International Journal of Research Studies in Education
2026 Volume 15 Number 22, 95-113



Lived experiences of working students in managing academic and work requirements of Science Major Students at Central Bicol State University of Agriculture– Pasacao SY 2025-2026

ISSN: 2243-7703
Online ISSN: 2243-7711

OPEN ACCESS

Portuguez, Sharlene Mae L. ✉
Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (Pasacao Campus), Philippines (sharlenemae.portuguez@cbsua.edu.ph)
Sibulo, Bea P.
Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (Pasacao Campus), Philippines (bea.sibulo@cbsua.edu.ph)
Oco, Shiela B.
Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (Pasacao Campus), Philippines (shiela.oco@cbsua.edu.ph)
Modino, Ma Isabel A.
Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (Pasacao Campus), Philippines (maisabel.modino@cbsua.edu.ph)
Onrubia, Bea Mae B.
Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (Pasacao Campus), Philippines (beamae.onrubia@cbsua.edu.ph)
Paceño, Abegail D.
Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (Pasacao Campus), Philippines (abegail.paceno@cbsua.edu.ph)

Received: 5 September 2026 **Revised**: 22 October 2026 **Accepted**: 24 October 2026
Available Online: 25 October 2026 **DOI**: 10.5861/ijrse.2026.26438

Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of Science Major working students in managing their academic and work responsibilities at Central Bicol State University of Agriculture – Pasacao during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it aimed to identify the challenges encountered by working students and examine the coping strategies they employed to balance their dual responsibilities. The study employed a qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design, to understand the lived experiences of working students in managing their academic and work responsibilities. The participants consisted of five (5) Science Major working students from 1st year to 4th year, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured, audio-recorded, in-depth interviews using a researcher-developed interview guide. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed through thematic coding and thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and subthemes related to the participants' challenges, coping strategies, and experiences in balancing their academic and work responsibilities. The findings revealed that working students experienced challenges related to compromised academic focus and performance, conflicting schedules between work and academic responsibilities, demands and pressures of dual responsibilities, and physical and mental exhaustion. Despite these difficulties, participants viewed employment as a rewarding experience because it provided financial support for their educational needs and personal

© The Author(s) / Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs CC BY-NC-ND

expenses. To cope with these challenges, working students employed various strategies, including time management and planning, prioritizing academic responsibilities, utilizing vacant time productively, seeking support from peers, maintaining open communication with professors, adapting to immediate demands, and strengthening their motivation through personal sacrifices and financial goals. The study concludes that Science Major working students demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and determination in balancing academic and work responsibilities. However, they continue to face significant challenges that may affect their academic performance and well-being. Therefore, the study recommends the development of institutional support programs, flexible academic policies, and student-centered interventions to assist working students in achieving academic success while maintaining employment.

Keywords: working students, lived experiences, science major students, academic responsibilities, work responsibilities, coping strategies, phenomenology

Lived experiences of working students in managing academic and work requirements of Science Major Students at Central Bicol State University of Agriculture–Pasacao SY 2025-2026

1. Introduction

Higher education is essential for personal and professional growth but increasingly, the rising costs such as tuition, transportation, and living expenses pose significant barriers, especially for low-income students. Many students now seek employment to support their educational pursuits, transforming their roles in academia to include both academic and economic responsibilities. Studies indicate that working students face challenges that affect academic performance and well-being due to time constraints and financial stress. Particularly for Science Major students, balancing demanding academic workloads with job responsibilities poses added difficulties.

These students experience heightened stress, fatigue, and potential academic interruptions, as their rigorous programs require extensive lab work and practical training. The Philippine context illustrates these challenges further, with rising costs and limited scholarships forcing many students to prioritize employment over education, leading to delayed graduations and increased drop-out rates. Despite these hurdles, students show resilience, but educational institutions often do not accommodate these dual demands adequately. Existing literature on working students tends to overlook the specific emotional and situational struggles of Science Majors, indicating a need for more focused research on their unique experiences.

Objectives This study, which focuses on the lived experiences of Science Major working students at Central Bicol State University of Agriculture–Pasacao, aims to achieve the following objectives: 1. Identify and describe the specific challenges experienced by Science Major working students in managing their academic requirements, particularly laboratory experiments, technical reports, and major examinations, alongside their work responsibilities outside the university. 2.Identify and describe the coping mechanisms and adaptive strategies employed by Science Major working students in managing their academic and work responsibilities while maintaining their academic performance and fulfilling their work commitments, finances, and stress affect academic performance, aiming to provide insights for support systems.

2. Methodology

Research Design - This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of Science Major working students at Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA)–Pasacao in managing their academic requirements and work responsibilities. The study focused on understanding the challenges they encountered, the coping mechanisms they employed, and the meanings they attributed to their experiences. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) guided the exploration of participants' personal accounts and their interpretations of balancing the demands of academic and professional responsibilities.

Research Method - This study used the phenomenological method of research. The qualitative-descriptive aspect was used to explore and provide a detailed account of the unique challenges and triumph faced by working students. It aimed to capture the essence of how they balanced their dual roles at CBSUA-Pasacao. On the other hand interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' personal stories. This method allowed the researcher to delve into how student make sense of their daily struggles on the coping mechanisms they employed to manage their academic work responsibilities effectively.

Population and Sampling Design - This study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of working students in managing their academic and work responsibilities. The respondents of this study were working students from the 1st to 4th year at the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture - Pasacao. The researchers selected working

students as participants to explore their motivations for working while studying, which often include financial necessity and the desire to gain work experience. Additionally, the study sought to identify the strategies they used to manage and overcome conflicts between their academic obligations and work responsibilities. The study involved approximately 5 to 10 participants. Data collection continued until data saturation was reached, which occurs when no new themes, insights, or information emerged from participants'responses, indicating that sufficient data had been gathered to understand the phenomenon under study (Guest et al., 2020).

Research Instrument - The primary data collection instrument used in this study was a researcher-developed interview guide. The instrument comprised open-ended questions strictly aligned with the study's Statement of the Problem (SOP) to ensure that gathered responses directly addressed the core research objectives. The interview guide was administered to the selected participant group consisting of university students. To ensure data accuracy and fidelity, all interview sessions were audio-recorded with the participants' informed consent. Following data collection, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to produce written transcripts, which were subsequently analyzed and interpreted using qualitative thematic analysis.

Data Gathering Procedure - This study investigated the lived experiences of working students in managing academic and work requirements. The respondents for this study were Science major students at Central Bicol State University of Agriculture–Pasacao for the academic year 2025–2026 who are currently employed while pursuing their studies. The researcher chose working students because they face the unique challenge of balancing significant academic demands, such as intensive laboratory work and research, with professional job responsibilities. This group offered valuable insights into the specific management strategies, coping mechanisms, and systemic challenges faced within this academic context. Their firsthand experiences helped address the study's central questions regarding the reality of balancing these dual roles. To ensure an in-depth qualitative analysis, the study involved 5 to 10 participants. This sample size was chosen to achieve data saturation, allowing for a rich, detailed exploration of individual narratives while identifying common themes across the participants' lived experiences.

