

Social Studies Working Students' Experiences of Online Learning

John Erwin Prado PEDROSO^{a*}, Mark Louie CRUDO^a, Lester B. MAGNO^a, and Heart L. MELLIZO^a

^a*College of Education, West Visayas State University, Iloilo City, Philippines*

*Corresponding author: johnnerwin.pedroso@wvsu.edu.ph

Abstract

Working students felt the impact of the uncertainties brought by the pandemic and faced issues influenced by various factors such as time constraints, home-schooling, and limited workspaces at home. This descriptive phenomenological qualitative study focused on describing the experiences of social studies working students during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study was conducted among six (6) social studies working students who were determined through purposive sampling. The data were gathered using a duly-validated researcher-made questionnaire administered through online platforms such as messenger and e-mail. The accumulated data was then analyzed using conventional qualitative content analysis. Social studies working on students' experiences of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic emerged to have three (3) major themes which are motivational experiences, roadblock experiences, and coping experiences, and six (6) major categories. The motivational experiences considered by social studies working students to pursue working while studying encompass intrapersonal motivation and interpersonal motivation. Furthermore, during their working-while-studying experience, they faced roadblock experiences such as challenges encountered and thoughts of discontinuing. In light of this, social studies working students had coping experiences namely coping with responsibilities and coping with feeling overwhelmed which helped them cope with the demands of their duties. Delving into the experiences of social studies working students during the COVID-19 pandemic is critical to understanding what they were going through. The lived experiences of these individuals must be taken into consideration, knowing that they constitute an essential part of society.

Keywords: online learning, Social Studies working students, Experiences, COVID-19 pandemic

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Introduction

Many students are working while enrolled in higher education. However, their employment may compromise their academic studies and college experience (Tumin et al., 2020). Among the reasons why students choose to work while schooling include the increasing cost of study, the decreasing opportunity for scholarships, and low family income. In 2020, the academe experienced a paradigm shift in the modes of teaching and learning when a pandemic struck. Students, teachers, and school administrators struggled to meet the immediate demands due to a lack of preparedness for the unexpected transition of work and study spaces from school to home from physical to virtual. Moreover, the need to implement ICT in education was promulgated suddenly due to the onset of the global health crisis for students with informal learning environments to cope effectively (Valtonen et al., 2021).

Working students, in particular, had felt the impact of the uncertainties brought by the pandemic and faced issues influenced by various factors such as time constraints, home-schooling, infrequent communication with co-workers, and limited workspaces at home (Xiao et al., 2021). In addition, (Wallengren-Lynch et al., 2023), suggests that it is vital to understand the experiences of working students during this pandemic and formulate interventions that could help these students who are struggling with the demands of their multiple responsibilities. Furthermore, they noted that their work had increased their stress and responsibility, pushing them to adjust to new “chaotic” environments with additional safety precautions brought by the prevailing health concerns (Petropoulos et al., 2022). This is the fact that the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) advised higher education institutions (HEIs) to utilize “accessible flexible learning and other alternatives instead of the face-to-face conventional setting of learning” (Valtonen et al., 2021). This regulation has put students, particularly undergraduates at HEIs, including working and less fortunate students, in an entirely new situation—the immediate impact being on their daily life, expenses, or other financial difficulties, and with no definite information as to how long the impacts will persist. With this, it is crucial to examine further the experiences of working students and consider how they cope with the struggles anchored with learning and working in the present time (Dayagbil et al., 2021).

Information collected through this study described and examined the learning experiences of selected Social Studies working students of a public state university during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the conduct of this study, the researchers specifically aimed to identify the primary motivators of social studies working students working while schooling amidst the pandemic. Discovering the roadblocks faced by social studies working students and their experiences with coping that helped them during the pandemic is also part of the study's focus. With this, it was presumed that financial incapability is considered to be a primary motivator for social studies students to continue studying while working. Researchers also presumed that social studies students find it difficult to manage their time both in school and work and they overcome this through scheduling responsibilities and self-discipline.

Methodology

Research Design

This descriptive phenomenological qualitative study. This implies acquiring, organizing, tabulating, depicting, and describing data to formulate a body of knowledge. In this study, the interpretation, analysis, and gathering of data were used to describe the experiences of social studies' working students of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Informants

The informants of this study were six (6) social studies working students who were identified using a purposive sampling technique. Informants were required to meet what was stated in the inclusion criteria to fully participate in the study. The inclusion criteria included: a) the informant must be enrolled in the school year 2021-2022; b) the informant is taking up a Bachelor of Secondary Education, Major in Social Studies at a public state university; c) they are learning in the remote and online learning setup; and, d) a working student, during the conduct of this study.

