



Study habits and sacrifices of working students in a State University

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Abstract

Developing essential study habits involves allocating time and resources to plan and manage tasks. Thus, this study aims to determine the study habits and the sacrifices of working students in a particular university in Cebu City, Philippines. A qualitative descriptive design was utilized, which seeks to gather information in order to define phenomenon, circumstances, or population. A total of 15 working students were purposely chosen at a particular university as the respondents of this study. The result shows that several working students use techniques such as Pomodoro, planner, to-do list, and quizlet that serve as their study habits to manage their time effectively despite their hectic schedules. Working students also gain new skills, such as enhanced communication skills. Working students tend to sacrifice extra-curricular activities due to their work commitments, and they are less likely to acquire typical study habits like taking notes and reading extensively, as they are more likely to be busy working. It is recommended to investigate further the effectiveness of these time-management strategies in improving academic performance among working students.

Keywords: study habits, time management, challenges, sacrifices, academic performance, working students

1. Introduction

Students strive and work hard to achieve their goals, especially in the academic field. Study Habits are an essential practice in which students perform various actions that help accomplish tasks and boost academic performance. Developing study habits requires resources and time for students to plan and manage their tasks. Working students, especially those who study at a chosen State University in Cebu City, are expected to comply with the given tasks similar to regular students. However, because of their schedule, their study habits are in question.

Students have different ways and means for them to study. According to Felce (2018) ^[8], “Adjusting to the academic workload in college can be difficult, that is why it is important to exercise good study habits.” Felce (2018) ^[8] added that there are some good study habits that a college student would need and here are those: (1) Securing a good place to study, (2) Taking note of the deadlines and important dates to remember, (3) Cramming is greatly discouraged, (4) arranging group studies, (5) Review/Scan your notes, and (6) Seek for help. The above-mentioned are only a few of the many study habits that a person would do. There are even some who prefer quiet time alone for them to study, some prefer listening to music while studying, and some also aren’t easily distracted by what is in their surroundings.

According to Rabia *et al.*, (2017) ^[20], In the aspect of developing and improving the knowledge and skills of a student, study habits are remarkably significant. In most cases, good study habits would help increase the academic performance of a student. It’s like they’re connected with each other, thus, it affects a student’s learning and performance. According to Jafari *et al.*, (2019) ^[10], “Academic performance is a complex process that is influenced by several factors, such as study habits.” It’s been said that the study habits of the students have a great impact on their academic performance but there are such students who need to go to work since they have financial dilemmas and the fact that they’re the breadwinner of the family pushes them to do so.

Most Filipino college students settled in many online jobs, they also dealt with being call center agents with a graveyard shift, being a crew in a fast-food chain, etc. According to Abenoja *et al.*, (2019) ^[1], "Being a working student is stressful most likely in balancing your social life, time for family, school, and work." Even so, those working college students still managed to juggle their studies and work. As they cope with studying and work, thus, they also have different and unique study habits.

Also, working students experience things that aren't normal for a student to experience, these include positive and negative experiences. The most common negative experiences that working students experience are their sacrifices. According to Steddin (2019) ^[21], working at a young age, and building skills that are necessary for life are important, however, schoolwork and study habits are being compromised and are sacrificed as they juggle both work and schooling as they are obliged to work and to support not only themselves but also their families.

In the pursuit of their studies, students establish a behavior pattern known as study habits, which act as a channel for learning (Mendezabal, 2013) ^[14]. And each one of us has different styles of managing our time, especially those who are working. With that, this study aims to figure out how these working students manage their time in both working and studying. Especially since there are a lot of working students in our country. In fact, according to the College Student Employment, 43% of full-time undergraduate students and 81% of part-time students were employed in 2018.

In this ever-changing world, researchers strive hard in order for desires and aspirations in life to come into reality. This could be through working, studying, business, etc. People who juggle both work and study can have different study habits. According to Shafiqah, cited by Aziz (2013) "balancing study, work, and social life requires planning, time management, and self-discipline. Outdoor sports help cope with stress, promoting mental health and focus". It is interesting to figure out the study habits and the sacrifices of working students in the chosen University in Cebu City.

By this study, it may provide an accurate understanding of how working students excelled academically despite having a hectic schedule. This research may inform other students about what working students do and their study habits and sacrifices. The findings of this study may provide students with a clear understanding that working while studying is possible and to discover the sacrifices they've made as working students.

