

Challenges Associated with Working and Studying as Expressed by Undergraduates in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Oyedotun Dolapo ILORI

Department of Counsellor Education
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
ifedee95@gmail.com

Patrick Oluwafemi AKERELE

Department of Counsellor Education
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
akerelepatric@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the university of Ilorin, Nigeria, using descriptive survey type. The study seems necessary to help students understand the integrities of work study and for school management to make work study more available for students. The study adopts a descriptive survey. The study covers all the faculties in University of Ilorin, Ilorin Kwara State, and the population for the study comprises all undergraduate students, the sample size is 380. The questionnaire that was used as instrument for the study was titled "Challenges Associated with Working and Studying Questionnaire" (CAWSQ) with reliability coefficient of 0.87. One research question was raised and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data was collected online using Toolbox data collector. The study concluded that the challenges associated with combining work and school vary as students advance from year one to the next phase, there is greater workload, as such highly skilled counsellor working in universities need to help students harness suitable resources and every academic support facility for the students. The study recommends that professional counsellors should endeavour to communicate the primary purpose of work study programme to university community which will not cause problem for students who are willing to engage in working and studying at the same time.

Keywords: Challenges, Working and Studying, Undergraduate

Introduction

Work and study programme are being run at the University of Ilorin under the umbrella of the Technical and Entrepreneurship Center (TEC) and the Unilorin Counselling and Human Development Center (UCHDC), which is facilitated by ensuring indigent students have a fair and more relaxed assessment and scrutinized process for qualification. This programme is open to all students in all faculties at the University of Ilorin, both male and female. It is important to establish that among the reasons why students opt for working and study concurrently include poor socio-

economic background, which was severally reported by previous researchers (Gouvias & Vitsilakis-Soroniatis, 2005; Maseviciute, Saukeckiene, & Ozolinciute, 2018) as the most common reason.

Students from lower socioeconomic homes may feel compelled to work and study simultaneously in order to make ends meet. That is, students explore working and studying concurrently for variety of reasons, including their family background, financial condition, and viewpoints. Individual students may work several menial jobs while studying; equally, students with excellent soft skills and internet savvy may work part-time or freelancing while studying (Chopra & Bhilare, 2020). Students who are tech-savvy are constantly pushed to keep their skills up to date, so it appears imperative to participate in activities. According to the study of Maseviciute, Saukeckiene, and Ozolinciute, (2018) students get paid jobs and work during the lecture period mainly for financial reasons. As a result, students who work and study must develop better time management skills in order to maintain a balanced schedule.

Although it can be challenging to balance both responsibilities, it is an excellent opportunity for students to gain work experience, earn money, and develop essential skills that will benefit them in their future careers. This research focuses on full-time students at conventional public universities and the challenges associated with working and studying. This is because most public institution in place requires students' personnel services programme. Student personnel services refers to all the non-academic services rendered to the students at the schools setting, outside the formal classroom instruction, for the purpose of healthy, physical, emotional, social and moral development as part of their preparation for a responsible and productive adult life (Dominguez-Whitehead, 2018).

These services are complementary to the academic programme in making a holistic and balanced education of the students. While the task of intellectual and skill development can be accomplished through curriculum planning and implementation, the task of developing responsible attitudes and morals can only be achieved through the provision and administration of student personnel services which includes students' loan, work study and financial assistance (Carnevale well & Spinks, 2021).

It seems there has been less theoretical and empirical attention paid toward the constructs of work and study in Nigeria, though few studies focus on the challenges associated with schooling

and are very scanty in relation to work and study. For instance, Schoffstall and Arendt (2014) investigated benefits and challenges encountered by working students. The findings revealed that students and graduates identified educational experiences and common types of work experiences, as well as the impact of these experiences on their academic performance, advancement expectations, and career preparation. Omonijo, Anyaegbunam, and Okoye, (2020) explored the usefulness of Work-study Programme in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. The study illustrates the usefulness of the scheme to indigent students, using data from a secondary source and content analysis as a methodology. Similarly, Pedroso, Alcarde, Gordon, and Ponesto, (2022) worked on challenges and opportunities faced by working students amidst pandemic. The findings of the study revealed that working students during the pandemic, encountered challenges of emotional and physical-self limitations and experience lesser in-person connection and mobilization.

