TEARS OF HOPE: THE PLIGHT OF WORKING STUDENTS UNDER TVL-LATE AFTERNOON PROGRAM

Ruby Anna C. Baja[i]
University of Mindanao,
Philippines

Abstract:

This study investigated the challenges faced by working students enrolled in the Technical Vocational Livelihood Late-Afternoon Program (TVL-LAP) and examined the impact of their employment on their academic performance. The research design employed was descriptive-qualitative, using a phenomenological approach to capture the participants' authentic stories and experiences through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Thematic analysis using Creswell's (2013) six steps in the qualitative data analysis process was applied to identify prominent patterns within the interviews, which were categorized according to the main themes and core ideas. After the data analysis, three (3) essential themes emerged across all the study questions. Essential themes in the experiences and challenges focused on providing for economic needs, meeting multiple demands, and seeking consideration. Self-motivation, finding time to study, and compassionate teachers and peers were revealed as essential themes in coping mechanisms. Commitment to goals in life, the value of support from God and others, and helping oneself surfaced in shared insights. Findings suggest that providing flexible schedules or alternative work arrangements, offering academic support services, encouraging peer support groups, and providing training and support in time management and problem-solving can help students become more resourceful and efficient in balancing academic and work responsibilities.

Keywords: education, challenges, TVL-LAP working students, Philippines

1. Introduction

In recent years, an increasing number of high school students have started working part-time jobs and enrolling in secondary schools with programs that combine employment with education. While most students are enrolled in traditional class programs, some participate in work-study programs that allow them to earn money while still in school. The enrollment of these students in these programs has been motivated by several factors.

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[i] Correspondence: email rubyanna.baja@deped.gov.ph, r.baja.486218@umindanao.edu.ph

For students from less privileged backgrounds, a job is essential to pay for tuition and living expenses (Beer & Bray, 2019; Neyt *et al.*, 2018). Other studies have also shown that students' employment hours correlate with their financial needs, including paying for tuition, rent, and other bills as well as supplementing their parent's contribution to their education (Tsurugano *et al.*, 2021). Payusan *et al.* (2022) reported that although working while studying is financially beneficial, working students still encounter various difficulties and face challenges that affect their academic performance, such as time management and a busy schedule (Taylor *et al.*, 2020).

In today's society, only some are fortunate enough to have their basic needs met without working for them. This includes students, who often need to work to support their tuition and living expenses (Chiang *et al.*, 2020). Work-study programs have become famous for students who need to earn money while pursuing their education (Awi *et al.*, 2021; Saudi, 2021). However, the impact of working while studying on academic performance has been debated. While some studies suggest that integrating work and learning can be helpful, mainly if the work is in the same field as the subject being studied, other studies claim that working more hours to make ends meet has a negative impact on academic performance (Carnevale, 2018; Ostoj, 2020; Perna & Odle, 2020; Zhang & Yang, 2020). This is especially true for less fortunate students who have to work more to support themselves (Creed *et al.*, 2019). Working students may experience less class attendance, missed lectures, and cumulative assessments, which can ultimately affect their grades and academic performance (Saudi, 2021).

Students who work while in school may gain financially, but it may also negatively affect their mental and physical health (Awi *et al.*, 2021; Summer *et al.*, 2023). For students, juggling school, work, and personal life can be overwhelming and stressful, potentially having a negative impact on their academic performance and well-being (Mitchell, 2020). Although several studies have examined the effects of part-time work on students, there is a need for additional research that explores the relationship between working as a student and mental health outcomes.

Globally, it is becoming more and more crucial for students to strike a balance between their academics and employment. In order to supplement their income and obtain market experience, many students in Europe and the United States have taken on paid employment (Eurostudent, 2018). The US Department of Labor (DOL, 2019) reports that a sizeable portion of students aged 16 to 24, who are employed combine their jobs with their studies for various reasons. Similar trends may be seen in Canada, where a significant portion of students between the ages of 15 and 24 work for pay (Wade, 2018). While combining employment and school might be advantageous, it can also bring several problems for students, including financial hardship and issues juggling work and academic duties.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it even more difficult for working students to cope with issues including money problems, a lack of resources, and elevated stress levels (Tsurugano *et al.*, 2021). Even though working students are common in the Philippines, little is known about their experiences and how working while studying affects their academic achievement and general well-being. It has been reported that many students

experience irregular sleeping patterns during the experienced lockdowns, which was said to be caused by schoolwork, stress, and anxiety – such as worrying about getting a poor grade (Philstar.com, 2021). Understanding the impact that working while in school has on Filipino high school student's personal and academic lives is important to examine and find viable approaches to support their successful time management and academic endeavors.

In the Davao Region, the Department of Education (DepEd) voiced concern about the low study completion rates. Research by Pregoner *et al.* (2020) attributed the city of Davao's low educational attainment to low income, which forces students to work while in school. Financially disadvantaged students can put more time into working than studying, which would harm their academic performance and ratings. Students' mental health and academic performance may suffer due to part-time employment (Awi *et al.*, 2021; Summer *et al.*, 2023). The situation highlights the need to explore the effects of working while studying in school on Filipino students' academic performance and general well-being.

More studies need to concentrate on the experience of working throughout the high school years, especially among those enrolled in Late Afternoon Programs, even though many studies have looked at the effect of employment on academic achievement among high school students. These programs are designed for students working part-time in various industries, many of whom struggle to balance employment and academics. Although it has been noted that TVL-LAP students experience absenteeism, tardiness, and poor academic performance, whether these issues are entirely related to their employment as students is unknown. The pressing need for a study that investigates the hardships and obstacles experienced by TVL-LAP working students and establishes this research gap highlights the degree to which their employment impacts their academic performance. The results of this study can close this gap by offering insights and suggestions that can assist these learners in overcoming their difficulties and achieving better academic results.

2. Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the experienced challenges, coping strategies, and insights of Grade 11 Senior High School Technical Vocational Livelihood Late-Afternoon working students of Davao City National High School during the School Year 2022-2023. This study may shed light on working students' needs and concerns based on their experiences within the educational setting. Understanding the difficulties and barriers experienced in the pursuit of education can help policymakers and educators create more effective policies and programs that will meet their needs. The results of this study may also impact workforce and economic development because a better-educated workforce can result in higher productivity and creativity. This research may help to guide decisions about public policy that will benefit working students in the Philippines and globally.

The following research questions are used to inform the interview guide's construction perspective;

1) What are the experiences and challenges of working students?
2) What coping strategies are used to manage studying time while working?
3) What are the insights and lessons learned from experiences of being a working student?

3. Literature Review

This section focuses on existing research that backs up the current study's findings. Working students' information is provided and discussed in this section. Furthermore, only the most important details are highlighted to ensure that the concepts of the current study are linked to past research.

3.1 Meeting Financial and Social Needs

Education is one of the most critical aspects of one's life, especially for families who are working hard to send their children to school. However, some families face financial challenges and lack the capability to send their children to school because they prioritize other basic needs leading to the sacrifice of education (Magno & Magno, 2022). Because of this, some students resort to getting part-time work while preceding study. This practice is commonly known as "working students" and is prevalent in many countries worldwide. Working students provide for their own financial needs, either with or without their parents' assistance so that they can continue their education. These are committed individuals who give their service to help others in exchange for money to pay for their education (Coral, 2020). Working while studying can help students cover their expenses such as tuition fees, books, and living costs. It can also provide them with valuable work experience and skills that they can use in their future careers.

In developed and industrialized economies, government funding is usually available to support students in continuing their education (Barada *et al.*, 2020; Helin, *et al.*, 2020). In contrast, developing economies may have limited opportunities, causing some students to abandon their studies due to financial constraints (Auger *et al.*, 2020; Onyema *et al.*, 2020). This lack of government support leads to restricted access to education, especially for marginalized communities and low-income families, exacerbating inequality and impeding social and economic development. Consequently, educational opportunities are increasingly unequal between the rich and the poor. The reasons why a student considers and accepts a part-time job are complicated and multifaceted. The study by Fatah *et al.* (2021) found that the main reasons for working while studying are financial support, personal growth, and the desire to gain practical experience for the future. Meeting financial and social needs is one of the primary reasons why students choose to work while studying (Wojciechowska, 2020), and financial necessity is often the most important reason why students engage in part-time employment (Antipolo, 2021; Astudillo, 2019; Pregoner *et al.*, 2020). Previous research has unequivocally established that students' desire to make money drives them to work. (Magno & Magno, 2022) emphasize that the main reason individuals take up part-time jobs is to support their families financially.