Table 1. Informants of the study

Informant	Enrolled in S.Y. 2021-2022	Taking up BSEd Social Studies at a public state university	Remote and online learning	Working student
Shiela	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suzy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alex	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blessy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mike	✓	✓	✓	✓
Felix	✓	✓	✓	✓

Data Gathering Instrument

The instrument used in the study was a duly-validated researcher-made written questionnaire administered using Google Forms and sent through online platforms: messenger and e-mail.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed online through Facebook messenger and e-mail. There was no time limit for answering the form. As soon as the informants submitted their responses, the online survey form automatically recorded the informant's data. After, a summary of their answers was downloaded for offline viewing and data analysis.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data was collected through an online questionnaire to be answered by the informants and then coded by hand. A thematic analysis was utilized to acquire knowledge and understanding about the lived experiences of Social Studies students who are working during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Reliability

To ensure the reliability of this qualitative research study, rigorous data collection, member checking, textual descriptions, verbatim or direct quotations, and informant validation were employed. Steps undertaken by this research pursuit were also reported for other researchers to consider when conducting research that may or may not be related to this particular study (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012).

Ethical Considerations

In high consideration of the informants and their right to make well-informed decisions, an initial letter was provided introducing the researchers and the title of the research, as well as the purpose of the study. The voluntary nature of participation as an informant in the study was emphasized in a consent form signed by the informants after they agreed to participate in the research. Furthermore, the anonymity of answers and confidentiality of any personal information disclosed in the questionnaire has been actively preserved by the researchers.

Results

The experiences of the Social Studies majors of a public state university who are also working students were categorized into three: (1) the factors considered that motivated their decision to work while studying, (2) the roadblock experiences that the students faced while trying to balance work and studies, and (3) the coping experiences they practice to overcome difficulties and adjust to both their work and school responsibilities.

The factors that encouraged the informants to become working students, are (a) intrapersonal motivation, and (b) interpersonal motivation. On the other hand, roadblock experiences are divided into (a) the challenges encountered as working students, and (b) thoughts of discontinuing either work or school. Lastly, the informants' coping experiences include practices that help them (a) cope with responsibilities, and (b) cockpit feeling overwhelmed.

Motivational Experiences

There were two (2) explicit categories determined concerning the motivating factors that encouraged the informants to become working students namely (1) intrapersonal motivation and (2) interpersonal motivation.

Intrapersonal motivation.

Intrapersonal-related factors trigger a strong influence on the reasons of an individual that may facilitate or hinder the occurrence of an action. It encompasses age, personality, values, self-concept, and lifestyle. The informants' intrapersonal reasons for being a working student were classified into four (4) subcategories namely (a) Increasing Sense of Enjoyment, (b) Acquiring New Experiences, (c) Furthering Productivity, and (d) Stimulating Learning.

- ***Increasing Sense of Enjoyment***

Voluntary engagement in works and services that are beneficial furthers the sense of satisfaction. Willingness to undertake any activity allows for the ability to become more fulfilled

in life. Similarly, students during their college years find it enjoyable to attain working careers while still pursuing their studies at the same time.

Suzy: “Although budlay sa part ko ang mga ini, pero ok lang kay ga enjoy man ako kag naga bulig man ini sa akon kaugalingon nga mangin maayo pa sa akon mga ginabuhay para ako mangin maayo man nga maestra sa ulihi.” (Although it’s hard on my part, it’s okay because I find it enjoyable while developing myself to become a better teacher in the future.)

Mike: “...rather, I find it enjoyable to work during my spare time because my class schedule is not particularly demanding.”

● **Acquiring New Experiences**

Working while studying is an effective and feasible way of acquiring valuable work experiences. It can be noted that having a head start in the job market creates better credentials. It also offers great opportunities for those who are seeking a fresh and new environment to deal with. This allows for the enhancement of social engagements and the establishment of stronger social relations. Moreover, being exposed to varying work fields allow for better adaptation and flexibility when faced with unprecedented real-life situations.

Mike: “Working has allowed me to experience a new atmosphere where I can truly enjoy studying while working after years of staying at home due to restrictions.”

Felix: “I want to venture out of my comfort zone for now.”

● **Furthering Productivity**

The COVID-19 Pandemic paralyzed the global academe by halting the conduct of face-to-face classes which led to the implementation of a remote-learning setup. However, students were not prepared to adjust to this new model of education and have started finding ways to maintain a proactive learning environment. Hence, working while studying enhanced workethics and furthered a more active lifestyle.

Felix: “I felt that I had more free time than usual during the onset of online classes hence, I felt unproductive.”

