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Experiences of Work-Study Students at Walton Whaley Library (WWL) of Valley View University, Oyibi Campus, Accra

Samuel Ameyaw*[1], Frank Boateng Afoakwa[2], Esther Manyeyo Tawiah[3]

*Department of Library & Information Services, Valley View University, Oyibi, Ghana
*Correspondence E-mail: sameyaw@vvu.edu.gh

Abstract

The growing demand for financial autonomy and practical experience has led numerous students to engage in work-study programmes despite the inherent difficulties of managing academic and work responsibilities. This study examines the experiences of work-study students at the Walton Whaley Library (WWL) of Valley View University (VVU) on the Oyibi Campus in Accra. The study employed a qualitative research design, collecting data through interviews with 11 students currently engaged in work-study at the library. The findings indicate that financial necessity and opportunities for professional growth are the primary drivers of students' engagement in the work-study programme. Additionally, the study identified the availability of supportive structures, such as adaptable work schedules and mentorship opportunities. However, the study revealed some challenges. These included time management or time constraints, heightened stress levels, and difficulties maintaining academic performance. The study provided recommendations, such as adopting effective time management skills and a more balanced working condition. This research contributes to the broader discussion of enhancing the work-study experience in higher education institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

The escalating costs of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa, coupled with limited family support and rising living expenses, have driven a substantial increase in the number of university students engaging in paid work alongside their studies (Fentahun, 2025; Moore, 2021; Tesha, 2025). In Ghana, undergraduate students at private faith-based institutions such as Valley View University (VVU) often face acute economic pressures. These challenges compel many to participate in work-study programmes to cover tuition fees, textbooks, accommodation, transportation, and daily necessities. Such programmes not only provide immediate financial relief but also offer structured opportunities for practical skill development within the university environment, particularly in essential support units like academic libraries (Ecton et al., 2023; Owusu, 2024).

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Students engage in work-study due to various reasons. They are economic, academic, and personal aspects. One of the key reasons is financial pressure, as many students are involved in work-study to meet these expenses, especially when support from family is not reliable or available. Some students work to lessen their over-reliance on family, also to gain adequate control over their finances. Apart from financial concerns, students engage in work while studying to gain real-world experience and enhance their curriculum vitae, which can secure them a job after graduation. The number of students working while pursuing tertiary studies is on the rise, driven by several factors (Christiansen et al., 2019; Kanmodi, 2020). Accommodation and basic living expenses continue to soar every year, leading students to take on jobs during their studies to meet their financial needs (Stevenson et al., 2022). Around the world, there has been a steady rise in the number of university students who take on work commitments while studying (Onyema et al., 2020; Owen et al., 2018).

At Walton Whaley Library (WWL) on VVU's Oyibi Campus in Accra, work-study students play a vital role in maintaining daily operations. They contribute to critical functions, including circulation services, cataloguing and classification of materials, security monitoring, photocopying, and direct user assistance. In exchange, these students acquire hands-on experience in core library and information science (LIS) practices, such as information organization, customer service, and resource management. Recent studies indicate that student employment in academic libraries can foster transferable skills, including time management, teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and professional accountability, thereby enhancing post-graduation employability and career readiness (Cady & Beavers, 2023; Bond, 2024; Sadvari, 2024; Stoddart, 2022). However, these benefits are frequently offset by notable challenges. Students must juggle demanding academic schedules with work responsibilities, often resulting in role conflicts, physical and mental fatigue, reduced study time, and limited participation in extracurricular or social activities (Drăghici & Cazan, 2022; Summer, 2023; Tu, 2025).

This tension is especially evident in resource-constrained private universities in Ghana, where institutional support may be inconsistent and the demands of dual roles can intensify stress while potentially compromising academic performance. Classic role strain theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding these dynamics (Goode, 1960). The theory posits that individuals experience strain when faced with incompatible or excessive demands from multiple social roles, particularly when resources such as time and energy are limited. For work-study students, the concurrent obligations of full-time academic pursuits and library employment commonly manifest as role overload (excessive demands) and role conflict (competing expectations between class schedules and work shifts). In the absence of sufficient institutional support, such strains may contribute to heightened stress, burnout, diminished academic achievement, and even withdrawal from studies (Ali, 2024; Drăghici & Cazan, 2022; Kulik, 2025).