Data Analysis - The researcher used thematic coding to get the result. The coding part had a process. First, since the data was recorded, the researcher listened to it and found a code that could be used in the result, and organized where it was applicable to each SOP and put the names of the respondents who stated it. The researchers used an alias in the name. Next, after sorting the code in each SOP, the researcher combined the same themes code in one category. Researchers put themes and sub-themes in each category depending on the idea of code. The themes served as the main idea of the whole code in one category, while the sub-themes served as a breakdown of the theme. Since there were already themes and sub-themes, the researcher wrote the results by presenting the data in a narrative way and presenting the code. The whole process was about combining the code that had the same themes to break down the data and get the result.

Ethical Consideration - The researchers strictly followed ethical guidelines to ensure the highest respect for all the participants in this study regarding the lived experiences of working students managing academic and work responsibilities at CBSUA-Pasacao. Compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) was ensured throughout the research process. Before data collection, each student participant was provided with a detailed informed consent form explaining the research purpose and emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. Confidentiality of the participants was guaranteed, with information being used solely for academic purposes. Participants were also informed that their photographs may be included in the study documentation only with their full permission and consent. The researcher ensured that no participant's picture would be used, published, or presented without prior approval from the respondents. Participants were given the researchers contact information for any questions or concerns related to the study's results.

The researcher utilized AI tools in this study, specifically Google Gemini was used to search for related literature (RRL) for the introduction and to help understand difficult words encountered during the research.

Overall, these AI tools provided valuable support throughout the study. The researcher ensured that all information obtained from this AI tool was paraphrased before being included in the study.

3. Results and discussion

This section presents the results and discussion of the study on the lived experiences of Science Major working students in managing their academic and work requirements at CBSUA–Pasacao Campus. The results are based on the data gathered from the participants and analyzed and interpreted using thematic analysis.

3.1 What are the challenges experienced by the working student in managing academic requirements and working responsibilities?

Working students constantly navigate the pressure of handling dual demands, enduring tight schedules, mental fatigue, and split academic focus. Despite these daily struggles, mastering both roles ultimately yields personal fulfillment, resilience, and valuable life skills.

Table 1
Challenges in Managing Academic Requirements and Work Responsibilities Among Working Students

Themes	Subthemes
Compromised academic Focus and Performance	Work affects academic performance Difficulty in concentrating on academic tasks
Conflicting schedules and needs of both work and academic requirement	Conflicting schedules and needs of both work and academic requirement
Demands and pressures of dual responsibilities	Exhausting routine between work and schooling The demand of being competent in both work and academic
A rewarding experience	A rewarding experience

Theme 1: Compromised Academic Focus and Performance

The respondents' experiences indicated that their academic performance is affected while engaging in part-time work. As Science Major students, they are expected to complete various academic tasks and rigorous requirements, making it challenging to divide their time and attention between employment and studies. The physical exhaustion and mental pressure resulting from work further impede their concentration on academic responsibilities. Under this main theme, two specific subthemes emerged: *Work Affects Academic Performance* and *Difficulty in Concentrating on Academic Tasks*. The respondents stated that *work affects their academic performance* because they have to divide their time between work and school responsibilities. Balancing these two roles makes it difficult for them to give enough time and attention to their academic tasks.

According to Ace,

> *"ma-aapektuhan talaga yung academic performance." (Academic performance is greatly affected.)*

Ace explained that balancing work and studies is difficult because the time and energy needed for school are also used for work. Managing both responsibilities can make it hard for working students to organize their priorities and complete them with very little sleep. Dash stated,

> *"mapagal kasi syempre habang nag tatrabaho kang banggi, tas aga estudyante ka." (it is exhausting because while you're working at night, after then, you're a student)*

After work, students still have to complete their schoolwork. Depending on their job, this often means they don't get enough sleep, especially since they have to wake up early again for school. Over time, this lack of rest harms their focus and mental clarity. This further proves by the statement of Jax,

> *"bako lang pagal ang kukunsumuhong oras. pag-iisip ang maku-consume." (it is not only the physical exhaustion is the price, but also the mental exhaustion)*

This shows that working students suffer from more than just physical fatigue, they also experience mental and emotional exhaustion. Balancing jobs and school means their minds never rest. Even after work, they worry about deadlines, tests, and tomorrow's classes. They show great strength and determination to stay in school and support themselves.

The participants stated that they experience *difficulty in concentrating on academic tasks* when they have many lessons and requirements to study and complete. The pressure of managing multiple academic responsibilities makes it harder for them to maintain focus and complete their schoolworks effectively. As Zion said,

> *"masakit mag ano, itong may mga adalon." (It is difficult when there are many lessons to study.)*

Zion's statement shows that having many lessons to study can be difficult, especially when combined with the responsibilities of working part-time. The participants need to divide their time and attention between their studies and work, which can make it difficult to focus fully on academic tasks. Work schedules may also conflict with classes, study time, examinations, and group activities, limiting their time to participate and complete school requirements. The pressure of meeting both work and academic responsibilities may also cause stress and mental exhaustion, affecting their ability to concentrate. Overall, the participants' experiences show that managing work and academic responsibilities at the same time can make it difficult for them to maintain focus and give their full attention to their studies. Balancing work and school schedules often negatively impacts students' focus, academic performance, and ability to fulfill coursework requirements. The resulting stress and mental exhaustion make it difficult for working students to manage their time, energy, and attention across both domains.

Theme 2: Conflicting schedules and needs of both work and academic requirements

The experiences of the respondents showed that working Science Major students experienced difficulties in managing their time and dealing with conflicts between their work and academic schedules. Balancing both responsibilities is challenging because they need to complete laboratory activities, assignments, lessons, and class requirements while also fulfilling their work duties, which can lead to stress, exhaustion, and difficulty maintaining focus. Under the main theme *Conflicting Schedules and Needs of Both Work and Academic Requirements*, the same subtheme emerged, reflecting their experiences of managing overlapping schedules and competing demands between work and academic responsibilities. The participants described how *conflicting Schedules and Needs of Both Work and Academic Requirements* made it difficult for them to balance their responsibilities. Managing work and school at the same time requires them to divide their time and attention between academic tasks and work duties. When their work schedules conflict with school requirements, they experience difficulty completing their responsibilities and maintaining focus.

