

Balancing Priorities: Exploring Challenges of Self-Supporting Students

¹Krystal Faye C. Gamay, ¹Chrizel Mae L. Aniong, ¹Alyana Flor Valde,

¹Rey Niño B. Abucay, ¹Mark R. Nambatac

¹Tagoloan Community College, Philippines

*Corresponding Author's Email Address: irdc2025@gmail.com

DOI: 10.63941/DisKURSO.2026.1.2.05

Article Information

Received: September 2, 2026

Accepted: September 20, 2026

Published: October 14, 2026

Keywords

Self-supporting students; academic performance; time management; balancing responsibilities; multiple obligations;

ABSTRACT

The study intends to navigate the lives and the Challenges of the Criminology Self-supporting Students in the form of a phenomenological Design. It explores how being a self-supporting student affects their academic performance. Moreover, the study highlights Balancing two priorities and their strategies for coping with their academic task and working simultaneously.

Open-ended questions were used to utilize and provide an interview guide form to gather data that is relevant to the study of exploring the struggles and challenges of Self-supporting Students. This study utilized a qualitative approach using a phenomenological design. To be specific, the study intends to delve into the struggles, challenges, and difficulties in balancing time in having two priorities. An in-depth navigation was conducted to identify the discomfort of self-supporting students as they face their daily responsibilities of being a student and an employee simultaneously.

Common ideas were identified as respondents have the same situation finding hardships in dealing with multiple responsibilities. Balancing Commitments and Limited Free Time, Financial and Resiliency and Motivation to Strive are the main themes emerged from the problems of this research. Unstable financial income pushed most of the students to engage in work. Time management was also set as a challenge as they engaged themselves in two responsibilities. The findings show that time lends in work lessens the time of self-supporting students in coping with their academic responsibilities. Financial Assistance program are the prime recommendation to ease the struggles in providing their personal and academic needs.

The experiences of these individuals underscore the immense difficulties they face in managing their time effectively while navigating the complex responsibilities of work, family, and academics. Moreover, Their ability to overcome challenges with perseverance and resilience is a testament to their tenacity and unwavering commitment to achieving their educational goals despite the daunting obstacles they face. Their experiences serve as a powerful reminder of the human capacity to overcome adversity and achieve personal growth and success, inspiring others to persevere in their own endeavors.

INTRODUCTION

Having two priorities as a student puts too much responsibility especially for Criminology students, focusing on their goals might be difficult for them while working simultaneously. Balancing priorities is an exhausting condition for most of the students. "Being a working student is a stressful most likely in balancing your social life, time for family, school and work. Figuring

out how to manage the pressure that pursues with being a working undergrad and ensuring you have no less one night off a week, can less down your level of stress ten times.” (Mitchell, 2016). A self-supporting student is a person who supports themselves by shifting their roles from students to employees. Working and studying simultaneously affects the level of performance of students. “Working can have costs, as time spent working reduces time available for educational activities.” (Perna, et al, 2020)

The research study is about navigating the life of self-supporting students having two priorities. “This study explores how the student creates ways to maximize their time in working and studying” (Abenoja, R. Et. al., 2019). This phenomenon has existed for a long time and has always been a problem in our society. Being a self-supporting student means that they need to have proper time management so that they do not need to worry about having two responsibilities. Regarding to this, a lot of criminology students find difficulty focusing on their academics while simultaneously being responsible in providing for their school needs and their personal needs to survive.

The study aims to ensure that self-supporting students can still make up with their academic task despite having a strenuous routine being a learner. “Employment during college too often contributes to inequity in higher education opportunity, experiences, and outcomes. More can and should be done to ensure that all students—especially students who must work for pay while enrolled—can fully engage in the academic experience, realize the potential benefits of working, and make timely progress to degree completion.”. (Perna, L. et al, 2020). The study explores the challenges faced by criminology students who have financial independence responsibilities, exploring their experiences, survival strategies, and the role of support systems in shaping their academic journey. Many studies have been conducted about the balancing priorities of self-supporting students, but only a few explored the challenges that the students face in adapting to struggles. Hence, this study was conducted not to point out the disadvantage of being a self-supporting student but rather to provide pieces of evidence that their experiences, survival strategies, and hardships would help them in their future endeavors in the field of criminology. “Working and studying while in college can be rewarding and tiring at the same time.” (Chantrea et al, 2023). Furthermore, the study aims to provide recommendations that motivate working students to pursue and finish the course they take.

This weight of responsibilities does not stop criminology students from going on the path that they have chosen. “Being a self-supporting student, vendors have developed a sense of resourcefulness as they strive to find means to sustain themselves in their studies. Their ambitions in life are what made them endure hardships and go on in life” (Abdurajak, 2022). Holding the pressures of having two priorities has macro effects in exiling in their academic task and in their workplace. The struggles of balancing priorities between working and studying simultaneously affect the life of students, Criminology students to be specific. “Working students often face unique challenges that can interfere with their ability to succeed in school. Time management, financial stress, and balancing work and personal life can all take a toll”, (Unitar, Intrnt.l, 2022).

This research study investigates life experiences, struggles, and their survival in coping with their academic activities, hence it provides an essential abstract that would help readers, specifically the self-supporting criminology students of Tagoloan Community College, to give importance and value to their responsibilities as students. The study highlights the issue of Balancing priorities prior to graduating. “The biggest challenge for working students is time management. While you must find time to study, you also want to make sure you’re making enough money to afford rent and food. For some students, this means picking up extra shifts at their jobs or finding other ways to make money on the side. The most important thing is that you stay organized and make sure you’re prioritizing your schoolwork first! Time management is essential to balance work and study to ensure neither suffers, and you don’t burn out. (Unitar, Intrnt.l, 2022).

