing their academic requirements and extracurricular commitments?
3. What specific strategies are employed by silent drill cadets to navigate and cope with the demands of their academic and training commitments?
4. What is the essence of the experience of balancing academic and extracurricular activities among silent drill cadets?

Significance and Scope of the Study

The findings of this research bear significant implications for various stakeholders:

- For the Silent Drill Cadets: The study validates their experiences and highlights effective coping strategies, offering a platform for shared learning and self-reflection, potentially leading to improved time management and mental health practices.
- For the Criminology Faculty and Instructors: The results will increase their awareness of the unique challenges faced by their CJE students involved in high-commitment organizations. This insight can inform instructional design, the judicious setting of deadlines, and the implementation of academic support or remediation programs.
- For the College Administration: The study provides empirical evidence to justify the creation of specialized support services, such as mentorship programs or flexible attendance policies, designed to help students maximize the benefits of extracurricular activities without compromising academic integrity.
- For Future Researchers: The themes generated will serve as a foundational qualitative source for future quantitative studies aimed at measuring the correlation between extracurricular involvement, stress, and academic performance among students in professional programs.

The scope of this study is limited to ten silent drill cadets actively enrolled in the Criminology program at Tagoloan Community College who were selected using convenient sampling. The findings are contextualized to their specific experiences within the Silent Drill organization and the CJE program environment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach utilizing a phenomenological design. A qualitative approach was essential because the research objective was to explore, interpret, and understand the deep, personal, and lived experiences of the silent drill cadets, rather than to measure a variable or test a hypothesis. The complexity of balancing competing life roles cannot be reduced to numerical data; it requires rich, narrative detail.

Specifically, the study adopted Transcendental Phenomenology as articulated by Clark Moustakas (1994). This method is specifically designed to understand the essence or structure of an experience, shared by multiple individuals who have lived that experience. The purpose was to explicate the phenomenon of balancing academic and extra-curricular commitments as it is consciously experienced by the cadets, by setting aside preconceived notions and biases—a process known as epoche or bracketing. This allowed the themes and meaning units to emerge directly from the participants' narratives.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at the College of Criminal Justice and Public Safety of Tagoloan Community College (TCC), a local government-funded educational institution in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. The CJE program at TCC is known for its rigorous training components, including the highly esteemed Silent Drill Organization.

The participants were composed of ten (10) silent drill cadets currently enrolled in the Criminology program. Participants were selected using a convenient sampling technique, which allowed for the quick and accessible selection of individuals who met the following criteria: active membership in the Silent Drill Organization for at least one year, willingness to openly discuss their experiences, and enrollment in the CJE program. The sample size of ten is consistent with qualitative phenomenological studies, which aim for saturation of thematic content rather than statistical generalizability. The sample included a mix of students with varying academic standing to ensure a comprehensive representation of the spectrum of balancing experiences.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was an open-ended, semi-structured interview guide. The guide was developed based on the Statement of the Problem and was carefully validated by a panel of Criminology and research experts to ensure clarity and alignment with the study's objectives. The questions were designed to elicit in-depth, descriptive narratives, covering their motivations for joining, specific struggles faced, and concrete coping mechanisms utilized.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering followed strict ethical and procedural steps:

1. Approval: Formal letters requesting permission to conduct the study were secured from the College Dean and the Head of the Criminology Program.
2. Ethical Clearance: The study protocol, including the interview guide and consent forms, was reviewed and approved by the institutional ethics review committee.
3. Participant Identification and Consent: Potential participants were identified and individually approached. Informed consent was secured from all ten cadets, assuring them of confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.
4. Interview Implementation: Face-to-face interviews were conducted by the researcher in a private, quiet setting free from interruptions. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' explicit permission. The language used was the local vernacular (Cebuano/Tagalog) to ensure participants could express their experiences authentically and richly. Each interview lasted between 45 to 90 minutes.
5. Transcription: The audio recordings were immediately and meticulously transcribed verbatim, then translated into English for data analysis.

