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Balancing Work and Study: The Lived Experiences of Working Students in a Higher Education Institution in Sta. Ana, Pampanga

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Abstract: *This study explored the lived experiences of working students as they balance academic responsibilities and employment while pursuing higher education. The research aimed to understand the challenges they encounter, the coping mechanisms they develop, and the impact of working while studying on their academic performance and personal well-being. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with twelve (12) selected working students who shared their personal insights, struggles, and motivations in managing both work and academic demands. A qualitative research approach was used, specifically employing a transcendental phenomenological design to capture and describe the participants' experiences. The findings revealed several common challenges among working students, including time management difficulties, physical and emotional fatigue, financial pressure, and limited time for academic preparation and social activities. Despite these obstacles, the participants demonstrated resilience, determination, and strong motivation to complete their education while supporting their financial needs. Many students developed strategies such as prioritizing tasks, maintaining discipline, and seeking support from family, friends, and instructors. The study highlights the importance of understanding the realities faced by working students and emphasizes the need for supportive educational policies and flexible learning environments to help them succeed academically while fulfilling their work responsibilities.*

Keywords—Working students, Lived experiences, Work-study balance, Higher education, Phenomenology, Time management, Academic challenges.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, the number of working students has been increasing in the higher education systems of the world. This is largely due to the increasing tution fees, the increasing cost of living, and the need to support the education and living expenses of the students through their own sources financially. This has led to the occurrence of many challenges among the working students.

In the United States, studies showed that working students often face academic difficulty because of less time for studying, fatigue, and time conflict between work and school. Lopez (2021) explained that "students who work long hours are more likely to report lower performance and absences. In addition, working long hours also affects the concentration and memory of the students because of work-related stress and less sleep."

Likewise, in Thailand, it has been found that working students experience difficulties in terms of time management and academic performance. The rapid increase in employment opportunities has motivated students to take up jobs in conjunction with their studies. However, this has led to various difficulties in terms of stress levels and academic performance (Chaiyaporn & Suksawat, 2020). Thus, the difficulties experienced by working students in various educational systems have been highlighted.

This is more visible in the Philippines, especially because of the economic disparities and the lack of support in financing the educational expenses of the students. At present, many Filipino students are working to support their educational expenses, family obligations, and daily expenses. According to Reyes and Santos (2022), the Filipino students who are working experience role conflict in trying to meet their obligations at school and at work.

In Pampanga, the presence of business process outsourcing companies, retail, and service establishments created more employment opportunities for the students. However, this also

exposed them to challenges such as working at night, having irregular working hours, and suffering from fatigue. According to reports, a large number of college students in Pampanga are working part-time, and this affects their focus and participation in school. This situation poses a challenge for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as they need to cater to the needs of the increasing number of working students.

For instance, in the municipality of Sta. Ana, Pampanga, students who are currently enrolled in Higher Education Institutions encounter the same issues. These students, who are currently working, encounter challenges in balancing their work shifts with their academic schedules, in fulfilling academic requirements, and in maintaining their academic attendance. Moreover, the limited support, academic policies, and understanding of their situation contribute to the challenges they encounter. Despite their enrollment in Higher Education Institutions, students in the municipality of Sta. Ana, Pampanga, who are currently working, encounter challenges that may affect their academic performance.

Considering the issues affecting working students, it is essential to investigate the challenges and problems they encounter in a particular context. Various studies have already examined the issues of working students in particular areas, such as in metropolitan cities. However, there is a scarcity of literature on the issues of working students in rural areas, such as in the municipality of Sta. Ana, Pampanga. Thus, this study seeks to investigate the lived experiences of working students in a particular Higher Education Institution in the municipality of Sta. Ana, Pampanga, with emphasis on the challenges and problems they encounter in their academic life.

1.2 Review of Related Literature Foreign Literature

International literature reviewed showed that there is an increase in the number of students who work part-time or full-time and pursue higher educational studies. According to Perna (2019), due to the increase in cost of attending higher educational institutions, students are now forced to look for employment. This has greatly changed the lives of students. According to Robotham and Julian (2020), student employment is now a global phenomenon in developing and industrialized countries.