The choice of a student to work while attending school was notably influenced by the extent of financial assistance provided by their family. Student workers have increased, especially those whose parents have low educational levels (Sanchez-Gelabert *et al.*, 2017). While some push through their education and work simultaneously to earn money to support their school's financial needs, other students end up working and stopping school to help their families earn a living. Other findings further revealed the lack of parental participation to be one of the main factors pushing students to work, which results in school absenteeism, health problems, and a lack of social activities among working students (Balcuit, Jr. & Lopio, 2022; Moores *et al.*, 2019; Özcan, 2020).

The opportunity for young people to work will get them to learn general and job-specific skills to help them transition from education to the labor market after studying. Wojciechowska (2020) found that students who work experience an enhanced sense of independence and self-sufficiency, leading to a positive impact on their overall well-being. Additionally, working students can use the skills and knowledge acquired from their jobs to enhance their academic performance and future career prospects (Coral, 2020). The drawback is the risk that time spent working could impede studying, reducing the chances of success and negatively affecting the labor market in the future.

The challenges faced by those students who choose to work while they study are numerous (Carnevale, 2018). Beer and Bray (2019) found that low-income students and those who work long hours face much more significant obstacles when juggling employment and school. These challenges include managing their time effectively, balancing work and academic responsibilities, and dealing with the stress of juggling multiple commitments. Other than the factors mentioned, some identified struggles and challenges based on the testimony of some working students who are getting late in school, skipping classes, and having insufficient time for studying, adversely affecting their academic performance. Francisco (2021) supported this struggle, stating that some working students struggle to manage their studies and work simultaneously. As a result, poor academic performance is often observed (Coral, 2020). A recent study by Drăghici and Cazan (2022), identified that working students with high levels of stress and low levels of social support were at a greater risk of experiencing academic difficulties. Additionally, Creed *et al.* (2019) further emphasize the need to manage work and academic obligations properly.

A recent study by Payusan *et al.* (2022) showed that balancing work and academics can negatively affect students' mental health due to increased responsibilities and expectations. The result was sustained by Creed *et al.* (2019) who posit that job demands hinder achievement and cause frustration among working students. In addition, working students are more likely to experience anxiety and stress and have fewer resources to cope than their non-working peers (Summer *et al.*, 2023). These findings suggest that balancing work and academics can negatively affect student's well-being and academic performance, highlighting the importance of effectively managing time and resources to minimize stress and optimize success (Mitchell, 2020). This suggests that pursuing employment is not necessarily a bad option and that students should be mindful of its potential effects on their well-being.

Intense workloads can negatively affect academic performance, as students may need help to balance their work and study responsibilities (Payusan *et al.*, 2022). However, the benefits of working while studying may vary depending on individual perspectives. For example, some students may view working as an opportunity to gain valuable skills and experience (Coral, 2020), while others may see it as a financial necessity due to the high cost of tuition (Magsumbol, 2021). A pessimistic student who believes negatively about the impact of working on studying may need to find a balance between coursework and workload. In contrast, the optimistic student sees it as a means to gain valuable skills and experiences to enhance their prospects (Zhang *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, it is essential to consider both the potential benefits and drawbacks of working while studying and to approach the decision carefully considering individual circumstances. Working while studying is already a typical scenario, but this only sometimes gives assurance of a students' success. A particular study stated that it is now common for students to work while studying, but found that most part-time students are more motivated (Meilan & Mariani, 2023; Sikyr *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, students who work part-time while taking up school may have underlying reasons and motivation to proceed or even step up the level.

3.2 Classroom Engagement and Academic Performance

Regular attendance determines academic performance (Bartanen, 2020; Gottfried, 2019). When students attend school regularly, they are more available for academic advising and more likely to participate in classroom activities and discussions, which can enhance their academic performance (Sekiwu *et al.*, 2020). Several studies have shown a positive correlation between school attendance and academic performance, indicating that students who attend school regularly tend to perform better on exams and academics than students who attend less frequently (Kearney *et al.*, 2020). Absences can also result in missed academic opportunities, leaving students unprepared for future coursework and exams (Liu *et al.*, 2021). Regular attendance in class is a sign of a student's commitment to their education and their willingness to learn. Class attendance is often considered the primary indicator of a student's persistence and academic performance (Kearney *et al.*, 2020). On the other hand, absenteeism indicates a student's risk of dropping out of school (Gubbels *et al.*, 2019). Numerous studies have been conducted on this issue, with the primary finding being that regular attendance is significantly associated with academic performance (Kim *et al.*, 2020; Pinter *et al.*, 2020; Sekiwu *et al.*, 2020). In fact, regular attendance has been found to impact students' learning positively and is widely believed to be directly and positively related to academic achievement (Gottfried, 2019) .

Recent literature suggests a positive relationship between classroom engagement and academic performance among working students. A study by Zhang and Yang (2020) reported that working students who were highly engaged in their coursework had better grades and were likelier to persist in their studies. Classroom engagement enhances their academic performance and increases their likelihood of staying committed to their academic journey. Using GPA as a measure of academic performance is widely accepted,

and there is evidence indicating a positive correlation between class attendance and academic achievement, as noted by Almutawa and Suwaidan (2020). Student absenteeism, which refers to missing school without valid reasons or excuses, is also known as playing truant or cutting classes (Gubbels *et al.*, 2019). Studies have shown that excessive absences can result in a loss of instructional time, further affecting academic performance and grades (Gottfried, 2019). Poor attendance rates and a higher percentage of unexplained absences have been found to hinder academic success and result in poor academic achievement (Sheriff, 2021). This issue is especially prevalent among working students, who may struggle to balance their job responsibilities with their academic commitments (Zhang & Yang, 2020). Frequent absences can restrict students' chances of success in their studies, leading to a detrimental effect on their academic performance and potentially contributing to student attrition (Epstein, 2018; Zhang & Yang, 2020).

A literature analysis conducted by Neyt *et al.* (2018) revealed that student employees may face more significant negative consequences in their educational choices and behavior rather than in academic success. Student employees are prone to experiencing increased levels of stress and fatigue due to the demands of balancing work and school. This is due to working students needing more time to attend lectures, reduced study time, fatigue, and conflicts of interest between their jobs and academic responsibilities (Magno & Magno, 2022). As a result, this can create a perception of a negative impact on academic performance. Undeniably, absenteeism and tardiness are common problems among working students since they will directly affect their academic performance. Studies have shown that students who put in extra effort and focus on their studies are more likely to achieve higher GPA's (Tatar & Dü¸stegör, 2020). In contrast, students more focused on work or other activities may struggle to maintain good grades (Rosário *et al.*, 2018). Beyond lowering exam scores, Liu *et al.* (2021) asserted that high school absences reduce the likelihood of graduating from high school on time and immediate entry into college. It also lowers the chances of future employment (Cattan *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, prioritizing academic work and attendance in class can significantly impact a student's GPA and increase their chances of success in their academic pursuits.

Punctuality is essential for success in goal-driven organizations like schools (Adegunju *et al.*, 2019). Tardiness or lateness to school is another factor to consider when examining the classroom engagement of working students, as it is often correlated with low academic performance. The issue of student tardiness is not new and has been attributed to factors such as maturity and motivation (Goodwin, 2020). Grobelna and Tokarz-Kocik (2021) explained that maintaining activity and punctuality in the workplace is imperative for working students to thrive in their employment. Meanwhile, Baniaga *et al.* (2018) pointed out that it is a necessary skill for them to thrive. However, when most of their time and energy are devoted to work, they may have less time and energy for academic requirements, leading to stress and exhaustion (Andrade, 2018). Insufficient study frequency can lead to tardiness and poor concentration in class, as noted by Suhaini (2020). This is supported by Adegunju *et al.* (2019) who affirmed that being late to school negatively correlates with academic performance. Magno and Magno (2022) also asserted that tardiness is a disadvantage for working students and can result

in poor academic performance. Persistent tardiness among students results in missing out on essential tasks and activities, further impeding their academic success. Furthermore, being tardy can also negatively impact a student's overall discipline and time management skills (Goodwin, 2020). This can have long-term consequences beyond academic performance, affecting their ability to meet deadlines and fulfill responsibilities in other areas of life.