● **Stimulating Learning**

Existential crises and self-doubt afflicted by the long periods of quarantine and isolation brought about by the pandemic triggered the urge to learn and discover more. This increased among working students during the period when the COVID-19 Pandemic was at its peak. The nurturing of soft skills, increased independence, and significant improvement in psychosocial maturity can be seen as contributing factors to the growing presence of working students.

Suzy: “I am fond of exploring and immersing myself into different kinds [of] experiences because I believe these are the best lessons for me to grow holistically.”

Interpersonal motivation. Interpersonal-related factors are influences brought by the social environment that affect the ability to decide on doing something. This is amplified by

physical and social environments, economic status, belief systems, morality, peer influence, and customs. The interpersonal reasons of the informants for being working students were classified into three (3) subcategories namely (a) Financial Reasons, (b) Peer Pressure, and (c) Family Pressure.

● **Financial Reasons**

The long-term economic impacts of the global health crisis can still be experienced even up to this day. One of the major effects of the pandemic was the occurrence of hyperinflation which caused the rise in the price of basic goods and services. It was then accompanied by the massive retrenchment of workers in different sectors of the economy. The sources of income for every family became scarcer and harder to maintain. With the aforementioned premises, it is without a doubt that students in a remote-learning set-up were prompted to find work to support and cater to their family's needs. In addition, having a sense of financial freedom also furthers the idea of working while studying.

Shiela: "My mother got ill and has maintenance pills needed to take."

Shiela: "To help provide my younger brother's tuition fee."

Shiela: "My older brother barely got a job that could last a month or two."

Shiela: "I decided to work to continue my studies as well because in that way I could provide myself load and at the same time I could pay our electric bills and buy our household necessities such as a sack of rice, clean drinkable water, etc."

Suzy: "My family only earns a minimum salary of 7,500-8,500 per month. From this given budget, dividing our expenses monthly let us only focus on our living needs."

Alex: "First is poverty, I have been working for more than a decade now, and when I decided to continue my studies, I'm very thankful that my boss supports my decision."

Felix: "Having your own money without asking your parents gives you a stronger sense of freedom."

● **Peer Pressure**

The decision of students to work while studying does not only result from mere impulsive choice but it can be associated with one social factor—peer influence and pressure. Deciding whether to work or not while balancing school responsibilities is never an easy choice but with the right amount of social enticement enforced by one's peers, it is relatively easier for students to find themselves interested in the working field. It can also be noted that peer expectations and the idea of not wanting to become a burden may prompt students to work. In addition, the urge to work was motivated by peers who were also currently working while studying.

Blessy: "I know a lot of people my age and some even younger than me who already works and are earning money and are helping their family."

- **Family Pressure**

With the onset of the pandemic, management of resources became more challenging, especially for low-income families and even more so for bigger households. Families may encourage their children to work, especially those who are of legal age. Students belonging to the aforementioned sector where their family is earning less of what they need may feel pressured to support their family members' basic needs by finding decent work while studying. The urgency among students to work was to support their family which is because of financial instability accompanied by personal choice.

Alex: "...I don't want to be a burden to my family, especially to my siblings, so as long as my work is manageable and won't hinder my studies, I will remain a working student."

Blessy "I think my parents got used to the fact that I was earning my own money that they kind of pressured me to try and apply for work."

Roadblock Experiences

There were two (2) explicit categories determined about the roadblock experiences of the informants for being working students namely (1) challenges encountered, and (2) thoughts of discontinuing one or the other.

Challenges Encountered

Pursuing a working career while continuing studies amidst the COVID-19 pandemic puts forward a lot of responsibilities and pressure that was felt by the students within and around them. The challenges encountered by the informants as working students were classified into three (3) subcategories namely (a) Mental Health Concerns, (b) Safety Risks, and (c) Time Inadequacy.

- **Mental Health Challenges**

The worsening cases of mental health concerns reached their peak during the sudden onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students were some of the most affected due to the sudden change in learning modality. For students who were working, constant anxiety brought about by the uncertainties of the pandemic kept them in a critical situation. In addition, pressure and stress were afflicted by responsibilities in work and school directly affecting how they think and perceive things.

Shiela: "The most difficult challenge is how I am gonna make myself feel motivated to flip my notes before taking a quiz, a test, or an exam the next day."

Shiela: "I took day-offs as a perfect day to rest mentally when the truth is I only excuse myself from doing the tasks that I needed to pass."

Suzy: "Loads of work-related activities and academic-related activities make me tense. It oftentimes held me into different situations where my body or emotions react on the demand of doing several tasks in one given time."