Data Analysis (Moustakas' Reduction)

The transcribed data were analyzed using the systematic procedures of Moustakas' Transcendental Phenomenology (1994):

1. Epoche (Bracketing): The researcher actively set aside all prior knowledge, expectations, and personal biases regarding student organizations, drill culture, and academic struggles. This was done to allow the participants' voices to speak for themselves, preserving the integrity of their lived experience.
2. Horizontalization: Every statement that provided insight into the participants' experience of balancing the two roles was extracted and treated as having equal value, resulting in a large list of preliminary expressions.
3. Clustering into Themes (Meaning Units): The preliminary expressions were examined for recurrence and commonality. Repetitive or irrelevant statements were eliminated. The remaining, non-redundant statements were grouped into meaning units and then clustered into broader invariant themes that captured the core meaning of the experience.
4. Textural Description: This involved describing what the participants experienced. It was accomplished by using the verbatim excerpts to illustrate the depth and quality of the three emergent themes, focusing on the sensory and emotional elements of their experience.
5. Structural Description: This involved describing how the participants experienced the phenomenon. It required the researcher to use imaginative variation to determine the underlying conditions, contexts, and structures that influenced the experience, such as the organization's schedule, the academic demands, and the social environment.

6. Textural-Structural Synthesis: The textural and structural descriptions were combined into a final, comprehensive narrative—the Composite Story—which represented the universal essence of balancing academic and extracurricular activities among the silent drill cadets.

Theme	Sub-Themes	Meaning Units / Core Concepts
Theme 1: Discipline, Camaraderie, and Personal Growth	1.1 Discipline and Personal Growth	Self-discipline, time management skills, self-control, improved academic focus.
	1.2 Inspiration and Camaraderie	Sense of belonging, "second family," role modeling, peer support.
Theme 2: Stress and Struggles of Academic and Silent Drill Commitments	2.1 Balancing Training and Academic Commitments	Scheduling conflicts, fatigue hindering study, missing classes, financial costs.
	2.2 Experiencing Academic and Performance Struggles	Difficulty coping with missed responsibilities, psychological distress, feeling overwhelmed.
Theme 3: Strategic Time Schedule Management and Motivation	3.1 Navigating Challenges through Strategic Time Management	Prioritizing tasks, creating daily schedules, seeking instructor support, multitasking.
	3.2 Striving Harder and Achieving Balance	Internal motivation, desire to be a "wiser person," positive mindset, resilience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis, utilizing Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology, resulted in the emergence of three core themes that capture the essence of the silent drill cadets' experience in navigating the balance between their academic life and their extracurricular commitment. The following sections present the **textural description** of these themes, supported by the cadets' **verbatim narratives**.

3.1 Theme 1: Discipline, Camaraderie, and Personal Growth

The first set of experiences shared by the participants overwhelmingly centered on the positive, intrinsic benefits derived from their membership. This theme explains *why* the students invested their limited resources into the organization.

Sub-theme 1.1: Discipline and Personal Growth

The participants consistently emphasized the positive transformation in their character and habits, specifically highlighting the transferability of the organization's discipline to their academic lives.

P2 stated:

"The Silent Drill made me flourish discipline, self-discipline, and self-control. Before, I was a very lazy person, but because of the organization, I've learned to manage my time wisely... I realized that if I can be precise in my drill, I must also be precise in my studies. It taught me how to set priorities, which is the most critical part of balancing everything."

P1 noted the tangible impact on academics:

"I noticed an improved academic performance, increased discipline, and better time management skills. The constant pressure to be on time and prepared for the drill practice forces you to be on time and prepared for class as well. It's like a habit that transfers automatically. Without the drill's discipline, I might be skipping classes, but now I can't."

Sub-theme 1.2: Inspiration and Camaraderie

Beyond personal discipline, the strong social connection and sense of belonging were reported as foundational resources that sustained the participants during difficult periods. The organization functions as a potent support system.

P10 described the group dynamic:

"We became a second family. When one of us struggles in academics, the others who are proficient help them. We cover for each other. If I'm exhausted after training, I know my kuyas (older brothers) or peers will share their notes. That sense of camaraderie is the primary reason why I stay, because I feel supported, not just challenged. It's a shared burden."

P9 highlighted the role model effect:

"My motivation to join was seeing my cousin, who is now a police officer, succeeding through the discipline of the drill. She always told me that the organization is where future officers learn true dedication. Knowing that I am part of that tradition, and that my peers are going through the same thing, is my inspiration to keep pushing through the exhaustion."

Sub-theme 1.3: Personal Growth and Satisfaction

The successful execution of challenging tasks and the sense of public recognition provided a powerful sense of self-efficacy and accomplishment.

