

EXPLORING THE NITTY-GRITTY OF LIFE: ANECDOTES OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL HOUSEHOLD HELPERS

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Abstract. This study viewed the nitty-gritty of working student of secondary schools in Sto. Niño National High School, Tugbok District, Davao City. There were eight (8) working who participated in the study. This study made use of a phenomenological approach to extract the ideas from the student participants. The participants were purposely selected as representatives from the working students in the school. The virtual in-depth-interview was employed to gather some information as regards to their respective experiences. Using the thematic analysis, the following themes emerged as it relates to the experiences of the participants: the experiences of the working students were on their difficulty balancing work and school duties, economically underprivileged and aiming to finish studies. The coping mechanisms of the working students were: Managing time wisely, focusing on the current duties and staying healthy and energetic. The educational management insights drawn from the findings of the study were: Engage working students in flexible learning mode, Provide proper guidance and school support to working students and Encourage peer learning. The home economics teachers may be more receptive to the need of their students. Other considerations for working students may be crafted to give enough time and space for them. The teachers may be more sensitive to the needs and wants of their students. The students may be directed well by their classroom advisers and the guidance counsellor of the school. The teachers attention to each of the students in the classroom plays a significant value specifically to the working students that they may be given proper guidance and directions for them to complete their dreamed diploma and gain a better life in the future.

KEY WORDS

1. Nitty-gritty of life
2. junior high school
3. household helpers

1. Introduction

Adolescents are bound to be at school to enhance their ideas from the courses they take on a daily basis. Being at school makes the lives of these youngsters meaningful and fruitful for the future. Moreover, learning is supposed to be more focused and realistic. However, there are instances when these youngsters need to exert their energies to help their parents make the ends meet in terms of economic sources, their needs for daily sustenance and other forms of work not supposed to be exerted by these youngsters. Over the years, the concept of “work-study balance” has been an ongoing struggle for working students. While there can be a number of factors involved, financial crisis is still the primary reason why students take part-time (or full-time) jobs. Running from school to work and juggling academic requirements and

side-hustles while keeping your family, social, or love life in check is a truly daunting task. Hatchet (2021) detailed that students working during the pandemic had to reconcile schoolwork and jobs. Some working students reported that their jobs have increased their stress and obligations as a result of the pandemic, forcing them to adapt to new "chaotic" surroundings with additional safety protocols. They said the extra obligations have motivated them to request assignment extensions from their lecturers in order to complete their education around their work shifts. Students who work in critical vocations said the pandemic has put their ability to balance schoolwork and their careers to the test. Like for instance, since lessons moved online, a junior studying in psychology, has struggled to manage working at a local ice cream shop with her uncle's legal practice as an office assistant. She said she had a difficulty with time management because she had to fit her studies around her work hours. Abenoja et al (2019) noted that Filipino students are still able to support themselves financially through working although they have financial problems. According to The Working Student (2016), to set down the job options of Filipino working students namely online jobs, paid corporate internship, fast-food crew, and school jobs. Filipino students are struggling because they have to meet the standards in their work so that they will not lose their job and maintain academic performance so that they will not get a failing grade. Around 216,000 undergraduates in the Philippines are right now juggling school and work, the most recent information from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). About 8In the study of Ramento (2011), the low educational attainments of the students in the City of Davao were due to a low salary which leads the students to combine working and studying. Thus, the students that have financial problems are spending more time working than studying, and because of this, they attained poor grade and poor performance

in school. Antipolo (2021) declared that while educators have worked so hard to just provide learning continuity throughout this time, students have had to resort more on their own alternatives to continue studying distantly via the learning modules or internet. Teachers, however, had to adjust to these new pedagogical concepts and techniques of delivery that they, in one or another, may not have been taught for. Students from wealthy homes, with the support of their parents and a desire to learn, may be able to make their way past closed school doors to other learning options. However, students from the most marginalized groups, who lack access to digital learning tools or the resilience to persevere, are particularly vulnerable. Soria et al. (2020) postulated that that working students were more likely than non-working students to have financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic, including lost pay from family members, lost pay from on- or off-campus employment, and higher living and technology costs. Working students are roughly twice as likely as ordinary students to be anxious about financing for their education. They also take fewer academic units because they must balance work and school. The study further compared working students to non-working students. It said that working students are most likely to have high risk of mental health disorders, greater issues transitioning to online learning, confront hurdles linked to lack of sufficient study spaces and lack of gadgets necessary to perform the learning activities, and are less likely to attend during scheduled virtual classes. With these challenges, the question on how do working students manage and balance their time with academic requirements remained to be a significant issue to raise.