This is in line with what Torres (2021) said, which is that older students are more likely to have jobs while studying due to their increasing financial responsibilities. This is further supported by Hovdhaugen (2019), which found that mature students are more likely to experience role conflicts. On the other hand, Callender & Mason (2021) found that age and academic level are significant factors in how students experience working and studying. Salamonson & Andrew (2021) found that working students are likely to possess resiliency and adaptability, which are useful in their future careers.

Differences in working students based on their genders have also been widely discussed. According to Reyes (2022), working female students are likely to experience additional stress due to household responsibilities. On the other hand, male working students are likely to feel pressure in providing for their families. This is in line with what Warren (2020) found, which is that gender roles are significant in working students.

According to Garcia and Santos (2020), the type of students' work significantly influences their academic life. For instance, students who work in physically exhausting jobs or in service work with high pressure experience fatigue, which consequently leads to academic disengagement. This is corroborated by Curtis and Shani (2019) who concluded that students who work at night experience poor academic engagement.

Time management is also commonly identified as a challenge by students in their work life. For instance, Torres and Valdez (2022) concluded that students who experience an overlapping of academic deadlines with work schedules experience inadequate study time, which consequently leads to poor sleep habits. Similarly, Broadbridge and Swanson (2020) concluded that students who experience poor time management experience academic disengagement.

Financial needs are commonly identified as the main driver for students to engage in work. For instance, Santos (2021) concluded that students work to meet their financial needs, which include tuition fees, transport, and learning materials. Similarly, Panganiban (2020) concluded that financial insecurity, coupled with job insecurity, leads to students' anxiety.

Another area that was widely studied was academic performance. Lopez (2021) asserted that working students usually suffer from delays in submission and low grades because of the lack of time to study. This was supported by the study of Kosi-Antwi and Dzator (2022), which indicated that long working hours result in low academic achievement and low class participation. The study of Butler (2022) showed that working students benefit greatly from the academic performance that flexible deadlines and hybrid learning provide.

Health and wellness issues were also issues in the foreign studies. Lopez (2021) asserted that long hours of working and academic-related stress may lead to burnout and psychological issues. According to Ramos (2020), working students who suffer from sleep deprivation experience low memory and concentration. This was supported by the emphasis of Ahrberg et al. (2019), which indicated that long hours of sleep deprivation negatively impact learning

outcomes.

Overall well-being, however, is also impacted by working students. As Alvarez (2020) claimed, working students are often not afforded the opportunity to socially interact and be involved in extracurricular activities. As Tinto (2021) stated, this may affect the student's sense of belonging, leading to a higher dropout rate.

Local Literature

In the Philippines, working students are becoming more noticeable, especially in light of the country's financial struggles and the scarcity of educational financial assistance. As Reyes and Santos (2022) claimed, Filipino working students are often engaged in work to help pay for school and family expenses, resulting in a heightened sense of role conflict.

As Navarro (2022) stated, demographic factors, such as year level, greatly impact working students. Senior working students, for instance, are often subjected to a higher level of academic demands, including research and internship requirements, making it difficult for them to manage work and study. As Dela Cruz and Villanueva (2021) found, a higher academic load results in a higher level of stress for working students.

The nature of employment that is available to Filipino students is mainly in service, retail, and BPO industries. According to Cruz (2020), these types of employment require students to work for long hours and on rotational shifts. This leads to student fatigue and absenteeism. Moreover, Flores and Mercado (2023) emphasized that night shifts affect students' sleeping patterns and academic routines.

Time management issues are also emphasized in previous studies. According to Torres and Valdez (2022), Filipino working students face difficulties in balancing academic and work-related time. Santos and Lim (2021) emphasized that due to time management issues, students are often late in meeting academic requirements and experience academic stress. Moreover, Abesamis (2021) emphasized that Filipino working students in Philippine universities face time conflicts; however, they manage to cope with these issues through prioritization and time scheduling.

Financial pressure continues to be a significant factor. As cited in Santos (2021), the financial resources of the students are not always sufficient to cover all of the expenses of education. As cited in Panganiban (2020), the loss of employment or a reduction in working hours may affect the continuation of studies. As cited in Balanquit and Cabanilla (2020), financial pressure, as the primary reason for working, is a significant factor for Filipino working students.