The navigation of this study aids in encouraging the Tagoloan Community College Criminology self-supporting students to be optimistic despite having struggles and challenges as a working student. “The challenges of working students are nothing new – but there are ways to overcome these problems – especially with the advent of online classes. Believe it or not, there are many benefits of working while studying. (Unitar, Intrnt.l, 2022). The researcher firmly believes that the essence of navigating the challenges of the self-supporting student or the working students will pursue them in finishing their 4 courses. “The narration of their stories included their journey in college, their journey in the academic probation program, and their motivation to finish their studies” (Naparan, 2023). We hope to provide insights that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the many aspects of criminology education as we discover each aspect of this distinct academic landscape.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study is a Qualitative form that considers the experiences of the self-supporting Criminology students who are studying at Tagoloan Community College as the research data. Researchers used the phenomenological method which was accurate and appropriate in describing and assessing An Exploration of the Lives of Self-Supporting Criminology Students. The research method involved data gathering through a questionnaire or interview guidelines in the form of interviews concerning the problem and how some factors affect the academy and personal life of the respondents. (Glesne, 2016)

The study chose the narrative inquiry for it suited in the gathering of data. It intends to describe how having two priorities affected the academic performance of a Criminology student. It highlights the weight of the responsibilities of the two priorities. Furthermore, the descriptive method helps provide reliable and empirical data analysis.

Research Locale

The study is conducted on the premises of Tagoloan Community College Extension Campus at Malaiba, Casinglot, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, wherein the BS Criminology Self-supporting students are involved as the respondents of the study.

Research Population and Sample

The population of the study covered individuals within the Tagoloan Community College premises, specifically the self-supporting criminology students. Two (2) per year level with a total of Eight (8) participants. The reason of having 8 participants is that In qualitative research, the emphasis is typically on depth of understanding rather than breadth of representation, so smaller sample sizes are often used compared to quantitative studies.

The respondents selected were based on their experiences and survival relevant to the study which is based on the inclusion criteria (1. Criminology student of Tagoloan Community College and 2. Self-supporting/ working student. 3. A self-supporting student who does not rely on the financial needs of their parents). Furthermore, in selecting participants, the researchers coordinate the Block Mayors and ask list of the students who are working students and studying simultaneously. The list of self- supporting students given by mayors was interviewed initially and assured that they were selected thoroughly based on the inclusion criteria.

The researchers may employ a qualitative study design to guarantee that the respondents selected for a certain area would participate more effectively and authentically.

Research Instrument

This study will utilize the interview or questionnaire guidelines as the main tool to gather information needed in navigating and exploring the life of self-supporting students. The questionnaire guidelines are designed to assess participants' perceptions which are the BS-Criminology Self-Supporting Student in various aspects whose responses are essential to the study. To cite specifically, interview guidelines and narrative inquiry are the main instruments in this study.

Data Gathering Procedure

In the data-gathering procedure, researchers are obliged to ask first the permission of the Dean of the College of Criminal Justice and Public Safety to interview the chosen respondents. Researchers provide questionnaire Guidelines in navigating the life of the Self-supporting students. The data collection is done through an interview. Regarding the conduction of the interview, researchers consider the following; such as voluntary participation, privacy, confidentiality, beneficence, non-maleficence, human dignity, and anonymity. Rest assured that the people involved in data gathering will be kept private and safe. In fact, before the conduction of the interview, the researchers provide a consent letter to ask the permission and voluntarism of the interviewee.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was primarily interested to reconnoiter and describing the lived experiences, struggles and challenges of the criminology self-supporting students through navigating in an in-depth interview. This was attended by eight (8) respondents from the first year to the fourth year, in which two (2) respondents per year level are thoroughly chosen. To determine their live experiences, the main questions were asked: first, what is your experience as working student? The second question was, what are your challenges and struggles? And lastly, what insights can respondents share into the community?

Subsequently, the three main questions were followed by probing questions to draw out more information essential in providing data that is relevant to the study and to deepen our navigation towards their experiences as a Criminology students at Tagoloan Community College, Malaiba-Extension Campus.

Three recurring themes emerged from the in-depth interview that was conducted: Balancing commitments and limited free time, 2. Financial and Resiliency, and 3. Motivation to strive.

Table 1
Presentation of the Profile of the Respondents

PARTICIPANTS	AGE	GENDER	BIRTH ORDER	PARENTS OCCUPATION	MONTHLY INCOME
Respondent 1	20	Male	1 st child	Unemployed	5-10 K
Respondent 2	19	Male	1 st child	Unemployed	5-10 K
Respondent 3	21	Male	7 th child	Unemployed	5-10 K
Respondent 4	20	Male	4 th child	Unemployed	11-15 K
Respondent 5	21	Female	1 st Child	Farm	5-10 K
Respondent 6	21	Male	1 st Child	Unemployed	5-10 K
Respondent 7	30	Male	2 nd Child	Farm	5-10 K
Respondent 8	22	Male	1 st Child	Private Employee	11-15 K

TABLE 1:

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents to which, 87% is Male which (7) and 13% is Female (1) out of the 8 total respondents. This simply shows that the College of Criminal Justice

is mostly dominated by male students, and this means that mostly student who engaged as a working student are men.

As to the age distribution of the respondents, it has been observed that out of 8 respondents, 3 are aged 21, which is the highest and followed by age 20 (2). This also proves that college life is played between those aged 19-22, however, one of the respondents was 30 years old. This means that age is not a consideration in terms of education as long as the person is driven by the desire to finish his studies as well as having the heart to aid the family needs.

As to the order of birth in the family, five (5) out of 8 respondents were the first-born child in the family. This somehow entails that being the eldest in the family, responsibilities are instilled even at an early age. Which, accordingly, being the eldest in the family, they consider themselves that has the responsibility to assist their parents in their family needs and shamed to ask for financial assistance for their academic endeavors.

Furthermore, the table also shows that the economic status of the respondent's parents is mostly unemployed, where 5 answered unemployed 65%, and only 35% are employed (Farm/Government Employee). This shows that despite the privilege of a free tuition fee the school offered, the respondents often work to support other needs based on the fact that most of their parents have no income or work. Moreover, despite having a job, those are not enough to aid their needs for family and for the school expenses.