Suzy: *“In everything I do, specifically in academic-related activities, I always make myself in fear and anxiety that, ‘what if I will be left behind in school?’; ‘How could I cope up if ever this will happen?’.”*

Blessy: *“Managing my mental health is the hardest part to do as it seems that I don’t have that much time for myself anymore.”*

• **Safety Challenges**

Safety against the COVID-19 virus was, without a doubt, one of the major concerns of working students amidst the pandemic. It was a challenge on their part to continue working despite the current threat of contracting the virus when exposed outdoors, and further the possibility of spreading the virus to members of their household which puts their health at risk as well. In addition, working students needed to be health-conscious knowing how vulnerable they were to getting sick due to the multiple responsibilities that they were handling.

Shiela: *“I have to risk my safety every day as I got to work through a jeepney ride where health protocols are almost neglected”*

Shiela: *“... because I got tired because of the loads at work and even got sick because I stay awake all night, I miss activities too.”*

• **Time Management Challenges**

Having limited time to do tasks and responsibilities were the constant complaints of working students. The inability to manage what they need to accomplish leads to self-neglect. Also, sudden school work and personal emergencies make it harder for working students to balance their time. Further, setting priorities was a constant challenge since distractions and unprecedented commitments hinder them from efficiently handling their responsibilities.

Shiela: *“I have to constantly check and reduce the assigned tasks every day, only that I needed to do it in between my work hours.”*

Shiela: *“During online classes, I cannot fully put my attention to the discussed topic because I have to do chores at the same moment.”*

Suzy: *“To manage your time is a difficult task to handle especially in a time like this (pandemic). Balancing work and study tests your flexibility, self-discipline, and organization.”*

Suzy: *“Usually, my sleeping patterns only take 2-3 hours per day, on average.”*

Alex: *“I think managing my time is the biggest struggle for me. I have to handle all things at once that I get overwhelmed with the pressure.”*

Mike: *“Working with school projects that are unannounced but must be completed in a short period is a common difficulty I face.”*

Mike: *"...there have been times when I couldn't just compromise my work because I'm also assigned important responsibilities at work."*

Felix: *"You'll have to adjust with the time of your peers rather than following your schedule."*

Difficulty in Balancing Responsibilities

When everything starts to feel out of their control or seems to go out of hand, working students think of discontinuing either their working career or their studies. There usually comes a time that stress and pressure are mentally agonizing to the point that they emotionally break down. With this, the informants' thoughts of discontinuing were classified into two (2) main choices namely (a) Discontinuing their Work, and (b) Discontinuing their Studies.

• Discontinuing Work

The idea of discontinuing work crosses students' minds when they encounter problems in their workplace. It can also be associated with experiencing severe burnout which leads to work discontinuation. Furthermore, getting sick easily and the rising vulnerability to contracting severe health complications furthers the preemptive suspension of work. In addition, prioritizing studies and not risking education also leads to the end of a student's working career.

Shiela: *"...now, I am considering discontinuing my work because I want to focus on my academic errands..."*

Alex: *"There are times that I consider quitting or discontinuing my job, especially if I get frustrated and I can't do well my academic task because of distractions."*

Blessy: *"There are times that I want to discontinue my work because of health reasons and school. I don't want to risk my education and health issues with the fact that I'm earning my money."*

Felix: *"School is not something that should be stopped, for me at least. It has an everlasting effect that will benefit me in the long run whilst work is only for my temporary convenience."*

• Discontinuing Studies

Financial constraints amplified by the COVID-19 Pandemic affected severely poor families. The strangulating scarcity of financial resources was the very reason that working students opt to discontinue their studies. Focusing on work leads to the sustenance of necessities and survival in the ongoing health crisis.

Shiela: *"I once thought [about] giving up my studies especially when my grandfather died, Nanay got ill, and my brother loss a job because of the pandemic."*

Coping Experiences

There were two (2) explicit categories determined about the coping experiences of the informants while fulfilling their responsibilities as working students namely (1) coping with responsibilities, and (2) coping with feeling overwhelmed.

Coping with Responsibilities

The ability to balance personal, academic and work-related duties was crucial for maintaining efficient management of responsibilities as working students. The informants' coping with responsibilities were classified into two (2) subcategories namely (a) Task Scheduling, and (b) Time Management.

● **Task Scheduling**

The remote learning setup poses a greater challenge for working students to keep up with their academic-related demands. That is why making a to-do list of what and when to do allows working students to be on track with their intended schedule. It was also important to set short-term goals that are feasible enough to be achieved. Moreover, establishing clear and specific targets allow for the accomplishment of tasks in a regulated and effective manner.

Shiela: "I make a to-do list for the day."

