Balancing Work and Studies: The Journey of Students with Part Time Employment in their Academic Pursuit

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Abstract: With the modern academic scene, most students in college have to engage in work and study simultaneously to be able to carry on with their education and pursue personal and professional goals. This research ventured into the experiences of working college students juggling part time work and studies. The primary aim was to find out how these working students manage their duality of work and study, the problems they face, and the coping mechanisms they employ to balance both work and academics. Recognizing the increasing number of students engaging in part-time employment, this study sought to shed light on their lived realities to foster better understanding and awareness within the community. With a qualitative phenomenological research approach, the study was conducted in one of the higher learning institutions in Ozamiz City and involved ten student participants, which were selected using purposive sampling. Data were gathered using in-depth interviews and interpreted using Moustakas' transcendental phenomenological technique. Based on the analysis, six major themes were found: Financial Motivation and Family Responsibility, Time Management Struggles, Overlapping Schedules and Conflict, Stress, Fatigue, and Health Consequences, Time Management and Prioritization, and Positive Attitude and Motivation. The findings confirmed that employed students face severe challenges in balancing studies and work, but they also develop valuable life skills and a strong sense of responsibility. It is therefore recommended that the Local Government Unit (LGU) may implement programs and initiatives that promote student welfare, such as providing financial assistance, mental health support, and skills development opportunities. Such initiatives will do great help in empowering working students to maintain balance and achieve success in both their academic and personal endeavors.

Keywords: *Balancing Work and Study, Coping Strategies, Lived Experiences, Part-Time Employment, Student Journey.*

I. INTRODUCTION

College is a time of significant change marked by newfound freedom, academic pressures, and the journey of self-discovery. Students must navigate a complex environment that demands strong time management, self-discipline, and adaptability (Ismailova, 2025). Balancing academics with extracurricular activities, social relationships, and sometimes financial responsibilities can lead to stress, anxiety, and exhaustion (Nayak & Kachhi, 2025). These challenges test students' resilience as they strive to meet both institutional expectations and personal goals (Etherton et al., 2022).

Academic success in higher education is vital as it sets the stage for personal, social, and professional development (Mohareb & Al Khraisha, 2025). Personally, it enhances

self-esteem, gives one a sense of accomplishment, and provides students with vital life skills like critical thinking and problem-solving (Babaei, 2023). Socially and professionally, it improves one's capacity to make a positive contribution to society and improves the chances of getting internships, employment, and postgraduate studies. Within the framework of university stress, academic achievement also indicates whether a student can handle responsibilities and overcome obstacles abilities essential in every aspect of life (Al-Abyadh & Abdel Azeem, 2022).

In the last ten years, escalating education and living costs have turned financial anxiety into an everyday reality among most college students. The increasing charges for tuition, transportation, learning materials, and miscellaneous expenses weigh heavily on students and their families, particularly those who belong to lower- and middle-class

families (Jackson, 2023). Consequently, most students are forced to engage in part-time work to fund their schooling and personal costs (McCormick et al., 2023). Balancing schoolwork with financial stressors can adversely affect their academic performance, physical health, and emotional well-being, which underscores the necessity for increased support for working college students (Talib, 2025).

In the past few years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of part-time workers among students, both in the Philippines and internationally. According to a 2023 Agile Data Solutions poll, approximately 60 percent of Filipinos, particularly Gen Z and millennials, engage in part-time work to earn extra money in the face of inflation, with up to ₱10,000 monthly earnings. The same can be applied in the United States, where 23 percent of four-year undergraduates and 61 percent of two-year College students were employed part-time, with 7.4 million part-time students enrolled in the 2022–2023 school year. In the UK and Australia, more than 50 percent of overseas students also indicated that they worked paid employment during school terms, reflecting the international trend of part-time employment as a way for students to become financially independent, gain work experience, and be flexible.

Most students work while attending school not only because of economic needs but also because of a combination of personal and economic reasons (Perna, 2023). Tuition fees, learning materials, and miscellaneous expenses require working as a necessary support for remaining in college. Some work to gain practical experience, enhance résumés, and acquire a competitive advantage upon graduation. In addition, other students are also driven by the need for autonomy or responsibility to earn money for their low-income families, and therefore labor is a pivotal and powerful element of their school experience.