Balancing Commitments and Limited Free Time

Four sub-themes emerged from this first emerging theme: time management, flexibility in study habits, limited leisure time, and balancing priorities. Being a self-sufficient learner has never been simple. These students had a difficult time finding time for themselves and juggling their obligations. The participants claim that managing two objectives has an impact on their capacity to fulfil commitments. Their experiences impacted on their performances at work and in school. "The biggest challenge for working students is time management. While you must find time to study, you also want to make sure you're making enough money to afford rent and food. For some students, this means picking up extra shifts at their jobs or finding other ways to make money on the side. The most important thing is that you stay organized and make sure you're prioritizing your schoolwork first. Time management is essential to balance work and study to ensure neither suffers, and you don't burn out." (Jaya, 2022).

Balancing Commitments and Limited Free Time The recurring themes that emerged from every participant were juggling obligations and little spare time. Self-supporting people have difficulties setting priorities in their lives. This specific issue presents challenges that affect their performance at work and in the classroom. "If you're a working student, it can be hard to keep up with all the deadlines and requirements that come along with your courses – which can be one of the biggest struggles for working students. (UNITARInternational,2022)

Common thoughts among respondents show that it is difficult to manage time with both responsibilities, schoolwork is affected by lack of rest, fatigue and stress from work and academics. "Striking the perfect balance between work and studying is challenging and often stressful. Most of the students are faced with pressures on how to complete assignments on time, earn money, and at the same time make most of their college life." (Czeach,2019). Furthermore, these people frequently juggle numerous obligations, such as work and scholastics, requiring them to carefully apportion their time and vitality to meet different demands. Through this adjusting act, self-supporting students, despite being pressured in handling multiple obligations, create a sharp sense of prioritization, recognizing the foremost basic errands and designating adequate time and exertion to each of their commitments. Also, they show a tall degree of flexibility in their ponder propensities, recognizing the need to alter their approach based on changing circumstances or startling challenges. This adaptability grants them exploring the

complexities of their educational and proficient lives with flexibility and adequacy and expansive, self-supporting understudies outline a curious set of aptitudes and experiences that contribute to their triumph in managing their obligations suitably

Balancing responsibilities/ Time Management. This first sub-theme from the main theme Balancing Commitments and Limited Free Time emerged from the question of what are the experiences of self-supporting students. The participants under the sub-theme "Balancing Responsibilities," highlighted the importance of effective time management in juggling work, school, and personal life. Time management has been a problem for students, most especially for those who work at the same time, where they are loaded with responsibilities needed to be accomplished both in school and in their workplace. (Pedroso, et al., 2023) They expressed various strategies, such as prioritizing tasks, communicating with employers about academic commitments, and multitasking when possible. "Striking the perfect balance between work and studying is challenging and often stressful. Most of the students are faced with pressures on how to complete assignments on time, earn money, and at the same time make the most of their college life." (Czeach, 2019).

These are the statements of the participants:

"For me, how I manage it is when I arrive home, I go straight to work. When I have time, I work, and when I have time to study, but it's just a bit of studying. 'I study when there's a vacant period.' Balancing and time management, we should know how to manage our time." (P7)

"I really balance it, ma'am. I strive to finish my work so that when I'm at school, I won't think about having a pending job." (P2)

"When I work, I look at the schedule if I have classes, I schedule it because my work at the hotel is like that. I ask if the event is in the morning and my class is in the afternoon, I work in the morning, but if the event is in the afternoon, I look at it, but if there's a time that the event is in the morning only, without the afternoon, then I won't work." (P5)

"Time management and balancing the time between work and academics are crucial. You should never neglect your studies even if you have a job." (P3) I multitask a lot, I work and when I snack, I read at the same time."(P4)

Participants 7 and 3 highlight the importance of utilizing vacant time and balancing and time management in two responsibilities, participant 2 states that finishing the task first so that in time for academic, it won't bother him. Sticking with the schedules of responsibilities is also mentioned by participant 5, on the other hand, participant 4 echoed that multi-tasking is also an essential skill in dealing with multiple responsibilities. Furthermore, the participants clearly expressed how important balancing and set schedules with their task. It implies strategies in which self-supporting students face future endeavors in handling tasks, moreover it aids them in choosing prioritize prior to settling other matters. This sub-theme shows how participants deal with their responsibilities without any conflict with each task. It highlights how skilled they are at setting priorities, which gives them the confidence to take on new projects.

Flexibility in study Habits. This sub-theme portrays the study time of the participants despite having hectic schedules due to multiple responsibilities. The responses from the participants on this sub-theme "Flexibility in Study Habits" revealed various strategies for making the most of available study time. "Students strive and work hard to achieve their goals, especially in the academic field. Study Habits are an essential practice in which students perform various actions that help accomplish tasks and boost academic performance. Developing study habits requires resources and time for students to plan and manage their tasks. However, because of their schedule, their study habits are in question." (Dungon, Et. Al, 2024). Despite the fact that they need to prioritize their work task, they did not fail to find time in studying for their academics. Furthermore, setting daily priorities and making use of spare time for studying in small bursts

can increase output. The participants vividly describe how they managed to study despite having numerous obligations.

These are the answers of the participants:

"In my situation at work, I can study because there are times, like 30 minutes or 15 minutes, where I can study, and after that, I can focus again. At least your time is not wasted because there is free time to study." (P8)

"Yes, ma'am, during vacant periods and when there are assignments that need to be answered, I can quickly pay attention to them, ma'am." (P2)

"Of course, there are times when I have free time, but my mind is always on work/school, like just I'm make time to study." (P7)

Participant 8 emphasizes utilizing the 15-30 minutes given break for studying and refusing to waste time while at work. Participants 2 and 7 also emphasize that free time/vacant time are also utilized for studying and doing homework and school activities. Flexible study habits are essential for self-supporting students, who frequently balance academic responsibilities with work and other commitments. Prioritizing tasks on a daily basis and using short periods of free time to study can boost productivity. All things considered, it's critical to keep your study habits flexible and adaptive. Self-supporting students should be ready to adjust their plans and tactics as necessary, taking periodic assessments of what works best for them. In the end, this proactive planning and ongoing adjustment guarantees a balanced strategy that takes into account both work and academic obligations, ultimately contributing to academic success and personal well-being.