There is a paucity of research on the challenges associated with working and studying in Nigeria, as most of the aforementioned research is basically foreign-based, the only one that seemed related, is that of Omonijo, Anyaegbunam, and Okoye (2020), which explored the usefulness of the work-study program. The knowledge gaps that this study seeks to fill are caused by the dearth of local literature in this field. To find solutions to the challenges associated with work study, there is need to identify the nature of these challenges. Therefore, this research is meant to examine the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, to bridge the gap in literature.

The benefits of work-study are numerous. First and foremost, it provides students with a way to earn money while studying. This can help reduce the amount of debt that students have to take on in order to pay for their education. Additionally, work-study programs can provide students with valuable work experience that can help them build their resumes and prepare for their future careers. Work-study programmes can also be beneficial for employers. By hiring students through work-study programs, employers can access a pool of talented and motivated workers who are eager to learn and gain experience. Additionally, work-study programs can help to build relationships between employers and colleges or universities, which can lead to other opportunities for collaboration and partnership. The University of Ilorin Work-Study programme is under the Technical and Entrepreneurial Center (TEC). The TEC works with the University Student Affairs Units and the University of Ilorin Counselling Center, called Unilorin Counselling and Human

Development Centre (UCHDC). The UCHDC provides financial aid in terms of student loans to the University of Ilorin undergraduate students for the purpose of tuition fees and accommodation payments for indigent students. The UCHDC promotes the psychological health of University of Ilorin students and the campus community through preventative programming, clinical interventions, financial aids and professional consultations. At UCHDC, services are tailored to the needs of individuals, including assessment, consultation, brief psychotherapy, and referrals. As such, the UCHDC always refer indigent students to the TEC for the work-study programme. Students whose performance evaluation grades fall below average after taken on work study are advised to stop working. Labour sheet is submitted to work-study supervisor in TEC on the last working day of the month or the next working day if the month ends on a weekend.

Students are advised to fill their work-study application form before closing for the day in order to be considered for payment at the end of the month. New students are to pick and fill their forms at the UCHDC, or TEC at the beginning of the school session for job placement. It is necessary to establish that indigent students referred by counsellors from UCHDC might not meet up with all the eligibility criteria for work-study. To be eligible for work-study at a university, a student must be a registered full-time and current student of the institution and also an indigent student whose living expenditures exceed their expected family contribution. In addition, such students must have a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of at least 3.00. Work-Study opportunities in University of Ilorin are in the following areas: catering and food services, cleaning services, farming, facilities management, office assistant, residential halls, library assistants, and research assistants

Challenges Associated with Working and Studying

Working and studying at the same time has benefits, but it also has drawbacks as students earn money while obtaining educational objectives, such as graduate degrees. Also, working and studying help students get on-the-job experience, especially if the work and study align with the students' course of study. It is also true that working at the same time as schooling will give students the opportunity to develop and improve management skills since student will be working and attending school simultaneously (Simon, & Johnson, 2015).

Time Management: The biggest challenge is often balancing the demands of work and studying. It can be difficult to find time for both, especially when both requires a significant amount of time and effort.

Fatigue and burnout: working and studying can be exhausting, and it can be easy to burn out if one is not careful. Managing workload, taking breaks, and getting enough sleep and exercise can help prevent burnout and fatigue (Maslach, & Leiter, 2016).

Stress and Anxiety: The pressure of working and studying can be stressful and can lead to anxiety. It is essential to develop stress management skills and find ways to manage anxiety to avoid being overwhelmed. Stress and anxiety are both common experiences that people may face in their lives.

Financial Strain: Working and studying can be expensive, and many students have to balance their budgets carefully to make ends meet. This can be an additional stress and pressure to an already challenging situation.

Difficulty in Concentration: It can be difficult to focus on studying after a long day at work, and vice versa. Finding a quiet study space and limiting distractions can help improve concentration and productivity.

