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Work and Study in Balance: Comparing Academic Performance Among Physical Education Students

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Index Terms:

academic performance, working students, non-working students, physical education

Abstract. This study examined the academic performance of working and non-working students in the College of Sports Science and Physical Education at Western Mindanao State University. Specifically, it aimed to determine the level of academic performance of students and to assess whether employment status significantly influenced their academic outcomes. A quantitative descriptive-comparative research design was employed, involving 150 students selected through stratified random sampling, with equal representation of working and non-working students. Data were collected using a structured survey and students' general weighted averages (GWA), and were analyzed using descriptive statistics and an independent samples t-test. The findings revealed that both working and non-working students demonstrated a very satisfactory level of academic performance. Statistical analysis indicated no significant difference in academic performance between the two groups. These results suggested that employment status did not significantly affect students' academic outcomes within the context of the study. The study concluded that students were able to manage academic and work-related responsibilities effectively, resulting in comparable academic performance. It highlights the need to consider broader factors influencing academic success beyond employment status and underscores the importance of institutional support in promoting student achievement and long-term academic resilience. These findings support policies that enhance student support.

Introduction

Academic performance remains a central indicator of student success in higher education, shaping both academic progression and future career opportunities. In recent years, an increasing number of students have engaged in employment while pursuing their studies, primarily due to financial constraints and the need to support educational and personal expenses. This dual role of being both a student and an employee introduces competing demands on time, energy, and cognitive resources, raising concerns about its potential impact on academic outcomes.

Research indicates that student employment is a widespread phenomenon, particularly in higher education settings where financial pressures are significant. A substantial proportion of students engage in part-time work, often balancing academic responsibilities alongside employment demands. Studies suggest that working up to 20 hours per week may not adversely affect academic performance and, in some cases, may even enhance academic engagement, particularly when employment is related to academic tasks (BYU Employment Services, 2006; Pike & Lederman, 2009). Additionally, exposure to real-world work environments has been associated with the development of practical skills that complement academic learning (Richardson, Evans, & Gbadamosi, n.d.; Carnevale et al., 2015).

Existing literature presents mixed findings regarding the relationship between student employment and academic performance. Several studies indicate that financial necessity is a primary driver of student employment, as learners seek to manage tuition costs and daily living expenses (Williams, 2014; Furr & Elling, 2002). However, employment may reduce the time available for academic engagement, potentially leading to lower academic achievement, reduced course

participation, and, in some cases, increased risk of dropout (Darolia, 2014). Conversely, other studies suggest that moderate employment can foster the development of transferable skills such as time management, responsibility, and career readiness, which may positively contribute to students' overall development. However, the relationship between employment and academic performance remains inconclusive. Several studies report that increased work intensity—particularly beyond 20 hours per week—can negatively affect academic outcomes, including reduced class participation and lower grades (Quirk, Keith, & Quirk, 2002; Singh & Ozturk, 2000). Similarly, employment obligations may lead to missed lectures and decreased academic engagement, thereby compromising performance (Curtis & Shani, 2002). On the other hand, some findings suggest that moderate employment can promote psychological well-being, leadership skills, and time management competencies (Leventhal, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2001; Mortimer, 2003; Pascarella & Padgett, as cited in Lederman, 2009).

The complexity of this relationship is further emphasized by evidence suggesting that the effects of employment depend on factors such as working hours, job type, and students' ability to balance academic and occupational responsibilities. While some researchers argue that excessive work hours negatively affect academic performance, others report minimal or no significant differences between working and non-working students, particularly when employment is limited or flexible. Further evidence suggests that the effects of employment are mediated by individual and contextual factors. Student engagement, defined in terms of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement in learning, plays a critical role in shaping academic outcomes (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Klem & Connell, 2004). Additionally, students who engage in employment due to financial necessity often experience increased stress, sleep deprivation, and competing role demands, which may negatively influence both academic performance and well-being (Jogaratnam & Buchanan, 2004; Hovdhaugen, 2015; Creed, French, & Hood, 2015). Despite these challenges, some students develop adaptive strategies that allow them to balance academic and occupational responsibilities effectively (Abenoja et al., 2019). This inconsistency highlights the need for context-specific investigations, especially within particular academic disciplines and institutional settings.