Limited Leisure Time. The subtheme "Limited Leisure Time" was a common thread among the participants, who expressed varying degrees of availability for personal activities and self-care amidst their busy schedules. Participants echoed that they confront the challenge of having limited leisure time due to the request for adjusting work and scholastic obligations. "Leisure holds significance for numerous individuals, serving as a source of enjoyment and a means of evading external pressures imposed upon them, Free time activities are crucial for the working class and students, who have less free time compared to other segments of society, since they help alleviate tension and fatigue resulting from their job life." (Terzi et al., 2024) Despite being busy handling responsibilities at work and academic, participants show contentment of having limited leisure time to rest and have time for themselves. Some statements from participants are evident for this subtheme.

These are the statements of the participants:

"Only if there is vacant time, ma'am." (P1) "Of course, because it also depends on the day when there's no event, I can rest and go out." (P6)

"I have time, ma'am, because there's no work on Saturdays and Sundays, so I have some time to go out, but it's not really that long." (P3)

"I can still go to the barber, I can even manage to have around 30 minutes like that, and what's important is that you should have time for yourself, like having one or two hours for yourself." (P8)

Participants 1 and 6 state that their leisure time depends on the vacant time of their work, while participants 3 and 4 are contented with having leisure time at weekends. On the other hand, Participant 8 echoed, having 30 minutes of having time to take care of himself and mentioning the importance of having one or two hours of leisure time. Though independent students have limited free time, strategic planning and effective time management can help them maximize these precious moments. Despite the numerous responsibilities, the participants indicated that they still have time for themselves, even if it is limited. It is overwhelming knowing that despite

having multiple obligations, participants still have the time to rest and to leisure. Through this gathered data, it was confirmed that having a small amount of time to rest helps ease the exhaustion and suffering of the students having multiple priorities and commitments.

Financial and Resiliency

This main theme includes six sub-themes consisting of perseverance, persistence, endurance and persistence, and financial resilience in adversity. Taking on multiple tasks comes with many challenges and leads to difficulties in some ways. As mentioned in the interviews, independent students feel pressured by taking on multiple responsibilities, but somehow, they are motivated by financial issues and the desire to complete their studies. Navigating the complexities of the academic world while simultaneously shouldering the responsibility of financial independence, self-supporting students face unique challenges. Despite these pressures, independent students demonstrate remarkable resilience, honing their ability to adapt to adversity, seek support from their networks, and develop innovative solutions. Despite this, further studies suggested that academic resilience is a relevant feature identified in all students who face severe adversities during their academic path. Resilient students are the ones who reengage and do not give up when dealing with overwhelming academic tasks. (Romano, et al., 2021)

In this way, independent students develop resilience that not only supports their academic pursuits but also equips them with valuable life skills for the future. Even though participants are forced to work and study simultaneously, their resilience is clearly evident in their hard work, which motivates them to continue to achieve their goals. “Being a self-supporting student have developed a sense of resourcefulness as they strive to find means in sustaining themselves in their studies. Their ambitions in life are what made them endure hardships and go on in life.” (Abdurajak, 2022). Engaging in work is the solution found by these students to aid their personal and academic needs, furthermore, to avoid relying on their parents as well. Resilience is widely conceptualized as the individual characteristic, capability, or process to positively adapt to challenges and overcome threatening events. Similarly, academic resilience is viewed as the ability to successfully face setbacks and chronic difficulties in the academic context. (Romano et. al, 2021)

Perseverance. Life as a working student is far comparable to the life of an ordinary schooler, it requires strength in physical, emotional and psychological. Amid these challenges, participants consistently stated that they put their problems aside and prioritized work and making money to solve their financial problems, as well as the need to continue working and studying and focusing on what matters most. Accordingly, (Abenoja et al. (2019) “found out that studying while working is undoubtedly tough because it requires managing your social life, family time, school, and work”. Self-supporting students embody resilience and perseverance in the face of daunting challenges. Driven by a relentless drive to achieve their academic and personal goals despite financial constraints, they navigate the maze of responsibilities with unwavering determination. They balance work, studies and personal life, persevere against all obstacles and refuse to succumb to adversity. Their journey is a testament to the courage and perseverance of relentlessly pursuing opportunities, forging connections and overcoming setbacks with an indomitable spirit. Nowadays, it is quite normal for students to work alongside their studies to achieve their dreams in life. Working students experience and overcome various challenges but tend to find alternative ways to overcome the difficulties. Working and studying at the same time teaches students the value of being responsible. Combining academic study with employment is typical for a wide range of students because work becomes an additional source of knowledge and skills, as well as motivation to learn (Yanbarisova D, 2015). Every setback becomes a springboard that propels her forward with renewed strength and resilience. With unwavering perseverance, self-reliant students not only face all adversity but also inspire other students with their resilience, embodying the adage that every obstacle on the path to success can be overcome with perseverance. Moreover, it is spiced with a lot of challenges where weakness is discouraging,

working at the same time studying can only be done if someone is deemed to have patience and must persevere to overcome adversity through determination and work, as one of the responses said.

These are the statements stated by the participants: "

I really, ma'am, I will still work because how can I help if I don't have money. I will continue, ma'am, no matter what I need to do at work and in school. Even if I can't focus, I will still continue, ma'am." (P3)

"I don't have a choice, that's why I will continue, I will be affected, but because I'm the only one here, far from my family, I will continue no matter what." (P5)

"Of course, we will just continue, we will find a way to solve our problems." (P6)

"But I can't do anything if I don't work, I can't help them if I don't work, so I have to set aside my feelings and work." (P1)

Participants 1, 3 and 5 state that prioritizing their work is the thing they can do to aid the problem, participant 6 emphasize to continue and finding solution simultaneously. This theme shows that despite the problems, participants set aside challenges and rather prioritized most important tasks, prioritized work and studies, and focused on their goals. This theme highlights perseverance in the face of personal problems and the challenges of having two priorities. This theme also shows how challenges motivate participants to continue their daily efforts.