Most of the published studies primarily focused on the working students and/or study habits alone and did not specify the study habits and the sacrifices of the working students. Thus, this study seeks to provide complete information about working students' study habits, their sacrifices, and how they manage their time studying while working.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative descriptive design, which is a research design that seeks to gather information deliberately in order to define a phenomenon, circumstances, or population. According to Williams (2007) ^[24], a qualitative descriptive design is used to investigate a situation involving the recognition of characteristics associated with a specific

phenomenon based on observation.

2.2. Sampling Design, Respondents, and Environment

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used upon conducting this research inside the chosen university located at Osmeña Blvd, Cebu City, Philippines, to select 15 working students. According to Nikolopoulou (2023) ^[16], the purposive sampling technique is used, and the participants are selected because they have the characteristics that researchers need in their research. By that, the researchers carefully chose the students of the university who are working students. These working students are asked about their study habits and the sacrifices they made. For this study, Purposive Sampling was used to select 15 participants, specifically working students. These working students were selected for interviews regarding their study habits.

2.3. Research Instrument

This study conducted an interview with the purpose of getting to know the study habits and sacrifices of working students at a State University located in Cebu City, Philippines. As this is a qualitative descriptive type of research, one of the data collection methods is the researcher himself/herself (Wa-Mbaleka, 2019) ^[23]. Thus, the researchers were the main instrument in gathering data. As for the second instrument, the researchers used a semi-structured type of interview questionnaire. A semi-structured interview is a combination of a predetermined set of open questions with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular responses from the interviewee (KnowHow, 2018) ^[12]. This means the researchers were able to conduct and ask follow-up questions. The said interview had 5-6 open-ended questions to be answered. With the respondents' permission, an audio recording was used for transcription.

2.4. Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers asked for approval from the Research Ethics Committee. Then, the approval of the interview questionnaire followed. Once approved, the mayor of each block, from freshman to 4th-year students of the chosen school, asked for a list of working students in their respective block. After having the list, the researchers asked for those working students' availability for an interview conducted inside the premises through open-ended questions. Then, the researchers purposely selected 15 working students of the said school and asked for their consent if they agreed to participate in our research study. Furthermore, the researchers gathered the data from the interviewee through open-ended questions. During the interview, the researchers asked for the respondents' permission to record the interview. After gathering all the data, the researchers provided a token of appreciation.

2.5. Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was utilized in analyzing the respondents' responses regarding their study habits. Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative data analysis method; it is a valuable and accessible tool for qualitative researchers (Kiger & Varpio, 2020) ^[11]. In thematic analysis, transcription of the respondents' responses was done first. Then, the researchers shall group the typical responses of each interviewee and provide themes for each group. These themes serve as the basis for identifying working students' study habits and sacrifices in the chosen University in Cebu City, Philippines.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are essential in any research study to guarantee the security and welfare of respondents. Before administering the survey, the researchers provided an overview of the study and its content as well as had the participants sign a consent form to confirm their willingness to participate. Personal Information was kept with utmost confidentiality by the researchers. After taking the survey, the participants received a complimentary reward, such as cash, as a token of appreciation for participating in the study.

3. Results and Discussion

Fifty-eight (58) significant statements were extracted from the interview transcripts. There were 36 codes, which generated six formulated meanings. The 36 codes were grouped into six categories, which emerged as six themes. According to the participants' responses, they use techniques when it comes to studying. Also, working students still face many challenges, such as having a hectic schedule due to work commitments. However, above all else, there are still positive outcomes, mainly showcasing the enhanced skills they gained while working, which greatly helps them in different aspects of their lives.

Theme 1: Techniques and Habit of Studying

Results showed that working students utilized different techniques that served as their study habits to manage their time effectively despite their hectic schedules. The following statements from respondents supported these:

"I have this kind of study habit where I apply Pomodoro technique...." - Participant 1

"My study habit is that I have a quizlet..." - Participant 2

"I utilize a planner which we should have so that no tasks will be forgotten..." - Participant 4

"I listed down all the activities that I needed to comply with, especially during this week." - Participant 9

Study habits involve using effective study procedures, efficiency in doing academic assignments, and how to study skills (Dano, 2003) ^[6]. Hartwig and Dunlosky (2011) ^[9] agreed that students have different study habits; only some report utilizing the same techniques. These techniques include creating a study schedule and breaking down tasks into smaller manageable chunks. With this, one of the participants utilized the Pomodoro technique, which the respondent applied every time she had vacant time, especially when working on her assignment and preparing a recitation or exam. Another technique used was the quizlet, which she used as a tool to manage her schedules and assignments that needed to be done.