While having a job while attending school has its benefits, it is also fraught with great challenges that affect a student's health and academic life (Leal Filho et al., 2021). One significant challenge is time management as students have to juggle class timetables, assignments, and work commitments with little time for sleeping or social activities. Such constant juggling can result in stress, burnout, and reduced physical and mental well-being. Without supportive networks from family, friends, or school, most working students are left isolated citing the necessity of better awareness and institutional support to ensure they can succeed (Knight et al., 2021). Part-time employment has both beneficial and harmful impacts on students' academic achievement and well-being (Duong et al., 2024). Positively, it can develop time management, responsibility, communication, and problem-solving skills, increase self-esteem, and provide real-life experiences. Nevertheless, excessive or improperly managed working hours can result in academic performance deterioration, physical and mental fatigue, as well as higher stress and anxiety. Finally, the success of part-time working depends on a student being able to achieve a proper balance between work and study (Francis et al., 2025).

Although earlier research has explored the life experiences of working students and their performance, there is a lack of empirical evidence for how high levels of stress and mental health status affect this population, especially in the Philippine context (Martinez et al., 2020). Previous research tends to be focused in Western settings, and hence this creates a geographical gap that fails to address localized factors that affect working students in Mindanao, particularly criminology students. This also indicates a population gap, as students of criminology have special academic requirements and training needs not typically explored in more general studies of working students (Zaportiza & Cuevas 2025) In addition, there is an applied gap in the literature, with few evidence-based suggestions for institutions to create focused interventions that can successfully enhance the well-being and academic performance of this population (Rani, 2025).

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the lived experiences of college students who work part-time while pursuing their academic goals within the local context of Misamis University. Although existing literature on working students has grown, most studies focus on broad national or international trends and fail to capture the specific socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional realities unique to particular regions or academic environments (Brown, 2025). In our institution, there remains a notable gap in research that documents the everyday challenges, coping strategies, and personal realities of part-time working students. Since local economic conditions, community norms, and available support systems significantly shape how students navigate the demands of work and study, a localized investigation is necessary (Gao,2022). Through the testing of these experiences in our setting, this study is addressed more accurately to develop practical recommendations that would develop policies towards improving services and fostering the overall academic wellness and success of working students.

This research is important because it offers a better understanding of how working part-time influences the academic achievement, well-being, and overall educational experience of criminology students in Misamis University (Akhter et al., 2024). The results will not only expand the scarce body of local research on working students in Mindanao but also offer useful insights to instructors, administrators, and policymakers in creating student-focused interventions and support mechanisms (Edwards-Fapohunda, 2024). In addition, the findings will be able to direct future students of criminology in better handling the dual roles themselves and promote resilience and balance. Ultimately, this study will close the gap between theoretical understanding and real-world application to ensure that academic achievement and personal development among working students are valued in higher education (Gamage et al., 2021).

II. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of college

students balancing part-time employment and academic responsibilities in a higher educational institution in Ozamiz City, Region X. Guided by Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological approach, the study aimed to uncover the essence of students' experiences, including their difficulties, coping mechanisms, stress levels, and mental health outcomes related to managing dual roles. The participants consisted of ten (10) college students who were engaged in part-time or full-time work while enrolled in academic programs and were selected through snowball sampling based on specific inclusion criteria. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews using a validated interview guide that covered demographic information, work–study balance, stress levels, mental health experiences, and coping mechanisms. Prior to data gathering, approval was obtained from the College Research Committee, and informed consent was secured from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, and adherence to Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012). Interviews were audio-recorded and supplemented with note-taking to ensure accuracy, and participants' identities were protected through anonymization and secure data storage. Data analysis followed Moustakas' phenomenological reduction method, which included bracketing, horizonalization, clustering of meanings into themes, textural and structural descriptions, and textural-structural synthesis, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of the academic, emotional, and psychological realities faced by working students, as well as their resilience, coping strategies, and support systems.

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study, Balancing Work and Studies: The Journey of Students with Part-Time Employment in Their Academic Pursuit, was conducted at Misamis University in Ozamiz City, Philippines. It utilized a phenomenological research design to systematically examine and understand the lived experiences of college students who engage in part-time employment while pursuing their academic requirements. The participants consisted of ten (10) part-time working students, selected through snowball sampling, which was appropriate for identifying individuals who were actively experiencing the phenomenon under investigation. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using Moustakas' phenomenological reduction method, ensuring a rigorous and structured interpretation of participants' lived experiences.

