

Experiences of Working While Studying – A Phenomenological Study of Baguio Central University College Students

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Abstract: This study investigates the strategies that students utilize in order to make the most out of their time when they are working and studying concurrently. The aim is also to record the experiences of students in employment scenarios. The challenges and difficulties faced by students are becoming more apparent as they progress through their studies. This research aims to explore how these issues are tackled by students and the way in which they are able to overcome them. A qualitative approach is taken in this investigation, with a phenomenological approach aiming to capture relevant data. The Snowball Method is used in this part of the study. The results indicate that motivation for working and studying comes in various forms such as supporting oneself financially, developing one's skills, and having an internal drive to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Moreover, these students are also found to exhibit a positive attitude and effective time management. Clue to this is their ability to practice introspection that, in turn, helps them to resolve any issues they encounter. To conclude, the participants offered advice and recommendations for students in similar situations. One of the key points raised was being dedicated and disciplined in order to successfully work while studying.

Keywords: self-supporting students, retrospection, financial assistance, school-work balance, school aids, school grants.

1. Introduction

Despite the financial demands of pursuing a higher education degree, eight out of ten undergraduates are still making the choice to work part-time, demonstrating the importance of the financial and personal benefits and challenges related to working while in school (CHED Chairperson Prospero "Popoy" E. de Vera III, 2022)

The primary motivation for working while in school is a financial need: to make up for shortfalls in various forms of understudy support; to supplement income to provide a better understudy understanding; or to contribute to future goals. Additionally, it gives students the opportunity to share the burden of paying for their tuition, gives them a sense of financial independence, and develops account management skills in them. This new study builds on SIES findings to get a deeper understanding of why people choose to work, the kind of jobs they take on, and the benefits and challenges of working while pursuing a higher education (HE) degree (Williams,

2014). In order to meet their financial demands while attending school, eight out of ten (77%) undergraduates are now working part-time, according to research conducted by Endsleigh (2015). It is probably difficult to balance your social life, family time, schoolwork, and work while you are a working student. By ensuring that the student may have at least one night off each week, and by teaching them how to handle the stress that comes with working while still an undergraduate, stress levels will be greatly reduced (Mitchell, 2016).

Despite their financial challenges, Filipino students are nonetheless able to sustain themselves financially through working. In order to outline the employment choices for Filipino working students, The Working Student (2016) lists internet jobs, paid corporate internships, fast-food crew, and school positions. Filipino students struggle because they must uphold standards in their employment in order to keep their jobs and because they must maintain their academic standing in order to avoid receiving a failing grade. According to the most recent data from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), over 216,000 students in the Philippines are now balancing employment and education. According to ABS-CBN News (2010), 8% of all college students in the Philippines are also working students. According to CHED (2010), barely half of employed students' complete college since many struggle with concentration, others drop out due to bad health, and still others quit up due to financial difficulties. The low completion rates of higher education in Baguio City are of concern to the Commission on Higher Education, Cordillera Administrative Region (CHED-CAR). According to Faculo (2011), the poor educational attainment of students in the City of Baguio was caused by a low wage, which caused the students to mix working and studying. As a result, students who face financial difficulties spend more time working than studying, resulting in bad grades and poor performance in school.

Williams (2014) found that students tend to work for multiple reasons such as for money and to help each other achieve their educational goals. The study by Furr and Elling (2002) supports the fact that working students often face financial difficulties. However, according to Darolia (2014), working while in school can negatively affect academic performance and often leads to

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students losing motivation and dropping out. Data provided by the Department of Labor (2019) stated that 34.1% of junior, senior and including college students who entered the workforce between January and October 2019 are now employed. While there are existing studies about working students, they are mostly conducted in industrialized nations, leaving a research gap in the experiences of students in other nations. Soriano (2020) argues that the large percentage of working students might contribute to profit disparities if employment at a young age turns out to be advantageous for the economy. Therefore, to understand the complete experience of working students, the gaps in existing research must be further studied.

However, if employment at a young age turns out to be advantageous for the economy. The large percentage of working students might thus contribute to the profit disparities that were later discovered (Cruz & Cruz, 2019). Since there are several alternative outcomes, the researchers must view the gaps in this study in order to investigate the experiences of the working students and completely comprehend what a working student is. The goal of this study is to examine the difficulties that working students face in order to determine the key distinctions between working and non-working students (Wagner, 2019). The next step is to acquire pertinent information on how working students dealt with their challenges. The research also tries to understand the driving forces of working students. Last but not least, to completely comprehend what it is like to be a working student and to assist the students in understanding what it entails to work while learning (Armacost, Newland & Anderson, 2020). The overall goal of this study is to understand the whole scope of a working student's life.

