



## The Voice of Student Assistants' Time Management and Academic Performance: A Phenomenological Study

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### Abstract:

Student life now has been a rollercoaster journey, especially for the college students. It does not matter how often you go to school but how you can be able to get to school with financial instability. This leads college students to juggle work and study at the same time. This study explored the challenges in time management of student assistants that affect their academic performance in a Local City College. In terms of the impact of the challenges on the student assistants' academic performance, the challenges encountered by the student assistants in time management affect their academic performance towards formulating a Time Management and academic performance action plan based on the findings of the study. It utilized the Husserlian Descriptive Phenomenology, it is employed as a qualitative approach to gathering data through Individual Interviews. The survey questionnaire/ interview guide used is semi-structured and taken from the study of Inger Marie Halvorsrud Jaavall entitled "Quality of School Life for Working Students." A group of six (6) student assistants the informants, who spent 6-7 hours each day working in various offices on the school campus, were purposively selected and interviewed to check the time management challenges affecting their academic performance. During the course of the study, thematic analysis was employed to examine the responses that emerged. The results indicated that balancing work and study was considered difficult yet time management and prioritization were the keys to having good educational progress. The findings also revealed that student assistants faced a lot of challenges in managing their time since they had to prioritize their studies and at the same time doing their work responsibilities. Through balancing they have the time to do their school activities when they were vacant and make some paperwork in the office. This study suggested that student assistants should enhance their time management skills through planning their tasks and responsibilities effectively. As a result of the study, a time management action plan was recommended.

**Keywords:** *Challenges, Student Assistants, Time Management Action Plan, Husserlian Descriptive Phenomenology*

### Introduction:

College life was very challenging because there were many responsibilities that each student needed to fulfill. A student's life was a mixture of self-discovery, academic tasks, and educational milestones. It was observed that only those who could afford to enroll in colleges graduated. Thus, if you were determined to attend school, there were numerous ways to pursue your dreams. In the age of digital education, it offered a pathway to global competitiveness. However, the majority of students, unable to fully experience college life due to financial constraints, often found themselves working while studying. This dual role, notably seen in student assistants, presented significant challenges that impacted their physical and emotional well-being as well as academic performance, as confirmed by studies conducted by J.D.M Pregoner and Foulkes et al. (2020). Notably, poor sleep quality among student assistants increased the risk of mental illness and hampered academic achievement, contributing to a pervasive sense of anxiety and physical health issues due to early morning work schedules. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the time management strategies employed by working students in their roles as student assistants. Furthermore, this study served as a valuable resource for all student assistants, helping them utilize the proposed activity guide for time management, emotional well-being, and psychological health. This could enable them to achieve outstanding academic performance despite the challenges they faced.

### Literature Review:

Working while studying can be a practical way to pursue a college degree, however, this strategy also poses various challenges in balancing time between work and studies. As highlighted in the study by Logsdon (2020), it might be difficult to manage your time when you have to balance between school and job. Managing time in your academic and work lives is no easy task especially when you have other responsibilities competing for your time. Many researches have indicated that the combination of full-time study with part-time employment might be affecting students' physical and emotional well-being. It might have a bad effect on a student's academic achievement according to J.D.M Pregoner et al., (2020).

This study focused on providing various methods and strategies in balancing time between work and studies, one of this is by setting priorities. As stated by Smith (2023), to successfully navigate these demands, working students must prioritize effective time management. By efficiently allocating their





time, they can achieve a harmonious work-life balance, excel academically, and nurture their relationships with their loved ones. Employing strategies for managing time effectively not only reduces stress but also contributes to their overall well-being. Moreover, according to Logsdon (2020), creating order is the first step in successfully managing your time, and making a schedule helps create order. This will help give you a clearer picture of what you have to work with in terms of setting up times to study and tend to the other responsibilities in your life. It emphasized that challenges will be overcome by managing your time efficiently as this can orderly balance the time in working and studying.