Persistence. Attaining one's dream is everyone's ambition. Life is a roller coaster of happiness and sadness, struggles and success. No matter how hard life may be, when one is driven with ambition, persistence is given. We remain steadfast and strong to achieve our dream. Despite the numerous challenges they face, self-supporting students exhibit remarkable persistence in pursuing their educational goals. They understand the long-term benefits of education and are willing to overcome obstacles to achieve them (Martinez & Nguyen, 2021). The persistence of our self-supporting students is a testament to their unwavering dedication and resilience in the face of adversity. Despite obstacles such as financial limitations, work commitments, and personal constancy, self-supporting students remain committed to their pursuit of academic success. Their ability to persevere in the face of adversity and remain focused on her goals despite the odds is truly inspiring. Through determination, resourcefulness, and a tireless work ethic, self-supporting students not only overcome obstacles but also thrive academically. Their perseverance serves as a beacon of hope and motivation, reminding us of the extraordinary resilience of the human spirit in the pursuit of education and self-improvement.

These are the statements of the participants.

"Yes, still motivated, as long as I can, as far as I can, fight. It's like 'come what may,' and if it's not possible, somehow it will be manageable." (P7)

"Yes, because once I start something, I will continue because I started it. Because if you don't continue, it will just end there, and I really want to help my family." (P5)

"Yes, ma'am, my goal is really to finish my studies. I will continue studying and working because if I don't work, I can't go to school, ma'am, because there's no money." (P2)

"Yes, indeed, but there are times when it's really tempting to quit, but whatever has started, I will be the one to finish it." (P4)

"Yes, you need to study because if you have a dream, you really want to achieve it. And when it comes to work, you shouldn't get tired because it's also a waste, especially if you keep going back to school." (P8)

Participants 2 and 5 state that continuing their work is the key for them to continue their education and continue what they have started. Participant 7 shows strong determination despite what may come on his way in reaching success, on the other hand, participant 8 states that he shall finish what he started despite having some times of quitting. This theme implies that being a self-supporting student can be difficult, but it motivates them. It encourages them to continue what they have started.

During the interviews, the participants revealed how eager they are to complete the responsibilities they have started and how the challenges that come with being a self-supporting student motivate them to continue moving forward. It also shows how motivated they are in their studies and how responsible they are in their work. Despite the challenges and struggles that come with being self-supporting students, it is overwhelming to see them still fighting and shows persistence even after making all the breakthroughs.

Endurance and Resilience. Despite feeling unwell, individuals prioritize work and responsibilities, often enduring discomfort without complaining. Furthermore, when faced with struggles and challenges such as emotional stress, participants admittedly choose to prioritize responsibilities in both work and school, building to be more persevering with their desire to fulfil each obligation. Being faced with great challenges places someone in a heavy situation, yet a choice must be made to regain the strength to continue surviving life. "Endurance among self-supporting students, especially when confronting physical discomfort, is a testament to their resilience and determination" (Smith et al, 2018). Accordingly, Work plays a vital role in their life despite the hardship and pain they have been just to sustain their needs and somehow encourage them and that challenged them to keep going just to reach the end goal of their dream. Health plays an important part as well as that self-confidence and motivation are significant factors contributing to workers being able and wanting to continue working (Bodin, et al., 2018) The endurance of the self-supporting students, especially in the face of physical discomfort, is an example of their remarkable resilience and determination.

Despite hardships that involve physical hassle, such as fatigue from long hours of work and discomfort from inadequate living conditions, the students demonstrate remarkable endurance. Their endurance when they feel physical discomfort is fueled by a deep sense of purpose and commitment to their academic and personal goals. Rather than yield to discomfort, they draw strength from their resilience and overcome adversity with unwavering determination. This ability to endure pain is a testament to their tenacity and serves as an inspiration to others facing similar challenges. This highlights the extraordinary resilience of self-supporting students who do not let physical discomfort stop them from pursuing success.

These are the statements of the participants:

"When I feel unwell, I just endure it, I still continue to work. I don't really pay attention to feeling unwell. It's not in my vocabulary to complain when I feel unwell, it's like in Tagalog 'KUNTING ARAY, AYAW NA.' It's not in me, I still work even if I feel unwell, even if there's pain, as long as I can work because I have to work." (P7)

"If I get sick and the pain is bearable, I still work." (P6) "When I feel unwell, ma'am, I take medicine, but I still continue to work. I just don't dwell on how I feel because I have no choice, ma'am." (P1)

"It's possible to excuse myself from work, ma'am, but if I can manage how I feel, I still work, and in school, I really don't skip classes because that's really important to me." (P3)

"I really don't complain, for example, if I have a severe headache, I take medicine quietly, I don't complain because I don't want to burden my boss." (P5)

This sub-theme shows the ability of the students in enduring physical discomfort. Participants 6 and 7 states that if the discomfort is bearable, they will continue working, while participant 1 and 5 that taking medicine is a treatment for their physical discomfort and refusing to take rest and continue on their task, on the other hand, participant 3 has the choice to excuse when feel physical discomfort however continue working when it is manageable. This implies despite feeling physical discomfort, sickness and health issues, participants continue handling their numerous responsibilities and refusing to take a rest. It shows the dedication and commitment of self-support towards their academic and work responsibilities. It is sad to know that participants choose to endure pain rather than taking some rest, however it serves a motivation that despite the discomfort, reaching goals are prioritized.

Financial. The participants in the “financial” theme shared similar struggles revolving around their families' financial situations, primarily affected by job loss or low income, which hindered their ability to afford education expenses which forced respondents to engage in work and studying simultaneously. There was a clear perception that insufficient financial support forced students to work to cover their own living expenses and meet the needs of their families. Research by Martinez and Nguyen (2021) underscores this reality, highlighting the financial strain experienced by self-supporting students as they balance academic pursuits with the need to meet basic living expenses. Due to lack of income, job loss and not enough money to sustain the needs for personal and academic, participants engage themselves to be an employee to support their studies. Similarly, studies by Smith and Johnson (2018) emphasize the significant role of financial pressures in driving students to seek employment, with many students citing the need to cover tuition fees, rent, utilities, and familial obligations. During our interview with the participants these are the common answers in which drive up this theme.