2. Review of Related Literature

Students working part-time or even full-time while they are in school is becoming the norm everywhere. The pupils will eventually be prepared for their future career through job employment. The majority of the study's data will come from commonplace encounters, however these facts will be examined and supported by specific ideas. The P.F. Moral Responsibility Theory is applied in this study. Strawson, Edward Wilson's Sociobiology Theory, and Friedrich Nietzsche and Soren Kierkegaard's Existential Theory (Nietzsche and Kierkegaard 1999).

Anent, Strawson (1962) book displays the repercussions of each activity as a pros and cons outcome. The advantages and disadvantages of working students' experiences in life are shaped by this notion. According to Watts and Pickering (2000), working part-time while going to school full-time provides a number of advantages, and most survey participants said that part-time employment was necessary to thrive in the modern higher education environment. However, the student may feel under strain because of academic requirements, such as finishing projects by the deadline, and financial instability. These diligent students are sleep deprived due to their employment and studies, and sleep deprivation raises the risk of insomnia and brain damage (Queen Mary Univ. of London,

2017). Despite receiving a fair pay, working students who are subjected to an excessive workload over time may have negative impacts on their health and wellbeing (Vargas, 2017).

According to Cannon (2012), "the experiences and traits of the participants are given significance and relevance in their decision-making process." Likewise, Lee (2016) has argued that the theory used to guide this study "serves to make a legitimate argument about the conditions surrounding the research participants that have pushed them to choose to work while they are students in order to fund school."

A. Student's experiences

Part-time and full-time employment among students is becoming an increasingly common practice internationally, as demonstrated by Steinberg et al. (1981) and Schill et al. (1985). Curtis & Lucas, 2001 and Curtis & Shani, 2002 and Curtis et al., 2002 have found students who work part-time have the opportunity to develop and sharpen academic knowledge, practical skills, communication, teamwork, and collaboration. Multiple studies have concluded part-time work provides important financial and experiential benefits, with Watts and Pickering (2000) and Manthei and Gilmore (2005) confirming part-time work provides an increased opportunity for financial efficiency and real-world experience, respectively. Finally, studies suggest institutions should provide more opportunities to expose students to educational, part-time vocational, and job experiences (Yorke, 2004; Glover et al., 2002; Tymon, 2013; Tomlinson, 2007).

There have been numerous studies examining how part-time employment can affect full-time students in higher education. It has been found that this combination can be detrimental to physical and mental health, and can lead to poorer academic performance. Curtis and Shani (2002) conducted research that stated students who work part-time are more likely to miss lectures and feel they would have earned better grades if they did not work. Universities should be supportive of their students, allowing flexibility in course requirements and assignment designs, while also offering practical skill training. Overall, this is a widespread issue that universities must manage in order to better understand the challenges faced by students.

B. Factors affecting working students

One of the often-stated reasons given by Hovd Haugen (2015) study for why students quit a certain university before receiving their degree is holding a job while they are enrolled in classes. This study assesses the effect of work status on dropout rates using a survival analysis. It shows that employment status does have an impact on dropout rates for students since those who work full time while still attending school full time are less likely to graduate than those who work part-time or not at all. Working more than 20 hours per week raises the chance of dropping out by the same amount as working full-time, as if there were a limit to how much work students can do. The inclusion of work status in the study does not modify the impact of factors like gender, grades, and socioeconomic background that are known to affect dropout

rates, but it does help to clarify which students are most likely to do so. This means that models for retention and dropout must additionally justify these external elements, rather than merely taking into account what occurs on campus, as in the model of student departure (Franke, 2003).

According to Marcia Devlin, Richard James, and Gabrielle Grigg's (2008) study, "Ateneo De Naga University Student Finances 2006", students pay and changing higher education finance arrangements have had a direct effect on the relationship between Filipino students and educational institutions. CHED's research found that 8% of all college students in the nation are misrepresenting their academic and professional pursuits, mostly in food service, entertainment, and sales industries due to financial and commodity prices. Approximately 45% of traditional undergraduate students are employed full-time while enrolled, and 80% of college students take part-time jobs. Filipino college students experienced an 8% increase in students working while enrolled between 2016-2019. The literature has documented both the benefits and risks of working while attending college. All the more it increased in 12% in the post-pandemic scenario, for this reasons, college students utilized their free time from blended learning in filling in a job (Cruz & Cruz, 2021).

C. *Effects of working while studying*

Pascarella and Padgett's (2009) research on how working impacts academic performance found that working 20 hours or more per week had a good impact on students' psychological health, and also improved their leadership skills. The findings further showed no threats to the cognitive outcomes such as moral reasoning and critical thinking. Yet, research also revealed that the effects on students with varying academic backgrounds varied significantly, with low-ability students suffering the biggest damage. Working on campus for 1-10 hours a week was, however, beneficial for high-ability students in terms of their critical thinking. Hence, this study aims to further delve into the effects of work on academic performance.