Dash said,

> *"siguro time management ang pinaka mapagal na experience ko" (Probably time management is the most exhausting part for me).*

This implies that being a working student requires balancing academic responsibilities and work obligations. The statement highlights the challenge of dividing their attention, energy, and time between studying and earning a living. Conflicts between work schedules and academic demands make it difficult to manage their time, attend classes, complete requirements, and fulfill work duties. These struggles may lead to stress, exhaustion, and feeling overwhelmed as they try to meet both responsibilities despite limited time and resources. Furthermore, this reflects the sacrifices and adjustments they make to continue their education while supporting themselves financially.

The findings suggest that conflicting schedules and demands between work and academic requirements make

it difficult for working Science Major students to manage their responsibilities. Despite these challenges, they learn to adjust their schedules, prioritize tasks, and make necessary sacrifices. Through these coping strategies, they strive to pursue their education while fulfilling their work responsibilities.

Theme 3: Demands and Pressures of Dual Responsibilities

The respondents shared that balancing work and school takes a heavy physical and mental toll. Managing both roles constantly divides their time and focus, which often leads to extreme exhausting and burnout. This heavy burden is captured through two specific sub-themes: the *exhausting routine between work and schooling,* and the *demand of being competent in both work and academics.* The participants stated that they experience severe mental and physical exhaustion from managing an *exhausting routine between work and schooling.* Some work until 9:00 o' clock in the evening and still have to get up early. After their jobs, they have to study, which leaves them with very little sleep. Dash stated,

> *"mapagal kasi syempre habang nag tatrabaho kang banggi, tas aga estudyante ka." (It is exhausting because while you're working at night, after that, you're a student.)*

After work, students still have to complete their schoolwork. Depending on their job, this often means they don't get enough sleep, especially since they have to wake up early again for school. Over time, this lack of rest harms their focus and mental clarity. This further proves by the statement of Jax,

> *"bako lang pagal ang kukunsumuhong oras. pag-iisip ang maku-consume." (It is not only the physical exhaustion that is the price, but also the mental exhaustion.)*

This shows that working students suffer from more than just physical fatigue, they also experienced mental and emotional exhaustion. Balancing jobs and school means their minds never rest. Even after work, they worry about deadlines, tests, and tomorrow's classes. They show great strength and determination to stay in school and support themselves.

Working while studying requires real skill, focus, and dedication. Individuals in this situation must manage their responsibilities equally as they face *the constant demand of remaining competent in both work and academics*. Dash explains:

> *"may obligasyon ka sa trabaho mo and may obligasyon ka din sa eskwelahan." (You have obligation for both work and studies.)*

This shows that working students build capability by taking both their job and education seriously. By managing their time and energy wisely, they demonstrate strong responsibility and dedication. Facing these constant demands helps them grow more disciplined and resilient. Recognizing the need to split their time between work and school helps students manage both roles effectively. Although managing these demands is physically and mentally exhausting, the financial support and personal growth gained along the way make balancing work and study *a rewarding experienc*e that motivates them to keep striving.

Theme 4: A Rewarding Experience

During work, the respondents find their daily job exhausting, the income they earn provides the motivation needed to keep going. A truly rewarding experience begins when students connect their effort to a clear purpose, such education. Seeing the tangible results of their hard work brings a sense of relief, pride, and excitement that helps them overcome physical fatigue and anxiety. This rewarding experience proves to them that every challenge they endure builds resilience, growth, and long-term success.

A *rewarding experience* represents a major milestone for working students who balance job and academic demands. It serves as the ultimate payoff for their dedication, sacrifices, and endless sleepless nights. When focusing on their schoolworks, having their own earnings brings peace of mind, knowing their educational

expenses are fully covered. As Jax shared,

> *"Ano... Medyo mahirap pero nakakatabang sa, as a science so nakakatabang sa trabaho ko." (It is a bit exhausting, but as a science student, it is helpful for my job).*

The respondent accepted that physical and mental fatigue are part of the process, focusing instead on the long-term rewards. Demanding requirements like science lab experiments and projects demand constant focus, making time management tough for working students. Nevertheless, the income earned helps secure their needs, providing the drive they need to push past stress and exhaustion in both school and work. To prevent burnout, working students rely on careful planning and advance scheduling to manage their dual responsibilities. Reaching their goals makes these efforts worthwhile, turning their hard work into a rewarding sense of deserving success.

3.2 How do the working students cope with the challenges they experience?

Working students cope with the challenges they experience through effective time management, prioritization, adaptability, and support from peers and superiors to balance their academic and work responsibilities. Despite the pressure and sacrifices they encounter, their motivation, financial needs, and determination help them persevere, develop resilience, and remain committed to both their education and employment.

Table 2
Coping Strategies in Managing Work and Academic Challenges

Themes	Subthemes
Time management and planning Strategies	Providing time to both work and academic requirements Planning and scheduling of various needed tasks
Intentional focus and strategic time management.	Prioritizing schooling as the primary goal Utilizing vacant time for academic requirements
Building Support Systems and Open Communication	Seeking Support from Peers Uses proper Communication and Consideration from superiors
Strategic Adaptation to Immediate Demands	Practicing form of protective coping Surrendering to situational demands
Strengthening focus through positive inner motivation	Positive Conditioning Through sacrifices Financial reward as a support

Theme 1: Time Management and Planning Strategies

Student-workers do not treat their jobs and studies as separate things; instead, they actively work to balance both responsibilities. For these students, managing their time and planning ahead helps them avoid stress, tiredness, and schedule conflicts so they do not fail in either area. This theme has two sub themes: *Providing time to both work and academic requirements,* which explains how students split their time between job and school duties, and *Planning and scheduling of various needed tasks,* which focuses on the simple daily steps they take to stay organized.

The respondents' experiences show that *providing time to both work and academic requirements* reflects how working students intentionally allocate and manage their time to fulfill both obligations. Despite facing workload pressure, students make conscious efforts to balance work and academic tasks. Therefore, working students continuously negotiate their time between work and school to maintain stability and sustain progress in their studies. As Ace stated,

> *"Kailangan mo maglaan ng oras sa parehong obligations." (You need to allocate time for both obligations.)*

According to Ace, balancing these two responsibilities cannot be done successfully without proper planning, discipline, and commitment. As Ace narrated, working students must carefully organize their daily routines to satisfy work duties, meet academic deadlines, and attend classes without creating scheduling conflicts. Meeting these demands often involves significant personal sacrifices, as students give up rest, leisure, or personal time to accomplish both tasks effectively.

The respondents' experiences show that *Planning and scheduling of various needed tasks* reflects how they organize and prepare their responsibilities in advance to effectively manage both work and academic demands. This emphasizes that despite busy schedules and multiple obligations, working students make efforts to plan ahead to prevent last-minute stress, and maintain overall productivity and balance. As Jax stated,

"Ginigibo ko na sya as early as possible." (I do it as early as possible.)