Possible Low Grades: When issues like lack of sleep and mild depression hits you as a person working and learning simultaneously, it will affect your grades, because your level of concentration will decrease.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Also, the influence of moderating variables of gender and level of study on respondents' view on the challenges associated with working and studying.

Research Question

A research question was raised to guide the conduct of this study:

- i. What are the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were generated to guide the conduct of the study:

- i. There is no significant difference in the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin based on gender.
- ii. There is no significant difference in the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin based on class level.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey type. A descriptive survey was adopted for quantitative data, and the primary purpose of this type of survey research was to obtain information describing the characteristics of a large sample of individuals of interest relatively quickly. The study covers all the faculties in University of Ilorin, Ilorin Kwara State. The population for this study comprises all undergraduate students in University of Ilorin, Kwara State. According to the Unilorin bulletin (June, 2022), University of Ilorin has over 48,000 undergraduate and over 5,000 postgraduate students studying 90 academic programmes across different faculties. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 5 faculties out of 16 faculties in University of Ilorin. The target population for this study consists of undergraduate students in the 5 faculties that were selected for the study in University of Ilorin, which are: Agriculture, Education, College of Health Sciences, Engineering & Technology and Sciences.

The main instrument for the study is a questionnaire titled "Challenges Associated with Working and Studying Questionnaire" (CAWSQ). The Questionnaire consists of two sections (A and B). Section A consists of demographic data of the respondents such as gender, class level, and faculty. Section B contains 15 items designed to find out the challenges of working and studying. The instruments were patterned in line with four Likert-type rating scale formats: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree; Strongly Disagree. The instrument was validated by three (3) experts (in test and measurement) in the department of social science education university of Ilorin. The reliability of the instrument was established through a test-retest method using twenty (20) students from Kwara state University Malete. These students were selected for reliability because the respondents possess the same characteristics similar to that of respondents under study. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and coefficient was used to obtain 0.87 reliability coefficient. Data was collected online using Toolbox data collector. KoBoToolbox is a suite of tools for field

data collection. It is widely used by humanitarian organizations, researchers, and others for gathering, managing, and analyzing field data.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents’ demographic characteristics are presented as follows, using a descriptive statistic of percentage.

Table 1: Demographic distribution of respondents

N	Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
i.	Gender	Female	240	63.2
		Male	140	36.8
		Total	380	100.0
ii.	Class Level	200	36	9.5
		300	174	45.8
		400	123	32.4
		500	47	12.3
		Total	380	100.0

Table 1 shows that 380 participants took part in the study, out of which 63.2% were female and 36.8% were male. In addition, 36 students (9.5% of the population) were in the 200 level, 174 (45.8%) were in the 300 level, 123 (32.4%) were in the 400 level, and 47 (12.3%) were in the 500 level. This implies that more female students participated than male students. As regards students’ class level, the majority of the respondents for this study were 300-level students.

Research Question: What are the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Rank Order of Challenges Associated with Working and Studying

S/N	I experience the following while working and studying:	Mean	Rank
2	continuous fatigue	3.72	1 st
12	distraction from academic related skills	3.66	2 nd
8	poor academic performance	3.61	3 rd
5	inability to engage in social activities	3.60	4 th
1	poor time management problem	3.60	4 th

S/N	I experience the following while working and studying:	Mean	Rank
14	overcrowded daily schedule	3.59	6 th
4	uncontrollable stress due to where I work	3.59	6 th
11	lack of support from employer	3.56	8 th
7	financial strain	3.55	9 th
9	may develop excess anxiety	3.49	10 th
13	getting fatigue from daily activities	3.48	11 th
3	inability to meet up with academic expectation	3.46	12 th
10	difficulty concentrating in the classroom	3.46	12 th
15	mental stress while trying to balance academic with work life	3.44	14 th
6	inability to sleep properly	3.41	15 th