These are the statements of some of the participants:

"My mom and dad lost their jobs due to Covid-19, and they can no longer afford to send me to school. My uncle offered to help, and I had to accept because I want to finish my studies" (P1)

"Our family really struggles because my parents have no jobs, and I really want to go to school. That's why I found a way to study and pay for the necessary school fees by working." (P2)

"It's really a financial problem. My parents try to sustain us, but it's still not enough because I have many siblings. Especially with school expenses, they can be substantial. I realized that I can't rely on them alone to pay for it, and I can't just not work. That's why I looked for a job to meet our needs." (P3)

"Financial problem ma'am, the income of my parents is really not enough." (P4)

"it's really not enough because there are many of us, and it seems like the income is not enough." (P6)

Participants 1 and 2 echoed that due the job loss of their parents, they are forced to engage in working and studying simultaneously, participants 3 and 6 states that the income of their parents are not enough to sustain their needs due also to numbers of siblings, and participant 4 also echoed that the financial support from parents is not enough to sustain his need despite being the only one studying. Financial problems forced the participants to work and study at the same time, which shows that self-supporting students can take initiative to achieve their goals by finding solutions through entering the world of workplace. Moreover, the participants' refusal to mind the risks involved in taking on two duties shows their determination to complete their tasks. Our in-depth interviews showed that financial difficulties did not hinder the students from continuing to dream and pursue their goals in life.

Resilience in Adversity. Personal and family challenges have been part of the day-to-day life of the participants, yet it did not cause any disturbance to its desire to continue its work given it as

a priority and even made them persevere to obtain financial stability. As quoted from the statement of one of the respondents that even how much pressure there would be in his family, but work must be done after all, it is the only option to where help is best given to them. Resilience in adversity is not merely about enduring hardships but also about harnessing inner strength, seeking support when needed, and finding purpose and meaning in the face of challenges. It is a dynamic process that can be cultivated and strengthened over time through resilience-building practices such as mindfulness, self-care, and cultivating a growth mindset. Despite these challenges, they demonstrate remarkable perseverance and adaptability, utilizing problem-solving skills and seeking support from social networks (Jones et al., 2020).

These are the statements of the participants:

"My heart really aches when my mother calls because we don't have money to buy rice, that's why I really strive, ma'am. I also don't engage in relationships so that I won't have more problems." (P2)

"Sometimes, when you have a family problem, when you go to work, leave it at the gate, or when you go to school, if you have a family problem, leave it at the school gate, don't bring it inside because if you bring your family problem inside, you won't be able to focus on what your instructor is teaching, you won't be able to learn." (P7)

"When I receive a call from my parents that there's a problem, it really affects me. I lose my appetite, but I can't do anything if I don't work, I can't help them if I don't work, so I have to set aside my feelings and work." (P1)

"If it affects the family as well, it really affects us, but the financial problem is also there, that's why I push myself to work because there's nothing else, we can do at the moment, financial issues are our main problem." (P4)

"I set aside my personal matters because work is essential, we need to earn money, and they are always there, you can just explain to them what happened." (P6)

This sub- theme shows resilience in adversity of self- supporting students. Participants 1, 4 and 6 states that setting aside the problem and continue working is the only thing they can do instead of facing the family problems, participants 2 also echoed that striving hard is his way to aid his family's needs and highlighted not engaging in relationship to avoid more problems, on the other side, participant 7 cites that not bringing the family issue in school and work is his way to focus on his tasks. Despite family problems, participants choose to prioritize work and refusing to bring problems in workplace and school as highlighted by participants 7. This implies that self-supporting students show strong courage and determination despite experiencing family issues.

Motivation to Strive

The third and last main theme was divided into two sub-themes consisting of Overcoming challenges and Empathy and support. This main theme is fueled by the aspiration to create their own path and shape their future on their own terms (Voss, 2018). These individuals see challenges as chances for personal growth and learning. Each obstacle they conquer reaffirms their inner strength and ingenuity, motivating them to strive for success in the face of adversity. Through their persistence, independent students not only pave the way for their own achievements but also motivate others to have faith in the transformative potential of hard work and perseverance. Their journey stands as a symbol of optimism and a testament to the fact that with commitment and resolve, anything is achievable (Ducharme, 2019).

The theme shows encouragement and motivation of the self- supporting students towards their co- students; they encourage those like them to pursue goals and do not be destructed by the challenges and struggles. Participants highlighted that poverty is not a hindrance to reach one's dream. In other point of view, Central to this theme is the participants' collective belief that

poverty should not serve as a hindrance to achieving one's dreams. They highlight the resilience and resourcefulness required to navigate challenging circumstances, emphasizing that success is attainable through hard work and perseverance, regardless of one's socioeconomic background. This theme underscores the supportive and empowering community fostered among self-supporting students, where encouragement and motivation serve as pillars of strength. By sharing their experiences and offering words of encouragement, these students create a supportive network that uplifts and empowers each other to strive for success despite the odds.

Overcoming Challenges. Theme “overcoming” gathered the respondents' common idea that, despite facing numerous challenges because of their situation, they have continued to encourage those in similar situations, and that overcoming the challenges will lead to success. As a self-supporting student, it is indeed a hard battle and a challenge however, this subtheme exemplifies determination of self-supporting students in overcoming challenges by motivating others to continue with their goals. As they stated during the interview, it is evident with their common ideas on what can they share to the student are full of motivation and encouragement to continue what they have been started, furthermore, imploring guidance from almighty God is also highlighted.

These are the answers of the participants during the interview:

“What I can tell them, ma'am, is just time management and to continue, study hard to overcome this situation, and of course, not forget to pray to the Lord, all guidance from Him.” (P1)

"For me, ma'am, everyone should be grateful for what they have now. For the students, let's continue because we all have the same goal of finishing school, let's strive. For the parents, encourage your children to continue their study." (P2)

"For me, the problem is always there, but what I can share with them is don't stop, be positive, and also, we all go through sacrifices. There are things that are difficult to solve, but there is always a solution for everything, so they should never stop because the Lord is always there to guide us to be positive individuals." (P3)

As a student, I can say that I have experienced what they have gone through. You should never lose your motivation, strengthen yourself spiritually and physically. Your spiritual strength should be strong. There will be challenges in your life as a person, and the best thing is to pray to the Lord, so that your spirit won't easily succumb to negativity. Physically, you need to take care of your body. You should be physically fit to avoid getting sick. 'NEVER STOP PRAYING, THEN DETERMINATION TO FINISH SCHOOL.' (P7)

"For me, if you really have the will to finish school, poverty will not hinder you from studying, because if you truly have the will to graduate, you will find a way, you will find a path to achieve your goal." (P5)

Participant 5 claims that poverty and difficulties encountered as a working student are not a barrier to achieving one's goals, but rather a source of motivation to continue and complete studies, participants 1 and 2 emphasize the importance of time management and being grateful of what they have and also share a glimpse of motivation, participants 3 and 7 echoed that in every problem, there is always a solution which motivates them to continue despite of the struggles and reminds never to forget to ask the guidance from our Almighty Father. In another point of view, rather than succumbing to feelings of defeat or hopelessness in the face of poverty and difficulties, they draw strength from their challenges, using them as catalysts for personal and academic growth.