Academic performance is also impacted in the local setting. As cited in Castillo (2021), the absences and lateness of working students may affect their comprehension and academic performance. This was also cited in Ortega and Ramos (2022), that working students may experience difficulty in maintaining a consistent academic performance. Health and wellness are also impacted in the lives of working students. As cited in Reyes and Cruz (2022), Filipino working students may experience physical exhaustion and emotional pressure. As cited in Navarro (2022), working students may experience anxiety, irritability, and low self-confidence as a result of long-term pressure.

The overall well-being is similarly affected. According to Alvarez (2020), the lack of participation in campus activities affects the students' feelings of belonging. The lack of social support may impact the students' motivation and persistence in higher education, according to Bautista and Gomez (2023).

1.3 Objective of the Study / Statement of the Problem

General Objective

Working students were also more visible in higher education institutions, where students sought to meet their financial needs by balancing academic life with work. Although there were certain opportunities that could be explored in meeting students' skill development needs, there were also certain challenges that could be experienced in academic life, personal life, and college life. Understanding the challenges that were experienced by working students in higher institutions of learning had to be explored in relation to their experiences in their particular setting.

There were limited studies conducted in Sta. Ana, Pampanga, on how working students experienced or understood their work in relation to their academic life. There was also a need to give voice to working students in relation to how they understood or made sense of their experiences in particular settings. Understanding their experiences could give deeper insights on how their challenges could be understood.

This research study is intended to explore the experiences and challenges of working students in a selected Higher Educational Institution in Sta. Ana, Pampanga, particularly in relation to their balancing act in fulfilling their academic and working responsibilities

Specific Objectives:

A. How do working students describe their lived experiences in balancing academic responsibilities and working responsibilities?

B. What challenges do working students face in balancing

their responsibilities as students and employees?

C. How do working students perceive the challenges in balancing their responsibilities in relation to their academic life and personal well-being?

D. How do working students make sense of their experiences in balancing their responsibilities in fulfilling their academic and working demands?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The aim of this study was to gain further understanding on the challenges and experiences that working students face in a higher educational institution in Sta. Ana, Pampanga. The research provided insightful information on:

Working Students. This study provided working students with an opportunity to express and share their experiences and challenges, and through this, their voices were heard and recognized. This study also provided students with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and gain insights on how they managed to balance and cope with the challenges that they face as working students.

School Administrators. The results and findings of this study provided school administrators with an understanding and awareness on the issues and concerns that working students face. This awareness and understanding provided school administrators with an opportunity to review and look into policies that were more accommodating and understanding towards students who were also working and studying at the same time.

Instructors. This study provided instructors with an understanding and awareness on the experiences and issues that working students face. This awareness and understanding provided instructors with an opportunity to look at things in a different perspective and be more accommodating and understanding towards students who were also working and studying at the same time.

Parents and Families. This study assisted parents and families in gaining a deeper insight into the challenges faced by working students. This, in turn, helped them give appropriate emotional support and encouragement to the students in achieving their educational goals.

Employers and Businesses. The findings of this study assisted employers and business establishments in Sta. Ana, Pampanga, in gaining a deeper insight into the experiences of working students. This, in turn, assisted employers in becoming more aware of the academic demands faced by working students.

Future Researchers. This study contributed to the existing knowledge of working students by offering qualitative information specific to the local context. It was used as a reference or benchmark for future studies that may seek to explore the same or similar topics in a different setting or scope, or for further studies that may be conducted on the subject of working students and higher education.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design to explore the lived experiences and challenges of working students in balancing their academic and work demands in a selected Higher Education Institution in Sta. Ana, Pampanga. Qualitative research focuses on non-numerical data such as stories, feelings, and personal experiences, allowing for an in-depth understanding of human perspectives.

Specifically, this study employed a Transcendental (Descriptive) Phenomenological approach, originally developed by Husserl. This approach aims to describe the essence of a phenomenon as experienced by individuals while setting aside the researcher's personal assumptions through a process known as bracketing or epoché. The goal is to understand the common meaning of the participants' lived experiences.