### Research Method:

This study utilized a Qualitative approach by applying Husserlian Descriptive Phenomenology, which is well-suited to investigate the lived experiences of student assistants and their time management's impact on academic performance at Mandaue City College. Descriptive phenomenology brings forth various viewpoints, experiences, values, beliefs, and identities during data collection and analysis (Lee, Landy, Wahoush, et al., 2019). The informants of this study were the identified working college students of Mandaue City College specifically the student assistants. A total of 16 student assistants were assigned to the different offices of the institution. Purposive sampling was utilized in selecting the informants. The researcher considered the following inclusion criteria: Student assistants who are vaccinated and officially enrolled this school year 2022 -2023 and are willing to participate in the study. Since the data was saturated after six interviews, the researchers chose not to pursue the remaining informants.

To gather qualitative data, the study employed a semi-structured interview guide adapted from Jaavall (2007). This guide facilitated a two-way communication process, enabling the collection of insights into the perspectives of the participants. The interview questions were categorized into three parts: Part I focused on the challenges faced by student assistants, Part II explored the impact of their roles on academic performance, and Part III delved into their strategies for balancing work and school. Each section of the interview guide included three question elements: a main question, probing and developing questions, and a concluding question. Moreover, the Colaizzi Phenomenological Data Analysis was utilized in analyzing the data. According to Kaufman (2020), this strategy directs researchers to uncover themes from complex relationships by offering a rich and logical framework through which this experience's overall structure can be investigated. The data analysis was done following the seven phases of Colaizzi's method, namely familiarization, identifying significant statements, formulating meanings, clustering themes, developing exhaustive description, producing fundamental structure, and seeking verification of the fundamental structure.

### Findings and Discussion:

The gathered data that has been analyzed is clustered into three main themes and five subthemes. These themes and subthemes function as primary and secondary classifications to efficiently organize and evaluate the collected data. The first theme is Time Management: A Challenge, wherein consists of two subthemes; Time Constraints, and Time Management Troubles: Academic Impact. The second theme is the Juggling Work and Studies: Mastering the Art of Time Management. It consists of two subthemes, the Balancing Time between Work and Studies, and Sacrifice comes before Success. Lastly, the third theme is the Salary Justifies One's Effort which only consists of one subtheme, the Work pays off: Salary reflects one's effort. Each theme is elaborated below.

#### Theme 1. Time Management: A Challenge

Working under the new normal education is a new experience and it provokes challenges for working students especially student assistants, the true essence of working and studying, is to work on the assigned task and assess the teachers' and the students' needs and queries. The restrictions and prohibitions of the nature of work assignments and activities gravitate to the difficulty of studying and exhaust the student assistants in finding ways and alternative solutions to managing the time properly, bridging the gap between work and study. Additionally, limited time allotment makes it also more challenging on the part of the student assistants, to filter and condense the most essential and effective way of doing things in the right way.

##### Sub - Theme 1.1. Time Constraints

*"I don't have enough time for my personal life. Another challenge that I encountered is that I don't have much time for my family and my friends." – Lady Fortitude (Line 2-4)*

Working students faced significant challenges in managing both their professional and family responsibilities. As stated by Lady Fortitude (Informant 1) the task of balancing work and education alongside fulfilling familial duties can place immense demands on them. To successfully navigate these demands, working students must prioritize effective time management. By efficiently allocating their time, they can achieve a harmonious work-life balance, excel academically, and nurture their relationships with their loved ones. Employing strategies for managing time effectively not only reduces stress but also contributes to their overall well-being. (Smith, J.A. 2023)

##### Sub - Theme 1.2. Time Management Troubles: Academic Impact

*"At first, I struggled with my grades. Applying as a student assistant is not rainbows and butterflies, there's always the ugly truth that no matter how hard you try to balance everything, there will be a time that they fall apart. It's like a domino effect. You'll get burned out by your work and then it'll affect your studies that result having low grades."- Triad Woman (Line 85)*

Working as student assistant has an impact on academic performance which can lead to having high or low grades. As stated by Triad Woman (Informant 6), once you become bombarded everything will explode and it will significantly impact your academic status. However, if you effectively manage these responsibilities you will be able to attain good grades. The enhancement of positive academic outcomes can be achieved by students through the adoption of time management behaviors or skills, enabling them to effectively handle their coursework and attain their learning goals. (Razali et al., 2018). Effective time management enables students to enhance their academic performance, reduce feelings of anxiety, and develop better readiness for the workforce. (Romero-Blanco et al., 2020).