Due to a desire to reduce debt and loans, Kavarana (2013) found that there was an increase in the number of working students. To earn more of the tuition, students felt the need to reduce their borrowing. Another advantage is the sense of accomplishment and pleasure one gets from pushing oneself to balance two very different lifestyles and a double workload. It all comes down to pushing yourself to the ultimate limit and showing the rest of the world that you can work and study simultaneously in order to maximize your time.

Working during school has consequences that depend on the type of job and the hours worked; long hours can lead to poorer academic performance and diminish post-college opportunities. While there is a risk of dropping out or taking more time to complete a degree, there are also positive outcomes, such as gaining professional experience and building relationships with faculty or local communities. Alli (2010) and Orszag *et al.* (2001) provide evidence of the impacts of student employment.

3. Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative approach, which gathers pertinent information through a phenomenological practice that pays attention to comprehending and deciphering the significance participants give to their daily lives (De Vos, 1998). It is a subjective analysis. The participants of the study were the 16 working students purposively taken, of Baguio Central University, Baguio City, Philippines for Academic Year 2022- 2023. Snowball sampling method was used. This study used a semi-structured questionnaire which were validated by the experts from (2) University of the Philippines-Baguio and (1) Benguet State University.

4. Results and Discussion

The literature analysis and research findings from the interviews have been taken into account as this chapter has been written to address the research question. The research questions and interview questions will be used to structure the findings and discussion. The trends and direct reactions from the informants will be simpler to notice in this manner.

Research Question 1: What is the general opinion of students regarding the idea of having a job while in school? The research was aimed to discover the standpoint of college students on studying while working. Outcomes from the survey participants corroborated that fiscal aid, personal growth, and inner determination to coalesce concept and practice shape the reasoning to pursue studying while working. From the survey answers, it can be assumed that the interviewees appeared to grasp the basis and objective of studying while working. Four interview questions revealed a diverseness of feedbacks from the interviewees:

They said when inquired what drives them to keep learning while working:

"I am certain that I need to better my quality of life. So, even though I had to work, I opted to continue my education."

"For me, the goal is simply to get experience and more financial assistance."

The participants concurred when inquired about their opinions about working while a student and agreeing:

"Actually, it is quite nice in theory. However, integrating and doing both at the same time is quite challenging."

"I have confidence in that education is important, but we also need money for studying. So, working for a living at the same time for school is critical."

The participants gave a favorable response when inquired if they knew anybody who worked and studied:

"Yes, I have several acquaintances that work and study at the same time. It occasionally forces them to miss class, and most communication takes place via email."

"Yes, some of them work at formal sector and informal sector."

The participants were also inquired to distinguish between those who work while they study and those who do both. They believed the following:

"I would say that students that work while studying, in my opinion, remain focused on their studies, working just to fund

their studies. Students who learn while working, on the other hand, have a primary concentration on working rather than studying, therefore the outcome is obviously different.”

When probed about their motivations for working while in school, they responded:

“Personally, I wish to improve my abilities. When my skills improve, I will be able to better serve my students' knowledge and needs.”

“I want to become independent. I don't want to be a dependent to my parents, so I am capable of covering my own costs and tuition. I may learn new things and it's beneficial to pursue my interests.”

Thematic Analysis of Research Question 1

Key Themes	Financial assistance Growth and development Inherent drive to combine theory with practice
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Research Question 2: What advantages and drawbacks come from combining work and studies? The advantages and disadvantages of working while learning was the subject of the second research topic. The results showed that the participants are optimistic and have good time management abilities. They also became more responsible and improved their personal lives. The replies to three interview questions are shown below.

When questioned about how they feel when working and studying, they explained:

“I am content and appreciate what I do. The experience can help me gain fresh ideas on how to address an issue if I have one, therefore it can improve my problem-solving abilities.”

“I can manage and enjoy my time efficiently and effectively. It is critical for me to manage my time when I am studying and working.”

When probed about the benefits of working while learning, the participants said:

“The benefit is that I can better manage my time. I can have more opportunities to learn new things and broaden my knowledge.”

“I'm mostly learning how the world works and how to be responsible for myself outside of class.”

The participants were also probed on their time management strategies for working and studying. The responders:

“I attempt to strike a harmony between the hours I spend working and the hours I spend studying. Despite not having the capacity to fit in as much study time as I would like, due to needing to actively participate in other activities, I do my utmost to allocate enough time to each task.”

“I try to manage my time efficiently by determining when the time I can study and when I can work.”