On the other hand, several studies have suggested that absenteeism and tardiness resulting from part-time employment may not always harm students' learning (Kim *et al.*, 2020; Nurwulan & Selamaj, 2020), especially if they are working for a manageable amount of time. Some studies have even found that employment can positively impact academic achievement but does not necessarily impact overall academic performance (Clynes *et al.*, 2020; Tumin *et al.*, 2020). Tumin *et al.* (2020) conducted a comparative study. They found that most of their research sample considered working part-time to have positive outcomes. There was no direct or conclusive relationship between the students' grades and their perception of their overall academic performance. Therefore, it is only sometimes that student absenteeism is negatively correlated with academic performance.

Students' success in education is directly related to the amount of time spent in the classroom (Epstein, 2018). Students who spend more time in the classroom perform better academically than students with high rates of absenteeism and tardiness (Adegunju *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, it is a good practice for a school to consider absenteeism as well as tardiness to increase the learning opportunities of students (Goodwin, 2020; Suhaini, 2020). The educational institution must develop improved practices for preventing absenteeism. Finding study time becomes more challenging due to employment obligations, and academic institutions often provide more support for working students than businesses do (Payusan *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial for working students to find a school that understands and supports their needs (Sunnexdesk & Sennexdesk, 2021). Additionally, schools can also collaborate with parents and guardians to address any underlying issues that may contribute to absenteeism and provide necessary support to ensure students' regular attendance. Opportunities are more likely to arise when a student is consistently present on campus, allowing them to utilize their time to improve their erudition.

3.3 Time Management of Working Students

Working students possess strengths such as the ability to prioritize their lives and maintain optimism, as pointed out by Al Aziz and Yusanti (2021). Students can develop a sense of responsibility and reinforce their academic learning through employment. Studies have also shown that working students exhibit greater confidence and superior time-management skills compared to their non-working peers (Pregoner *et al.*, 2020). Besides earning an income, part-time employment can provide students with a sense of independence, satisfaction, training, and practical experience (Nga, 2020). While working students face a variety of obstacles which include managing time and prioritizing tasks, this however can have a profound impact on their academic success (Coral, 2020). Juggling work and academics can have a detrimental impact on academic

performance if not properly managed. Payusan *et al.* (2022) identified time constraints caused by schoolwork as a significant factor. Individuals must juggle their responsibilities and balance the demands of being both a working student and a part-time worker. It can be particularly difficult as it includes fulfilling work-related obligations and meeting academic requirements and expectations.

Effective time management requires being realistic about what can be accomplished within a given timeframe, as viewed by Saudi (2021). Balancing work and study can be challenging, making students vulnerable to a deficit in time management. The impact is dependent on how well students manage their time between work and study. Several studies have revealed, that both positive and negative effects on academic achievement can result from working while studying. Zhang and Yang (2020) conducted a review of the research. They discovered that although work can provide skills and financial security, it also has a negative effect on academic achievement, with a threshold of 10-25 hours per week. This is corroborated by the findings of Bartolj and Polanec (2021), which indicate that student work should be limited. They discovered that only job experiences lasting up to two years were advantageous for employment prospects. However, Pregoner *et al.* (2020) emphasized the value of dedication and discipline and outlined the advantages of working while studying, such as financial support and personal development. Based on these results, students should carefully balance work and study, even if it positively and negatively affects academic achievement. Al Aziz and Yusanti (2021) suggest that despite working part-time, students can maintain a respectable grade point average (GPA) or even improve their academic performance through the application of time-management skills. Therefore, it is possible for students to successfully balance work and study by prioritizing time management.

Other studies have also explored the connection between time management and its impact on the academic performance of working students. Sallehuddin *et al.* (2019) described the significant relationship between time management and academic performance, highlighting time management as a crucial component for working students. Poor time management may lead to declining academic performance, underscoring the importance of practical time management skills for balancing work and study responsibilities. Clynes *et al.* (2020) noted that working students frequently encounter a heavier workload as they must juggle both work and school responsibilities. Berezina *et al.* (2022) concluded that some individuals require assistance with time management due to conflicts between their work and class schedules. Astudillo *et al.* (2019) observed that students frequently face challenges in effectively managing their thoughts while balancing work and school activities concurrently. Respondents reported difficulties in answering teachers' questions due to inadequate review time, indicating that time management while working can be challenging for students. In line with this, J. E. Pedroso *et al.* (2022) concluded that poor time management can put a student's academic performance at risk. Balancing work and school responsibilities can be difficult for students, and effective time management is crucial for maintaining academic success.

Effective time management is crucial for managing conflicts between work and study among working students. Tetteh and Attiogbe (2019) affirmed that combining full

or part-time work with education can lead to a lack of time for studying, negatively impacting academic performance. The study of Masevičiūtė *et al.* (2018) demonstrated how working students in Central and Eastern Europe spend up to and beyond 30 days per week during the semester while working students in Western Europe work an average of 23-28 hours per week in a paid job. This underscores the importance of effective time management, as the less time students spend on their studies, the more likely their academic performance will suffer.

Moreover, adequate sleep is crucial for a person to fulfill their daily duties effectively, and students who need more sleep may not perform better academically. Many working students experience struggles balancing work and school due to a conflicting schedule and a lack of sleep (Solmiano *et al.*, 2022). Beer and Bray (2019) explained that full-time students often require more time to study and complete assignments. Lack of this leads to increased pressure and less sleep than they need. Similarly, Salamonson *et al.* (2020) noted that combining work and study resulted in less time for sleep and academics, as reported by study respondents. These highlight the challenges of managing time for students who work while studying, further underscoring the importance of effective time management in balancing academic and work-related responsibilities. Furthermore, lack of sleep can adversely affect students' physical, emotional, and social well-being and academic performance (Chiang *et al.*, 2020). Studies have shown that sleep deprivation is associated with lower academic achievement, increased tardiness and absenteeism, and decreased motivation (Alfonsi *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, if sleep deprivation persists in young adults, it could lead to an increased risk of chronic diseases. Working students who struggle with time management may be more vulnerable to these negative consequences (Tumin *et al.*, 2020).

Additionally, Staff *et al.* (2019) found that adolescents who worked over 20 hours per week had lower school performance compared to those who worked fewer hours. Their study also revealed that those students who expressed their desire to work experienced difficulties in school and had lower academic performance. Determining its impact on academic success is challenging since most working students choose to allocate a certain number of hours each day for work and study. Further studies suggest that working long hours can negatively affect working students' academic performance, although there is no clear consensus on what constitutes too many hours (Chiang *et al.*, 2020). On the one hand. part-time students in higher education institutions must prioritize their time management, career planning, and academic performance to graduate successfully (Hasnun & Mustaffa, 2020). Effective time management is crucial in enhancing the academic performance of working students and increasing their chances of graduating with distinction. Additionally, it is recommended that on-campus part-time jobs are more suitable for working students than off-campus jobs (Berge, 2019). On-campus jobs provide students with more time to attend classes promptly, as they do not have to commute, reducing transportation time and distance.

3.4 Perks and Setbacks of a Working Student

Part-time work can allow students to use their free time to earn funds for their studies, and develop relevant skills for future employment. Several literatures emphasize the need to address working students' unique needs and circumstances, including financial assistance, flexible scheduling, and academic support services (Summer *et al.*, 2023). Students often take a practical approach when selecting a career program that will benefit them financially, with self-financing being a significant consideration. Combining work and study allow students to earn enough money to meet their basic needs (Neyt *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, maintaining their desired lifestyle while covering essential expenses motivates students to work (Tan *et al.*, 2020). This highlights that many high school students who work part-time are willing to support themselves financially to cover their educational costs and personal expenses, rather than relying on their parents' income.

Many researchers have found that students seek employment during term time to meet financial needs and gain experience to improve their career opportunities, in addition to more traditional vacation employment (Tumin *et al.*, 2020). By doing this, working students can develop personal skills, enhance their employability, and build their confidence. From a student's perspective, part-time employment is often viewed as a means of preparing for the workforce and can contribute significantly to their personal and career development (Tumin *et al.*, 2020). Based on Mitchell's (2020) study, many students consider part-time employment necessary for surviving in the educational sphere. Christiansen *et al.* (2019) affirmed that many participants perceived the workplace as a means of skill development that would benefit the current studies and future career prospects. It can also help students develop responsibility and reinforce what they learn in school (Al Aziz & Yusanti, 2021). Tumin *et al.* (2020) further support this idea, suggesting that temporary or part-time work can expose students to various tasks and responsibilities that can enrich their overall role and improve their academic performance.