The analysis yielded six major themes: (1) Financial Motivation and Family Responsibility; (2) Struggles with Time Management; (3) Overlapping Schedules and Conflicts; (4) Stress, Exhaustion, and Health Impact; (5) Time Management and Prioritization; and (6) Positive Outlook and Motivation. These themes comprehensively represent the core challenges, stressors, and adaptive strategies of part-time working students as they navigate the demands of work and academic life.

The first objective of the study, which sought to explore the lived experiences of part-time working students in balancing work and studies, revealed Financial Motivation and Family Responsibility as a central theme. Participants consistently identified financial necessity and family obligations as the primary reasons for engaging in part-time employment. These responsibilities significantly influenced their daily routines, academic decisions, and personal sacrifices. Furthermore, participants described a process of self-reflection and personal growth, wherein their experiences as working students strengthened their sense of responsibility, resilience, and commitment to completing their education. This finding demonstrates that while financial pressure serves as a major source of strain, it also functions as a motivating force that shapes students' perseverance and goal orientation.

➢ *Financial Motivation and Family Responsibility*

Financial Motivation and Family Responsibility refer to economic pressures and familial obligations that influence the student to pursue part-time jobs in addition to studying. This theme encapsulates how financial difficulties, scarce family resources, and a wish to contribute toward family needs become strong motivating factors to juggle work and academics. It also encapsulates a situation where students are emotionally attached to helping their families despite this placing a strain on time, health, and academic performance (Lin & Zainudin, 2024). Participants consistently described how financial need played a central role in their decision to work while studying. Student 1 shared that they were compelled to work because their family was "not financially well-off," showing how economic uncertainty pushes students to take responsibility early. Similarly, Student 2 emphasized that life was "financially difficult," especially when paying tuition and allowances, indicating that their employment was not optional but necessary for survival. Student 3 also echoed this sentiment, identifying the family as their greatest source of inspiration, showing that emotional obligation is as strong as financial pressure. Student 4 repeated the same motivation as Student 1, highlighting that parental limitations compelled them to "strive harder," proving the recurring pattern among participants. Finally, Student 5 linked financial struggle with a personal desire to help their parents, illustrating a deep sense of duty. Across all five experiences, students were driven not by personal wants but by necessity and family responsibility. Their stories reveal a shared narrative of financial hardship, emotional obligation, and determination to support both their education and household needs.

"What motivated me the most to work while pursuing my college education is my parents. Since we are not financially well-off, I decided to strive harder and support myself through work while studying." (S1)

"What motivated me most to work while studying is my family situation. Life is financially difficult, especially when it comes to paying tuition and allowances, so I decided to become a working student." (S2)

"First and foremost, my family is my greatest inspiration in pursuing both work and studies." (S3)

"What motivated me the most to work while pursuing my college education is my parents. Since we are not financially well-off, I decided to strive harder and support myself through work while studying."(S4)

"I was motivated to work because of the financial difficulties my family faces. I want to help my parents while also pursuing my studies."(S5)

This theme aligns strongly with Goode's Role Strain Theory, which explains how holding multiple roles simultaneously can create tension, conflict, and emotional burden. Working students experience strain as they navigate their responsibilities as both learners and financial contributors to their families. Their testimonies reflect the pressure of fulfilling familial expectations while striving to succeed academically, leading to emotional fatigue and competing obligations. Similarly, Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory supports this theme by illustrating how students strive to acquire and protect essential resources such as money, educational access, and family stability. Their decision to work is driven by the need to regain or preserve these resources. Yet, the same decision drains other critical resources like time, energy, and well-being, showing how resource loss and resource gain coexist in their experiences (Li & Meng, 2022).

This implies that working students' motivations are deeply rooted in financial necessity and familial responsibility, making their employment not a matter of choice but survival. As a result, institutions must recognize the dual pressures these students face and design targeted support such as flexible schedules, financial aid, and guidance programs. Acknowledging their economic burden is essential to improving their academic success and overall well-being (Munir, 2023).