Thematic Analysis of Research Question 2

Key Themes	Positivity and effective time management accountability Personal growth
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Research Question 3: What issues do students encounter while juggling schooling with a job, and how do they address these difficulties?

The third research question focuses on the hurdles that the participants experience and how they overcome them. According to the research, effective methods include solid time management and self-reflection. The answers to three interview questions are highlighted below.

When probed about the drawbacks of working while in school, participants replied:

“Of course, there are numerous negative consequences, particularly in academic performance. When I work, for example, I prefer to focus on my working environment, which depletes my stamina and makes it difficult for me to concentrate on my studies.”

“It depends on the situation.” The disadvantage is that if we do not manage our time effectively, we will take longer to complete the study. For several years, I have to finish my thesis draft.”

A question concerning how working while studying affected the participants' academic achievement was also posed. They referred to:

“I haven't had any problems with it yet. The outcome will be determined by our efforts to manage our study time. If it is at its peak, academic achievement will be excellent.”

“Of sure, it has an impact on my academic achievement. Specifically, the time spent working and studying will have to be split properly.”

When asked how they overcame the difficulties of working while pursuing a degree, they suggested:

“Self-retrospection is generally the first thing I do. It is significant because issues can arise from within ourselves. We must first master ourselves in order to handle our surroundings. To put it another way, we must be prepared to confront all adversities.”

“The essential point is how well we manage our time. In order to do so, I believe we must be healthy. I exercise and balance my dietary intake in order to be healthy and completely manage my time.”

Thematic Analysis of Research Question 3

Key Themes	Good time keeper Self-retrospection
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Research Question 4: What advice would you give to students who are studying and working simultaneously?

The final study question asked participants for thoughts and advice for kids in similar situations. Among the ideas are that students who choose to work while studying must be devoted and disciplined first and foremost. They must manage their time well since it is the most important factor in balancing work and studies at university. It is not an easy work, as the participants acknowledged, but it is achievable and manageable as long as the individual is accountable in what he or she is doing. The comments and recommendations are shown in two interview questions. When inquired for advice for students who are

working while they are in school, the participants mentioned:

"The first point to emphasize is time management. When a person divides his time, he may not focus on target A since the fraction must be distinct between working and studying. The second component is a positive self-reflection, because studying is more than just getting a result or certificate, or passing with grades A and B. The most significant aspect of the research is what we learn. It is critical to reflect in order to identify the cause of the problem inside ourselves."

"My advice is to focus more on studying because it is what we are actually seeking to learn, whereas working just serves to augment experience and understanding of the working world."

The participants were also probed on their suggestions for enhancing students' performance at work. They were mindful of this:

"Studying time should be treated similarly to working time. If you want to be successful at both employment and school, you must balance your time."

"My advice to students who work while studying is to value their work and to be professional. Consider that working is a learning process for obtaining a successful life in the future. Remember that our primary goal is to learn, which serves as our foundation."

Thematic Analysis of Research Question 4

Key Themes	Passionate Well-mannered Good time manager
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5. Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Findings

The main points of this study are as follows:

1. Supporting oneself financially, developing oneself, and having an internal drive to combine theory and practice are factors that motivate working while studying at the university.
2. Time management and introspection are key to effectively managing working while studying.
3. Participants were able to provide advice and recommendations to students in a similar situation.

B. Conclusion

The end results of the study are the following:

1. The results of the evidence drawn from the respondents indicate that college students work to support themselves financially and gain experience for self-development to improve the quality of their lives.
2. Students often work to gain money, make themselves happy, and manage their time, but this sometimes becomes overwhelming if their workload is too great.
3. Working students find themselves taking on a great deal of responsibility, gaining new experiences and ideas, while also improving their interpersonal and problem-solving skills.

4. Working while studying can be a difficult endeavor, but with commitment, discipline, and time management, it can allow students to gain insight into the positive and negative impacts of the experience, and to successfully navigate any problems that arise.

C. Recommendation

The research provides recommendations and advice for further considerations:

1. Research and develop an understanding of how to effectively earn an income while studying to support oneself financially;
2. Investigate the current job market to find part-time options that can be combined with studies;
3. Utilize the advice and recommendations provided by participants to understand how to effectively juggle studies and a job;
4. Improve time management skills to ensure that one's studies and job can co-exist;
5. Use introspection to better understand your own limitations and manage stress levels;
6. Develop an effective and organized plan of attack to ensure that one can undertake a job while growing academically;
7. Generate strategies and goals to ensure that one can continue to progress both in studies and in their job;
8. Make effective use of university support systems such as career counseling and coaching services;
9. Research and become familiar with measures to ensure success while studying and working; and
10. Track and review one's progress to ensure the successful execution of one's plan.

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