Part-time employment can provide students with some benefits in both personal and career development. Research by Evans (2021) posits that part-time students are more likely to develop time management skills and a sense of responsibility, both of which are highly valued by potential employers. Antipolo (2021) stressed that students who had good time management skills were less likely to experience adverse effects on their academic performance as a result of working while studying. Further, students who work while studying can develop essential work-related skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and communication (Huang *et al.*, 2022; Salamonson *et al.*, 2020; Tatar & Dü̧stegör, 2020). The authors agreed that these skills can be transferable to future careers and make students more competitive in the job market. A study by Ramenick and Bergman (2020) shows that working students can better understanding of the job market and gain exposure to different industries and career paths. The authors suggest that this can help students make more informed decisions about their future careers and increase their chances of finding fulfilling employment. Additionally, part-time employment can provide students with valuable work experience and networking opportunities. This can lead to future job opportunities and references. This was supported by Nashich and

Palupi (2020) who believed that the benefits of working part-time develop a sense of autonomy, independence, time management, and organizational skills, which are essential for success in any field.

Combining study and work can lead to positive outcomes in the workplace and academic settings. Furthermore, successfully balancing work and study can help individuals develop a clearer sense of their life goals, motivating them to pursue higher levels of education and achieving better academic performance. Recent studies support the idea that combining work and study can lead to improved academic performance. For instance, Tumin *et al.* (2020) asserted that students who work part-time during term time are more likely to complete their degrees and achieve better grades than their non-working peers. Moreover, Salamonson *et al.* (2020) argue that working students have the opportunity to acquire practical skills and experience that enhance and support their academic learning.

While soft skill improvement has been identified as the primary benefit of part-time employment for students, social challenges have been noted as the most significant challenge they face (Al Habsi & Madbouly, 2021). Contrary to popular belief, studies have found that working while in school can have drawbacks. Due to the restricted time available to students, time spent working may be at the expense of academic, social, recreational, and extra-curricular activities. Al Habsi and Madbouly (2021) highlight that working students often encounter social challenges, such as the lack of time for socializing with friends and family. As a result, the well-being of the students as well as their academic performance may be at risk. Overwork can also prevent students from fully participating in the academic and extra-curricular activities that are believed to be more beneficial to academic success. Balancing work and study can be challenging and lead to adverse outcomes if not managed effectively. Naidoo-Chetty and du Plessis (2021) stated that students who work may face work-specific demands and needs, which can negatively affect their academic performance by increasing their risk of physical and emotional exhaustion. In simpler terms, the difficulties of managing both work and studies could lead to burnout, ultimately impacting a student's academic performance (Zeijen *et al.*, 2021). Students must find a balance between their work and studies to avoid potential negative consequences.

Recent literature indicates varying conclusions regarding how employment directly affects students' academic performance. While some studies have found no significant correlation between employment and academic performance (Sinaga, 2018), others have reported a negative relationship (Baert *et al.*, 2017). There is also evidence that the impact of employment on academic performance may vary depending on various factors, including the type and intensity of work, as well as individual characteristics of students (Zhang & Yang, 2020). It is important to note that certain factors may moderate the negative impact of work on academic performance. Numerous studies have highlighted possible moderating variables that could mitigate the detrimental effects of labor on academic achievement. Urgan and Ak (2022) conducted a study that demonstrated a positive association between the quality of a job, encompassing job satisfaction job security, and academic performance. Similarly, Khuram *et al.* (2021)

suggested that students' performance and academic stress may be moderated by pleasant emotions. In conclusion, Janib *et al.* (2022) asserted that a positive job atmosphere significantly contributed to alleviating the negative impact of workload on students' job satisfaction. The overall impact of these results emphasizes the need to consider the different factors that may lessen the harmful effects of labor on the student's academic performance. There is a growing recognition of the value of integrating work-based learning experiences into higher education programs to enhance students' employability and bridge the skills gap between education and the workplace (Sudirman & Gemilang, 2020). To overcome these challenges, students must be proactive in managing their time effectively and prioritizing their academic commitments.

3.5 Working Students Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic has caused significant disruptions to numerous sectors including educational institutions (Bozkurt, 2020). The government has put in place various laws to stop the virus from spreading because its spread caused problems in the education sector. Citizens are forced to stay home, work, worship, and educate themselves in this situation (Bahasoan *et al.*, 2020). Students in the academe were compelled to transition to a highly experimental modality, emphasizing a shift in approach. To maintain continuity in student's education, educational institutions have had to modify their curricula and methods of instruction quickly. One of the ways to protect students from the coronavirus was through online learning. Educators and students faced both opportunities and challenges due to this change as they learned to use new technology and adjusted to a virtual learning environment (Neuwirth *et al.*, 2020). Numerous schools shut down as classes were shifted to online platforms. The transition from traditional to online education has profoundly affected students, teachers, and educational institutions globally. Even so, online learning has also posed challenges for students needing access to a stable internet connection or essential resources at home. Three semesters were passed while the effects of the pandemic on student health due to switching to online learning amid a public health emergency were observed (Woosley *et al.*, 2023). Additionally, the shift to online learning highlighted existing inequalities in access to education, as students from low-income backgrounds or rural areas faced more significant challenges in accessing reliable internet and necessary technology for remote learning (Faturoti, 2022). A recent study reported that students had trouble with online learning and reported feeling anxious, depressed, and uninterested in accomplishing tasks (Logel *et al.*, 2021). During the implementation of flexible learning, respondents of a study encountered significant obstacles related to learner motivation, internet accessibility, and limited social interactions (Priatmoko *et al.*, 2021). Conflicts in poor internet connections and distractions that make learning more challenging prevent students from joining online courses (Ag-Ahmad, 2020). Further, the lack of motivation to complete schoolwork was exacerbated by the lack of discipline in their new online learning environments.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant global effect on several businesses and human life. It has negatively impacted employment globally, particularly for non-

standard workers (Tsurugano *et al.*, 2021). During the global health crisis, numerous individuals struggled to make ends meet due to insecurity and lack of job stability. Since regular employment does not provide benefits, non-traditional workers are even more vulnerable financially in the absence of a safety net. Consequently, many people are under more financial stress and risk becoming impoverished. Many students, especially those who work, have been affected and encounter more academic challenges since they need to manage their time. Students who depend on part-time employment for financial support have experienced financial difficulties due to the pandemic's economic downturn (Francisco, 2021; Muico & Requinto, 2022). This has created a demanding schedule for working students who fund their education by earning a living (Mutya *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, the study of Soria *et al.* (2022) found working students to have experienced financial difficulties during the pandemic compared to their non-working peers. Despite the difficulties, self-sufficient working students continue to make money for socio-economic reasons, the need to pay for their education, and the opportunity to grow personally (Pregoner *et al.*, 2020).

COVID-19 has a significant impact on people's emotional and coping mechanisms and poses a severe threat to many people's lives and health. During the pandemic, more than half of Japan's working student population lost their jobs. After a sharp decline in March 2020, the percentage of working students recorded in a survey dropped by 46% in April. The number of students who experienced financial instability and poor self-related health was higher, with 37% expressing anxiety about living expenses and tuition fees (Tsurugano *et al.*, 2021). A study done in the USA resulted in a decrease in working students' salaries by 31%, and their average number of weekly hours worked decreased by 37%. Additionally, about 40% of students reported losing their internship, employment, or job offer, and 61% said they had a family member whose salary decreased (Aucejo *et al.*, 2020). As a result of the pandemic, some working students claimed that their employment had increased their stress and responsibilities, requiring them to adjust to new normal environments with additional safety protocols.

Working students face difficulties during the pandemic because they are aware of their own physical and emotional boundaries and have limited opportunities for in-person interaction and mobilization (J. E. P. Pedroso *et al.*, 2023). The pandemic pushed working students to work, which had a detrimental effect on their academic performance because they found it challenging to balance both duties (Payusan *et al.*, 2022). Time constraints caused by schoolwork resulted in low grades for the students. This abrupt shift in focus clearly shows how time poverty impedes working student's ability to achieve their academic and personal goals (Lup, 2021). On the other hand, the results of several studies have demonstrated that although working during the pandemic may have been perceived as problematic, it actually proves to be financially helpful. Notwithstanding their struggles, working students often develop alternative solutions to problems and have shown resilience in challenging situations (Solmiano *et al.*, 2022). Compared to their non-working peers, employed students welcomed this extra time and considered it an opportunity to pursue their academic and personal goals. They show high levels of participation in educational activities and demonstrate improved well-

being and the ensuing sense of fulfillment (Lup, 2021). Furthermore, their employment provides financial stability, allowing working students to alleviate some of the stress and anxiety that may arise from uncertain economic circumstances during a pandemic.