In the local scenario, Sto.Niño National High School, Tugbok District, Davao City, some of the students were noted to have been a part of other families. They were rehomed as young helpers of another household. Although

as a researcher, I knew that this incident was not totally willed by the parents and other members of the household, but somehow, this must have been driven by the family's financial difficulties. Some of the students' families were unable to sustain the entire family's financial needs to feed and send their children to school. These are just a few of the observed key reasons for having these students to become household helpers.

1.1. Purpose of the Study—The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lives of junior high school students who became household helpers at a very young age. This research also dealt with the coping mechanisms of the students as they combined their schooling and being a member of another household as an errand boy or girl. The teachers' insights about their respective experiences in dealing with these students at school.

- (1) What are the stories of junior high school students as a household helper rehomed in another family?
- (2) What are the coping mechanisms of junior high school students they combined school and work ?
- (3) What educational management insights are drawn from the findings of the study?

1.2. Theoretical Lens—This study was anchored on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Icek Ajzen (1991) (started as the Theory of Reasoned Action in 1980) to predict an individual's intention to engage in a behavior at a specific time and place. The theory was intended to explain all behaviors over which people have the ability to exert self-control. The key component to this model is behavioral intent; behavioral intentions are influenced by the attitude about the likelihood that the behavior will have the expected outcome and the subjective evaluation of the risks and benefits of that outcome. Another support theory for this study was drawn from the Self-determination Theory which focuses on different orientations of motivation that influence the quality of engagement (Deci Ryan, 1985). According to the theory, motivation can differ not only in strength but also in orientation. The orientations of motivation refer to the different reasons that give rise to an inclination for an individual to do something. Students can be motivated to learn a new skill because they gain their parents' approval or because learning the skills is necessary for their dream job. Based on the orientations of motivation, the theory categorizes motivation into several types. The two basic types of motivation are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to a disposition to engage in a task for one's inner pleasure. An example of intrinsic motivation is a student reading a history textbook for fun. It is human nature for people to engage in activities that they are intrinsically interested in. Intrinsic motivation often leads to high levels of engagement and performance. Self-determination theory is unique in that it differentiates the construct of extrinsic motivation. The theory explains how to motivate students to carry out learning tasks that are not inherently interesting. The theory specifies three psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—as the basis for sustaining intrinsic motivation and more self-determined extrinsic motivation. To the extent that students internalize and integrate external regulations and values, they experience greater autonomy and demonstrate high-quality engagement in learning activities. Another theory that supports a negative association between student work and educational success is the Primary Orientation Theory (Baert, Marx, Neyt, Van Belle, Van Casteren, in press; Bozick, 2007; Warren, 2002), often cited in the field of sociology. This

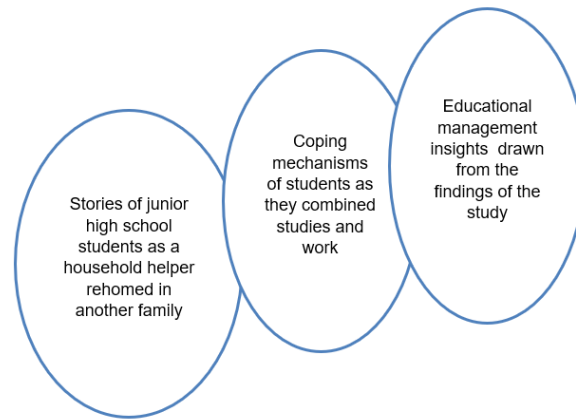


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework

theory suggests that the worse academic performance of working students is related to their primary orientation being toward work rather than toward school. In other words, it reflects a disengagement from school that existed before the decision to work was made, rather than a negative effect due to student employment itself. Therefore, instead of providing an explanation for a causal, negative effect of student work, this theory reveals a potential selection problem that one wants to control for in empirical analyses. Reid (2022) theorized that poverty is the primary reason children are sent to work. Sadly,

child labor keeps children from getting the education they need to break the cycle of poverty. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), a U.N. agency, about 70% Lasty, this study was anchored on The National Council Against Child Labor (NCACL), created under Executive Order No. 92 issued on 17 September 2019, is tasked to amplify government efforts for the protection of the rights of vulnerable sectors, especially the children, strengthen related institutional mechanisms, and establish further measures to contribute to the prevention, reduction, and elimination of any form of child labor.

2. Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design that was used, the role of the researcher, the research participants, the data collection, the data analysis, the trustworthiness, and the ethical consideration. The three most common qualitative methods are participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. Each method is particularly suited for obtaining a specific type of data. Participant observation is appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviors in their usual contexts. In-depth Interviews (IDI) is optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored. Focus groups are effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented. Patton (2002) defined phenomenology as inquiry which asks the questions, "What is the structure and essence of the experience of his phenomenon for these people?" "the goal of this research worked well with this definition in trying to understand challenges of the floating teachers. Giorgi (2007) cautioned researchers to be prepared for an investigation that is greater in both depth and breadth than the offered description implied. He suggested information be viewed as only the tip of the iceberg. In the preparation of this paper, the researcher employed artificial intelligence tools

for proofreading. Specifically, AI was utilized to enhance the accuracy, coherence, and overall quality of the manuscript. This practice is being explicitly stated to maintain transparency and adhere to ethical standards in research. The usage of AI for proofreading reflects a commitment to leveraging advanced technologies responsibly and acknowledges the increasing prevalence and capability of AI in academic and professional writing.

2.1. *Philosophical Assumptions—T*

The philosophical assumption is a framework used to collect, analyze and interpret the data collected in a specific field of study. It establishes the background used for the coming conclusions and decisions. Typical philosophical assumptions have different types and are elaborated below. Good research – undertaking with the selection of the topic, problem or area of interest, as well as the paradigm. Stanage (1987) traces ‘paradigm’ back to its Greek (paradigma) and Latin origins (paradigm) meaning pattern, model for example among examples, an exemplar or model to follow according to which design actions are taken. Differently stated, a paradigm is an action of submitting to a view. This view is supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) who defend a research paradigm as a “basic set of belief that guide action”, dealing with first principles, “ultimates” or the researcher’s worldview or philosophy. Ontology. This part of the research pertains on how the issue relates to the nature of reality. According to Creswell (2012) reality is a subjective and multiple as seen by participants in the study. The ontological issue addresses the nature of reality for the qualitative researcher. Reality is constructed by individuals involved in the research situation. Thus, multiple realities exist, such as the realities of the researcher, those of individuals being investigated, and those of the reader or audiences interpreting the study. In this study, the experiences of the students were carefully dissected to unleash their past and present challenges as they perform their household work and their schooling at the same scenario. In this study, I relied on voices and interpretations of the participants through extensive quotes, themes that reflected their words and provided evidences of different perspectives. The answers of the participants to the study were coded and analyzed to build and construct for the commonality and discreteness of responses. I made sure that the responses of the participants were carefully coded to ensure reliability of result. The researcher upheld the authenticity of the responses and precludes from making personal bias as the study progress. Epistemology. This refers to the awareness of how knowledge claims are justified by staying as close to the participants as possible as during the study in order obtain firsthand information. Guba and Lincoln (1985) as cited by Creswell (2013) state that on epistemological assumption, the researcher attempted to lessen distance himself or herself from the participants. He suggests that being a researcher he or she collaborates, spends time in the field with participants, and becomes an “insider.” Based on Davidson (2000) and Jones (2011). I will identify phenomenology with the use of thematic analysis as the best means for this type of study. In this regard, individual researchers “hold explicit belief”. The purpose of this research was to gather important details on the challenges of the working students particularly those coming from Sto. Niño National High School, Tugbok District, Davao City. I assured to establish a close interaction with the participants to gain direct information that will shed light to the knowledge behind the inquiry particularly on the challenges of the working students who were trying to combine schooling and work. Axiology refers to role of values in research. Creswell (2013) avers that the role of values in a study is significant. Axiology suggests that the researcher openly

discusses values that shape the narrative and includes own interpretation in conjunction with interpretation of participants. I uphold the dignity and value of every detail of information obtained from the participants. The researcher understands the personal and the value-laden nature of information gathered from the study. I therefore preserve the merit of the participant's answers and carefully interpreted the answers in the light of the participant's personal interpretation. Rhetorics. This philosophical assumption stressed that the researcher may write in a literary, informal style using the personal voice and uses qualitative terms and limited definition. In the context of the study, the researcher used the first person in explaining the experiences and challenges of the working students. As a researcher, I agree with the post modernism