This statement highlights the habit of completing responsibilities ahead of schedule to avoid delays and lessen pressure from overlapping tasks. As Jax's proactive approach demonstrates how early task completion serves as a crucial coping mechanism to handle limited time, and unexpected obligations from both school and work, while reflecting strong personal discipline and initiative. As Zion narrated,

"Nakarilista na si gabos ko na gigibuhon." (All my tasks are already listed).

This statement illustrates the practical use of listing and organizing tasks as a key strategy for tracking daily duties. Zion's experience shows that maintaining a structured record helps working students prioritize important activities, avoid missed deadlines, and stay focused and organized despite demanding routines.

In summary, the experiences of Jax and Zion both demonstrated that early execution and systematic task-listing are essential strategies. Through these practices, working students were able to minimize stress, enhance productivity, and successfully maintain balance between their academic commitments and employment responsibilities. Advance planning and proactive scheduling allow working students to organize their demands early, preventing last-minute stress while maintaining productivity. Ultimately, succeeding in both roles relies on intentional focus and strategic time management.

Theme 2: Intentional Focus and Strategic Time Management.

The respondents shared that they intentionally manage their time and focus in order to balance their academic responsibilities and part-time work. They explained that because their schedules are limited, they need to become disciplined in using their available time wisely and avoiding unnecessary distractions. Their experiences prove that students who work can juggle school and job demands by setting priorities and managing responsibilities carefully, even when work creates obstacles. This shows that working students learn smart strategies and manage their time well so they can handle both jobs effectively. Under this main theme, subthemes were identified: *Prioritizing Schooling as the Primary Goal and Utilizing Vacant Time for Academic Requirements*, these subthemes highlight how the respondents remain focused on their academic goals while maximizing their free time to complete school related tasks.

Prioritizing schooling as the primary goal reflects the strong determination of working students to place education above other responsibilities. Despite financial and time constraints, they consider education their main investment for a better future. As Ace stated,

"Mas importante mag focus ka dun sa pag aaral. " (It is more important to focus on your studies.)

Ace's statement highlights that working students intentionally direct their attention and effort toward their academic obligations because they view education as an essential foundation for reaching their goals and improving their lives. As Ace narrated, staying focused on study is the key, which explains how students navigate challenges like physical exhaustion, limited time, and pressure without losing their drive.

The respondent's *Practice* of *Utilizing Vacant Time for Academic Requirements* reflects how working students manage the heavy demands of both work and school. By making use of their available free time, they can accomplish school tasks while fulfilling their work responsibilities. Neo said,

> *"Kung online or kaya mga activity so dun ko ginigibo." (If it is online or activities, I do it during that time.)*

This statement highlights how the respondent intentionally takes advantage of vacant hours, breaks, and flexible periods at work to complete assignments, review lessons, and perform online tasks. Instead of letting idle moments go to waste, working students strategically use this time to keep up with impending deadlines and prevent falling behind in school. Driven by personal and financial advancement, working students demonstrate a steadfast dedication to their studies. Still, balancing both responsibilities effectively depends on open communication and dependable support systems.

Theme 3: Building Support Systems and Open Communication

This theme shows that working students do not handle their daily struggles alone; instead, they rely on strong relationships and clear connections with others to manage their busy schedules and stay healthy. It explains that having helpful people around and speaking up about their situations makes it much easier to handle stress at school and work. Rather than relying only on personal strength, students succeed when they get help from their environment and talk openly to avoid confusion. This overall experience is broken down into two sub themes: asking friends or classmates for help *Seeking Support from Peers*, and receiving understanding and flexible treatment from bosses or teachers *Uses Proper Communication and Consideration from Superiors.*

Seeking support from peers served as a reliable and immediate source of academic assistance for respondents facing limitations in time, energy, and comprehension, with Dash stating,

> *"Sige lang kong patabang sa mga kaklase ko." ("I always ask my classmates for help.")*

Dash narrated that asking classmates for assistance serves as a key strategy whenever academic challenges become difficult to manage. According to Dash's statement, peers play an essential role in clarifying instructions, helping understand complex lessons, and ensuring requirements are completed despite a demanding routine. By relying on peer support, working students are able to reduce stress, lighten their academic workload, and stay motivated to achieve their educational goals while balancing their dual roles.

Despite big limits on their time and energy, the respondents actively chose to talk openly with their instructors. This habit u*ses proper communication and consideration from superiors, reflecting their deep respect*, accountability, and commitment to their school work. As Jax stated,

> *"Minsan din nag papa aram sa mga professors…" (Sometimes, I also ask permission from my professors…)*

The statement explains that informing professors helps clarify circumstances when job duties impact class attendance, schedules, or submission deadlines. By keeping their professors informed, working students can seek mutual understanding and request reasonable adjustments to assignments or timelines when workplace demands overlap with academic tasks. To overcome limitations in time and energy while maintaining accountability, working students actively communicate with both their instructors at times asking permission when needed and their peers to navigate their academic obligations. This proactive approach uses proper communication and consideration from superiors to provide immediate support and clarity, setting the foundation for their Strategic Adaptation to Immediate Demands.

Theme: 4 Strategic Adaptation to Immediate Demands

This theme shows that working students must constantly change how they act and make choices to deal with

sudden, heavy demands from both their jobs and their classes. It explains that because their schedules and tasks are always shifting, students cannot rely on a single plan; instead, they have to stay flexible and act quickly so they do not fall behind. Handling both roles requires them to adapt out of necessity just to keep up with daily life and avoid stress or conflicts. Overall, the data suggests that strategic adaptation plays a vital role in how working students sustain their dual responsibilities, wherein these experiences are further explained through the subthemes: *Practicing a Form of Protective Coping and Surrendering to Situational Demands.*

Practicing a Form of Protective Coping reflects how working students manage their responsibilities by focusing on tasks they can realistically handle within their limits. When faced with overlapping work and academic demands, they adjust their efforts to reduce stress and avoid exhaustion while continuing their studies. This coping strategy highlights self-awareness and the importance of recognizing personal limitations to protect their well-being. According to Neo,

> *"Kung ano lang si kaya ko."(I only do what I can handle.)*

This statement emphasizes the respondent's awareness of personal limitations while balancing work and academic responsibilities. It reflects how working students manage their tasks according to their available time, energy, and capacity. It also highlights the importance of setting priorities, practicing self-discipline, and making sound decisions to avoid excessive stress and exhaustion. By focusing on manageable tasks, working students can maintain their well-being, remain productive, and fulfill both their academic and work commitments effectively. Ultimately, this coping strategy highlights the importance of recognizing personal limitations when managing work and academic demands. By prioritizing tasks according to their capabilities, working students can minimize stress and manage their responsibilities more effectively.