Furthermore, the respondents also utilized a to-do list and planner wherein they listed their activities that needed to be done to avoid lapses. It is important to understand that a schedule assists in developing good study habits (Quincocadosales, 2013). These tools helped them stay organized and prioritize tasks effectively. This implies that most working students do not have typical study habits such as reading extensively and taking notes. According to Pinola (2022), taking notes while studying helps students stay focused and hasten learning. Since working students do not include such habits, instead, they utilize techniques they think are adequate to manage their schedules.

Theme 2: Working Student's Challenges and Difficulties

Results showed that a conflict between the two aspects is expected when working while studying. The following statements from the respondents supported these:

"... I always plan to study, but my body wants to rest and get some sleep, but I still cannot due to the household responsibilities that I have" - Participant 1

"... I find it difficult to balance work and study because it consumes energy." - Participant 2

"... when almost all of your instructors give us tasks at the same time, especially when exam week is coming" - Participant 6

Working students have encountered various challenges and difficulties due to their study and work commitments. Mesra et al. (2021) ^[15] agreed that the challenges that working students experience include enduring sleepiness due to getting night shifts and difficulties in making assignments due to tiredness from work. The challenges and difficulties that the respondents face are not just about lack of sleep alone; they also involve difficulties in time management and in doing the school tasks that are given simultaneously. Time management is one of the most common challenges working students face because most of them have other responsibilities besides work and study. Additionally, working students have difficulty completing simultaneous school tasks because of exhaustion from work and lack of time. This implies that the results of the gathered data found that the primary challenge that working students face is the lack of sleep and time management.

Theme 3: Student's Obligations and Sacrifices

Results showed that the respondents agreed that, as working students, there are instances where they need to sacrifice their comfort zones and happiness and that they do not have ample time to study and attend to their other personal responsibilities. The responses of the working students supported these:

".....especially I would like to join any organization, so I have to sacrifice that one...." - Participant 3

"If you have work, it is better not to get involved because you will be more stressed." - Participant 6

"I am part of the chorale, and since I am also working, I decided to give it up." - Participant 7

".....in the first year, I tried joining Genlites org, but I gave up....." - Participant 8

".....whenever there are extra-curricular activities, I do sacrifice it....." - Participant 11

".....the responsibilities at home can be neglected and left behind." - Participant 12

"I think the one that I sacrificed was my study....." - Participant 13

"There are times that I choose to sacrifice my work....." - Participant 14

"I have been sacrificing my urge to join volleyball in school....." - Participant 15

This means that studying and other school-related stuff and responsibilities at home have been sacrificed due to their work commitments. Bulhoes (2012) ^[4] confirms that students often have to sacrifice a social life, school, or nights of sleep. These working students do not always have an option. Thus,

they sacrifice a lot. Some respondents were restricted from joining school-related organizations and activities; others sacrificed their study time and hobbies. Also, other respondents added that the time for family and friends was sacrificed. This implies that in a journal conducted by Alpert (2010) ^[2], he stated that no matter how hectic schedules are with work and study, it is still essential to preserve time for family and friends and employ family and friends for support, particularly in the most trying times. Working students must rely on their loved ones and friends, especially if they have encountered countless problems and difficulties in life, meaning no matter how hectic the schedule may be, they should still not compromise and sacrifice the time allotted for their family and friends.

Theme 4: Invested Time in Studying and Working

Results showed that working students invest time in both studying and working. The responses of the working students supported these:

".....maybe I would choose to sleep over studying, so it would not last an hour. Is 9 hrs." - Participant 3

"An hour or even a minute, it depends. 9 hours" - Participant 11

".... It depends if I have a vacancy available. My work lasts for 9 hours every day except Saturday and Sunday." - Participant 12

"1 to 2 hours, 6 to 8 hours, but if there is no one on duty for the next shift, my shift will be until 12 hours." - Participant 15

".....1 hour. My work lasts for 8 hours." - Participant 5

"..... Sometimes, I set a time for like 4 hours to study, and in the next hours, it will be the time that I will stay awake and work. I have been working, maybe 5 to 6 hours since I finished my work at midnight." - Participant 13

"On average, it is probably 8 hours a day. Working only one hour." - Participant 10

"2-3 hours. It depends on my schedule that I have in my free time because I work at this school as a student assistant, so it depends on my free time." - Participant 1