#### Theme 2. Juggling Work and Studies: Mastering the Art of Time Management





In today's fast-paced world, many individuals find themselves faced with the challenging task of juggling work and studies, especially student assistants. Whether it is pursuing a higher degree while maintaining a full-time job or managing part-time employment alongside academic commitments, effective time management becomes crucial. The ability to balance these two essential aspects of life requires discipline, organization, and prioritization. By mastering the art of time management, student assistants can achieve academic success while excelling in their professional endeavors.

#### Sub-Theme 2.1. Balancing Time between Work and Studies

*"For me, the best strategy for these kay dili mag saying sa oras. If ever there is extra time after school, gamiton ni nako para mag basa basa ug libro, kundili ka mag review. Actually, while naa kos bus padung oli, I do my activities there or attend my online class. For me to use that time while riding hahaha. Pero kapoy jud kay dili mabati kayo. Then, sa akoang pag abot sa balay, I do some tasks, like household chores and taking care of my child. As I said earlier, muoli kos balay gabie najud kaayo because of work, and sometimes I need to work overtime para extra income." – Fearless Mother (Line 100-103)*

To achieve a healthy balance between work and studies and make the most of their time. As stated by Fearless mother (Informant 4), consistency in managing time is an essential skill that can help improve productivity, reduce stress, and achieve your goals effectively. According to Logsdon (2020), creating order is the first step in successfully managing your time, and making a schedule helps create order. This will give you a clearer picture of what you have to work with in terms of setting up times to study and tend to the other responsibilities in your life. It emphasizes that challenges will be overcome by managing your time efficiently as this can orderly balance the time in working and studying.

#### Sub-Theme 2.2. Sacrifice comes before Success

*"When it comes to personal life, honestly, lisud jud para nako because I need to perform my duties as a daughter and as the mother of my child sad. Sometimes I don't have time at home because muoli nakog dugay. Then, during weekends, I mag work sad ko sa HR office for extra income" – Fearless Mother (Line 91-92)*

*"I need to give up some social time or hang out with friends para mo succeed, kay you must make a sacrifice jud" – Goal Hunter (Line 144)*

Work-life balance involves maintaining engagement in various aspects of life and handling multiple roles. It encompasses overall well-being, including mental, physical, social, emotional, financial, and spiritual health. As stated by Fearless Mother (Informant 4), and Goal Hunter (Informant 6), sacrificing family time is one of their way to manage their time between work and studies. According to Holding, C. et.al (2019) Individuals, particularly young adults, often need to make sacrifices to achieve important goals, especially when it comes to their career aspirations. Young adulthood is seen as an opportune time for individuals to start building their professional lives, and they may be motivated to pursue specific career goals. In doing so, they might willingly give up personal comforts such as reducing sleep, limiting socializing, or neglecting self-care activities, to create more time for studying or pursuing their desired career outcomes and activities to dedicate more time and effort towards their studies or professional development.

### Theme 2. Salary Justifies one's Effort

Financial struggles are common among students, and it can be difficult to manage expenses related to bills, projects, food, and transportation on a limited budget. Some people believed that salary should be directly proportional to the effort or value of the work they put in. They argued that higher salaries are necessary to compensate for hard work, expertise, skills, and the impact they bring to an organization. Student assistants are not just working academically but they are also financially paid according to their hours of work.

#### Sub-theme 3.1. Work pays off: Salary reflects one's effort

*"Akoang masulti rajud kay akoang allowance as student assistant kay kuwanganon rajud, especially in terms of bills, projects, food, and daily transportation." – Fearless Mother (Line 87)*

*"First, I expect to have a salary increase. Mao jud ni akong gusto kay na shock ko, diman siya enough. At first, I thought nindut mahimong SA because it has a good salary wage, but then expectation versus reality, dili haha. Our salary is not enough, dili jud siya enough like sa kaon palang ug sa transportation." – Healing Helper (Line 76-77)*

Student assistant positions often serve as a means to gain practical experience and supplement your education, rather than solely focusing on monetary benefits. However, it is understandable to feel frustrated if their salary does not meet their financial needs or match their initial expectations. As stated by Healing Helper (Informant 3), salary increase would be desirable to make ends meet. However, aside from managing their time, student assistants must also learn how to manage their budget. According to Jones, L., et al. (2020), students must adopt budgeting strategies. Creating a budget plan, tracking expenses, prioritizing needs over wants, seeking financial assistance when necessary, and exploring cost-saving measures can help students navigate their financial challenges.