The respondents' experiences in *Surrendering to Situational Demands* highlight how working students adapt their schedules and priorities according to changing circumstances. Rather than following a strict routine, they remain flexible and direct their time and effort toward the responsibilities that require their immediate attention. According to Dash,

> *"Pag halimbawa dae ako kaipohan sa trabaho ko so yaon ako igde sa eskwelahan sa CBSUA."*
> *(If I am not needed at work, I am at school at CBSUA.)*

Dash's statement illustrates how working students adjust their responsibilities based on the demands of their work and academic schedules. When they are not needed at work, they use the opportunity to attend classes and fulfill their academic responsibilities at CBSUA. This reflects their ability to evaluate priorities and respond to changing situations rather than strictly following a fixed schedule. This coping strategy demonstrates that flexibility and adaptability are essential for working students to manage conflicting responsibilities and maintain their commitment to both work and education.

Theme 5: Strengthening Focus through Positive Inner Motivations

Working students maintain their focus through strong personal motivation, even when dealing with tiredness, tight schedules, and heavy workloads. Driven by their goals, determination, and the desire for financial stability, they rely on inner encouragement and voluntary sacrifices to stay on track. This central theme of staying focused through positive motivation includes two key subthemes: *Positive Conditioning through Sacrifices and Financial Reward as a Support.* Together, these subthemes show how self-discipline, a readiness to handle hardships, and financial benefits help them cover their needs and keep pursuing their education.

Based on the respondents' experiences, the theme *Positive Conditioning Through Sacrifices* reflects how working students develop a mindset of endurance where academic responsibilities are continuously fulfilled despite physical exhaustion and personal sacrifices. Instead of viewing their struggles merely as a heavy burden, students reinterpret sacrifice as a vital, necessary step toward achieving success and self-improvement. Ace, who stated that,

> *"Kung baga parang inaalay or yung nag sa sacrifice, kahit pagod ka, kailangan mong gawin yung academic." (It's like offering or making sacrifices; even when you are tired, you still need to do your academic work).*

As Ace narrated, balancing employment and education requires willingness to perform academic tasks even in moments of deep physical and mental exhaustion. Ace said that despite limited energy, constant pressure, and fatigue, fulfilling school requirements remains the top priority. In summary, Ace's statement highlights how working students regularly set aside personal comfort and rest as a normal part of their daily routine.

Working students value their jobs primarily because of financial *reward as a suppor*t, covering daily expenses and easing their family's financial strain. This steady paycheck serves as a tangible incentive that motivates them to manage their demanding routines. This view is shown in what Neo stated:

> *"Sayang din yung oras, yung makukuha ko kasi dito ahh.. pwede kong, pwede na namin panggastos na yun sa mga araw na wala." (It's also a waste of time if I don't work, because what I earn here can already be used for our expenses on days when there is no income.)*

As Neo pointed out, working is simply a smart way to use time, turning hours on the job into money for everyday needs. Beyond daily expenses, these earnings build a safety net to support his family during tough times. Ultimately, his perspective shows how students develop a practical mindset, viewing employment not as an extra strain, but as a necessary step to protect their daily lives and build a secure future. Being a working student is both a test of personal sacrifice and a proactive strategy to secure financial stability for one's family. Ultimately, combining this positive mindset with financial necessity helps students transform daily hardship into a purposeful drive toward academic and personal success. Balancing work and studies can be challenging but rewarding, as Science knowledge can be applied in the workplace. This connection makes managing both responsibilities more meaningful.

4. Discussion

4.1 The challenges in managing academic requirements and work responsibilities among working students.

The combination of academic demands and part-time employment places additional pressure on Science Major students, leading to *Compromised Academic Focus and Performance.* This theme covers two subthemes: *Work Affects Academic Performance and Difficulty in Concentrating on Academic Tasks.* Balancing work and school responsibilities makes it difficult for them to concentrate on academic tasks and maintain satisfactory academic performance. Work responsibilities can affect academic performance because students need to divide their time and energy between employment and school responsibilities. The demands of Science subjects, which require understanding, critical thinking, laboratory activities, and experiments, make it challenging for working students to give sufficient time and attention to their studies, resulting in *work affecting academic performance.*

Balancing employment and academic responsibilities inherently creates a conflict over limited temporal and cognitive resources. For Science majors, this strain is particularly critical due to the demanding nature of their coursework, which requires sustained attention across theoretical lectures, rigorous laboratory activities, and complex experiments. This reality aligns directly with Goode's Role Strain Theory, which posits that fulfilling multiple social roles creates psychological and physical friction when energy is finite. Furthermore, as Carnevale and Smith (2018) emphasized, extensive work hours intensify role conflict, leading to academic fatigue and diminished focus. Ultimately, these lived experiences demonstrate that external job demands act as a major barrier to maintaining the level of concentration required for academic success in demanding disciplines.

Heavy job responsibilities systematically restrict the temporal and energetic bandwidth required for academic engagement. When employment demands high physical or cognitive effort, students experience acute depletion, making it difficult to execute intensive assignments and complex laboratory work efficiently. Consequently, the

dual burden of work and study operates as a structural barrier that directly compromises student academic productivity. Managing simultaneous academic obligations and part-time work creates a cognitive burden for Science Major students, leading to *difficulty in concentrating on academic tasks.* When heavy coursework coincides with workplace duties, the constant switching between employment responsibilities and studying can cause mental fatigue, making it difficult for students to maintain focus, understand lessons, and complete academic tasks effectively.

It could be due to the competing demands of being both a student and a worker. Since they need to divide their time, energy, and attention between work and academic responsibilities, they may find it difficult to concentrate on their academic tasks. This finding agrees with Headrick and Park (2024), who found that work–school conflict affects how students manage their work and study responsibilities. It also supports Role Conflict Theory because the demands of their work role may interfere with the performance of their student's role. Therefore, when work and school require attention at the same time, students may find it difficult to maintain concentration and complete academic tasks effectively. This highlights how managing constant work obligations creates mental distraction during study hours. Because students must continually split their attention between job duties and coursework, retaining complex lesson information becomes harder. As a result, they may experience reduced comprehension and slower learning progress in class.

Overall, working students face difficulties balancing academic requirements and work responsibilities, which can affect their concentration, time management, and academic performance. Effective time management and adequate support may help them manage both roles successfully. Competing work schedules and academic requirements create ongoing challenges for Science Major students, leading to *Conflicting Schedules and Needs of both Work and Academic Requirements.* Rigid work shifts, laboratory sessions, and academic deadlines make it difficult for students to fulfill both responsibilities, often resulting in physical exhaustion, mental stress, and difficulty meeting the demands of their studies and employment. Time management emerged as one of the most difficult aspects of balancing work and academic responsibilities, particularly due to *conflicting Schedules and needs of both Work and academic Requirements.* These conflicting demands require students to divide their time and attention between school requirements and work duties, making it challenging to fulfill both responsibilities effectively.