Through this design, the study focused on what working students experienced, how they experienced balancing academic and work responsibilities, and how they made sense of these experiences. In-depth interviews were used to gather rich and detailed descriptions from participants, enabling the researchers to identify themes and meanings associated with their experiences.

2.2 Population and Sample of the Study

The population of this study consisted of working students enrolled in a selected Higher Education Institution in Sta. Ana, Pampanga who are currently balancing their academic and work responsibilities.

The sample of the study included twelve (12) working students, selected using a purposive sampling technique. This method was chosen to ensure that participants possess relevant experiences and can provide meaningful insights into the phenomenon being studied.

Purposive sampling allowed the researchers to specifically select individuals who are actively engaged in both academic and work roles, making them suitable participants for this qualitative inquiry.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Currently enrolled in a Higher Education Institution in Sta. Ana, Pampanga

- Currently working part-time while pursuing their studies
- Willing to voluntarily participate in the study

This sampling approach ensured that the data gathered were rich, relevant, and aligned with the objectives of the study.

2.3 Research Instruments

The study adopted the semi-structured interview method in studying the experiences of working students in handling their academic and work life. A semi-structured interview is an effective method for conducting phenomenological studies as it allows respondents to freely express themselves and at the same time offers guidance in order to ensure that the interview is conducted in line with the objectives (Neubauer et al., 2019; Yildirim & Yüksel, 2022).

The interview questions were structured in a manner that included four (4) open-ended questions that aimed at obtaining in-depth responses from respondents on their experiences as working students. The questions were developed in a manner that allowed respondents to discuss their experiences, challenges, and perceptions in handling their dual role as students and employees. The semi-structured interview allowed for flexibility in that although respondents were expected to respond to similar issues, there was room for further exploration as guided by responses.

To ensure that the interview instrument is valid, it was validated and reviewed by 2 experts in education and qualitative research. The results of the validation and interview instrument were presented in the Appendix.

The interview was conducted face-to-face on campus, and this allowed for effective communication. The researchers were also able to observe non-verbal responses from the interviewees, which contributed to a deeper understanding of the interviewees' experiences. The interview session was audio-recorded with the consent of the interviewees. This ensured that accuracy and completeness of data were achieved.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researchers obtained permission from the administration of the selected Higher Education Institution in Sta. Ana, Pampanga. This ensured that permission was granted for the conduct of the study within the campus. Once this was done, the potential participants who met the inclusion criteria for the study were identified and invited to voluntarily participate in the study.

Each participant was provided with a letter of consent, which explained the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of the study, and the right of the participant to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The letter of consent also explained how the study would be conducted, audio recorded, and stored for the purpose of the study, ensuring the confidentiality of the participants.

Subsequent to this, the researchers conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the participants who had met the inclusion criteria for the study on campus. The interview was expected to take approximately 25-35 minutes, depending on the responses of the participant. The face-to-face interview was necessary for the researchers to observe non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice, as this is very important in phenomenological studies.

All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants to ensure an accurate recording of data. Immediately after each interview, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researchers. This ensured that all data collected during an interview, including pauses and emphasis, were documented. These transcripts were compared with the audio recordings to ensure accuracy and completeness.

The data collected during the interviews was then arranged in an organized manner for analysis. A unique code was assigned to each interview transcript to ensure confidentiality. Demographic data were also recorded separately to ensure confidentiality. Observations recorded during each interview were also documented to add depth to the data collected.

Lastly, the data collected during the interviews was studied several times to immerse in it. This is an important aspect of phenomenological analysis. Thematic analysis of data collected during interviews was done following the guidelines of Transcendental (Descriptive) Phenomenology. These guidelines include identifying significant statements, developing meanings, clustering themes, and creating a rich and comprehensive description of the lived experiences of the participants.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The interviews were studied with the use of thematic analysis, which is in line with Transcendental (Descriptive) Phenomenology (Neubauer et al., 2019; Yildirim & Yüksel, 2022). This type of analysis assists in determining common patterns of thought in what the interviewees discuss about their experiences as working students.