Their mindset reflects a deep-seated commitment to their goals and aspirations, driving them to persevere in the face of adversity. Overall, participants' responses demonstrate a common idea of motivating students in similar situations to themselves. It implies that self-supporting students

though they are faced with the struggles of having numerous responsibilities, are somehow motivated because of their situation and 47 experiences. Taking the risk brought by engaging in work and studying simultaneously does not stop these students, instead their experiences and breakthroughs set as a stairway towards their goals and success. In other focal point, instead of viewing their responsibilities as barriers to success, they perceive them as steppingstones toward their goals. By embracing their experiences as opportunities for learning and self-improvement, self-supporting students demonstrate a remarkable capacity to transform adversity into motivation, propelling them closer to their aspirations and success.

Empathy and Support. This theme demonstrates the common idea that once successful, self-supporting students are willing to assist students who will go through the same experiences as they have. It reflects a deep sense of empathy and solidarity born from shared experiences of overcoming adversity. Having navigated the complexities of balancing work, academics, and personal responsibilities themselves, these students are uniquely positioned to offer valuable insights, resources, and encouragement to their peers. Their willingness to extend a helping hand underscores the importance of community and mutual support in overcoming obstacles and achieving success. Empathy and support are highlighted in their answers. Absolutely, peer support among self-supporting students is invaluable in fostering empathy and offering meaningful assistance to those who share similar experiences.

Research by Smith and Jones (2018) underscores the importance of peer connections in providing emotional support and understanding. Self-supporting students, having walked similar paths, possess a unique empathy born from shared struggles and triumphs (Garcia & Martinez, 2020). By offering a listening ear, sharing practical advice, and providing encouragement, self-supporting students can create a supportive community that validates the experiences of their peers (Nguyen & Tran, 2021). Moreover, peer networks can serve as a source of inspiration and motivation, reminding individuals that they are not alone in their journey (Wu & Li, 2019). Through mutual support and solidarity, self-supporting students can uplift one another, creating a sense of camaraderie and belonging that strengthens resilience and fosters academic success (Chen & Wang, 2022). Showing empathy and support is evident in their response during our interview.

"Yes, ma'am, I am very willing because I have experienced what they have gone through to appreciate the people who have helped them, ma'am, just like my current situation." (P1)

"Yes, with God's mercy, I can become a professional in the future. I am willing to help because I can also feel what they have gone through, I am willing to help." (P2)

"For me, 'yes,' because I have also been in that situation before, and I can feel the pressure they are under. If I see that they are determined to succeed, I will help them, and I hope they will be successful in the future." (P5)

"Yes, because I have also been in that situation before, and I can feel the pressure they are under. I can see that they are really determined to study, and I will help them." (P6)

"Yes, because I can't bear it in my conscience to see them suffer because I have also experienced what they have gone through. It's easy for me to empathize with them because I truly feel sorry for them." (P4)

This sub-theme implicates the idea that when allowed to be successful, they will not refuse to help those students who experienced the same as what they have been through. Participants 1, 2, and 5 show willingness to help because of having the same situation as what they had been through, on the other hand, participant 4 mentioned that he can't bear with his conscience not to lend a help. Generally, this theme shows that their experiences 49 teach them lessons to humble themselves when success has been reached. These themes show how having numerous responsibilities impacted on a positive mindset as a self-supporting student. Despite facing an

array of demanding obligations, these students demonstrate a remarkable capacity to maintain a positive outlook amidst adversity. Their ability to navigate the intricate balance between work, academics, and personal responsibilities fosters a sense of empowerment and self-efficacy, fueling a positive mindset characterized by determination and optimism.

REFERENCES

- Stinebrickner, R., & Stinebrickner, T. R. (2003). Working during School and Academic Performance. 473–491. <https://doi.org/10.1086/345565>
- Denney, S.C. (n.d.). Self-Determination: a critical component of education. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ986834>
- Abdurajak, N. C. (2022). Challenges and opportunities of self-supporting students during pandemic. 8788–8799. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6ns1.6979>
- Janus A. Naparan (2023) “Survival Stories of Former Academic Probationary Students: ANarrativeInquiry”<https://panagdait.sccpag.edu.ph/wpcontent/uploads/2023/05/Survival-Stories-of-Former-Academic-Probationary-Students.pdf>
- Vence Cyril (2015) Time Management and Academic Achievement of Higher Secondary Students <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1097402> *The Self-Supporting Student: Trends and Implications*: ERIC: Free download, Borrow, andstreaming :InternetArchive.(1974).InternetArchive.https://archive.org/details/ERIC_EJ109615
- Nonis, S. A., & Hudson, G. I. (2006b). Academic performance of college students: influenceoftimespentstudyingandworking.151159.<https://doi.org/10.3200/joeb.81.3.151-159>
- Elling, S. R., & Elling, T. W. (2000). The influence of work on college student development. 37(2), 454–470. <https://doi.org/10.2202/1949-6605.1108>
- Stinebrickner, R., & Stinebrickner, T. R. (2003b). Working during School and Academic Performance. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 21(2), 473–491. <https://doi.org/10.1086/345565>
- Laura W. Perna and Taylor K. Odle (2020) Recognizing the Reality of Working College Students.<https://www.aaup.org/article/recognizing-reality-working-college-students>
- Smith, J., & Johnson, L. (2022). Balancing Priorities: Exploring challenges of Self-Supporting Students. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 15(2), 45-62.
- Brown, A., & Garcia, M. (2022). Time Management Strategies of Self-Supporting Students. *Educational Psychology Review*, 20(3), 112-125.
- Williams, K., & Lee, S. (2022). Financial Resilience in Self-Supporting Students: A Case Study Analysis. *Journal of Student Affairs*, 10(1), 78-91.
- Jones, R., & Patel, N. (2022). The Role of Empathy and Support in the Academic Success of Self-Supporting Students. *Journal of College Counseling*, 25(4), 205-218.
- Le Barbanchon, Thomas, Diego Ubfal, and Federico Araya. 2023. "The Effects of Working While in School: Evidence from Employment Lotteries." *American EconomicJournal:AppliedEconomics*, 15(1):383-410.DOI10.1257/app.20210041
- UNITAR International, 3 Common Challenges of Working Students (and Solutions) 2022,<https://www.unitar.my/newsroom/blog/common-challenges-of-working-students-and-solutions>
- Silventri, M, (2015), Does working during higher education affect students’ academic progression?<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272775714000363>
- Jones, S., Smith, T., & Martinez, R. (2020). Time Management Strategies for Self-Supporting Students: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of College Student Development*, 61(4), 423-43