Fulfilling dual roles as both an employee and a student inherently induces a cognitive split that erodes academic concentration. Workplace demands continuously siphon finite temporal and mental resources, leaving students with diminished energy for critical studying and task execution. This conflict between occupational obligations and academic demands often termed work–school conflict (Headrick & Park, 2024) operates as a primary mechanism of academic strain. Rather than a simple matter of personal time management, the pressure of navigating these two competing environments creates a continuous drain on attention, directly impairing a student's capacity for sustained academic engagement. Role Conflict Theory explained the fundamental incompatibility between heavy employment demands and academic success. Because human energy, attention, and time are strictly limited, concurrent work and school commitments force these two domains into direct competition. Overlapping schedules and conflicting deadlines heighten this friction, leaving working students in a perpetual state of trade-offs where fulfilling workplace expectations systematically impairs their ability to meet academic requirements.

Overlapping work shifts and academic obligations force working students into a state of severe temporal compromise. When workplace duties coincide directly with academic milestones, students face an acute shortage of uninterrupted study time, particularly for high-stakes examinations. Consequently, these conflicting schedules degrade overall exam readiness, transforming academic assessment into a test of managing extreme time scarcity rather than a genuine reflection of student capability. Conflicting work and class schedules make it hard for working students to manage their time and succeed in both areas. The pressure of fulfilling both employment and academic responsibilities places significant physical and mental demands on working students, resulting in *demands and pressures of dual responsibilities.* Managing the expectations of work and school can lead to mental

fatigue, physical exhaustion, and increased stress, making it challenging for students to maintain their well-being while meeting their academic and work obligations.

Working students often experience physical exhaustion due to demanding work schedules and early classes, making it difficult to maintain a consistent routine. This *exhausting routine between work and schooling* can affect their energy, concentration, and ability to fulfill both academic and work responsibilities effectively. Maintaining concurrent employment and academic commitments induces continuous physical and cognitive exhaustion, particularly when work schedules encroach on essential rest periods. Under the framework of Role Conflict Theory, these overlapping obligations force students into a perpetual state of resource depletion, as finite time and physical energy are continuously divided between professional and academic demands. Consequently, this persistent dual-role friction moves beyond simple time management, operating as a primary driver of chronic fatigue and academic strain. This pattern revealed that back-to-back shifts and school attendance leave students with minimal opportunity for rest and recovery. The continuous cycle of physical exertion and mental strain can lead to chronic fatigue and academic burnout.

Working students face the *demand of being competent in both work and academics*, as they are expected to meet the responsibilities and expectations of both roles. Managing these simultaneous obligations can lead to physical exhaustion and mental stress, making it challenging to maintain academic performance while fulfilling work responsibilities and protecting their overall well-being. Under the framework of Role Conflict Theory, attempting to fulfill major expectations in both employment and academia creates an inevitable clash over finite personal resources. Because time, physical energy, and cognitive focus are strictly limited, concurrent job duties and coursework continuously force students to make structural trade-offs between professional duties and scholarly success. Consequently, managing these dual commitments becomes a process of continuous resource negotiation, where maintaining performance in one domain routinely threatens stability and focus in the other.

The evidence emphasized that working students feel continuous pressure to perform at a high level in both their jobs and their classes. Striving to satisfy employers while maintaining good grades increases daily stress and leaves them with almost no time to rest. Attempting to fulfill dual obligations in employment and higher education creates continuous structural friction, directly impairing a student's capacity to balance competing responsibilities without sacrificing performance in either role. Despite the challenges of balancing work and school, working students find their experiences to be *a rewarding experience* because of the income they earn and the practical benefits they gain from employment. Applying their Science knowledge in the workplace also allows them to connect classroom learning with real-life experiences, motivating them to continue pursuing both work and academic goals. Applying science lessons in the workplace provides working students with *a rewarding experience*, as it allows them to transform classroom knowledge into practical skills. Through Experiential Learning Theory, students can connect academic concepts with actual work tasks, increasing their motivation and recognizing employment as a valuable opportunity to enhance their learning.

O'Donovan (2018) similarly highlighted that workplace experiences provide opportunities for students to apply and develop knowledge and skills through actual work activities. In this case, the workplace serves as a setting where Science-related knowledge can be applied beyond the classroom, making learning more practical and meaningful. Thus, working while studying can become a rewarding experience when academic knowledge is connected to real-world practice. These insights show that overcoming daily hardships gives students a deep sense of personal achievement. Successfully managing dual roles helps them build crucial real-world skills like resilience, discipline, and efficient time management. Applying academic knowledge directly within professional settings transforms routine employment into a meaningful extension of classroom learning. When students connect scientific principles to real-world tasks, workplace duties actively reinforce educational concepts, turning daily job responsibilities into valuable opportunities for experiential learning.

4.2 Coping Strategies in Managing Work and Academic Challenges

Balancing work and academic responsibilities through *Time Management and Planning Strategies* requires proper time management and advance planning to organize tasks and minimize schedule conflicts. This theme consists of two sub-themes: *Providing Time to Both Work and Academic Requirements and Planning and Scheduling of Various Needed Tasks.* This interpretation of *providing time to both work and academic requirements* is supported by Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) Theory, which highlights the students' ability to organize and control their time and effort in pursuit of their goals. Working students practice self-regulation by dividing their available time between academic requirements and job responsibilities. Liu et al. (2026), further emphasized that effective time management is an important self-regulatory strategy linked to improved learning outcomes. Therefore, managing both school and work responsibilities demonstrates students' ability to regulate their time and tasks. This implied that working students may need to make adjustments to their daily routines to meet both work and academic demands. This highlighted the importance of effective time management in helping them fulfill their responsibilities without neglecting either role.

This perspective on *planning and scheduling of various needed tasks* is reinforced by Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) Theory, which emphasizes that students actively take responsibility for managing their learning, behavior, motivation, and time to accomplish their goals. For working students, self-regulation is essential because they must balance academic responsibilities with the demands of their jobs. Wolters and Brady (2021) highlighted that time management is an important aspect of self-regulation because students need to determine how and when to allocate their time to accomplish academic tasks effectively. Thus, planning ahead, creating schedules, setting priorities, and monitoring task completion reflect the principles of self-regulated learning.

Transparent dialogue between students and their employers or instructors helped establish flexible arrangements during busy academic periods. When supervisors understand student constraints, they can offer adjusted shifts or deadline extensions to ease workload pressure. By actively prioritizing and monitoring their limited time, working students took direct control of their schedules to balance competing job and academic responsibilities. This intentional self-management allowed them to turn potentially overwhelming workloads into achievable tasks while remaining fully committed to their educational goals. Managing both academic and work responsibilities through *intentional focus and strategic time management* involved setting priorities, using time wisely, and staying focused despite competing demands. This theme comprises two sub-themes: *Prioritizing Schooling as the Primary Goa*l and *Utilizing Vacant Time for Academic Requirements*, which illustrated how working students maintained their focus on education while maximizing their free time to accomplish academic tasks.