First, the interviewees' stories were studied to comprehend their experiences. The essential words were highlighted to

determine what the interviewees experienced.

The highlighted words were then grouped into meanings, with the themes emerging from the meanings. These themes are the essential challenges, experiences, and perceptions of the interviewees.

Lastly, a summary of all the interviewees' experiences was written, including what they experienced and how they felt about their experience. This gives a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of the working students, considering their voices.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This portion of the study shows the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data from the group of respondents.

A. Perceptions and Experiences as Working Students The Duality of Student-Worker Life

Table 1 shows the theme in "The Duality of Student-Worker Life" could be summarized as "the balancing act of two demanding environments that demand constant adjustment and commitment." This theme also shows that being a working student is not just being in two places at once, but it is being in two places at once with a sense of duality. The participants in the study have defined their lives as being in a state of "Irregular Schedule Transitions," where they have to constantly transition from being students to being workers. WS1, WS3, and WS7 have emphasized that being in school and being at work at the same time is mentally and physically draining. WS2, WS5, and WS8 have also emphasized that being in school and being at work at the same time is "Physically Exhausting," with long hours at work, night shifts, and having little time to rest. These experiences are in line with Johnson & Thomas (2018) which found that working students often experience fatigue and stress due to the conflicting demands of academic and working roles. Smith & Raskin (2019) also found that dual role engagement poses structural challenges to students' time, energy, and emotional well-being.

In due course of time, some of the students experienced "Routine Normalization" (WS4, WS6, WS10, WS12), whereby the dual demands of academic and working roles became part of their daily routine. A sense of structured routine, time management, and flexible arrangements with employers or instructors helped them strike a balance between academic and working roles, which minimized their stress and ensured academic and working success. Lee (2020) also found that dual role engagement for an extended period helped students develop self-efficacy, discipline, and hardiness

because they learned coping mechanisms and incorporated them into their identity. Brown & Smith (2021) also found that routine formation helps students achieve psychological stability, which in turn helps them manage dual roles more efficiently and realize that the challenges of dual role engagement are not insurmountable.

Table 1: The Duality of Student-Worker Life

Table 1

Summary of Codes for Perceptions and Experiences as Working Students

Participant(s)	Details / Insights	Code	Theme
WS1, WS3, WS5, WS9	Difficulty adjusting when they started working	Initial Adjustment Hardship	**The Duality of Student-Worker Life**
WS2, WS10	Fatigue, lack of sleep, exhaustion	Physical Exhaustion	
WS4, WS6, WS8, WS12	Became used to routine over time	Routine Normalization	
WS7, WS11	Constant transition between school and work	Irregular Schedule Transitions	

B. Challenges in Strategic Management of Roles Strategic Academic Time Management

Table 2 shows the theme that is emerging from the answers is "Strategic Academic Time Management." This theme reveals the challenges that students face in effectively organizing their academic responsibilities while effectively utilizing the available time and juggling numerous responsibilities. The students are faced with numerous challenges, such as meeting deadlines, undertaking assignments, and delivering in academics, as a result of the increasing demands of schoolwork, extracurricular activities, and, in some instances, work. The demands require proper planning, proper task prioritization, and the ability to effectively allocate time for studies and the execution of academic responsibilities.

Effective time management becomes a significant challenge for the students, especially when they are required to handle numerous assignments, examinations, and projects simultaneously.

Several studies validate the significance of time management in achieving a balance in academic life. A

study conducted by Mariano et al. (2022) on the relationship between time management and academic performance for working students revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between time management and academic performance. The study concluded that students who possess effective time management skills show better academic performance as they are able to manage their academic activities efficiently.