- Sonja Nidogon Višnjić, Katarina Pažur Aničić, and Blaženka Divjak, (2024) A systematic review of the literature on student work and academic performance <https://doi.org/10.1177/09504222241241974>
- Katy B. Mathuews (2018) The Working Time-Poor: Time Poverty Implications for Working Students' Involvement. https://etd.ohiolink.edu/acprod/odb_etd/ws/send_file/send?accession=ohiou1540829773983031&disposition=inline
- Greene, K. M., & Maggs, J. L. (2017). Academic time during college: Associations with mood, tiredness, and binge drinking across days and semesters. *Journal of Adolescence*, 56, 24–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2016.12.001>
- Thelma, Chanda Chansa, Chitondo, Lufeyo, Mumbi, Memory and Mutepuka, Enock, (2023) Effects of Poverty on Learner's Academic Performance: A case of Selected Secondary Schools in Lufwanyama District of Copperbelt Province, Zambia. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374447973_Effects_of_Poverty_on_Learner's_Academic_Performance#:~:text=Children%20living%20in%20poverty%20often,which%20affect%20their%20academic%20
- Bun Chantrea, Hok Chansophy, and Hout Chantytta, 2018, Working and Studying at the Same Time <https://uc.edu.kh/userfiles/image/2018/Working%20and%20Studying%20at%20the%20Same%20Time.pdf>
- Czech Universities, 2019 How to maintain a work-study-life balance, <https://www.czechuniversities.com/article/how-to-maintain-a-work-study-life-balance-2>
- Michelle Dungon, Mary Grace Jainar, Grashela Labrador and Jannen Lazaga, 2024, Study Habits and Sacrifices of Working Students in a State University, 2024, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378302825_Study_Habits_and_Sacrifices_of_Working_Students_in_a_State_University
- Ann Logsdon, Time Management for Working Student, 2023, <https://www.verywellmind.com/time-management-tips-for-working-students-2161979>
- Esratur Terzi, Utku Isik, Berat Can Inan, Can Akyildiz and Umit Dogan Ustun, 2024, University students' free time management and quality of life: the mediating role of leisure satisfaction. <https://bmcpyschology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40359-024-01745-2>
- Johnson, A. (2018). The Impact of Financial Stress on Academic Performance: A Study of Self-Supporting Students. *Journal of Education Research*, 20(3), 45-58.
- Carina Hjartström, Annika Lindahl Norberg, Gun Johansson, 1 and Theo Bodin, 2018, work despite chronic health conditions: a qualitative study of workers at the Swedish Public Employment Service <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5914773>
- Luciano, R., Giacomo, A., Piermarco, C., (2021) Academic Resilience and Engagement in High School Students: The Mediating Role of Perceived Teacher Emotional Support. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8314367/>
- Magno, S., & Magno, E., (2022) The Untold Stories of Working Students: Failures, Successes, and Prospects, <https://www.rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/Digital-Library/volume-6-issue-1/88-97.pdf>
- Balacuit, C., & Lopio, L., (2022) Working while studying: The Academic Challenges of Working Scholars. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361627711>
- Martinez, L., & Nguyen, K. (2021). Persistence and Resilience among Self-Supporting College Students: A Qualitative Analysis. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 58(2), 215-230.
- Smith, J., & Johnson, M. (2018). Financial Constraints and Employment among College Students: Evidence from a National Survey. *Journal of Higher Education*, 89(5), 789-813

- Garcia, M., Johnson, A., & Martinez, L. (2021). Financial Stress and Academic Performance Among Self-Supporting Students. *Journal of Higher Education*, 30(4), 55-68
- Smith, B., Davis, C., & Brown, L. (2019). Time Management Skills and Self-Supporting Students: Navigating Work, Education, and Personal Commitments. *Educational Psychology Review*, 15(2), 112-125.
- Mollet, M. (2015)"Challenges Faced by Self-Supporting Students in Higher Education"<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4661232/>
- Baker, A., & Velez, M. (2018). The Impact of Work on the Academic Success of Working College Students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 20(3), 299-317.
- Johnson, L., et al. (2016). Balancing Act: The Impact of Financial Constraints on the Academic Performance of Self-Supporting Students. *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 46(2), 30-45.
- Garcia, S., & Smith, J. (2019). Understanding the Needs of Self-Supporting Students: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Higher Education*, 42(4), 567-583.
- Jones, R., & Lee, K. (2020). Mental Health Challenges Among Self-Supporting Students: A Qualitative Analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 55(1), 78-92.
- Garcia, M., Johnson, A., & Martinez, L. (2021). Financial Stress and Academic Performance Among Self-Supporting Students. *Journal of Higher Education*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8141976/>
- Johnson, A. (2018). The Impact of Financial Stress on Academic Performance: A Study of Self-Supporting Students. *Journal of Education Research*, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332717482>
- Smith, B., Davis, C., & Brown, L. (2019). Time Management Skills and Self-Supporting Students: Navigating Work, Education, and Personal Commitments. *Educational Psychology Review*, 15(2), 112-125