### Conclusion:

Challenges in time management revealed different obstacles that affect student assistants' academic performance. Having no time in personal life, extracurricular activities, families, and friends, and submitting late activities due to lack of time are some of the issues faced by the student assistants. However, despite the struggles they still performed these two things through time management. Time management allowed them to split their time between doing school tasks and paperwork where they were working.





Moreover, student assistants, are still obliged to prioritize their studies which is the main reason why they keep working. Aside from being a student assistant, it also helps them to gain income to sustain their needs. To be able to focus on the things that are more important, to maintain good grades even though they sacrificed their social life just to have a good academic performance. The result of this study simply implied that challenges in time management can be quite difficult to manage but with the dedication to balance their work and study they could maintain good academic performance.

#### Limitations and Further Research:

The study offered recommendations to address challenges faced by the student assistants of Mandau City Collge. This includes providing additional student assistants in every office, increase the stipend/honorarium of student assistants to sustain their daily needs, provide emotional support to the student assistants, and teach the student assistants how to face challenges in time management that require balance and prioritization in order not to affect academic performance. Further, the study advocates for future research using quantitative methods to determine the correlational relationship between two variables. They can also use stratified sampling to divide how many student assistants work in different offices.

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## APPENDIX A – RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

### Interview Guide Questions

The participants will be asked the following questions regarding the study entitled "THE VOICE OF STUDENT ASSISTANTS' TIME MANAGEMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A PHENOLOGICAL STUDY." In addition, the informants be reminded that their responses are recorded for the purpose of transcribing your words or word statements, which will be helpful in the success of this research and will guarantee the confidentiality of the gathered response.

This questionnaire contains three parts. Part 1 is about the challenges encountered by the student assistants; Part 2 is about the impact of working as a student assistant on their academic performance; and Part 3 is about how student assistants balance their time between work and studies.

#### Guide Questions:

Part 1: Challenges encountered by the student assistants.

1. Student assistants often face unique challenges that can interfere with their ability to succeed in their studies, like time management, financial status, and balancing work and personal lives. How do you manage these?
  - a. What are the challenges you encounter as a student assistant?
  - b. What did you learn from your experience with these challenges?
  - c. What is the best strategy or method you used to overcome the different challenges and to maintain your academic performance?

Part 2: Impact of the challenges on the student assistants' academic performance.

1. How do the challenges you've encountered affect your studies?
  - a. What are the challenges you encounter as a student assistant?
  - b. What did you learn from your experience with these challenges?
  - c. What is the best strategy or method you used to overcome the different challenges and to maintain your academic performance?
  
2. What are the possible challenges you think you will encounter in studying? How will you deal with them?

Part 3: Student assistants' challenges in managing their time between work and school

1. As a student assistant, how do you balance time between work and school?
  - a. What are your expectations as a student assistant?
  - b. Share your experiences as a student assistant and your experiences between work and your studies.
  - c. How do you overcome these challenges?

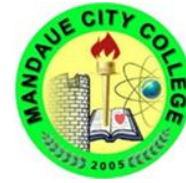




APPENDIX B - PLAGIARISM CHECK CERTIFICATION



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This certification is issued to Dotaro et'al. on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of June 2023 for whatever legal purpose this may serve best.

  
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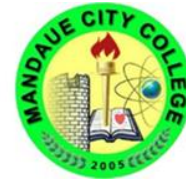


APPENDIX C- GRAMMAR CHECK CERTIFICATION



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CERTIFICATION FOR GRAMMAR CHECK

Name of Grammarian: Joseph Arnold Baunsit

Highest Educational Attainment: Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English

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This is to certify that the study entitled “**The Voice of Student Assistants Time Management and Academic Performance: A Phenomenological Study**” of Emery C. Dotaro, Quenie May B. Rebuyas, Jamila L. Camillo, Stephane L. Lobrino, Shyra A. Suroysuroy, Bachelor of Elementary Education students of Mandaue City College has been checked by Joseph Arnold C. Baunsit as Grammarian.

This certification is issued upon request of the group as part of their oral defense requirements. Given this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of June 2023.

  
JOSEPH ARNOLD BAUNSI