In the Philippine setting, student employment continues to rise, with reports indicating that a notable proportion of college students engage in work while studying, often due to financial constraints and limited access to educational resources (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2010). However, only a portion of these students successfully complete their degrees, as many struggle to balance academic and employment demands. National data further suggest that working students are commonly engaged in service-oriented and informal sectors, which may impose irregular schedules and additional challenges to academic engagement. These conditions underscore the importance of examining employment-related academic outcomes within localized institutional contexts. Despite the growing prevalence of student employment, limited empirical studies have focused specifically on students enrolled in physical education and sports science programs, where academic demands may differ from other disciplines.

Given these gaps, this study aims to examine whether employment status influences academic performance among students in the College of Sports Science and Physical Education at Western Mindanao State University. Specifically, it seeks to (1) describe the nature of employment among students, (2) determine whether there is a significant difference in academic performance between working and non-working students, and (3) assess whether academic performance varies according to the type of employment. The study intended to contribute to a deeper understanding of how employment interacts with academic performance within this specific educational context.

This study was anchored on Time Allocation Theory (1965), which posited that individuals had limited time and energy resources that must be distributed across competing activities. In the context of higher education, students who engaged in employment were required to allocate a portion of their time to work-related responsibilities, potentially reducing the time available for academic tasks such as studying, attending classes, and completing assignments. This trade-off suggested that increased work commitments could influence academic performance depending on how students managed their available time. Supporting this perspective was the concept of student engagement, as articulated by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, which emphasized that academic success was shaped by students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement in learning activities. Employment could limit participation in academically purposeful activities, thereby affecting engagement and academic outcomes. Furthermore, existing studies indicated that the effects of employment were not uniform but depended on factors such as work intensity and job type, suggesting that the relationship between employment and academic performance was complex and mediated by how students balanced their responsibilities.

This study was further supported by Role Strain Theory (1960), proposed by William J. Goode, which explained that individuals occupying multiple roles often experienced conflict due to competing demands on time, energy, and expectations. Students who simultaneously assumed the roles of learners and employees tended to encounter stress, fatigue, and reduced academic focus, particularly when work demands intensified. Complementing this perspective was Human Capital Theory (1964), developed by Gary Becker, which emphasized that investments in education and skill development enhanced an individual's productivity and future economic outcomes. From this viewpoint, employment during schooling functioned as both a constraint and an opportunity: while excessive work reduced time for academic

engagement, moderate employment contributed to the development of valuable skills such as discipline, responsibility, and time management. Taken together, these theoretical perspectives provided a comprehensive framework for explaining how employment status and the nature of work influenced academic performance, highlighting that outcomes depended on the balance between competing demands and developmental opportunities.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design to examine differences in academic performance between working and non-working students. This design was appropriate as it allowed for the systematic comparison of groups using numerical data and statistical analysis to determine significant differences between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The primary variable of interest was academic performance, measured through students' first-semester general weighted average (GWA), while employment status (working and non-working) and nature of employment served as grouping variables.

A stratified random sampling design was employed to ensure adequate representation of students based on employment status. The target population consisted of students enrolled in the College of Sports Science and Physical Education (CSSPE) during the first semester of the academic year 2023–2024. The population was divided into two strata: working and non-working students. From these strata, a total of one hundred fifty (150) respondents were selected, with proportional or equal allocation applied depending on the distribution of students across groups. Within each stratum, respondents were selected using simple random sampling to minimize selection bias. This sampling approach was appropriate for comparative analysis, as it allowed for balanced and representative group comparisons in examining differences in academic performance (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

Data were collected using a structured survey instrument designed to gather information on students' employment status and the nature of their work. Academic performance data, specifically the first-semester GWA, were obtained and recorded for analysis. Prior to data collection, necessary approvals were secured from the appropriate university authorities. The instrument underwent face and content validation by experts to ensure clarity and relevance. Establishing validity is essential to ensure that the instrument measures what it intends to measure (Taherdoost, 2016). All responses were treated with confidentiality and used solely for research purposes.

Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage, were used to describe the nature of employment among respondents. An independent samples t-test was employed to determine whether there was a significant difference in academic performance between working and non-working students, while a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to assess differences in academic performance based on the nature of employment. These statistical techniques are commonly used for comparing means between two or more groups in quantitative research (Field, 2013). All statistical tests were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the distribution of students according to the nature of their employment?