Shiela: "I set the deadlines a day earlier to trick myself into ensuring the task will be done before the deadline."

Suzy: "List of tasks to do in a weekly/monthly schedule."

Alex: "I do heavy tasks or work that consumes plenty of time during weekends and academic breaks."

Blessy: "I frequently write all the school works that need to be done by the end of the week."

Mike: "I prefer to keep track of my schoolwork on my blank printed calendar..."

● **Time Management**

Effective time management was considered a major coping mechanism that helps with the prioritization of responsibilities to be fulfilled. Being time-conscious aids in regulating actions and the ability to do tasks more productively without sacrificing the time allotted for other responsibilities. In addition, effective utilization of time makes it easier to deal with tasks, produce better outcomes, and increase self-satisfaction.

Shiela: "A 10-hour academic routine during my day off to catch up with the lessons I haven't studied yet."

Shiela: "I use my break times during work answering my activities."

Alex: "I try my best to allocate or set time for my work and my studies."

Alex: "...if I get distracted and can't create better ideas while working on my school tasks, I opt to do my house chores that are supposed to be done after to maximize my time."

Blessy: "I just try to manage my time and make a schedule of my daily routine."

Coping with Feeling Overwhelmed

Preventing the feeling of being overwhelmed from the exhausting set of responsibilities is essential for working students to maintain their momentum in both school and work. The coping strategies that help the informants cope with the feeling of getting overwhelmed were classified into three (3) subcategories namely (a) Self-care, (b) Establishing Social Support, and (c) Self-discipline.

• Self-care

Having adequate rest is very important to regain the energy that was utilized in fulfilling responsibilities as working students. But plain rest in the form of sleeping is not enough to suffice what the mind and body need. That is why allotting time to do hobbies that provide happiness and satisfaction was crucial in maintaining a sound mind and body. In addition, it is also necessary to set aside responsibilities once in a while and have some personal time for relaxation and self-reflection.

Shiela: "I take vitamins."

Shiela: "To keep me motivated, I treat myself to longer sleep hours or break times or a good meal."

Shiela: "I write in my journal shum book."

Shiela: "I contemplate a lot."

Suzy: "A reward for myself is a key for me to appreciate my efforts and continue to thrive."

Blessy: "I try to find time for myself. I take a walk or what sometimes I call s [a] breather before my shift to at least take my mind off of things."

Felix: "I always find time to rest since if my body gives up on me then everything follows."

Felix: "I do not take it against myself. I always tell myself it's okay..."

• Establishing Social Support

It is impossible to survive and be able to sustain the momentum of being a working student without needing social support. Maintaining a supportive and healthy social circle plays a vital role in being the stabilizer of psychosocial health and well-being. Working students having supportive peers were relatively better at coping with balancing multiple responsibilities. It also contributes to the alleviation of the effects of emotional distress brought about by personal, academic, and work-related responsibilities. Moreover, a healthy and responsive social support system helps in reinforcing stable mental health.

Shiela: "I tend to talk with a friend."

Suzy: *“Be around the right people. To be with people who trust and believe you the most is important...”*

Suzy: *“I seek advice in everything I do.”*

● **Self-discipline**

Self-regulation of actions and having the ability to become fully aware of how to deal with various commitments were imperative in pursuing work while studying during the pandemic. Applying positive reinforcements by establishing a strong mindset and having a sense of optimism was needed by working students to sustain focus on various duties. Furthermore, it was highly critical for working students to be strict with their schedule by abstaining from procrastinating and sacrificing short-term pleasures for the sake of better management of workloads.

Shiela: *“A goal to set in each task. In everything I do, I always find a goal to motivate me to further go on with what I started.”*

Alex: *“I wake up as early as possible to do my chores and responsibilities at work so that I can get ready before our scheduled class starts.”*

Blessy: *“...I just focus on it [my work] when I work and not on my time
..I have always had a positive attitude toward my responsibilities and made myself
unworried with the fact that it is just natural to be busy, tired, and feel
uncomfortable as a student sometimes.”*

Felix: *“Every hour counts. If you stay up late for an hour you won't be able to make the task on time as you still have to go to work.”*