Moreover, Mutya *et al.* (2022) discovered that working students have quickly adapted to address the challenges and struggles of the new normal of education. They gained opportunities to develop character and skills, effectively manage their finances, cultivate a positive outlook, and develop coping mechanisms. Additionally, the experience gained from balancing work and academics can enhance their time management skills and prepare them for future personal endeavors (Carnevale, 2018). This sense of security can positively impact their mental health and contribute to a more positive outlook on their prospects. Thus, working students encounter obstacles in this new normal yet obtain benefits integral to their education and personal development (J. E. P. Pedroso *et al.*, 2023). Expanded public support is necessary to address the problems brought on by the pandemic and help working students with academic difficulties (Tsurugano *et al.*, 2021). These measures should include targeted support and resources such as additional tutoring or academic counseling services. Payusan *et al.* (2022) suggested employers provide more flexibility for working students with options to adjust study loads during the pandemic. Notably, several study findings urge public education authorities to work closely with other stakeholders and give special attention to student groups at risk of being negatively impacted by the prolonged COVID-19 measures everywhere in the world (Aristovnik *et al.*, 2020).

3.6 Continuing Plight of the TVL LAP Working Students

Poverty can significantly impact an individual's attitude towards school, either positively or negatively. When negative, learners become discouraged and frustrated, they develop a negative attitude toward learning (Mirabel *et al.*, 2022). Poon (2020) believed that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds may receive lower grades than those from higher socio-economic statuses. Broer *et al.* (2019) also concluded that poverty is related to low levels of education. Students from low-income families often face various challenges, such as lack of resources, inadequate nutrition, and unstable living conditions that affect their academic performance. This creates a barrier that can prevent individuals from realizing their full potential and achieving financial independence.

Education is every human right that promotes the development of both individuals and society. Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution, stipulates the Philippine government's constitutional obligation to provide free primary education to all citizens. It mandated that "the state shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all." In addition, Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) lays out specific formulations on the right to education. It states that everyone has the right to education and that education should support the complete development of the human personality (Beiter, 2006).

The establishment of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533), also known as the K to 12 Curriculum, aims to improve the primary education system in the

Philippines. This curriculum includes the addition of two years of a Senior High School Program, with the primary goal of producing holistic graduates with 21st-century skills. The Senior High School Program aims to produce productive and responsible citizens with fundamental competencies, skills, and values that will enable them to be lifelong learners and job-ready. Graduates of K to 12 are expected to be equipped for higher education, middle-level skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship, which are in line with the demands of the 21st-century workforce (Ferrer, 2022).

As a result of these efforts, "Education for All" (EFA) has become the main initiative of the government and the Department of Education. The Philippine EFA program aims to make primary education more accessible and of higher quality for Filipinos by 2015. In order to make sure that all Filipinos have access to education, alternative learning systems have been developed. Alternative education programs have been developed to help those who struggle in standard schooling, have emotional or behavioral issues, or both, and to make the transition to post-secondary education or other endeavors easier (Donnelley, 2021; Wilkinson *et al.*, 2020). The program's approach is democratic and inclusive; it offers practical assistance, a broad curriculum, and wraparound services (te Riele *et al*. 2020).

In 2011, the Philippine government strengthened the Alternative Delivery Mode in its educational system to ensure that Education for All (EFA) is achieved. According to Rule 1, Section 1.1 of R.A. 9155, also known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, the Department of Education is mandated to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality basic education. It shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. As a result, the Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) was established to provide out-of-school youth and adults with primary education. To further enhance the implementation of Alternative Delivery Modes (ADMs), Deped Order No. 54, series 2012, was issued, which provides policy guidelines on the implementation of ADMs. These policies aim to expand the reach of alternative learning programs beyond the traditional Sunday High School Program to include the Modified Work and Study Program and the Late Afternoon Program under the ADM umbrella of DepEd. The Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) of instruction has been established to address the learning needs of underprivileged students and those at risk of dropping out and to assist them in overcoming social and financial barriers to their education (Department of Education [DepEd], 2011; Philippines ADM Evaluation, 2012). ADMs are innovative methods designed to increase accessibility and adaptability in the educational system, particularly for students who are challenging to reach, reside in crowded learning environments, and are unable to keep up with the usual school calendar (Sharma *et al.*, 2019). Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) of instruction has emerged as an option for schools, parents, and learners to access education as the number of post-secondary students who work continues to grow. Understanding the relationship between employment and post-secondary educational outcomes is becoming increasingly important. However, despite its implementation for several years, there is a need for more research on the delivery of ADM and its impact on students' academic performance.

International organizations like UNESCO have emphasized the significance of integrating vocational streams into secondary school curricula when designing tracks for senior high schools (Chamadia & Shahid, 2018). Mathur *et al.* (2022) also highlighted the preference for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as it enables youths to acquire skills that can expose them to the labor market or further higher education. This type of education is especially beneficial for learners from vulnerable backgrounds as it can improve their livelihood opportunities. The Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track is among the programs offered in the Late Afternoon Program. Its focus on practical skills is a hallmark of TVL, which is often acquired through hands-on learning in school-based workshops and laboratories or through work immersion. TVL specializations generally require learning by doing practical exercises that involve the use of equipment or materials. Completing the TVL track may enable learners to qualify for a National Certificate II. Investing in such credentials can improve students' labor market outcomes, ensure lifelong access to learning opportunities, and increase their adaptability in the future workforce.

However, despite the potential benefits of the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track and the opportunity to qualify for a National Certificate II, taking the NCII assessment has yet to be recognized as a requirement for graduation. Consequently, most senior high school students opt for academic rather than skills-related tracks. Unfortunately, some people have biased perceptions of technical education as an alternative educational opportunity for low-income students and school dropouts. The study conducted by Kamau *et al.* (2020) revealed that the community's overall perception towards training in youth polytechnics was predominantly unfavorable. Technical and vocational education was primarily meant for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who performed poorly academically. As per the community's perspective, the courses offered were believed to only lead to jobs in manual labor, commonly referred to as blue-collar jobs, thereby lacking perceived economic advantages. Munyite's (2018) research supported these conclusions, highlighting that overemphasizing academic subjects has discouraged many students from pursuing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Due to this focus on academic subjects, students tend to disregard technical subjects, leading to a negative attitude towards them. As a result, only a few students develop an interest in pursuing technical courses. This can be a challenge for working students who are skilled and inclined but may experience discrimination when choosing the TVL strand.

Malaysia's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system faces several challenges due to its perception as a less prestigious option than the academic stream, resulting in low enrollment and limited expansion of tech-voc activities with industries (Omar *et al.*, 2020). Unfortunately, many parents and students still prioritize academic streams over vocational streams, leading to a decline in student interest in Technical Vocational Education. Additionally, low enrollment is further exacerbated by inadequate educational facilities, teaching and learning services, and insufficient industrial linkages (Sitepu *et al.*, 2020).

As the name of the study program implied, the Late-Afternoon Program, or LAP, was opened to cater specifically to students who wish to continue in senior high school with classes that start late in the afternoon and end in the evening. This unconventional study setup adds to the challenge that the students face. Students would have to hurdle learning and absorbing lessons while enduring exhaustion after a long day's work. The question is whether working during the day and attending evening classes poses more risks than benefits to LAP students.

Results in the survey of Adams *et al.* (2022) study setup adds to the challenge that the students face. Students would have to hurdle learning and absorbing lessons while enduring exhaustion after a long day's work. The question is whether working during the day and attending evening classes poses more risks than benefits to LAP students. Some studies have analyzed the possible effects of sleeping habits, intelligence, and working students' academic performance in connection to being on afternoon to evening school shifts (Saxvig *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, stress and health problems have been reported as additional challenges of attending nighttime classes (Jakobsson *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, it is said that working students who attend school at night suffer from social isolation and exhaustion and are more likely to become distracted by concerns such as family responsibilities and work. Evening classes require a considerable time commitment, both within and outside of class. The decision to attend evening classes or not is ultimately a personal one. In order to effectively cope with the challenges and achieve academic success, LAP students must weigh the pros and cons to succeed in their feats confidently.

To completely understand the factors influencing students' decisions to work while studying, a thorough approach may be required. A study by Mutya *et al.* (2022) found that students who are also working can quickly adjust to their difficulties. This highlights the urgent need for governments and organizations to invest in education and provide financial assistance to students from low-income families. The authors suggested that support and encouragement be given to working students to ensure that their employment does not negatively impact their studies. Furthermore, other funding options including grants, loans, and scholarships can lessen the financial load on students.