➢ *Struggles with Time Management*
Puzzles with Time Management refer to the problem that working students experience regarding the distribution of time for academic tasks, work responsibilities, and personal rest. This theme describes how less than enough hours, activities overlapping, physical fatigue, and mental exhaustion make students struggle with managing the demands of both roles (Majka, 2024). It also encompasses the repetitive feeling of racing against deadlines, sleep loss, and the aftermath that result from poor time allocation (Sangeetha, 2024). Students repeatedly emphasized that time management was one of the most challenging aspects of being a working student. Student 1 shared experiences of rushing from one class to another and feeling stressed and exhausted from trying to meet both academic and work responsibilities. This illustrates the constant struggle of navigating tight schedules. Student 2 said their mind was often "divided between school and work," showing how mental fragmentation results from competing demands.

"The main difficulties I encountered were poor time management and physical exhaustion, especially when I had to rush between classes located in different rooms." "One major challenge is managing my time. It often left me stressed, tired, and struggling to balance both responsibilities effectively." (S1)

"I manage both school and work through time management." "Your mind is divided between school and work, and that makes things harder." (S2)

This theme strongly connects with Goode's Role Strain Theory, which argues that individuals performing multiple roles simultaneously experience pressure due to conflicting expectations and limited time. The students' testimonies clearly show how the roles of "worker" and "student" demand time, energy, and attention—resources that often clash, leading to chronic strain and fatigue (Taylor, 2025).

Likewise, Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory supports the theme by explaining how individuals strive to conserve their limited resources. Time, being one of the most finite and irreplaceable resources, becomes increasingly difficult to preserve when both work and academic responsibilities demand continuous investment. As students attempt to balance these dual obligations, they experience resource loss in the form of sleep deprivation, reduced concentration, and heightened stress levels (Dirisala, 2025). This ongoing depletion of resources may result in emotional exhaustion and diminished academic engagement. When students are unable to replenish lost resources through rest, support, or effective scheduling, they may enter a cycle of burnout that further compromises both their academic and work performance. The COR Theory therefore provides a clear framework for understanding how unmanaged time demands contribute to cumulative stress among part-time working students.

This implies that time management challenges significantly hinder working students' academic performance, mental clarity, and overall well-being (Amadi, 2023). Poor time allocation may lead to missed classes, delayed submissions, and reduced learning retention, further intensifying academic pressure. Schools and local institutions should therefore consider implementing flexible class schedules, academic leniency policies, and time management workshops to help working students navigate these challenges. In addition, access to academic advising and counseling services can assist students in developing realistic schedules and coping strategies. Providing structured institutional support can reduce role conflict, promote healthier routines, and enhance students' capacity to succeed academically while maintaining their employment responsibilities.

➢ *Overlapping Schedules and Conflicts*
Overlapping Schedules and Conflicts are those troubles times when work hours clash with class attendance, assignments, and other academic duties, leading to lateness, missed classes, incomplete tasks, and heightened stress. This theme refers to conflicting demands from work and school

that make students have to make very difficult choices, which nearly always result in compromised performance in either or both roles (Javed & Akhter, 2024). It also covers the emotional frustration and pressure resultant from a situation where students fail to meet the demands of two structured systems. They explain in detail how schedule conflicts created some of their most overwhelming struggles. Student 1 described how rushing to get to all her responsibilities resulted in physical exhaustion and lateness to show that overlaps directly impact their academic attendance and energy levels. Student 2 shared how constantly dividing attention between work and schooling brought additional strain to suggest that mentally these conflicts also create formidable burdens. Student 3 expressed how work and school both require undivided attention, which is just about impossible when schedules conflict. This covers the emotional turmoil of having to choose between one responsibility against another. Student 4 shared how this actually caused her to miss some classes because of needing to go to work, which is a real academic consequence of this conflict. Finally, Student 5 explained that work often consumed the time meant for studying, showing how schedule overlap leads to unfinished academic requirements and accumulated stress.

"The main difficulties I encountered were poor time management and physical exhaustion, especially when I had to rush between classes located in different rooms." "One major challenge is managing my time. It often left me stressed, tired, and struggling to balance both responsibilities effectively." (S1)

"Your mind is divided between school and work, and that makes things harder." (S2)

"One major difficulty is time, since both work and school demand attention. Balancing two responsibilities in a single day often leads to mental and physical exhaustion." (S3)

"Sometimes, my work schedule overlaps with class hours. There are instances when I'm still on duty during class time, which makes me late or even causes me to miss class altogether." (S4)

"I often struggle with time management, which sometimes leads to insufficient time for studying." "The biggest difficulty is managing time. Sometimes, work consumes the time that should have been used for studying, which often leads to stress and exhaustion." (S5)

This theme aligns strongly with Goode's Role Strain Theory, which explains that role conflict occurs when expectations from different social roles compete for limited time and energy. The overlapping schedules experienced by working students clearly demonstrate this condition, as academic and employment responsibilities often occur simultaneously. As these demands collide, students struggle to fulfill the expectations of both roles effectively. This situation results in heightened levels of stress, guilt, and emotional pressure. Consequently, students are often forced to make academic compromises, such as missing classes or reducing study time, in order to meet work obligations.