2.2. *Qualitative Assumptions*—The distinction between "methodology" and "method" is important. Methodology refers to the creative and responsive approach used to understand questions and subject matter, while method refers to the specific knowledge and procedures (Gerodias, 2013). This study focuses on gathering the experiences and challenges of working students, particularly those from Sto. Niño National High School, Tugbok District, Davao City. The researcher's interest in understanding the inner thoughts of the working students led to the choice of qualitative research, which Kalof and Dietz (2008), as cited by Gerodias (2013), found helpful in uncovering "meanings and motivations that underlie cultural symbols,

2.3. *Design and Procedure*—The study utilized qualitative research employing phenomenology. Interviews were conducted with individuals who have first-hand knowledge of a specific event, situation, or experience. The interviews aimed to address two broad questions

philosophy of Afzal-os-sadat Hossieni (2011). I believe that the aims of education are teaching critical thinking, production of knowledge, development of individual and social identity, self-creation. In postmodern education teachers just lead students to discover new things. They provide opportunities to discuss about different subjects and make creative ways. In this situation student learn to listen to other voices. They tolerate others criticism and try to think in critical way. They learn to respect other cultures and nationalities. Also they emphasize on cooperative learning independent learning, and dialectic, critical and verbal methods. It is deducted that postmodernism and creativity are embedded in each other and we can find the result of this opinion in postmodern education.

personal experiences, and phenomena." Phenomenology was used to address this need, with the aim of presenting the stories of the working students in a way that captures their themes, symbols, and meaning of their experiences, as suggested by David (2005). Phenomenological research is based on the premise that human experience is a valid and rewarding source of knowledge, as well as the idea that the everyday world is a valuable source of knowledge and can provide important insights into the nature of events (Morrissey Higgs, 2006). Through phenomenology, the researcher sought to explore the personal experiences and challenges of the working students and draw insights from their perspectives (Moustakas, 1995).

(Moustakas, 1994). The data was then read, re-read, and analyzed for common phrases and themes, which were then organized into meaningful clusters (Creswell, 2013). Through this process, the researcher constructed the universal meaning of the event, situation, or experiences

and arrived at a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

In this study, phenomenology aimed to extract pure, untainted data. In some interpretations of the approach, researchers use brack-

2.4. Research Participants—The participants in this study were composed of eight (8) informants. The selected informants were the working students of Sto.Niño National High School, Tugbok District, Davao City. The participants must have been as working student of a household being a general helper or parttime. All the participant were coming from various junior high school level, regardless of their sex, age and marital status. Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size the quantitative analyses. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all perceptions. Obtaining most or all of the

2.5. Data Collection—According to Creswell (2013), an important step in the process is to find people or places to study and to gain access to and establish rapport with participants so that they will provide good data. A closely interrelated step in the process involves determining a strategy for the purposeful sampling of individuals or sites. Once the inquirer selects the sites or people, decisions need to be made about the most appropriate data collection approaches. To collect this information, the researcher develops protocols or written forms for recording the data such as interview or observational protocols. Also, the researcher needs to anticipate issues of data collection, called “field issues,” which may be a problem, such as having inadequate data, needing to prematurely leave the field or site, or contributing to lost information. Finally, a qualitative researcher must decide how he or she will store data so that they can easily be found and protected from

eting to document personal experiences with the subject to remove themselves from the process. One method of bracketing is memoing (Maxwell, 2013).

perceptions will lead to the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommends five (5) to 25 and Morse (1994) suggests at least six (6). There are no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative sample size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 1990).

damage or loss. In this study, there are seven steps in the process of data collection. First is the site or individual; the participants were the Sto.Niño National High School, Tugbok District, Davao City. Second is the access and rapport; letter from the Dean of the Graduate School is given to the graduate student for the approval of the division superintendent; letter of permission for the Schools Division Superintendent, the school Principal and the concerned elementary teachers were prepared for easy collection of data. The third is the purposeful sampling strategy; all participants have experienced the phenomenon being studied. There were eight (8) informants selected in this study. The selected working students were considered group of individuals who can best inform the researcher about the research problem. They were also considered as individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and can facilitate the collection of data. The fourth is the forms