Table 3 presents the mean and rank order on the challenges associated with working and studying

as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The table shows that items 2, 12, 8, 5 and 1 were ranked 1st to 4th and have the mean scores that are more than the average mean score of 2.50 for 4-point likert scale. In view of this, item 2 stated that “I experienced continuous fatigue” was ranked 1st with mean score of 3.72, item 12 stated that “I experienced distraction from academic related skills” was ranked 2nd with mean score of 3.66. item 8 stated that “I experienced poor academic performance” was ranked 3rd with the mean score of 3.61. While item 5 and 1 were ranked 4th with mean 3.60, in the same vein item 14 and 4 were both ranked 6th with the same mean score of 3.59. Furthermore, item 11 which stated “I experienced lack of support from employer” was ranked 8th with mean score of 3.56. Item 7 which stated “I experienced financial strain” was ranked 9th with mean score 3.55. item 9 which stated that “I sometimes develop excess anxiety” was ranked 10th with mean score 3.49. Since all the fifteen items have mean scores above the mid-mean score of 2.50, then it can be stated that the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria are continuous fatigue, distraction from academic related skills and poor academic performance among others.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin based on gender.

Table 3: Analysis of t-test on challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std.D	df	Cal.t	p-value	Decision
Female	240	53.1958	5.78694	378	.30	.099	Not Rejected
Male	140	53.2143	5.76742				

Table 3 shows the calculated t-value of 0.30 with a corresponding p-value of 0.99 which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Since, the p-value is greater than .05 level of significance and critical t-value, the null hypothesis is not rejected This implies that there is no significant difference in the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin based on gender.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin based on level of study.

Table 4: ANOVA on challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates based on level of study

Sources	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	47.720	3	15.907	.475	.70	Not Rejected
Within Groups	12579.677	376	33.457			
Total	12627.397	379				

Table 4 presents the analysis of variance result on the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin based on level of study. The result shows that the F-value yielded .475 which seems not to be significant with the p-value of .70 ($0.70 > 0.05$) which is greater than .05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin based on level of study; hence the hypothesis is not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding from the analysis of hypothesis one shows that there is no significant difference in the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin based on gender. This implies that both female and male undergraduates experienced similar challenges, and this could be a result of the fact that undergraduates' challenges associated with working and studying often arise from broader societal, economic, and

personal factors that are not gender biased. This finding negates the finding of Lakshmi and Prasanth (2018) that found that the problems faced by the working women of Visakhapatnam in terms of work-life balance are quite high. The results also indicate that the work-life balance of individuals affect their tone of liveliness.

Hypothesis two which states that there is no significant difference in the challenges associated with working and studying as expressed by undergraduates in the University of Ilorin based on level of study. This finding is in variation to the earlier study of Scott-Clayton and Minaya (2016) in which first-year students struggle to manage time and maintain a balance between work and studies, which is consistent with earlier quasi-experimental research finding lower first-year GPAs among students who work more (Scott-Clayton, 2011; Stinebrickner & Stinebrickner, 2003). Working and studying simultaneously can be a rewarding experience, but it also comes with its own set of challenges. The challenges associated with combining work and study can vary based on the level of study. As it is obvious that as student move from year one to next phase, there is increased workload, courses may become more challenging and the workload may increase, compared to the first year. Students often need to choose a major by this year, which can be a significant decision affecting their career path. Also, internships and experience related to their field of interest can be competitive, but vital for future job prospects.

Conclusion

The pressure of managing multiple responsibilities can contribute to stress and anxiety, meeting work and study expectations can feel overwhelming, impacting students' mental well-being. The lack of time for rest and self-care can affect your overall health and ability to cope with challenges effectively. Striking a balance between work and study can put strain on personal relationships, especially if loved ones feel neglected due to time constraints. As such, students who tends to work and study simultaneously often deals with problems of work-life balance which might affect their tone of liveliness. The challenges associated with combining work and study can vary as student move from year one to next phase there is increased workload, as such professional counsellor practicing in universities need to help students harness relevant resources and every academic support facility for the students.

Recommendations

- i. Professional counsellors should endeavour to communicate the primary purpose of work study programme to university community that will not cause continuous for students who are working and studying
- ii. University authorities should work closely with the student's affair units and counselling Centre to identify the indigent's students and ensure stress-free programme by providing work study programme.
- iii. Government should provide flexible students loan that will be easily accessible by students to help in dealing with stressful work study.
- iv. State government need to ensure students' bursary get to students promptly and the amount should be substantial enough to cover the students' school fee for at a session.

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