Likewise, Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory explains how resource depletion occurs when individuals are required to expend more time, energy, and focus than they are able to recover. Overlapping schedules compel students to extend themselves beyond their physical and psychological limits. This continuous overexertion leads to exhaustion, reduced motivation, and emotional overload. The inability to achieve balance between work and academic demands accelerates the loss of essential personal resources. As a result, students become increasingly vulnerable to burnout and declining performance in both domains (Emre & De Spiegeleare, 2021).

This implies that overlapping schedules significantly disrupt students' academic progress and work performance. Persistent schedule conflicts limit students' ability to attend classes consistently, complete academic requirements, and perform effectively at work. Therefore, it becomes essential for both educational institutions and employers to adopt more flexible systems. Schools may consider implementing adjustable academic policies, while employers could provide predictable or student-friendly work schedules (Griep & Bankins, 2021). By reducing schedule conflicts, institutions can support improved academic outcomes, enhanced work productivity, and overall well-being among working students.

➢ *Stress, Exhaustion, and Health Impact*

Physical, Mental, and Emotional Fatigue: Stress, Exhaustion, Health Impact can be termed as the physical, mental, and emotional strain induced in the life of a working student due to coping with both academics and work pressures (Gonçalves, S. 2025). It encapsulates the aggregate fatigue, recurrent stress, sleep loss, and poor health occasioned by their hectic schedules. This also relates to how this sustained pressure affects not only academic and work performance but also general health and daily functioning (Gusy & Lesener, 2021). Participants consistently shared that balancing work and study took a great deal of toll on their health. Student 1 described experiencing "hardships, exhaustion, and even health struggle," showing that physical consequences are direct outcomes of their dual responsibilities. Student 2 referred to stress as the "enemy of all working students" and was even concerned about getting sick due to lack of money to buy food, revealing the deeper connection between financial struggle and health vulnerability. Student 3 further explained that having two responsibilities in one day causes "exhaustion, both mental and physical," proving that the burden taken is on the body and mind. Student 4 also mentioned extreme fatigue to the extent of going home just to sleep, showing how exhausted they were after long, tiring, and back-to-back schedules. Meanwhile, Student 5 shared how sometimes they wanted to sleep but were yet supposed to go out to work, which was the cause of their tiredness and results in having less time to deal with academics.

"I experienced hardships, exhaustion, and even health struggles because of this." "My experiences have been full of hardships, physical pain, and exhaustion." "It leaves me tired and drained." (S1)

"Stress is really the enemy of all working students. Sometimes, I feel broken, especially when I don't have money or allowance for food. I think, 'I might get sick because of this.'(S2)

"Balancing two responsibilities in a single day often leads to mental and physical exhaustion." (S3)

"By the time I get home, I'm so exhausted that I just sleep." (S4)

"There are times when I want to rest, but I still need to go to work. This often leads to fatigue and less time to focus on academics." (S5)

This theme is clearly supported by Goode's Role Strain Theory, which explains that individuals who fulfill multiple demanding roles simultaneously often experience tension, overload, and depletion. The physical exhaustion and emotional strain described by the participants reflect the consequences of role overload—situations in which responsibilities exceed an individual's capacity to cope effectively. Working students are required to meet academic expectations while also performing job-related tasks, leaving little opportunity for rest and recovery. As a result, they experience heightened stress levels and declining energy. These findings illustrate how unmanaged role demands can negatively affect students' physical health, emotional stability, and academic engagement (Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021).

Additionally, Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory explains why exhaustion becomes a recurring outcome among working students. According to COR, individuals strive to protect and preserve essential resources such as energy, health, time, and emotional stability. However, working students consistently lose these resources due to excessive workloads, late-night study sessions, and insufficient rest periods (Hammond, 2025). When resource loss outweighs recovery, stress intensifies and coping capacity diminishes. Over time, this accumulated resource depletion manifests in physical ailments, chronic fatigue, reduced motivation, and emotional burnout.