of data; the process of collecting information involved primarily in the In Depth Interview (IDI) with the eight (8) informants. The fifth is the recording procedures; the use of a protocol was used in the observation and interviewing procedures. A predesigned form used to record information collected during an observation or interview. The sixth was the field issues; limited data collection was engaged in this study. The last or the seventh step was the storing of data; Davidson's (1996) suggested the use of database in backing up information collected and noting changes for all types of research studies. The COVID 19 Health Protocols. The data was collected during the Corona Virus Pandemic (COVID-19) time; therefore, the collection of data was based on the protocols set by the Inter-Agency Task Force (AITF) standards. It is a task force organized by the executive of

the Philippine government to respond to affairs concerning emerging infectious diseases in the Philippines which was convened in January 2020. The Collection of data or the virtual In-Depth Interview (IDI) was conducted following the protocols for Social Distancing which is one of the mandates of AITF to avoid being contaminated and infected by COVID-19. In this study, the IDI was conducted with utmost care so that social distancing is followed and that at least 2 meters between persons was made. For some participants who missed the face-to-face social distancing efforts, the videocall via messenger, viber, zoom or google meet was used to gather the data or responses of the participants. The participants also filled-in the Interview Form provided to them and submit the same to the researcher.

2.6. Data Analysis—The study involved careful examination and analysis of the collected data. The researcher initially described personal experiences with the phenomenon under study and then proceeded to focus on the participants. Significant statements about how individuals experienced the topic were identified, grouped into themes, and used to develop a composite description of the phenomenon. Thematic content analysis was employed to identify patterns of themes in the interview data. This

method is flexible and can be used for both explorative and deductive studies. Document analysis, which involves a systematic procedure to analyze documentary evidence, was also utilized in this study. It is commonly used to corroborate or refute findings from other data sources. Triangulation of data, which involves using more than one method to collect data on the same topic, was also employed. Environmental triangulation, which considers how environmental factors may influence the findings, was used to establish validity in this study.

2.7. Analytical Framework—According to Braun and Clark (2006), qualitative data analysis methods can be divided into two groups. The first group includes methods driven by an epistemological or theoretical position, such as conversation analysis (CA) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), which have limited variability in how they are applied within their frameworks, and methods that are

situated within a broad theoretical framework, such as grounded theory (GT), discourse analysis (DA), and narrative analysis (NA), and can therefore be used in a variety of ways within those frameworks.

The second group includes methods independent of theory and epistemology, which can be applied across a range of different theoretical and epistemological approaches and are there-

fore very flexible. One such method is thematic analysis, which provides a flexible and useful research tool, potentially offering a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data (Braun and Clark, 2006).

In conducting thematic analysis, several steps were observed. The first stage involved extracting qualitative data for analysis from tape recordings through transcription in order to gain greater familiarity with the data and deeper insight. The transcription was done using personal resources, such as a personal computer and reliable headphones. Listening to the interviews over several nights helped in understanding the nuances of the language and semantics of the participants.

Practices varied considerably in terms of agreeing on conventions with transcribers. Some negotiated the layout and conventions required themselves, while others were less directly involved and accepted the conventions generally used by the transcriber.

The next step involved data extraction and analysis. Manual techniques based on note-taking and summarizing while listening to the recordings were used. This included the process of verbatim recordings of selected spoken words and selecting quotations about central issues or important and interesting points.

A number of different techniques were used, including marking up transcripts with colored pens, sorting data by cutting and pasting, and

using thematic grids and charts, as well as the framework technique developed by the National Centre for Social Research (Ritchie et al, 2003), which was useful in the process of coding, sorting, and collecting data for interrogation. This technique helped in understanding links and relationships between issues. All these efforts and procedures included saving verbatim spoken words from the transcripts, which could be cross-referenced to the thematic displays or the maps.

The thematic analysis method outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) consisted of six phases: 1. Familiarizing with the data by reading the whole data set and noting down initial ideas; 2. Generating initial codes, with codes being the most basic segments of the raw data that can identify a feature of the data that appears interesting; 3. Searching for themes by sorting different codes into potential themes and collating all data extracts within identified themes; 4. Reviewing the themes and refining them further, and producing a thematic map showing relationships between themes and sub-themes; 5. Defining and naming themes, ensuring they give the reader an immediate sense of what the theme is all about; 6. Writing the report to convince the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis, using data extracts embedded within an analytic narrative to make arguments in relation to the research question.