P4 expressed a deep sense of self-improvement:

"When we perform well, and people clap, it is satisfying. But the real satisfaction comes from knowing I pushed my limits. I learned coordination, stamina, and precision. I am physically and mentally tougher now. I am becoming a wiser person, not just a better student."

3.2 Theme 2: Stress and Struggles of Academic and Silent Drill Commitments

Despite the positive gains, all participants reported significant difficulties. This theme captures the core of the **Role Strain Theory** in their daily lives, detailing the costs associated with their dual commitments.

Sub-theme 2.1: Balancing Training and Academic Commitments

The primary struggle stemmed from the incompatible time schedules and the physical demands of training, which directly impacted their classroom performance and study time.

P8 illustrated the extent of the physical exhaustion:

"We practice countless hours, and sometimes it ends late, around 8 PM. By the time I get home, I'm physically and mentally exhausted. I have assignments, but I just collapse. I lose the will to study. The next day, I am too lazy to listen in class because I'm tired. It affects my focus so much. I feel like I'm doing two full-time jobs."

P5 described the consequences of schedule conflicts:

"There are times when the Silent Drill has an important exhibition, and we must skip classes for the whole day. When I go back to class, I've missed three or four lectures, and catching up is a massive struggle. I feel guilty about missing my responsibilities as a student, but I also feel a huge obligation to my unit. It's a constant tug-of-war."

P3 noted the financial pressure:

"It's not just time; it's money, too. The organization sometimes requires new uniforms or travel expenses, and that cuts into my budget for school supplies or even my allowance. The financial stress adds to the academic stress. I often feel guilty asking my parents for extra money just for the drill."

Sub-theme 2.2: Experiencing Academic and Performance Struggles

The persistent time conflicts often manifested as tangible performance deficits and psychological distress, confirming the direct impact of role strain.

P6 detailed the loss of study time:

"My grades suffered initially. I couldn't manage my time. I would study late into the night, sacrificing sleep, which made me sleepy in class. I started missing deadlines. The pressure built up to the point where I felt so overwhelmed. I was always on the verge of breaking down. I kept asking myself if this commitment was truly worth my academic record."

P7 described the emotional impact:

"The struggle is mostly internal. I know I am capable, but the stress of having to choose between finishing an assignment and mandatory training makes me feel inadequate. I feel psychological distress because I want to give 100% to both, but my energy is finite. I am constantly worried about disappointing my instructors or my drill master."

P9 explained the cycle of fatigue:

"I was too tired to listen because I'm tired. That's the simplest way to put it. The intense heat during practice and the physical demands meant my mind was never fresh for the late-afternoon classes. I became the student who sits in the back, trying not to fall asleep. It's a vicious cycle where the extracurricular commitment makes the academic role harder to fulfill."

3.3 Theme 3: Strategic Time Schedule Management and Motivation

In response to the identified stresses and struggles, the cadets developed and employed distinct coping mechanisms. This theme highlights the active, conscious effort made to mitigate the role conflict and maintain stability, demonstrating a successful deployment of **Conservation of Resources**.

Sub-theme 3.1: Navigating Challenges through Strategic Time Management

The most successful coping strategy involved proactively structuring their daily lives and communicating their needs to their support networks.

P1 detailed his structured approach:

"I learned to create a rigid, non-negotiable schedule. I dedicate a specific time right after training, even if I am tired, to review notes. Then, I set an alarm for an early start to finish assignments before class. I practice multitasking, like reading handouts during long bus rides. If I don't follow the schedule, I fail. The drill taught me to stick to the plan."

P4 emphasized the importance of communication:

"I always communicate with my instructors beforehand if I know I have a major event or practice. I politely ask for an extension or a make-up assignment. Most of the time, they understand my commitment as long as I show effort. Seeking that support is key. I realized I don't have to carry the burden alone."

P6 noted the change in priority setting:

"I learned to prioritize ruthlessly. Drill practice is mandatory; classes are mandatory. The time in between is for the hardest assignments. Leisure time became non-existent. It's a temporary sacrifice, but I frame it as an investment. My priority shifted from 'what I want to do' to 'what I must do to survive this semester.'"

Sub-theme 3.2: Striving Harder and Achieving Balance

Beyond logistical planning, the internal motivation and mental fortitude gained from the drill organization served as the psychological resource needed to persevere.