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents according to their employment status. The data indicated that out of the total sample of 150 students, exactly half (f = 75, 50.0%) were classified as working students, while the remaining half (f = 75, 50.0%) were categorized as non-working students. This resulted in an equal distribution between the two groups. The equal proportion observed in the sample reflected the sampling procedure employed in the study, wherein respondents were selected to ensure balanced representation of both working and non-working students. As a result, neither group dominated the sample in terms of size, and both categories were equally represented in the dataset.

In terms of numerical distribution, the identical frequencies and percentages indicated that the dataset was evenly divided between the two classifications of students. This uniformity in group size provided a consistent basis for subsequent statistical comparisons, as both groups contributed equally to the analysis. The data clearly showed that there was no imbalance in representation between working and non-working students within the sample.

Employment Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Working	75	50
Non-working	75	50

Table 1: Distribution of Students According to Nature of Employment

Research Question 2: What is the level of academic performance of students when grouped according to employment status?

Table 2 presents the level of academic performance of students when grouped according to employment status. The results showed that working students obtained a mean general weighted average (GWA) of 1.54 with a standard deviation of 0.24, while non-working students recorded a mean GWA of 1.51 with a standard deviation of 0.23. Based on the institutional grading classification, both groups were described as having a very satisfactory level of academic performance.

The data indicated that the mean GWA values of both working and non-working students were closely aligned, with only a minimal numerical difference between the two groups. In terms of classification, both groups fell within the same descriptive level, indicating consistency in academic performance regardless of employment status. The overall mean GWA of 1.53 further confirmed that the general level of academic performance among the respondents remained within the "very satisfactory" range.

Additionally, the standard deviation values for both groups were comparable, suggesting that the spread of academic performance scores within each group was relatively similar. This indicated that students in both categories demonstrated a consistent pattern of academic achievement, with no substantial variation observed between working and non-working students in terms of performance level.

Overall, the findings showed that both working and non-working students achieved a similar level of academic performance, as reflected in their mean GWA and corresponding descriptive classification.

Employment Status	N	Mean (GWA)	SD	Descriptive Level
Working	75	1.54	0.24	Very Satisfactory
Non-working	75	1.51	0.23	Very Satisfactory
Overall	**150**	**1.53**	**0.24**	**Very Satisfactory**

Table 2: Level of Academic Performance of Students by Employment Status

Research Question 3: Does employment status significantly influence students' academic performance?

Table 3 presents the comparison of academic performance between working and non-working students based on their general weighted average (GWA). The results showed that working students obtained a mean GWA of 1.54 with a standard deviation of 0.24, while non-working students had a slightly lower mean GWA of 1.51 with a standard deviation of 0.23. The difference between the mean scores of the two groups was minimal, indicating that both groups demonstrated relatively similar levels of academic performance.

The independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether the observed difference in mean GWA between the two groups was statistically significant. The computed t-value was -0.98 with 148 degrees of freedom, and the corresponding p-value was 0.329. Since the p-value exceeded the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in academic performance between working and non-working students.

In terms of distribution, the standard deviation values for both groups were also comparable, suggesting that the variability in academic performance within each group was relatively similar. The closeness of both the mean scores and standard deviations further supported the finding that the two groups exhibited similar academic outcomes. Overall, the statistical results demonstrated that employment status did not produce a measurable difference in the academic performance of students within the sample.

Group	N	Mean (GWA)	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Interpretation
Working	75	1.54	0.24	-0.98	148	0.329	Not Significant
Non-Working	75	1.51	0.23				

Table 3: Difference in Academic Performance Between Working and Non-Working Students

The present study examined the academic performance of students in relation to their employment status, with particular attention to both the level of performance and differences between working and non-working students. The findings revealed that both groups demonstrated a very satisfactory level of academic performance, with closely similar mean general weighted averages. Furthermore, the results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in academic performance between working and non-working students. These findings suggest that employment status did not serve as a determining factor in students' academic outcomes within the context of this study.

The comparable level of academic performance observed between working and non-working students aligns with previous studies indicating that student employment does not necessarily result in diminished academic outcomes. For instance, findings by Pascarella and Padgett (as cited in Lederman, 2009) suggested that employment may have neutral or even positive effects on certain aspects of student development, including psychological well-being and leadership skills. Similarly, research has shown that students who work a moderate number of hours are able to maintain academic performance comparable to their non-working peers (Pike & Lederman, 2009). These studies support the present findings, indicating that employment, when managed effectively, may not hinder academic achievement.