3. Results and Discussion

This part of the study dealt with the research questions and its answers based on the responses of the participants of the study. The participants revealed their experiences as they gathered their opinions on how they were able to surpass the nitty-gritty of life particularly of being a household helper. The participants also discussed their respective coping mechanisms as well as their insights specifically the students of Sto.Niño National High School, Tugbok District, Davao City.

3.1. The stories of junior high school students as a household helper rehomed in another family.—

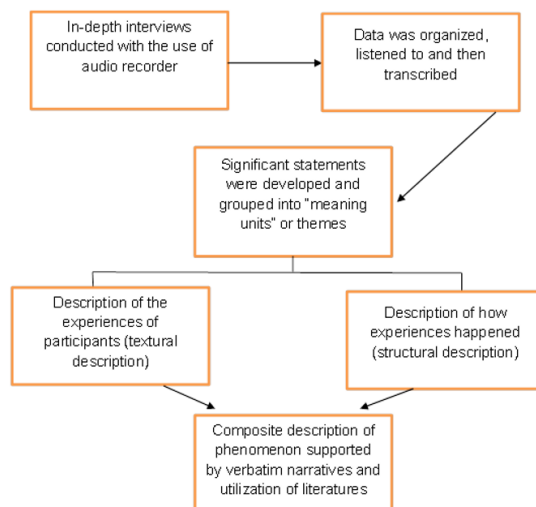


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of The Study

Some of the junior high school students are not full-time student. A few of them are working students who are trying their very best of finish their education by any means, in this study, these working students were interviewed and narrated their respective life experiences while performing two significant functions, one is being a student and the second is being a household helper.

3.1.1. Difficulty balancing work and school duties—During the interview, the participants eagerly shared their experiences of doing dual roles in their daily routines. For them, these two responsibilities were not easy to perform, in fact, it was very difficult to balance the two jobs at the same time.

3.1.2. Economically underprivileged—Most of the participants of this study belongs to the economically underprivileged families. Some of them could hardly eat three times a day. Their parents do not have regular salaries and that they were all dependent on the farm harvests. Due to financial difficulties of their families, these students, wanting to finish their secondary education opted to work as a household helper.

3.1.3. Aiming to finish studies—For the participants of this study, their main objective of being employed as a household helper was to earn money and pay their tuition fees and other incidental school fees. Being a household helper is a decent job and mirroring from other working students who finished their studies as a working student gave them the inspiration to continue their lives as a support person in a family.

3.2. Coping mechanisms of junior high school students as they combined school and work—

3.2.1. Managing time wisely—Despite the number of responsibilities of the participants of this study, they were able to hurdle their difficulties in life. For them, they cannot afford to lose their future due to poverty, that is, they were not privileged to have much money to spend for

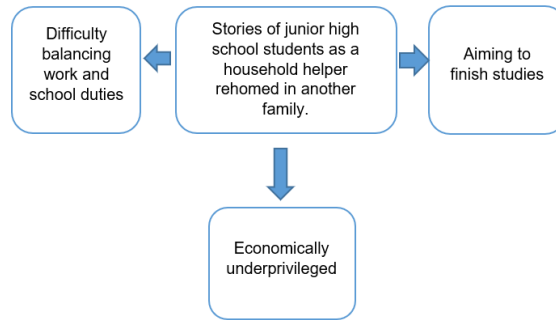


Fig. 3. Stories of Junior High School Students as a Household Helper Rehomed in Another Family

their families and school needs. These participants leaned on their respective coping mechanisms to continue their dreams in life to finish even high school and work in a household at

the same time. For them, they had to manage their time to cope with the demands of their household work and studies.

3.2.2. *Focusing of the current duties*—The participants of this study emphasized that one of their coping techniques was to focus their attention to their current job schedules and school

work time. They expressed their enthusiasm that even with the many complicated activities they are going through, they were able to finish their tasks.

3.2.3. *Staying healthy and energetic*—Based on the interviews from the participants, they all mentioned that staying healthy and energetic were one of their coping mechanisms. With their past experiences, they were all aware that if they do not keep themselves healthy,

this means that they cannot perform their duties in the household where they work. They had to keep themselves energetic at all times, they were all aware that if they do not have energy, they cannot perform their difficult and complicated tasks in the home and school.