P2's internal dialogue reflects resilience:

"Whenever I feel like quitting, I remind myself of why I joined—to become a disciplined, better version of myself. If I can endure the pain of a long drill practice, I can endure two hours of studying. The pain is temporary, but the reward—the discipline and the degree—is permanent. That mindset keeps me going."

P10 summarized the emotional breakthrough:

"It's about turning the struggle into motivation. I realized that the organization made me accountable to others, and my academics made me accountable to myself. I push harder in both because failure in one means letting down the other. I strive hard not just to balance, but to excel in both."

Textural-Structural Synthesis (The Essence)

The essence of balancing academic and extra-curricular activities among silent drill cadets is one of Active Negotiation of Priorities. The experience is fundamentally characterized by a simultaneous gain of personal and social resources (Theme 1) and an endurance of intense role strain (Theme 2). The cadets successfully mitigate the resultant conflict not by reducing commitment to either role, but by deploying strategic, disciplined self-management and utilizing peer support (Theme 3). The core structure of their experience is the transformation of external organizational discipline into internal personal resilience, allowing them to survive the demanding duality of their CJE commitment.

Theme	Nature of Experience	Theoretical Link
1. Discipline, Camaraderie, and Personal Growth	The positive personal characteristics and social support gained from the organization.	Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory: The organization serves as a source of valuable resources (self-esteem, social ties) that motivates persistence.
2. Stress and Struggles of Academic and Silent Drill Commitments	The core challenges arising from conflicting time and energy demands between the two roles.	Role Strain Theory: The dual roles of 'Student' and 'Drill Cadet' have incompatible expectations, leading to conflict, fatigue, and distress.
3. Strategic Time Schedule Management and Motivation	The deliberate methods and internal fortitude used to cope with the stress and achieve stability.	Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory & Stress-Coping Model: Conscious strategic action (Time Management) is the deployed resource to protect against resource loss (academic failure).

DISCUSSION

This chapter interprets the qualitative findings by connecting the emergent themes to the theoretical framework and existing literature on student development, stress, and role conflict.

Discussion of Theme 1: Discipline, Camaraderie, and Personal Growth

The findings that the Silent Drill organization promotes discipline, self-control, and a strong sense of camaraderie align strongly with studies on highly committed student organizations, particularly those with a quasi-military structure (Verrawati et al., 2022). This theme provides the central motivational resource for the cadets' persistence.

From the perspective of the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, the Silent Drill Organization is not merely an activity but a resource generator. The cadets invest energy and time (a resource) and, in return, gain:

1. Personal Characteristics: Discipline, time management, and self-efficacy (P1, P2).
2. Social Resources: Camaraderie, peer support, and a sense of "second family" (P10).
3. Condition Resources: Public recognition and belonging (P4).

This resource gain explains why the cadets voluntarily subject themselves to the strain (Theme 2). The perceived value of these acquired resources—especially the discipline that transfers to academics and the camaraderie that acts as a psychological buffer—outweighs the immediate cost of time and fatigue. This finding suggests that institutions should intentionally structure extracurricular activities to emphasize and formalize the development of these transferable skills, thereby strengthening the student's overall resource pool.

Discussion of Theme 2: Stress and Struggles of Academic and Silent Drill Commitments

The persistent difficulties reported by the cadets—physical exhaustion, schedule conflicts, and psychological distress (P5, P8)—are classic manifestations of Role Strain, specifically Role Conflict, as predicted by Merton's framework (Varpio et al., 2018).

The dual roles of 'student' (requiring focused, rested mental energy for academic performance) and 'drill cadet' (requiring intense physical commitment) create incompatible demands. The conflict is evident in the participants' accounts of feeling "physically and mentally exhausted" and "too lazy to listen" in class (P8, P9), which is the direct result of the depletion of a finite resource: energy.

The role strain is further intensified by the financial constraints noted by P3, where required organizational expenses threaten the resource of object loss (money). This multidimensional strain—physical, psychological, and financial—highlights the high-risk nature of combining professional CJE studies with such a demanding extracurricular commitment. These findings serve as a critical warning to administrators regarding the need for a safe space within the curriculum that acknowledges this reality. If the academic environment does not accommodate this strain, students will inevitably reduce their investment in the role perceived as having less immediate social pressure, often resulting in academic failure.