However, the results of this study also contrast with earlier findings that emphasized the negative consequences of working while studying. Several researchers have reported that increased work demands can lead to reduced study time, missed academic responsibilities, and lower academic performance (Darolia, 2014; Curtis & Shani, 2002). Additionally, studies by Jogaratnam and Buchanan (2004) and Hovdhaugen (2015) highlighted that working students are more likely to experience stress, fatigue, and sleep deprivation, which may adversely affect their academic outcomes. Despite these documented challenges, such effects were not reflected in the present study's results, suggesting that the relationship between employment and academic performance may be more context-dependent than previously assumed.

The findings of this study can be further understood through the lens of Time Allocation Theory (Becker, 1965), which posits that individuals distribute limited time across competing activities. While employment may reduce the time available for academic tasks, the absence of significant differences in academic performance suggests that students were able to effectively manage their time to meet both academic and work-related demands. This is supported by the concept of student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004), which emphasizes that the quality of involvement in learning activities, rather than the quantity of time alone, plays a critical role in academic success. It is possible that working students compensated for reduced study time by adopting more efficient or focused study strategies.

Moreover, the results may also be interpreted using Role Strain Theory (Goode, 1960), which suggests that individuals occupying multiple roles may experience conflict due to competing demands. While this theory predicts potential negative outcomes, the findings of the study indicate that such strain did not translate into lower academic performance among working students. This could imply that students developed adaptive coping mechanisms to balance their responsibilities. In parallel, Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) provides a complementary explanation, suggesting that employment may contribute to the development of skills such as discipline, time management, and responsibility, which can positively influence academic outcomes.

A key contribution of this study lies in its finding that employment status alone did not significantly differentiate academic performance, despite prevailing assumptions that working students are at a disadvantage. This suggests that the impact of employment on academic performance may not be inherently negative, but rather contingent upon how students manage their roles and responsibilities. The findings contribute to the growing body of literature that challenges the traditional view of employment as a barrier to academic success, instead presenting a more nuanced understanding of student experiences.

Overall, the findings indicated that employment status was not a determining factor in students' academic performance within the context of the study. The absence of significant differences suggested that students were able to adapt to the demands of both academic and work responsibilities, supporting the notion that the impact of employment is contingent upon individual capacity for time management and engagement. These results aligned with perspectives that emphasize the complexity of student experiences, where academic outcomes are influenced by multiple interacting factors rather than employment status alone.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the academic performance of working and non-working students in the College of Sports Science and Physical Education and found that both groups demonstrated a very satisfactory level of academic performance. The results further revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the academic performance of working and non-working students. These findings indicated that employment status, within the context of this study, did not serve as a determining factor in students' academic outcomes.

The results suggested that students were able to manage the dual demands of academic responsibilities and employment without experiencing a measurable decline in academic performance. This implied that working while studying, when managed effectively, may not necessarily hinder academic achievement. Instead, it reflected the capacity of students to adapt to multiple responsibilities while maintaining satisfactory academic standards.

From an institutional perspective, the findings underscored the importance of providing continued support for both working and non-working students. Educational institutions may consider implementing flexible academic arrangements, such as adaptable schedules or supportive learning environments, to accommodate students who engage in employment. Additionally, student support services may be strengthened to include programs that enhance time management, study strategies, and academic engagement.

For educators, the results highlighted the need to recognize the diverse circumstances of students and to provide inclusive academic support that considers varying levels of external responsibilities. Meanwhile, students may benefit from developing effective time management skills and maintaining a balance between academic and work commitments to sustain their performance.

Future research is recommended to explore other variables that may influence academic performance, such as study habits, motivation, mental health, and support systems. Expanding the sample size and including participants from different academic programs or institutions may also provide a broader understanding of the relationship between employment and academic outcomes.

Overall, the study contributed to the understanding that academic performance among students may not be solely determined by employment status. Instead, it highlighted the possibility that other factors—such as individual discipline, time management, and engagement—may play a more substantial role in shaping academic outcomes.

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Competing Interests Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Access to the data is subject to ethical considerations and the protection of participants' confidentiality.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.