4. Research Method

4.1 Research Design

In discovering the lived experiences of the participants of the study, the researcher employed a descriptive qualitative research design anchored on the phenomenological approach (Creswell , 2013). Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants (Sinfieild *et al.*, 2023). Descriptive phenomenology is an effective instrument for comprehending subjective experience, obtaining perceptions into people's actions and motivations, challenging conventional wisdom, and dispelling established beliefs (Giorgi, 2012). Using a

descriptive-qualitative phenomenological approach in this study allowed the natural occurrence of the rich stories and experiences of Senior High School working students under TVL-Late Afternoon Program. The researcher worked hard to get the depths of the participants' experiences because of wanting the readers to be aware and be informed about the shared human experiences of Senior High school working students under TVL-LAP.

4.2 Research Participants

The participants of the study were Grade 11 Senior High School working students who are currently enrolled in the Technical Vocational Livelihood strand in the Late Afternoon Program (TVL-LAP) of Davao City Division Schools particularly, Davao City National High School for the school year 2022-2023. The researcher identified students who are both working and are enrolled in TVL-LAP for participation in an in-depth interview and focus group discussion. The high school students were chosen as participants since it is during this stage that issues on working students are prevalent and in dire need of evaluation. A total of 17 students from Grade 11 were identified as participants in the study. There were ten participants for FGD and seven participants for IDI. Four female and three male participants took part in the in-depth interview (IDI), while two males and eight females participated in the focus group discussion (FGD). They were chosen based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria set in this study. Among them, only one participant was a minor who was given an assent form before the conduct of the study.

The identification of the participants was done through the purposive sampling technique since the main interest of this study is to work with small samples to achieve an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Purposive sampling is a technique used to better match the sample to the goals and objectives of the study, enhancing the study's rigor and the reliability of its data and results (Campbell *et al.*, 2020). Participants were appropriately informed of the type of study and the reasons for the research before it was conducted and before they agreed to participate. A written informed consent was required to indicate permission to participate in the study, which included an explanation of the study's purpose and the data collection process.

4.3 Data Collection

The researcher sought permission from the office of the Schools Division Superintendent of Department of Education Davao City Division, to conduct the study on senior high school working students of TVL-LAP. After the approval, the researcher then asked permission to the office of the school principal of Davao City National High School, which is the only school that offers TVL in the Late Afternoon Program, where participants were selected and the study was conducted. The class advisers of TVL-LAP were the ones who identified working students as participants. The researcher sought permission from the parents or guardians by sending those letters of consent. After the parents/guardians agreed on the conduct of the study, the researcher set a schedule for

the online interview with the identified students. The researcher and participants used the "zoom" and "messenger" applications as the platform for conducting the interviews.

The researcher utilized a researcher-made questionnaire, which was validated by the panel members and one external validator. A semi-structured interview was used in this study in which, all the data from the interviews were collected and recorded. Code names were used to ensure the anonymity of participants. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gather data from participants. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the laid-out government health restrictions, FGD and IDI were virtually conducted to gather relevant information on the pressing issues with the strict observance of health and safety protocols. Administration of the questionnaires was done online by providing or giving links to the participants to ensure their safety. The study participants were explained that their participation in this study is completely voluntary and that ensuring anonymity regarding the conduct of interviews is of vital importance.

4.4 Data Analysis

For the analysis, the researcher used Creswell's (2013) six-step method of qualitative data analysis process. It is a continuous process that is in addition to data collection, interpretation, and report writing (Creswell, 2013). In conducting the process, data were organized by typing notes and transcribing recorded interviews. Then, the researcher read through all the interviews to get an overview, after which, the researcher returned to each interview transcript and read them carefully. To make an essential connection to the research objectives, a thematic analysis was used to identify the most exciting pattern within the interview. Descriptions were constructed using codes based on the informant's assertions and how they answered the study questions. The answers were then coded according to the main themes and core ideas.

The data itself served as the basis for the analysis, with themes resulting from significant answers provided by the participants, as well as from interactions between the researcher and participants during in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and consultations with research sources. This study did not use the NVIVO software due to the low volume of interview data; instead, excel sheets were used to facilitate the analysis of the interview data.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Experiences and Challenges of a TVL-LAP Working Student

The study participants described their experiences and challenges as TVL-LAP working students. Table 1 presented three essential themes that emerged in the study: providing for economic needs, meeting multiple demands, and seeking consideration from employers and teachers.

Table 1: Essential Themes on the Experiences and Challenges of a TVL-LAP Working Student

Essential Themes	Thematic Statements
Providing for Economic Needs	*"I must work as well to augment my husband's income to support our family's needs."* *"I need to earn money not just for myself but send it also to my parents."* *"I'm working to support my schooling since my father wants me to provide for my own budgetary needs."* *"When working yields more income, it's tempting not to continue studying anymore."* *"I need to work to buy medicine for my sick father."* *"I only have a seasonal job, sometimes I have money for allowance, and other times I don't."* *"I want to give money earned from working to my mother, even sacrificing my allowance, I still go to school hungry."*
Meeting Multiple Demands	*"It is difficult balancing duties at home, at work, and schooling."* *"There are times I need to prioritize my job which is to clean a boarding house because it provides me with income."* *"Many times, I'm too tired from work but I still need to attend classes."* *"I sometimes struggle to attend class on time, especially during Sunday classes."* *"I want to breakdown sometimes because though I'm tired from work, I still need to join our night class."* *"Though I am sleep-deprived because of so many things to do, I still make an effort to continue studying."*
Seeking Consideration from Employers/ Teachers	*"There are times I am compelled to do overtime work by my employer despite knowing I need to attend my class."* *"Finding time to study after past 9 pm, only after my employer is already asleep."* *"Sometimes I study late at night or early in the morning, and sometimes I'm even too tired to study."* *"I do try to request to be absent from work because I really need to study for an upcoming exam."* *"Some LAP teachers do not seem to understand our difficult plight as working students, e.g. require outputs with short notice."*

Providing for Economic Needs. The theme of providing for economic needs emerged as the primary motivation for working while studying in the Late Afternoon Program. The findings of this study confirm that financial concerns and economic needs are major drivers behind the decision to pursue education while working. The struggle to balance academic responsibilities with work obligations can be especially challenging for working students who rely on their earnings to support themselves and their families. Poverty and the need for money are the main reasons why a student works based on their responses. The responses described their difficulties and the situations faced daily. Students are aware that the difficulties of life are the reason for them to work. These working students chose the work-study set-up for a variety of reasons, including their parents' inability to send children to school. They cannot afford to have too many mouths to feed, much less, send too many children to school. However, being in this situation also drives these working students to continue pursuing education because they see it as a way to escape poverty. Despite the hardships faced, their selfless love for their families is evident. Because of these challenges, working students view their jobs as a necessary means of supporting themselves and their families. They feel a sense of pride and

accomplishment in being able to provide for their economic needs, even as they struggle with the demands of balancing work and school.

Theories have been proposed to explain the relationship between work and education, including the human capital theory and the role theory. The human capital theory posits that education is a form of investment in human capital, which can increase an individual's earning potential over the long term (Becker, 1993). In this view, working students may be motivated to pursue education in order to improve their future economic prospects. On the other hand, the role theory suggests that work and education are both important components of an individual's social identity (Erickson, 1968). In this view, working students may be motivated to pursue education in order to fulfill social expectations or to achieve a sense of personal fulfilment. The findings of this study highlight the importance of economic needs as a major motivation for working while studying in the Late Afternoon Program. The human capital theory and the role theory provide useful frameworks for understanding the relationship between work and education, while previous research has documented the financial challenges faced by working students. Policymakers and educators should be aware of the economic needs of working students and should provide support and resources to help them balance their work and academic responsibilities.

Meeting Multiple Demands. The theme of meeting multiple demands emerged as a second significant challenge faced by working students in their day-to-day lives. These demands include academic responsibilities, work obligations, and personal commitments such as family and social relationships. The ability to balance these multiple demands is crucial for academic success and overall well-being. The responses show that being a working student is a challenging and demanding experience that requires a great deal of self-motivation, time management skills, and financial planning. The participants also discussed the physical demands of their jobs, particularly for those who work in physically demanding fields, and the added responsibilities of caring for their families or children. They expressed frustration with the difficulty of attending school regularly and the need to balance their time between multiple responsibilities. The amount of time a person spends working, as well as his physical state and resistance, could make it difficult to actively participate in schoolwork. Sleep deprivation and physical exhaustion could cut into study time. Because of the long hours spent at work, participants frequently find it more challenging to study, which impacts their grades in comparison to those students who only focus on class.