This also relates to the concept of burnout, which is often defined as the depletion of physical and psychological resources due to chronic work-related stress. The chronic exposure to conflicting demands without adequate recovery time puts the cadets at high risk for burnout, necessitating institutional intervention.

Discussion of Theme 3: Strategic Time Schedule Management and Motivation

The primary finding under this theme—the cadets' reliance on strategic time schedule management (P1, P6) and open communication with faculty (P4)—represents the active coping phase in the transactional model of stress and is a clear demonstration of the Conservation of

Resources Theory in action

The cadets are not passive victims of role strain; they are actively investing their energy resource into cognitive strategies (planning, prioritizing, scheduling) to protect their academic performance resource. Time management, in this context, is a crucial personal resource they leverage to avoid resource loss (failing a class or missing a drill).

The cadets' ability to "strive harder" and adopt a resilient mindset (P2, P10) is directly linked to the resource gain documented in Theme 1. The discipline, the camaraderie, and the self-efficacy gained from the drill organization are the internal resources that fuel the external action of strategic planning. This mechanism suggests that the positive attributes gained are functional: they are the tools used to combat the negative effects of the commitment itself.

This highlights the unique value proposition of the Silent Drill organization: it simultaneously causes severe role strain but provides the coping resources necessary to overcome it. The most successful cadets are those who can effectively internalize the organization's external structure (discipline) and translate it into a reliable, self-regulated system of time management. Institutions must recognize this strategic effort and provide formal training in academic planning that reinforces the existing discipline of their extracurricular lives.

CONCLUSION

The experience of balancing rigorous academic life with an intense extracurricular commitment among Silent Drill cadets in the Criminology program is a dialectic of high stress and profound resilience. The study unequivocally establishes that these cadets experience significant Role Strain due to the incompatible time and energy demands of their academic and organizational responsibilities, leading to physical fatigue, schedule conflicts, and psychological distress.

However, the essence of their experience is not one of failure, but of Active Negotiation of Priorities. They successfully navigate this strain by leveraging the personal and social resources (discipline, self-control, and strong peer camaraderie) inherently developed within the Silent Drill organization. By consciously deploying strategic time schedule management and transforming external discipline into internal motivation, the cadets mitigate the threat of academic failure. The Silent Drill organization is, therefore, a dual-edged commitment: a source of both significant stress and the essential coping mechanism to overcome it. This duality ultimately fosters a uniquely disciplined and resilient student poised for the demands of the Criminal Justice profession.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the established themes of struggle and strategic coping, the following recommendations are proposed to support the holistic development and academic success of students in high-commitment extracurricular activities:

For the College Administration and Deans

1. Establish a Structured Mentoring Program: Create a formalized academic advising program specifically for students in high-commitment organizations (like the Silent Drill). These mentors should receive training on the principles of Role Strain Theory and Conservation of Resources to guide students in strategic resource allocation and stress management.
2. Implement Flexible Academic Policies: Authorize Criminology instructors to offer reasonable academic flexibility (e.g., make-up assignments, modified deadlines) during periods of mandatory, major organizational events. This formal accommodation acknowledges the Role Strain and reduces the pressure on students who communicate their needs in advance.
3. Provide Financial Support: Create a small, need-based organizational fund to help cover mandatory uniform or travel expenses. This addresses the financial pressure experienced by cadets, which contributes to overall stress.

For the Criminology Faculty and Instructors

1. Proactive Communication: Faculty should initiate proactive communication with organization leaders at the beginning of the semester to identify students in the Silent Drill and anticipate peak periods of conflict.
2. Integrate Time Management: Explicitly reinforce the themes of discipline and time management learned in the Silent Drill by integrating practical time management exercises into relevant CJE coursework, ensuring the transfer of skills from the field to the classroom.

For the Silent Drill Organization Leaders and Cadets

1. Formalize Academic Check-ins: Implement mandatory academic check-ins where organizational leaders review the academic standing of their members and facilitate peer-to-peer tutoring, thereby leveraging the existing strong camaraderie for academic support.

2. Mandate Strategic Planning Sessions: Require all members to attend a mandatory strategic time management workshop at the start of each semester, focusing on how to construct a schedule that prioritizes sleep, study time, and training effectively.

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