3.3. *Educational management insights drawn from the findings of the study*—As the information was gathered from the participants of this study, some educational management insights were drawn as a result of the discussions made by me and the participants of this study. These insights are very significant in understanding the life of working students who are also sending themselves to secondary school.

3.3.1. *Engage working students in flexible learning mode*—Engage working students in flexible learning mode. It was clearly understood that most of the working students had difficulty in keeping and managing their time. As a researcher I would suggest that the working students be given the opportunity to have a flexible learning mode.

3.3.2. *Provide proper guidance and school support*—Proper guidance and support to working students of secondary schools may help them manage their lives very well. Being a working student is not an easy life since they have to balance both their school activities and their household responsibilities. The guidance officer of the school may provide specific time for the working students to at least listen to their

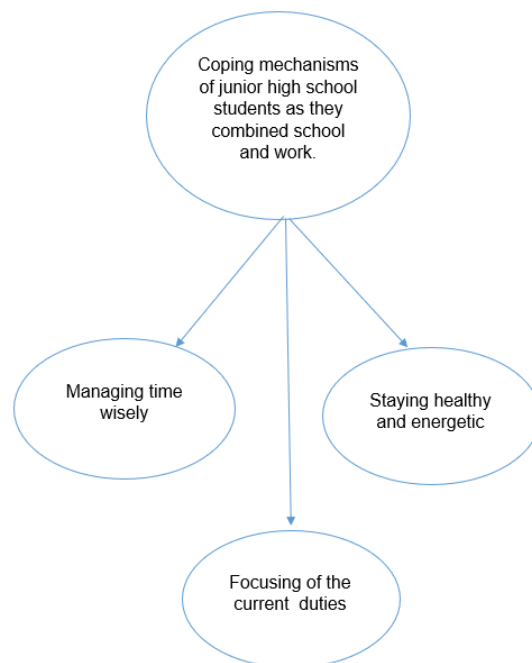


Fig. 4. Coping Mechanisms of Junior High School Students as they Combined School and Work
 problems, be it personal, emotional, financial and academic issues. Getting to know these problems may help the working students cope with their problems and fulfill their dreams of finishing their studies against all odds.

3.3.3. *Encourage peer learning*—Peer learning is one of the key factors that would unburden the working students with their difficulties at school. It was said that students learn more when they are taught by their peers since they at the same level of understanding with no expectations.

4. Implications and Future Directions

In this chapter, the summary of the study is presented, from the summary of the findings, I drew the implications and future directions. The purpose of my study was to find out the experiences of working students as they balance their responsibilities in the household where they work and their tasks at school. The participants coping mechanisms as well as the insights drawn from the participants and reaction of the teachers specifically in Sto.Niño National High School, Tugbok District, Davao City. To achieve the research objectives, I made use of qualitative phenomenological method with the use of thematic analysis. In adherence to Cresswell’s (2006) guidelines in which open ended questions for interview were applied to get authentic understanding of the participants experiences. Furthermore, through this interview approach, I encouraged my participants to fully and openly discuss their own definition or meaning of the phenomenon being explored which were the nitty gritty of the lives of working students. Based on the results of thematic analysis of the responses from the working students who participated in this study revealed the following themes: the experiences of the working students were on their difficulty

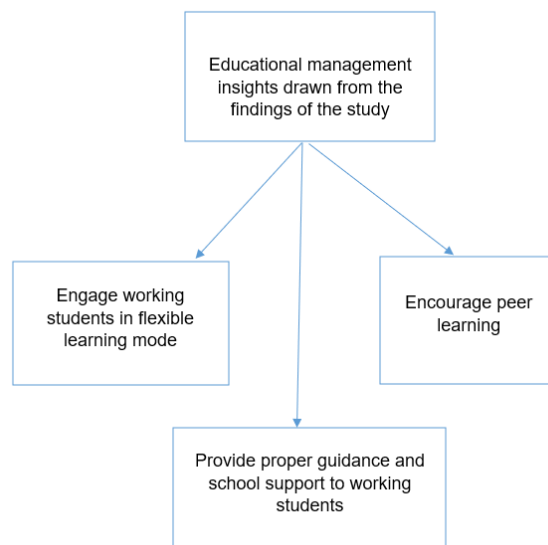


Fig. 5. Educational Management Insights Drawn from the Findings of the Study balancing work and school duties, economically underprivileged and aiming to finish studies. The coping mechanisms of the working students were: Managing time wisely, focusing on the current duties and staying healthy and energetic. The educational management insights drawn from the findings of the study were: Engage working students in flexible learning mode, Provide proper guidance and school support to working students and Encourage peer learning.