The study of Lisnyj *et al.* (2023) found that working students reported higher levels of stress and lower levels of engagement in their academic work compared to their non-working peers. This suggests that the demands of work can have a negative impact on academic performance. The findings of this study are consistent with the work-family conflict framework, as many of the participants described the challenges of balancing work and academic responsibilities with personal commitments. The concept of work-family conflict provides a useful framework for understanding the challenges faced by working students in meeting multiple demands. Based on Greenhaus & Beutell (1985), work-family conflict occurs when the demands of work and family roles are

incompatible, resulting in stress and negative outcomes for the individual. Strategies such as goal setting, prioritization, and effective time management can help working students balance their multiple demands more effectively (Kaur, 2023).

Seeking Consideration from Employers and Teachers is the third theme drawn from the challenges faced by working students in balancing their academic responsibilities with work obligations. Many working students require flexibility and understanding from their employers and teachers in order to effectively balance their workload. However, despite the work and study setup, there were times when employers compelled working students go to overtime, not minding that they had another responsibility being students. It can be inferred that the participant struggles with finding time to study due to exhaustion after work and the desire to sleep. The difficulty in their work schedules often interferes with their class schedules resulting in difficulties of maintaining focus after a long day. Participants have to communicate with their employers and teachers regarding their situation and schedules to manage their time effectively. It is clear that communication is the key to ensuring that these students can balance their work and studies as they need to negotiate with both employers and teachers to meet their responsibilities. However, this can be a challenging decision for students, as they may risk losing their jobs or damaging their reputation by frequently requesting time off.

The concept of role conflict provides a useful framework for understanding the challenges faced by working students in seeking consideration from employers and teachers. In the role conflict theory, individuals experience conflict when they are faced with incompatible demands from different roles, such as work and school (Levinson *et al.*, 1965). This conflict can result in negative outcomes, such as stress, burnout, and decreased performance in both domains. The findings of the study are consistent with the role conflict framework, as many participants described the challenges of balancing their work and academic responsibilities and the difficulties they faced in seeking consideration from their employers and teachers. The study by Ramenick and Bergman (2020) reported that supportive work environments, including flexible work schedules and supportive supervisors, were positively associated with academic performance among working students. Similarly, teacher support, such as understanding of work obligations and flexibility with assignment deadlines has been shown to promote academic success among working students (Mariano *et al.*, 2022; Pap *et al.*, 2021). Employers and teachers may not fully understand the demands placed on working students, leading to conflicts and stress. To address the challenges of seeking consideration from employers and teachers, it is important for working students to communicate their needs clearly and to advocate for themselves. This may include discussing work and academic obligations with supervisors and teachers, and requesting flexibility when needed. In addition, supportive policies and practices, such as flexible work schedules and online coursework, can help to facilitate work-school balance (Atibuni *et al.*, 2019).

5.2 Coping Strategies Done to Manage Time in Studying While Working

Based on the transcribed responses on coping mechanisms of the research participants, three themes were extracted from the conducted FGD and IDI. These themes focus on overcoming challenges, as presented in Table 2, namely: self-motivation, finding time to study, and having compassionate teachers and peers. It can be inferred that the participants fully understand the motivation and reasons behind working while studying.

Table 2: Essential Themes on the Coping Strategies
Done to Manage Time in Studying While Working

Essential Themes	Thematic Statements
Self-Motivation	*"I motivate myself to continue studying."* *"If you love yourself, you can overcome any type of challenge that may arise."* *"I really want to finish schooling, more so to gain a lot of experience in life.* *My parents' dream to finish compels me to continue studying no matter how difficult it may be."* *"I really want to finish schooling for my only child's welfare."*
Finding Time to Study	*"I need to balance my time so that I can cope with my work-study setup."* *"During break time at work or whenever there are no customers, I take time to study."* *"I availed of flexible arrangements for my fast-food duty hours so that I can join my class in the afternoon."* *"My work is not daily since I have a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule that ends at 4pm, can still attend class at 4:30 pm."* *"I avoid absences and diligently comply with projects required."* *"I strive to finish my work first so that I can do my assignments or project right after."*
Compassionate Teachers & Peers	*"Teachers are helpful especially when we have difficult lessons, they really try to help us learn."* *"Some teachers are understanding enough especially when we cannot immediately comply with the requirements."* *"Whenever I'm late, I always ask for consideration from my teachers."* *"Our teachers understand our challenging situation as working students so they do not put too much pressure."* *"Whenever we miss a class, we copy notes from our peers and we also help each other cope with other requirements."*

Self-Motivation emerged as the first theme from the participants towards responding to the challenges. The theme of self-motivation as a coping strategy and time management technique for studying has been widely discussed in the literature. Personal aspirations such as the desire for a better future for one's family, have been shown to be powerful motivators that can help individuals persist in the face of challenges and setbacks. Working students endure the difficulties and challenges that come along the way with the thought that they can overcome any obstacles by loving themselves and believing in their capabilities. These working students often have to balance academic responsibilities with their work schedule, which can be overwhelming at times. Despite these challenges, they remain determined and motivated to succeed in both aspects of their lives. The difficult situation and the hope for alleviating the family's economic conditions became my motivation to continue education. This is because families provide a support system

that encourages individuals to take risks and pursue their passions. Additionally, the values and beliefs instilled by families can shape an individual's goals and aspirations. Participants reported that setting specific goals and creating a schedule helped them stay motivated and focused on their studies. It is not only skills that are honed in a person's early employment. The entrepreneurial mindset is also honed, which is better learned based on real experience.

Recent research conducted by Bokan *et al.* (2020) found that self-motivation and personal aspirations were significant predictors of academic achievement. The study also highlighted the importance of positive feedback and social support in fostering self-motivation and persistence in the face of challenges. These findings are supported by self-determination theory, which posits that intrinsic motivation, or motivation that arises within an individual, is a critical determinant of goal attainment and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Based on the self-determination theory, individuals are most likely to experience intrinsic motivations when they perceive their actions as aligned with their values, interests, and goals. Effective time management strategies are also critical for success in a work-study setup. A study conducted by He and Zhang (2019) found that effective time management, along with self-regulation and study habits, were significant predictors of academic success among students. These findings are consistent with the time management literature, which highlights the importance of setting clear goals, prioritizing tasks, and avoiding distractions (Macan *et al.*, 1990). Time management is also closely linked to self-regulation, or the ability to manage one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in pursuit of a goal (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2015).

Finding Time to Study. This is the second theme generated from the FGD and IDI conducted which reveals that balancing work and studies requires good time management and diligence. Prioritizing tasks and setting achievable goals are useful strategies, but discipline and commitment are crucial for success. The participants' responses highlight the importance of finding time to study while juggling work responsibilities. Working students choose a job with a flexible schedule to meet the time that needs to be spent working and studying. This is consistent with the literature that suggests time management is a crucial factor in balancing work and study commitments (Mariano *et al.*, 2022). Effective time management involves prioritizing tasks, setting goals, and using strategies such as to-do lists and scheduling to ensure tasks are completed efficiently (Akhmarov *et al.*, 2023). Having a job with a flexible schedule allows the participants to balance their work and academic responsibilities, which can lead to better time management and academic performance. In addition, it can provide them with valuable work experience and help them develop important skills such as time management, communication, and teamwork. This allows participants to balance their work and academic responsibilities without sacrificing one for the other.

The theory of self-regulated learning (SLR) also supports the findings of the study. SLR is the process by which individuals actively seek out and use strategies to manage their learning and academic goals (Zimmerman, 1990). The participants in this study displayed characteristics of SRL by prioritizing their studies and setting achievable goals. Moreover, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model provides a theoretical framework

to explain the relationship between work and study commitments (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The model suggests that job demands and resources can affect employee well-being and work engagement. The findings of this study support the notion that effective time management and diligence in work and studies can serve as resources to balance work and study commitments.

Compassionate Teachers and Peers. The third emergent theme from the participants' responses in this study is the importance of having compassionate teachers and peers in managing time while studying and meeting the demands of their TVL-Track. The findings suggest that supportive relationships with teachers and peers can help students cope with the challenges of balancing work and studies.

The literature supports the role of supportive relationships in student's success. Having supportive teachers and peers can make a significant difference in working students' academic performance and overall well-being. Based on the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) proposed by Bandura (1989), individuals learn through observing and imitating others, particularly those they perceive as successful or similar to themselves. Thus, when students have supportive relationships with teachers and peers, they are more likely to imitate positive behaviors and adopt successful strategies for managing their time and meeting academic demands (Bandura, 1989).