Hardiningrum and Mukhlis (2023) also revealed that many working students face problems in effective time management due to their academic and personal responsibilities. The study concluded that students who are able to develop effective time management strategies through proper planning and prioritization are able to accomplish their academic tasks

Table 2: Strategic Academic Time Management

Summary of Codes for Academic Performance and Well-being

Table 2

Summary of Codes for Challenges in Strategic Management of Roles

Participant(s)	Details / Insights	Code	Theme
WS1, WS7, WS10, W11, WS12	Conflict on balancing between school and work schedule	School Schedule Alignment	**Strategic Academic Time Management**
WS2, WS5, WS6, WS8, WS9	Choosing tasks based on urgency and submission of schoolworks on time	Academic Workload Pressure	
WS3, WS4	Doing school tasks during work breaks and managing time properly	Small-Task Integration Strategy	

C. Academic Performance and Well-being Resilience Amidst Holistic Attrition

Table 3 shows the theme "Resilience Amidst Holistic Attrition" aptly describes the complex and dichotomous nature of the working students. The working students, despite showing professional character and academic performance, have also shown a holistic attrition of their interpersonal and social lives. The theme describes the bittersweet nature of working students, where success and growth are achieved through sacrifice and emotional endurance.

This led the participants to reveal that resilience does not only mean success in academics or even in profession, but it also entails the endurance of the tremendous pressure that working and studying simultaneously brings. The working students have shown that they have managed to maintain their responsibilities in school despite the exhaustion, time constraints, and even less time for socialization that working brings. However, the working experience also led them to professional discipline, accountability, and even maturity. However, this success was also accompanied by the challenges that working brings, such as delayed submission of works, less time for personal relationships, and less time for rest. This, in a way, reveals that the resilience of working students does not only depend on the success that they achieve, but it also reveals that there is a tremendous endurance involved.

Table 3

Table 3: Resilience Amidst Holistic Attriti efficiently.

Participant(s)	Details / Insights	Code	Theme
WS1, WS4, WS7	Maintains grades despite difficulty	Academic Performance Resilience	**Resilience Amidst Holistic Attrition**
WS3, WS10, WS11	Stess and tiredness	Emotional Strain	
WS2, WS5, WS8, WS9	Limited social life	Interpersonal Sacrifice	
WS6, WS12	Developed discipline and responsibility	Character Maturity	

Research studies that focused on working students also reveal that working students are resilient because, despite the fact that they are able to achieve success in academics, this success does not come without a tremendous personal cost.

Coping and Meaning-Making Purpose-Driven Perseverance

Table 4 presents the theme "Purpose-Driven Perseverance" embodies the primary motivational factor that allows working students to persevere in the management of their responsibilities. The theme reveals how working students are able to persevere in their endeavors by relating their struggles to a specific purpose, especially through the concepts of Vision-Driven Persistence and Financial Self-Sufficiency Drive. The working students are able to re-interpret their struggles not as hardships, but as pathways to

achieving their dreams.

The working students showed that having a purpose, such as acquiring a diploma, supporting the family, and becoming financially independent, helps them persevere from the fatigue and strain of working and studying. The working students' motivation is closely linked to the Filipino term "pangarap," or dreams and aspirations, that serves as a guiding principle for them to persevere amidst the challenges of working and studying. Their struggles are re-constructed as a source of growth and a symbol of perseverance.

The presence of this strong purpose helps working students put their sacrifices into perspective and see them as worthwhile investments in the future. Rather than viewing the fatigue, lack of social interaction, and academic demands as negative experiences, working students with strong purposes see these difficulties as part of the process toward achieving long-term success. In this way, purpose-driven perseverance acts as a psychological safety net that helps working students cope with the demands of balancing work and school.

Table 4

Table 4: Purpose-Driven Perseverance

working students also benefit from socio-spiritual support systems such as faith and prayer, which give them emotional*Summary of Codes for Coping and Meaning-Making*

Participant(s)	Details / Insights	Code	Theme
WS1, WS6, WS8	Persistence driven by dreams	Vision-Driven "Pangarap" Persistence	**Purpose-Driven Perseverance**
WS2, WS10, WS12	Building discipline and accountability	Discipline Building	
WS3, WS7, WS9, WS11	Relying on family and faith	Socio-Spiritual Support Systems	
WS3, WS4, WS5	Driving towards financial independence	Financial Self-Sufficiency	

4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary of Findings

A. Perceptions and Experiences as Working Students

The lived experiences of working students are marked by having a 'split existence' in which they constantly balance the demands of academic and working lives. In the early stage of managing these two lives, working students undergo Initial Adjustment Hardship in which they grapple with the difficulties of adapting to the demands of academic and working lives. However, working students gradually undergo Routine Normalization in which they gradually get used to the demands of balancing academic and working lives.