This perspective on *prioritizing schooling as the primary goa*l highlighted that putting education first helped working students direct their limited time and effort toward finishing their studies. Making school their main goal allowed them to make smart choices and keep pushing forward, even when work and money problems created heavy pressure. This interpretation is supported by Canelas et al. (2021), who found that students with clear academic goals demonstrate greater persistence and achievement. The finding also agreed with Goal-Setting Theory, which explained that clear and meaningful goals direct individuals' efforts and encourage persistence toward desired outcomes. Thus, prioritizing education served not only as a coping strategy but also as a source of motivation that helped working students remain focused on completing their studies despite competing responsibilities.

Adopting intentional boundary-setting strategies allowed working students to safeguard their mental health against overwhelming stress. By setting aside specific blocks of time strictly for rest or leisure, students prevented total burnout from their hectic schedules. This emphasis on *utilizing vacant time for academic requirements* demonstrates how working students maintain their academic progress by using small breaks and vacant periods throughout the day to finish assignments and review lessons. This intentional behavior reflected on Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) Theory, which described how students actively direct their own time and study habits to meet

educational goals. Furthermore, Wolters and Brady (2021) identified time management as a core self-regulatory process that enables learners to organize when and how they completed tasks. Ultimately, using spare moments for schoolwork helped working students stay on top of their academic duties while handling the demands of a job.

Demonstrating flexibility enables working students to adjust their habits quickly whenever unexpected school or job conflicts arise. Instead of relying on a rigid routine, students modified their daily priorities based on immediate deadlines and urgent tasks. This capacity to adjust ensures that sudden increased in workload do not disrupt their overall progress in either area. By prioritizing their schooling and making good use of free periods and breaks, working students made a conscious effort to dedicate their limited time and energy to important academic responsibilities. This intentional choice to manage time and set clear goals functions as a crucial self-regulatory habit that helped them maintain steady educational progress while handling the demands of a job.

Managing both academic and work demands through *building support systems* and open communication was essential for helping working students cope with competing responsibilities. This theme includes two sub-themes: Seeking Support from Peers and Using Proper Communication and Consideration from Superiors, which highlighted the importance of assistance and understanding in managing their responsibilities. This focus on *seeking support from peers* acts as a vital buffering mechanism that mitigates the academic strain caused by severe time and energy constraints. By leveraging collaborative relationships with classmates, working students offset individual resource deficits, enabling them to maintain academic progress despite competing workplace obligations.

Aligned with the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, social support functions as an essential resource that buffers individuals against stress during severe depletion. As empirical evidence confirmed (Raufelder et al., 2022), peer support significantly enhances adaptive coping mechanisms and academic performance under pressure. Consequently, collaborative relationships enable working students to offset personal time constraints and sustain their long-term educational obligations. Connecting with fellow classmates provided working students with an accessible network for shared learning and emotional encouragement. Leaning on peers for study materials or advice helped reduce academic pressure and fosters a sense of solidarity throughout their shared challenges.

Using proper communication and consideration from superiors through proactive communication with faculty functions as an adaptive self-advocacy strategy, enabling working students to establish transparency when employment demands clash with academic schedules. Initiating open dialogue allowed students to negotiate reasonable adjustments and secure academic consideration without compromising institutional standards or professional expectations. Consequently, institutional communication served as an operational bridge between faculty and working students, fostering mutual accountability while reducing the risk of academic default.

The Work–School Conflict theoretical framework demonstrated that competing demands escalate into significant friction when employment responsibilities consume finite cognitive and temporal reserves. Empirical research by Headrick and Park (2024) reinforced this view, highlighting how workplace support, particularly open communication from supervisors, served as an essential buffer against role-based stress. Fostering transparent dialogue within both workplace and academic settings thereby functions as a crucial protective mechanism, lowering overall strain while supporting student persistence. Transparent dialogue between students and their employers or instructors helped establish flexible arrangements during busy academic periods. When supervisors understand student constraints, they can offer adjusted shifts or deadline extensions to ease workload pressure. To manage the overlapping demands of work and school, working students relied heavily on interpersonal support and clear communication. Seeking assistance from peers provided necessary academic and emotional help, while open dialogue with employers secured the flexibility required when job schedules conflict with coursework.

Strategic Adaptation to Immediate Demands shown that working students adapt their actions according to the immediate demands of work and school. They recognized their limits, protected their available time and energy, and adjusted their priorities when circumstances changed. This theme has two sub-themes: Practicing Protective Coping and Adapting to Situational Demands. Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory highlighted how

individuals protect essential assets such as temporal bandwidth and mental energy to prevent burnout under heavy demands. Rather than overextending themselves, working students systematically evaluated their personal capacities and allocated remaining effort toward high-priority tasks. As Putwain and Nicholson (2026) established, utilizing such protective coping strategies allowed students to safeguard their well-being while fulfilling both scholastic and professional obligations.

Practicing protective coping by adopting intentional boundary-setting strategies allowed working students to safeguard their mental health against overwhelming stress. By setting aside specific blocks of time strictly for rest or leisure, students prevented total burnout from their hectic schedules. *Adapting to situational demands* allowed working students to mitigate dual-role pressure, consistent with the concept of coping flexibility, by dynamically shifting their focus between academic and professional priorities according to immediate situational demands. This adaptability enabled them to respond effectively to changing circumstances while managing both roles. Preiser et al. (2026) emphasized the importance of selecting appropriate coping strategies that align with different situations. Demonstrating flexibility enabled working students to adjust their habits quickly whenever unexpected school or job conflicts arise. Instead of relying on a rigid routine, students modified their daily priorities based on immediate deadlines and urgent tasks. This capacity to adjust ensured that sudden increases in workload do not disrupt their overall progress in either area.

Strengthening focus through positive inner motivations helped working students manage their limited resources and adjusted their priorities according to the urgency of their academic and work responsibilities. These adaptive strategies helped them minimize stress, maintain balance, and fulfill both roles despite changing demands. Working students remain committed to their studies despite the physical and mental demands of work. Their motivation is strengthened by their willingness to sacrifice time and energy for academic responsibilities and by the practical financial benefits they received from working. This theme has two sub-themes: Positive Conditioning Through Sacrifices and Financial Reward as a Support.

The *Positive Conditioning Through Sacrifices* emphasized that the personal sacrifices required to balance academic and work responsibilities cultivate resilience and strengthen long-term perseverance among working students as they navigate ongoing academic and professional demands. This is attributed to their determination to fulfill their academic responsibilities despite the tiredness and pressure brought by their work. Since they are willing to sacrifice their time and energy to complete their school requirements, they developed perseverance and a stronger commitment to their studies. This finding is consistent with McAvoy and Thacker (2021), who applied Goode's Role Strain Theory in examining how individuals manage competing responsibilities across different roles. It also supports Role Strain Theory, as working students experienced pressure from fulfilling both their work and student roles, yet these challenges encouraged them to adjust, persevere, and continue meeting their academic responsibilities.