Furthermore, a study by Ainurrohmah and Handayani (2020) asserted that teacher support has a significant impact on student motivation and achievement. Besides their peers, participants find inspiration and reassurance from sympathetic teachers who are aware of their situations. Working students are aware that LAP teachers put in extra time and effort beyond their regular workdays and working hours to help their clients learn. This study suggests that when teachers provide students with emotional and instrumental support, they are more likely to feel competent, confident, and more motivated to succeed in their academic pursuits.

5.3 Insights and Lessons Learned from Experiences of Being a Working Student
Participants shared the insights and lessons learned from their experiences as working students. Three themes emerge which are presented in Table 3 that include: committing to goals in life, valuing support from God and others, and helping oneself.

Table 3: Essential Themes on the Insights and Lessons
Learned from Experiences of Being a Working Student

Essential Themes	Thematic Statements
Commit to Goals in Life	*"I should learn how to prioritize what is more important."* *"Really need to practice self-discipline especially since I am a working student who needs to use my time well."* *I just really need to commit to working and studying while also taking care of my siblings."*
Value Support from God and	*"Though I married early and have no more parents to support my study, I really want to pursue my dream while taking care of my children."* *"Resolve to work hard in order to reach my goal and to finish my study."* *"I pray to God to guide my family as we go about our daily responsibilities."*

Others	*"Constant prayer is important to help me in order to sustain my desire to keep on studying."* *"I want to finish this because I heard TVL students will be prioritized in terms of admission to the City College."* *"I need to continue studying because I do not want to lose my 4P's grant."*
Help Oneself	*"I realize I need to love myself for although I got delayed in my studies, there is always hope."* *"In my case, I need to really remind myself not to be late for school."* *"I need to save, prioritize and prepare for what is important, and not put too much pressure on myself."* *"Learn to be self-reliant when facing challenges that surface in my life, to continue fighting."* *"Sometimes I intentionally disregard how tiring this situation is, I just need to keep going for my mother and my family."*

Committing to Goals in Life. When participants were asked about the lessons and insights gained from experiences as working students, the first major theme that emerged was their commitment to goals in life. Commitment gives one the power to focus on achieving goals, whether they are short or long-term. The finding that commitment to life goals is essential for working students is supported by literature on goal setting and achievement. Locke and Latham (2019) believed that individuals who set specific, challenging goals and commit to them are more likely to achieve those goals. This is because goal commitment increases the effort and persistence individuals put into achieving their goals. In the case of working students, committing to academic and career goals can motivate them to prioritize their studies and work towards their desired outcomes.

The concept of self-determination theory (SDT) can also provide insights into the importance of commitment to life goals. SDT posits that individuals have innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness and that satisfying these needs can lead to optimal functioning and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The participants share that it is essential to prioritize needs and important things in life to achieve goals successfully. Self-care and managing one's mental health and emotional well-being are crucial in dealing with the challenges of being a working student. The participants emphasize the need to persevere, work hard, and be committed to achieving their dreams despite the difficulties and obstacles they face. Committing to personal goals can satisfy the need for autonomy and competence by giving individuals a sense of control and mastery over their lives. Setting achievable goals and breaking tasks down into smaller steps helped them stay on track. By focusing on the smaller steps, they were able to make progress and stay motivated.

Valuing Support from God and Others. This was the second theme drawn from the participants' responses during FGD and IDI. The theme of valuing support from God and others among working students is consistent with existing literature and theories. Several studies have shown that social support can play a critical role in helping working students cope with academic and work-related stress and improve their academic performance.

A study by Maqbool *et al.* (2021) affirmed that social support, including emotional, informational, and instrumental support, was positively associated with academic performance among working students. Similarly, a study by Banstola *et al.* (2020) stressed that perceived social support from family and friends positively predicted academic achievement and helped working students cope with stress. The Social Support Theory, as discussed by Wethington and Kessler (1986) posits that social support is essential for individuals to cope with stressful events and that the availability of social support can influence how individuals perceive and manage stressful situations. According to this theory, social support can provide emotional support, appraisal support, informational support, and instrumental support, all of which are critical for helping individuals manage stress and improve their well-being.

Religious coping, which involves using spiritual beliefs and practices to cope with stress, has also been found to be beneficial for working students. A study by Hardjo *et al.* (2021) pointed out that religious coping strategies, such as prayer and seeking spiritual guidance, were positively associated with academic performance and psychological well-being among working students. It can be inferred that working students maintain a positive attitude and rely on their perseverance, time management skills, and faith in God to overcome them. Faith is an important aspect of their working student life, and that strength comes from God, on whom they rely for divine guidance to accomplish daily duties.

Help Oneself. Helping oneself is the third major theme in the insights and lessons learned from experiences as a working student. It is important to learn to help oneself to become self-sufficient and achieve personal growth. This involves being proactive, resourceful, and persistent in pursuing one's goals. As explained by Basith *et al.* (2020), self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in achieving their goals and is a crucial factor in helping working students overcome obstacles and achieve academic success. Students who have high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals, develop effective strategies to achieve them, and persevere in the face of difficulties.

Moreover, the theory of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2017) suggests that individuals have innate needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and fulfilling these needs can enhance their well-being and motivation. Being resourceful, proactive, and persistent helps develop in a working student a sense of autonomy and competence in achieving life goals, which can lead to a greater sense of fulfillment and motivation. Working students who help themselves by being resilient and persistent in pursuing their goals despite the challenges they face can develop the ability to overcome obstacles and succeed in their academic and professional pursuits (Backmann *et al.*, 2019).

In conclusion, the theme of "Help oneself" in the context of working students emphasizes the importance of self-sufficiency and personal growth in achieving academic and professional goals. Being optimistic in life amidst all challenges enables to overcome their difficult situation while still making education their top priority, with the realization that there is always hope and that it is never too late to continue schooling. Working students work to save for their future, prioritize, and prepare for what is

important without putting too much pressure on themselves. These individuals understand that education is the key to a better future and are willing to work hard to achieve their goals.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the challenges and strategies of TVL Late Afternoon working students and can serve as a basis for further research in this area. Recognizing the working students' unique needs and providing them with the necessary resources can create an empowering and inclusive educational environment for all. Educators should show their love in compassion to their students and give them the support they need to succeed in their academic journeys. Based on the challenges and experiences faced by working students, the findings suggest that educational institutions and employers can support working students by recognizing and addressing their unique needs. One way to do this is by providing flexible schedules or alternative work arrangements that allow students to balance their work and academic responsibilities. Educational institutions can also offer academic support services such as tutoring or counseling to help working students achieve their goals. Moreover, it is crucial to create a supportive and empowering environment for working students by promoting social support and spirituality. This can be achieved by encouraging peer support groups, providing access to counseling services, and offering opportunities for students to connect with their peers and mentors.

Furthermore, promoting a culture of persistence and resourcefulness can also benefit working students. Educational institutions and employers should encourage students to embrace failures and setbacks as part of the learning process and provide them with the tools and resources to overcome challenges. Providing training and support in time management and problem-solving helps students become more resourceful and efficient in balancing academic and work responsibilities. By recognizing the needs and unique challenges faced by working students and providing the necessary support and resources, educational institutions and employers can help these individuals achieve their goals and thrive in both their academic and professional lives. Future research might examine how working students fare in various institutional and professional contexts. Studies on working students in various professions or educational settings (such as community colleges, technical schools, or four-year universities) could be done, for instance. Researchers could develop a more nuanced knowledge of the potential and problems related to being a working student by looking at the experiences of working students in various circumstances.

Further, the experiences of working students from various demographic backgrounds, such as those who come from distinct racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic backgrounds, could also be the subject of future research. This could assist in identifying any particular difficulties or obstacles that these students encounter, as well as how they overcome them. A longitudinal design to track the experiences of working students over time could help to identify changes in their experiences as they progress through their

academic and work careers, as well as the factors that contribute to their success or challenges.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest related to the research presented in this article, ensuring that there are no factors that could unduly influence or bias the content of this work.

About the Author

Ruby Anna C. Baja is a public-school teacher in the Department of Education and is currently pursuing her MA at the University of Mindanao. Her research interest focuses on teaching methods, teacher self-efficacy, and classroom development assessment, particularly in the field of technical vocational livelihood education.

Email: rubyanna.baja@deped.gov.ph, r.baja.486218@umindanao.edu.ph

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