According to the figure on the previous page, the experiences of social studies working students were divided into three (3) important themes and include (1) *“motivational experiences”*, (2) *“roadblock experiences”*, and (3) *“coping experiences”*. Under the *“motivational experiences”* are two (2) major categories which include (a) *“intrapersonal motivation”* and (b) *“interpersonal motivation”*. The subcategories included in the former include: (a) *“increasing sense of enjoyment”*, (b) *“acquiring new experiences”*, (c) *“furthering productivity”*, and (d) *“stimulating learning”*. Meanwhile, *“interpersonal motivation”* encompasses three (3) subcategories which are: (a) *“financial reasons”*, (b) *“peer pressure”*, and (c) *“family pressure”*. On the other hand, *“roadblock experiences”* was divided into two (2) major categories, the first being *“challenges encountered”* which cover: (a) *“mental health challenges”*, (b) *“safety challenges”*, and (c) *“time management challenges”*. The second subcategory is *“difficulty in balancing responsibilities”* which includes: (a) *“discontinuing work”* and (b) *“discontinuing studies”*. The last theme is *“coping experiences”* which contains two (2) major categories: (1) *“coping with responsibilities”* and (2) *“coping with feeling overwhelmed”*. The two (2) subcategories under this theme are: (a) *“task scheduling”* and (b) *“time management”*. Meanwhile, *“coping with feeling overwhelmed”* comprises (a) *“self-care”*, (b) *“establishing social support”*, and (c) *“self-discipline”*.

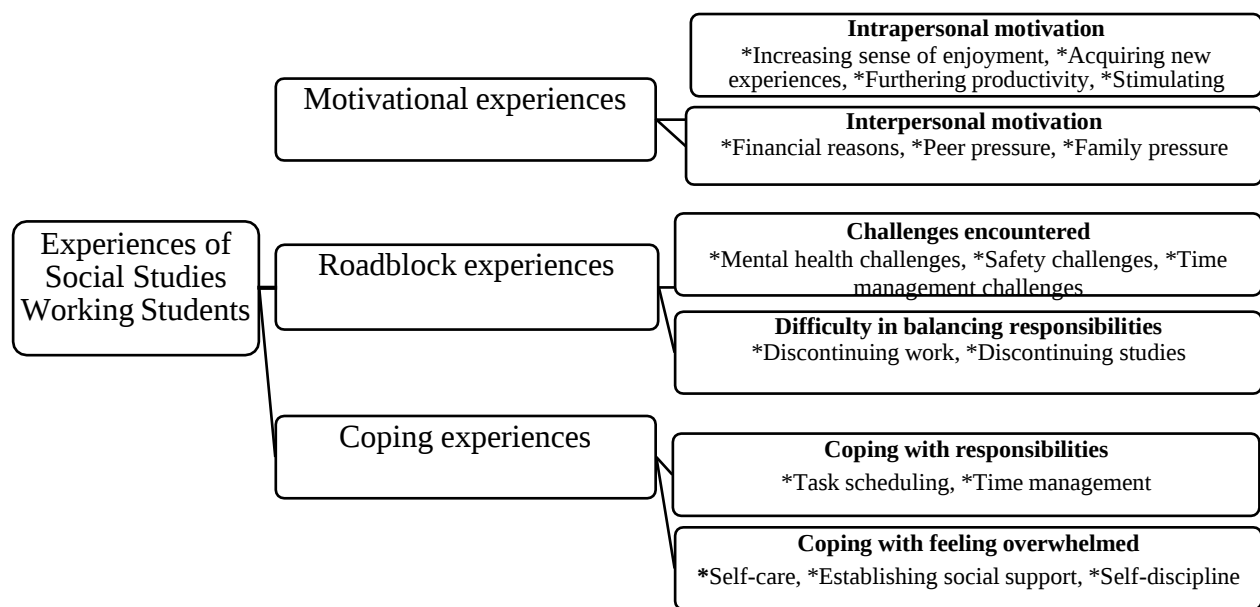


Figure 1. Demonstration of meaningful categories

Discuss

This study aims to find out the experiences of social studies working students during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions: 1) What were the motivational experiences of social studies working students that encouraged them to work while schooling amidst the pandemic? 2) What were the roadblock experiences faced by social studies working students during the pandemic? 3) What were the coping experiences that helped the social studies working students during the pandemic?

The experiences of the Social Studies majors of a public state university who were also working students were elaborated by three (3) important themes: motivational experiences, roadblock experiences, and coping experiences. After the in-depth review of interview transcripts, six (6) major categories were selected from the data text. The researchers prompted arigorous examination to place the findings of this study in the context of relevant literature and the outcomes of previous research initiatives.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has severely limited students' global learning possibilities. It prompted them to shift to a remote learning modality and have been compelled to abandon regular classrooms. Students, especially those who were working during this time of global health crisis, encountered significant hurdles in shifting methods away from face-to-face learning and toward an online learning environment mediated by various types of technology (Chiu et al., 2021).