This implies that academic institutions and employers must recognize that the combined demands of work and study can significantly compromise students' health and overall well-being. Without adequate support, students may experience long-term physical and psychological consequences that hinder academic success and work performance. There is therefore a need for health-oriented interventions such as accessible counseling services, stress management programs, and reasonable academic adjustments for students carrying heavy workloads (Bladek, 2021). Employers may also contribute by offering flexible schedules and workload accommodations. By prioritizing students' well-being, institutions can reduce burnout, improve productivity, and promote sustainable academic and occupational performance.

➤ *Time Management and Prioritization*

Time Management and Prioritization refer to how working students strategize to organize their limited time in order to meet academic requirements, work duties, and personal needs. This theme covers how students consciously plan, schedule, and prioritizes essential tasks to manage their responsibilities more effectively (Khan, 2022). It also highlights how discipline, planning, and conscious decision-making become necessary coping mechanisms to survive the dual pressures of work and study. The participants also shared that time management was their main coping tool to conquer the demands of work and school. According to Student 1, good time management helped enable them to cope with stress and therefore balance priorities, which showed planning was central to stability. Student 2 described sleeping early and waking up early, coupled with avoidance of unimportant tasks-revealing how managing time had required discipline and sacrifice. Student 3 also utilized effective time management, allowing her to keep up with assignments and the demands of work, thereby surviving through being organized. Student 4 reported a strong reliance on time management and discipline, which suggests that structure is necessary given the feeling of overwhelm: "Time management and self-discipline have been crucial to meeting the requirements of both roles successfully." Meanwhile, Student 5 explained that they allocate certain hours for each role and prioritize by importance-a strategic and thoughtful means by which balance is maintained.

"My main coping mechanism is effective time management. I manage stress by practicing time management and trying to balance my priorities." (S1)

"I manage both school and work through time management." "My main strategy is time management. I sleep early so I can wake up early and do more tasks in a day. I avoid wasting time on unimportant things that might affect my school and work performance." (S2)

"To balance school and work, I rely on proper time management, which helps me accomplish my responsibilities." (S3)

"I depend a lot on time management and discipline." (S4)

"Managing my time is challenging, but I try to dedicate hours to both school and work by prioritizing what is most important at a given time." (S5)

This theme aligns with Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, which explains that individuals strive to protect, allocate, and replenish their limited resources such as time, energy, and attention to minimize loss and maintain well-being. For working students, effective time management functions as a protective

mechanism that helps conserve energy and prevent burnout. By organizing tasks and setting priorities, students are able to manage their limited resources more efficiently. This approach allows them to maintain a sense of control despite demanding academic and work schedules. As a result, prioritization reduces unnecessary stress and safeguards students' physical and psychological resources (Mehta, 2025).

Furthermore, Goode's Role Strain Theory supports this theme by explaining how individuals cope with competing role expectations through adaptive strategies that reduce strain. Time management serves as a practical method for minimizing conflict between academic and employment roles. Through careful planning, students are able to allocate time appropriately to each responsibility without allowing one role to dominate the other. This structured approach helps reduce role overload and scheduling conflicts. Consequently, students are able to maintain functional balance and fulfill role expectations more effectively (Rafiq et al., 2021).

This implies that time management training and academic support systems should be strengthened within educational institutions. Providing structured workshops on prioritization, scheduling, and workload management can equip students with essential skills for balancing multiple responsibilities (Cameron, 2025). Academic advising and mentoring programs may further support students in developing realistic study–work plans. Schools may also consider flexible deadlines and accessible support services to reduce unnecessary strain. By implementing these measures, institutions can promote a healthier academic–work balance and enhance students' overall academic success and well-being.