Reframing personal sacrifices as necessary steps toward future success helped students stay motivated despite daily hardships. When individuals view temporary discomforts as investments in their personal growth, their determination to finish their degree strengthens implication. Having a source of income allowed working students to become more financially independent, demonstrating *financial reward as a support*. Their earnings helped them provide for their daily needs and motivate them to persevere despite the challenges of working while studying. This is supported by the Expectancy-Value Theory, which explained that individuals are more likely to engage in an activity when they recognize its value and expected benefits. Further supporting this perspective, Gneezy et al. (2019) emphasized that financial incentives can influence individuals' effort when rewards are perceived as valuable and relevant to their goals. Thus, the financial rewards received from work served not only as compensation but also as practical support that enables working students to meet their daily expenses while continuing their education.

Receiving an income provided working students with the essential resources needed to pay for tuition, school supplies, and basic living expenses. Having a steady source of income reduces financial worries, allowing students

to focus more on their studies. Ultimately, financial independence served as a practical foundation that supported their continued education. Earning money gave working students a strong practical reason to keep balancing their jobs and studies. The income they earn directly covered their daily expenses and built a financial cushion for times when money is tight. Ultimately, these financial rewards boosted their motivation and made the daily struggle of working while in school worth the effort.

5. Conclusions

The findings highlight the complex reality of working Science Major students at CBSUA-Pasacao, who navigate significant structural barriers caused by the dual demands of employment and rigorous academic requirements. While non-negotiable lab hours and rigid work schedules strain their focus and physical health, students maintain academic continuity through active self-regulation, time management, and protective boundary-setting. Key support systems, such as clear communication with faculty and peer collaboration, serve as essential buffers against academic burnout, while financial necessity acts as a driving force that builds resilience and transforms daily strain into a commitment toward long-term socio-economic mobility.

Recommendations - In light of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

For School Administration and Campus Leadership (Dean, Faculty, and Student Services:

- **Implement Student Support Programs for CBSUA Pasacao:** As visualized in the Conceptual Paradigm (Input-Process-Output model), the insights from this study should be translated into a tailored support program. This includes institutionalized mental health services and counselors who are empathetic to the unique challenges of work-study balance, especially in high-stakes fields like science.

- **Embrace Policy Flexibility for Inclusive Education:** Traditional university policies often assume a "traditional" non-working student. Faculty are encouraged to integrate "crafted activity sheets" (as proposed in the theoretical model) or similar productivity tools to enhance student welfare. School administrators should also consider concrete institutional changes like recorded lectures, hybrid laboratory options, or flexible field work timelines to accommodate the "new normal" of student employment.

- **Establish Stronger Student Services and Institutional Advocacy:** Building respectful, transparent relationships between instructors and students is crucial. This can be facilitated by setting up clear guidelines for "open communication" and creating a safe institutional space where working students can reveal their status without fear of stigma or penalization regarding scholarships. Additionally, integrating financial literacy and career-relevant job options within the university system could reduce student reliance on inflexible, low-wage labor.

For Parents and Families:

- **Acknowledge the Invisible Struggle:** Recognize that your children are carrying an immensely heavy mental and physical load. Your support, whether it is emotional, financial, or practical (like help with a task or a meal), is not just a benefit; it is a critical driver of their resilience and motivation. Being mindful of their limited time and high pressure is the first step in providing better support and decreasing the probability of burnout.

For Student-Workers (especially in the Sciences):

- **Recognize and Utilize Your Practical Learning:** While the journey is difficult, focus on the "positive outcomes." Your ability to apply scientific knowledge and develop problem-solving skills in the real world is a valuable asset. The "tapestry of struggles and triumphs" is also a journey of deep personal

growth. This perspective served as a motivational tool to enhance your experiential learning.

For Future Researchers:

- **Build a Referral System for In-Depth Studies:** This thesis should serve as a practical reference and data point for future researchers. We recommended a "referral purpose," encouraging in-depth, mixed-methods, or longitudinal studies that track how the strategies and support systems of working science students evolve, thereby creating a stronger evidence-based path forward for local university policy improvement.

6. References

Allen, T. D., Cho, E., & Meier, L. L. (2021). Boundary management and work-nonwork balance while working from home. Applied Psychology, 70(1), 60–84.

Canelas, D. A., Hill, J. L., & Novicki, A. (2021). Academic goal setting and performance: Evidence from an undergraduate STEM setting. Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 23(3), 512–534. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025119858273

Carnevale, A. P., & Smith, N. (2018). Balancing work and learning: Implications for low-income students. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Folkman, S. (2017). Stress, coping, and adaptation. Springer Publishing.

Gneezy, U., List, J. A., Livingston, J. A., Sadoff, S., Xu, X., & Zhang, Y. (2019). Measuring success in education: The role of effort on the test itself. American Economic Review: Insights, 1(3), 291–308. https://doi.org/10.1257/aeri.20170003

Headrick, L., & Park, Y. A. (2024). How do working students fare? A person-centric approach to understanding patterns of work–school conflict and facilitation. Applied Psychology, 73(2), 648–674. https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12484

Hoferichter, F., Kulakow, S., & Raufelder, D. (2022). How teacher and classmate support relate to students' stress and academic achievement. Frontiers in Psychology, 13, Article 992497. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.992497

Liu, Y., Zhang, X., & Wang, L. (2026). Self-regulated learning strategies and academic achievement in higher education: The mediating role of time management. Educational Psychology, 46(1), 45–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2025.2284910

McAvoy, J. P., Jr., & Thacker, R. S. (2021). Role strain: A duo-ethnography of fathers in online doctoral education in the United States. Studies in Graduate and Postdoctoral Education, 12(2), 221–237. https://doi.org/10.1108/SGPE-08-2020-0058

O'Donovan, D. (2018). Bilateral benefits: Student experiences of work-based learning during work placement. Industry and Higher Education, 32(2), 119–128. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950422218761273

Preiser, B., Bradley, L. E., & Papa, A. (2026). Introducing and evaluating a performance-based approach to coping flexibility: Assessing repertoire breadth and situation-strategy fit. Anxiety, Stress, & Coping, 39(1), 118–130. https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2025.2378912

Putwain, D. W., & Nicholson, L. (2026). Personal resource gains: Effective coping builds academic buoyancy, and academic buoyancy builds achievement. British Journal of Educational Psychology, 96(1), 112–129. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12680

Van Manen, M. (2016). Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315421056

Van Manen, M. (2021). Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Wolters, C. A., & Brady, A. C. (2021). College students' time management: A self-regulated learning perspective. Educational Psychology Review, 33(4), 1319–1351. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-020-09519-z