According to the studies conducted by (Kromydas, 2017), the primary reason why many learners chose to work while studying was to earn money. Likewise, in this study, it was revealed that one of the interpersonal motivators considered by social studies working students to pursue working while studying was due to financial reasons and the incapability to suffice their monetary needs. Moreover, working at a job they love was more fulfilling, productive, and important than money for some people. It is also true when it

comes to the working social studies students of a public state university. Hence, it has been shown that the increased sense of enjoyment was one of the interpersonal factors that motivate the students to work while studying. This supports the statements of the informants of a study conducted by (Peng, 2021); (Wei et al., 2022). According to them, they chose to work while studying because aside from earning extra money, they also enjoy their job and it was their hobby. In addition, (Kintu et al., 2017), have found out that the experiences gained in the real working environment were one of the main benefits and factors why learners choose to be working students.

Another factor that social studies students considered to pursuing work during this time of the COVID-19 Pandemic is for them to maximize productivity. Working while studying allowed students to become more conscious of the tasks given to them, prompting them to do their assigned responsibilities in no time (Niemic, 2019), in her study also posited that internships and work-related activities impact students by providing them with experimental experience which satisfies their thirst for learning. She continues that these internships and work-related activities nurture the practical knowledge of students and shape them to become competent individuals ready to solidify their place in the dynamic and competitive job market in the future.

Health restrictions and the suspension of major economic activities impacted people and made it difficult for them to manage their scarce financial resources (Belitski et al., 2022), study on the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic on household consumption and poverty conducted by (Chen et al., 2018), points out that students belonging to middle and lower socioeconomic classes were forced to work to support their studies financially while at the same time, sufficing their family's basic needs. (Martin et al., 2020), continue by stating that households with scarcer financial resources tend to encourage their children to make a living putting additional pressure on their children's backs. Furthermore, social studies working students from a public state university also consider peer pressure as an interpersonal-related factor that urges them to work while studying. It can be noted according to the study conducted by (McCoy et al., 2019), that adolescents and young adults were observed to be susceptible to peer pressure which triggers risk-taking behaviors and one clear manifestation of it is pursuing work while studying.

Aside from the factors mentioned above, the experiences of social studies working students also encompass their roadblock experiences during their work-while-studying set-up. One of the challenges they encountered was facing the severe psychosocial impact of stress, anxiety, and pressure which has taken a huge toll on their mental health. (Córdova Olivera et al., 2023), highlighted this point by stating that the COVID-19 outbreak caused a tremendous level of stress among students, especially those who were working to make their ends meet. It was then accompanied by extreme pressure brought about by the overwhelming responsibilities both in school and work. In addition, symptoms of depression and loneliness got worse during this period compared to measures before the pandemic. It can be noted that working students' stressors have evolved from concerns about missing out on social activities to concerns about their health, family, friends, and future (Elmer et al., 2020). Finally, (Pedroso et al., 2021). in their 2021 study highlighted the vitality of managing stress and pressure to fulfill one's tasks and responsibilities.

Another major concern that social studies working students dealt with during this pandemic was the high levels of sickness vulnerability and the risk of getting infected by COVID-19 (Lischer et al., 2022), in their study emphasized that the rapid rise in the cases of COVID-19-infected individuals enforced greater concerns and posed uncertainty and anxiety

among working students during this period. Further on, the current health crisis also aggravated the pervasiveness of anxiety among working students by adding pandemic-related factors (Jehi et al., 2023). Aside from that, time inadequacy in balancing work and studies has also been an issue for social studies working students. According to the study by (Santelli et al., 2020), failure to manage responsibilities was due to declining work productivity and self-efficacy. The aforementioned study also postulated that treating procrastination as a form of rest triggers working students to mismanage tasks and furthers the reduction of working time in dealing with commitments in work and school.

The 2020 study of (Kocsis & Pusztai, 2020), put forward students' attraction to the labor market as a probable reason for student dropout rates. They draw attention to the financial motives behind student employment eventually putting them in a position of considering quitting their schooling to continue with their work. In the same study, it was stated that students would make an effort to accommodate their work hours into their daily schedule, and such was especially common among university students. This is likely because students in tertiary education are more likely to have free time with a less rigid schedule. They found that there were more working students than non-working students who chose to discontinue university. The top five reasons to further this decision include health-related problems, insufficient financial resources, visa problems, and in about job: the decision to accept a full-time job, or conflicting demands of their work and their schooling.

On the other hand, there were also cases wherein students would rather discontinue their work to focus on their studies. As previously discussed, some students chose to work, not out of a lack of financial security, but rather to gain new experiences and to further their productivity. The sense of enjoyment and fulfillment makes up for the daunting responsibilities that come with balancing work and school. Following this, a fraction of the main concerns for working students is living expenses and tuition fees (Tsurugano et al., 2021). Students who were in a position of financial insecurity were more likely to compromise their schooling for their financial needs. Otherwise, working students were willing to trade out their work responsibilities and become students in the meantime, as they have more economic freedom to do so.