➤ *Positive Outlook and Motivation*

This is an optimistic disposition and future-oriented thinking that enables working students to put up with challenges brought about by the combining of work and study (Pawlak & Moustafa, 2023). This theme encapsulates how internal motivation, hope for a better future, meaningful goals, and positive self-talk enable students to struggle on despite stress, fatigue, and adverse situations. It is also characterized by beliefs that sacrifice in the present times will ensure long-term success, strengthening resilience and emotional endurance (Biggs, 2024). Participants described how keeping a positive mindset helped them to overcome daily struggles associated with juggling school and work: According to Student 2, loving what they do and being committed helped them to sustain hardships, while intrinsic motivation bolsters perseverance. Student 3 contributed that they choose to "enjoy every moment despite the challenges," which means that positivity serves as an emotional shield against stress. Student 5 reported that paying attention to long-term goals kept them determined, especially coming from a family in financial struggle. Among these accounts, optimism is borne as a formidable coping mechanism that perpetuates their motivation. Optimism is not mere traits for S2, S3, and S5 but part of a well-nursed mindset to keep them surviving the pressure of

academic life, financial problems, and physical exhaustion. Their stories paint a picture whereby the students use hope and motivation to get by through what they are experiencing-well, they live by the principle that one day, it will pay off. The above demonstrates how internal strength, future-oriented goals, and emotional resilience help them endure the stresses emanating from their dual role demands.

"I realized that if you truly love what you are doing and commit yourself fully, it helps you endure and move forward." "But I remind myself to stay strong and keep going, because in the future I'll be able to work better, provide for myself, and buy the things I need and want." (S2)

"My personal strategy is to enjoy every moment despite the challenges. I remind myself to keep fighting for my dreams and not let the weight of daily obligations hold me back." (S3)

"To cope, I remind myself not to focus too much on the struggles or the stress. Instead, I keep a positive outlook, stay determined, and focus on my long-term goal of finishing my studies." "My strategy is to stay motivated and remind myself of my goals. I always tell myself that as a student coming from a poor family, I must work harder and persevere to become successful." (S5)

This theme is well supported by Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, which explains that individuals rely on psychological resources such as motivation, optimism, and hope to withstand stress and prevent further resource loss. In the context of this study, participants utilized positive thinking as a protective factor that helped them preserve emotional energy and sustain resilience despite demanding academic and work schedules. By maintaining optimism, students were able to regulate stress levels and avoid emotional exhaustion. This positive mindset enabled them to remain focused on their responsibilities rather than becoming overwhelmed by pressure. As a result, psychological resources played a critical role in supporting students' persistence and overall well-being (Delgado et al., 2022).

Additionally, Goode's Role Strain Theory supports this theme by explaining how individuals adopt adaptive strategies to manage competing and conflicting responsibilities. Maintaining a positive outlook functions as an emotional buffer that reduces perceived strain, allowing students to continue performing both academic and work roles despite fatigue and pressure (Riepenhausen et al., 2022). Through optimism, students reinterpret challenges as temporary obstacles rather than permanent setbacks. This reframing enables them to sustain motivation and commitment even during stressful periods. Consequently, positivity becomes an essential coping mechanism in managing role conflict and role overload.

This implies that educational institutions should actively cultivate programs that strengthen students' emotional resilience and intrinsic motivation. Workshops

focused on stress management, mindset development, and goal-setting can equip working students with effective psychological coping strategies (Hudig et al., 2023). In addition, mentorship and peer-support programs may reinforce encouragement and emotional support. Such initiatives can help students sustain motivation while navigating the demands of multiple roles. By fostering a supportive environment, institutions can promote students' long-term academic success and psychological well-being.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that part-time working students experience tough circumstances, especially in their management of time, stress, exhaustion, and general well-being. Despite all this, these students demonstrate a great deal of strength in their manifestation of their personal values of discipline, proper prioritizing of their responsibilities, and a positive attitude. Their greatest motivations, which are their financial needs and family obligations, are noted to be a driving force that pressures as well as inspires them to strive even harder despite being battered emotionally and physically. However, it can be noted that part-time working students are able to earn from their experience priceless life skills in being independent, persevering, flexible, and ingenious, which contribute greatly to their scholastic success, personal development, and preparedness for their futures as working individuals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for future studies, in relation to this research, are recommendations for students to enhance their personal management capabilities, make use of proper coping mechanisms, and maintain effective communications with their school and company officials concerning their concerns over their workloads. Schools are also requested to develop flexible study options and connections with companies that are accommodated to working students, while companies are requested to develop flexible working hours, reasonable workloads, and positive working conditions. Their families are also requested to give them proper moral support, understanding of their plight, and refraining from idealizing their performance. Scholars in this field are requested to develop long-term studies that would encompass the effects of part-time working for students, along with studies focused on different groups of students and their screening of how support systems affect their performance.

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