B. Challenges in Strategic Management of Roles

Working students undergo various difficulties in the process of balancing academic and working lives. The most common difficulties experienced by working students are Overlapping Schedule Conflicts and Time Poverty. The difficulties experienced by working students lead to various negative effects such as physical exhaustion and fatigue

C. Academic Performance and Well-being

In the process of balancing academic and working lives, working students undergo various coping strategies. The most common coping strategy developed by working students is Strategic Academic Time-Management. The coping strategies developed by working students enable them to meet the minimum requirements of academic and working responsibilities.

D. Coping and Meaning-Making

For working students, their experiences are understood through Purpose-Driven Perseverance, which inspires them to persevere in their activities. Perseverance is greatly driven by their pangarap (dreams) for a better future. In addition,

4.2 CONCLUSIONS

A. The lived experience of the working students is characterized by a double role lifestyle, which means that they have to balance their academic life with their work life. During the early period, they experience some challenges, but as they get used to their work, they slowly learn to adapt to their lifestyle.

B. The experience of the working students is associated with some challenges, which include schedule conflict, time constraint, and physical exhaustion, which are all due to their academic and work life.

C. Despite the challenges they experience, the working students are able to demonstrate their flexibility by using effective strategies in managing their time in order to meet the demands of both their school life and work life.

D. The persistence of the working students can be attributed to their dreams, which are their personal aspirations, goals, and desires, particularly their dreams for financial stability and a better future. The dreams of the working students, which include their pangarap, are the main source of motivation for all the sacrifices they experience, including the challenges of holistic attrition, which include physical exhaustion, emotional stress, social sacrifices, and academic demands. Their perseverance is also made stronger by the support system that includes personal beliefs, faith, and emotional support that enable them to persevere in the challenges of balancing work and academic life.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations on the study:

1. To Higher Education Institutions, in light of the study's findings that working students experience a "split existence" and Initial Adjustment Hardship in coping with their roles as students and workers, Higher Education Institutions may consider enhancing the support mechanisms for working students. School may consider establishing flexible academic policies that may help working students cope effectively with Initial Adjustment Hardship. Such flexible academic policies may include, but are not limited to, allowing for extensions of deadlines, consultations, and alternative learning arrangements that may help working students cope effectively in the early stages of adaptation to their roles as workers and students. Such support mechanisms may help ease the "split existence" and Initial Adjustment Hardship experienced by working students, and may help them cope more effectively as workers and students

2. To Employers, in light of the study's findings that working students experience Overlapping Schedule Conflicts and Time Poverty, which often result in physical exhaustion and fatigue, employers may consider establishing flexible work arrangements that may help working students cope more effectively as workers and students. Employers may consider enhancing communication with working students to help them cope effectively with Overlapping Schedule Conflicts, and may help them avoid physical exhaustion and fatigue.

3. To Educational Institutions, With the findings showing that working students use Strategic Academic Time-Management, such as matching their school schedule with their work schedule, using their available work breaks to do academic work, educational institutions can design seminars, workshops, or mentorship programs on how to effectively manage their time, increase their productivity, and manage their stress levels. These programs can enable working students to improve their capacity to manage their academic work, increase their sense of responsibility, and improve their academic performance.

4. In relation to the findings on the development of resilience, character maturity, and purpose-driven perseverance among working students—shaped by their pangarap (aspirations) and strengthened by their socio-spiritual support systems—educational institutions are encouraged to strengthen their guidance and counseling services to better support the emotional well-being of working students. These programs may help students cope with emotional and academic pressures, enhance their motivation, and sustain their commitment to achieving both their academic and professional goals.

5. Future researchers may also examine other possible factors that may affect working students, such as family obligations, financial concerns, working conditions, and support systems. Future research may also include more participants or may be based on mixed-method research designs to give a wider understanding of working students' experiences, motivations, and coping mechanisms. More research may also help in creating better policies for working students..

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