Along with the reasons why social studies working students decided to work during the pandemic and the difficulties they faced were their coping experiences for them to stay afloat in their current situation. To their overwhelming responsibilities, social studies working students made sure to schedule their tasks and effectively manage their time by utilizing it as productively as possible. The study by (Larco et al., 2018), explained that adhering to strict schedules and minimizing the interaction from external activities deemed to be unnecessary helps in pursuing a more effective task scheduling strategy. The study further expounds that the capacity to manage time is a critical skill for working students' improved productivity and reaction time since they are the ones responsible for determining which tasks require attention. On top of that, since most working students are considered performance-oriented, (Romero et al., 2022). in their 2021 study revealed that performance-oriented individuals tend to accomplish tasks with lower values and initiate more interruptions which result in lesser efficiency when it comes to managing time. They further expressed that being schedule-oriented and time-conscious elicits a positive working attitude and better dealing with work and school responsibilities.

In addition to the above-mentioned means, the social studies working students also avoided the feeling of being overwhelmed to cope with the challenges they were facing. They did this by taking good care of themselves, maintaining a healthy social circle, and being self-

disciplined. A study conducted by (Davis et al., 2014), shows that spending time for leisure and hobbies can improve one's creativity which increases the productivity and quality of work of an individual. Furthermore, in another study conducted by (Okano et al., 2019), longer sleep duration, better sleep quality, and greater sleep consistency were all associated with better academic performance. It was explained in the study that one reason for this is that workers and students with enough sleep can avoid daytime sleepiness which can lead to poor performance both in the classroom and workplace. However, just taking care of one's self is not enough since it will be challenging to survive being a working student without social support. That individuals who perceive adequate social support from their friends show higher levels of subjective well-being compared to those who haven't. Lastly, being disciplined and having a strong mindset is a must to perform the responsibilities of a working student. According to a study conducted by (Bilginoğlu & Yozgat*, 2019), self-discipline has a statistically significant positive effect on an individual's career satisfaction. Hence, making it more likely for working students to continue working while studying. In addition, it has been revealed in a study conducted by (Mbaluka, 2017), that self-discipline has a significant correlation with the student's academic performance which is observable in their ITBS scores and GPA.

The key findings of this study show that it supports the researchers' generated presumptions. One of the researchers' presumptions is that financial incapability is considered to be a primary motivator for social studies working students to continue studying while working which is in congruence with the results. The accumulated data stipulates that financial reasons are one of the interpersonal-related factors considered by social studies working students in deciding to work while studying. It was also presumed that social studies working students find it difficult to manage their time both in school and work which matches the outcomes of this study since time inadequacy appears to be one of the challenges encountered by social studies working students. Lastly, the presumption stating that social studies working students overcome their difficulties through scheduling responsibilities and self-discipline was also proven to be true as stated in the results. The information acquired posits that social studies working students practice time management to balance their responsibilities and further self-discipline to the feeling of getting overwhelmed.

Along with the majority of research, the current study's design has its limitations that should be considered and may be addressed in future investigations. To begin with, the qualitative findings of this study might be reinforced by quantitative research to offer a better knowledge of the experiences of social studies working students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the study's informants were only limited to social studies education students so a thorough application of the study's results and implications to other courses and undergraduate programs may be identified. Furthermore, the findings of this study were based on the experiences, actions, perceptions, and attitudes of social studies working students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, future studies might give further information on the lived experiences of social studies working students. Ultimately, because the study used written interview questions, the results might be affected by self-report bias. Despite the aforementioned limitations, this study offered viable information on the experiences of social studies working students during the COVID-19 pandemic which may be utilized to provide credible insights into future research on this field of study.

Similar research about the topic, or further studies that can build and improve on the information provided, are highly encouraged. The findings of this research give out crucial information about the lived experiences of social studies working students that is by far less

attended by previous researchers which makes it a critical contribution to social studies-related research. Further on, this study could also urge researchers in the academe to become more interested in the behaviors of social studies working students amidst the pandemic and trigger the strong intention to delve into this matter to a greater extent. Moreover, the outcomes of this study could be promulgated to current working students, not just those who are taking social studies teaching courses but to the entire community of working students, for this will help them better understand their situation, infer critical insights from their fellow working students and improve their approach on dealing with unprecedented circumstances that they face daily. Finally, findings from future research may be used to develop more inclusive teaching policies and instructional practices, as well as provide more opportunities to enhance education and the experience of learners.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest

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