4.1. *Implications*—The nitty -gritty of the lives of working students were revealed after the series of interviews conducted by the researcher. The stories of junior high school students as a household helper rehomed in another family were found to be difficult as they balanced their household work and their schooling activities. It was really a difficult experience for these young participants since they had to satisfy the home owner on their household performance before they go to school. At school, the students need to cope with their assignments and other school requirements. Thus, balancing these two responsibilities were not easy. All the participants of this study were economically underprivileged. This means that most of them belongs to a poor family. Most of their parents do not have a sustainable job. They rely on their farm harvests to earn money which is not a regular earning that can financially support the entire family. The only way that these secondary students can finish their studies was to engage with house-

hold chores in another family, this means that they are rehomed since they had to stay in the house of their employers. As pertains to the participants aim to finish their studies, they were all determined to finish their secondary schooling. For them, the only way to be economically stable is to get a diploma and be hired for a good paying job in the future. For them, finishing a degree or having a diploma is the only way out of poverty. There is a big chance for them to be hired for a job anywhere when they qualify themselves academically. The coping mechanisms of the working students revealed three significant themes such as: managing time wisely, focusing on present duties and staying healthy and energetic. Managing time wisely was one of their coping mechanisms. Knowing the bulk of work they have in the household where they work as well as the demands from their school were almost unbearable. However, managing their time in their area of work as well as in their school provided them quality

time to push their expected work output on a daily basis. The working students interviewed in this study revealed that they focused on their present duties. They needed to be directed by their own responsibilities without being told. The greater they focus on their household tasks, the more they finish these tasks earlier, therefore saving enough time to do other important things. The same focus was done at school. They made use of their respective vacant times at school to create and join school activities without sacrificing their work at home. Another significant theme that emerged from the narratives of the participants was on staying healthy and energetic. They knew that their work entails a great amount of energy to finish their work. To stay healthy means to be able to perform their daily routines at the household where they work and at the same time, they can also save enough energy to do other chores. The healthier they stay, the more work and satisfying their work outputs, therefore making their employers happy about their jobs. The insights gained from the findings of the study revealed three factors such as engage working students in flexible learning, provide proper guidance and school support and encouraging peer learning. After the COVID 19 pandemic, academic delivery was changed tremendously. The on-line classes were implemented that until this time, some schools still adopt the off-class activities. Considering the predicaments of the

4.2. Future Directions—Based on the findings of the study, it is important that the findings are properly relayed and used by the significant people whom this research was intended for. For the principals or school heads to be more acquainted with the lives of their constituents, specifically the students. Policies regarding class attendance, class performances and other school activities maybe reviewed to give attention to some students who are working while studying.

secondary working students, they can also be included in the flexible learning mode. In this way, the students are able to use their own time significantly and fruitfully. Being flexible in their class schedules means a lot for these working students. This gives them enough time to comply with their school tasks and at the same time, work in the household. Another theme that emerged was on providing proper guidance and school support. Proper guidance for these working students may mean so much for them, these students are bombarded with so many responsibilities unlike the full-time students who do not need to work. The more the working students are guided at school through the guidance counsellor of the school, the better they feel about themselves and can perform well in their classes. The school support for them is very important since these can provide encouragement and upliftment of their spirits to continue with their studies amidst their struggles and difficulties. On the last note, encouraging peer learning provides a big impact on their learning process. There were times when these working students are absent in their classes due to their household work. As they return to their classes, their peers can guide them and teach them the lessons they missed. This responsibility cannot only be performed by the teachers, but the peer learning method can be of great assistance to these kinds of learners.

The home economics teachers may be more receptive to the need of their students. Other considerations for working students may be crafted to give enough time and space for them. The teachers may be more sensitive to the needs and wants of their students. The students may be directed well by their classroom advisers and the guidance counsellor of the school. The teachers attention to each of the students in the classroom plays a significant value specifically to the

working students that they may be given proper guidance and directions for them to complete their dreamed diploma and gain a better life in the future. For the future researchers, similar studies may be conducted in other regions or divisions. The researchers may consider other aspects of home economics and consider other fields as a source of information on students' academic endeavors.

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