"2-3 hrs. Depends on the schedule." - Participant 2

"Like 2 to 3 hours Working? 8 hours." - Participant 14

"It depends on when my brain wants to study, but it mostly lasts for 2 hours, but then within that time, I usually watch TikTok and Facebook videos. My work lasts for 4 hours." - Participant 4

".....2 hours every day, 2 hours every day because, for example, a specific subject such as English, I would divide the time to 30-30 and repeat on reading that subject, but I will not memorize it. So 30 minutes reading in the morning, then reading again at noon, then reading again at dawn. Since school started, my work lasts only for 2 hours, but during summer, it lasts for 8 hours every day." - Participant 6

"I usually take 3 hours during the day and 3 hours at night. I think it depends, but most of the time, I have many tasks, usually around 5 hours every day." - Participant 9

This means that the working students have different working and studying schedules. Most participants spend less time studying than working. This leads to an unequal amount of time given to both activities. Payusan *et al.* (2022) ^[17] recognized the importance of improving the time management of working students to do better in school.

Working students are expected to face many demands from work and school. Thus, time must be handled and planned well to minimize procrastination and heavy workloads. Time management is one of the most essential skills that a working student should have. However, despite the importance of this skill, some students still struggle to manage time. Some factors hinder students from managing time, including prioritizing sleeping and resting over studying. Due to working students' responsibilities in work and school, it is expected that they may struggle in planning and choosing the most practical choices instead, which is to prioritize health and only study if there is an availability of time. However, this would affect the working students' performance in school if not taken into action. This implies that working students should plan and manage their time well to progress academically and at work.

Theme 5: Skills Enhanced while Working and Studying

Results showed that working while studying can enhance skills (describe or define the theme). The responses of working students supported these:

"In interacting with professional people, it helps me boost my confidence..." - Participant 9

"... My communication skills enhance my communication skills." - Participant 3

"... My creativity is also enhanced." - Participant 6

"I learned how to manage my time, and it builds my leadership skills." - Participant 14

This means that many students pursue working while studying, which helps improve their individualities and develop the skills they try to acquire (Evarado, 2003). Ktoridou *et al.* (2021) ^[13] agreed that the skills could be enhanced differently and can be built outside the campus, especially in the working area. Many students gained skills related to social work, which is essential since it gives them the competence to deal with others, especially in school, where students can showcase their skills and talents. Enhancing skills is a fantastic experience, enabling them to improve their desired attitudes and qualities. The skills, particularly communication skills, confidence, creativity, and leadership, help them have a harmonious relationship with others. This implies that many students can gain new skills that instill a sense of self-discipline and make them better people than they are.

Theme 6: Advices with regards to Studying and Working Simultaneously

The results showed that working students' experiences can inform, influence, and benefit those interested in the field. The responses of working students supported these:

".....being a working student is hard..... Students who are just students alone should be grateful to their parents that their parents were able to support them, and I hope that they will focus on their studies....." - Participant 3

"If you can work and study at the same time, then work, because it is nice to have your own money..... But it is tiring." - Participant 12

".....working as a student is not easy, but if you like to achieve your goal while sustaining your self's needs, go for it. Being a student worker is nice. You can sustain yourself." - Participant 14

“.....if no one forced you to work, you should not work. Because once you have a job, people will always ask for money because they think that you already have lots of money.” - Participant 15

This means that working students are knowledgeable in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of working while studying. Tumin *et al.* (2020) [22] recognized working students as those who mostly understand the meaning and effects of working while studying. This is because working students already have the experience and knowledge about what it is like to work while studying. With this, the working students of the university advised those students who were interested in the field. Most of them mentioned the advantages of being a working student: becoming financially independent and sustaining themselves. However, this may also lead to certain disadvantages, such as others depending financially on them and having the mindset that working students are wealthy when, in fact, they are in this situation because they need money. The working students cited that being a working student is complex and tiring, thus advising that if one can juggle work and study simultaneously, then try, but if one cannot, then do not. Therefore, working students require self-discipline, commitment, and good time management between working hours and academic loads. (Tumin *et al.*, 2020) [22].

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Working students are less likely to acquire some typical study habits like taking notes and reading extensively, as they are more likely to be busy working. As a result of their work commitments and hectic schedules, they use techniques and ways to manage their time well and to balance the time they spend on both working and studying in order to achieve a satisfactory work-life balance. It is recommended that working students utilize varied techniques and strategies as well as investigate the effectiveness of these time-management strategies in improving academic performance among working students.

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