Previous studies have identified poverty, limited scholarship availability, and the need to support family income as factors motivating students to take on casual or low-paying jobs (Cieslik et al., 2022; Ilori & Akerele, 2024; Oludayo et al., 2014). These findings remain relevant to the current study. In addition to financial reasons, students also aim to obtain hands-on work experience and build skills that improve their chances of finding jobs in the future (Bartolj & Polanec, 2021).

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Current scholarship on working students reveals consistent global and regional patterns. Financial necessity remains the predominant motivator, with students from modest or underprivileged backgrounds seeking to reduce reliance on family support or loans while simultaneously gaining practical experience and professional networks (Ecton et al., 2023; Remenick & Bergman, 2021; Tesha, 2025). In academic library contexts specifically, student workers often report improvements in discipline, confidence, and a stronger sense of institutional belonging. Library roles further enable students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world information service environments, aligning with high-impact educational practices (Bond et al., 2024; Cady et al., 2023; Sadvari, 2024).

Nevertheless, the literature also documents persistent drawbacks, including inflexible schedules that conflict with academic timetables, inadequate remuneration that fails to meet living costs, physical exhaustion from extended hours, mental health issues such as anxiety and burnout, and reduced opportunities for social engagement or self-care (Mehta, 2020; Summer, 2023; Tu, 2025). Support mechanisms, such as flexible scheduling, mentorship by library supervisors, tailored academic advising, mental health counselling, and time-management workshops, have been identified as essential factors in mitigating these negative outcomes (Cady & Beavers, 2023; Zeijen et al., 2021). In African and Ghanaian contexts, additional complexities emerge from broader socio-economic conditions, including limited scholarship opportunities, cultural expectations of self-reliance, and the operational constraints typical of academic libraries in private institutions (Fentahun, 2025; Owusu, 2024; Tesha, 2025).

Despite this expanding body of research, a notable research gap persists. Although general studies on working students are abundant in Western and some Asian contexts, phenomenological investigations into the lived experiences of work-study students specifically within university library settings in sub-Saharan Africa remain scarceExisting literature rarely examines the distinctive cognitive and service demands of library work, including cataloguing, user interaction, and information literacy support. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to applying role strain theory to examine how these demands intersect with academic pressures in faith based universities in Ghana. Most prior work treats student employment generically, thereby overlooking the unique contributions and challenges faced by library student workers in resource-limited environments (Stoddart, 2022).

This study focuses on phenomenological approach, which captures the voices of the entire population of 11 work-study students at Walton Whaley Library. By centering participants' lived realities, this research illuminates how library-specific tasks intersect with academic demands in a private Ghanaian university context. It extends the literature by offering context-specific insights from the Global South, while evaluating not only motivations and challenges but also the perceived effectiveness of existing support structures. This library-centric perspective contributes fresh empirical evidence to discussions on student employment in academic libraries and provides practical implications for improving student well-being and service quality in similar institutions across Africa.

This study aims to explore the experiences of work-study students at Walton Whaley Library (WWL), Oyibi Campus, Valley View University. Specifically, it aims to (1) identify the primary motivations for participation in the work-study programme; (2) examine the availability and perceived effectiveness of support mechanisms offered by the

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library and university; and (3) investigate the multifaceted challenges students face in balancing work responsibilities with academic commitments. Grounded in Goode's (1960) role strain theory, the findings are expected to generate actionable recommendations for library management, work-study coordinators, and university administrators. These include greater scheduling flexibility, enhanced mentorship, targeted professional development opportunities, and better integration of library work with academic learning outcomes. Ultimately, this research enriches scholarship on work-study dynamics in higher education within developing countries and promotes more equitable, supportive conditions that foster both academic success and professional growth for student workers in academic libraries.

METHODS

The researchers employed a qualitative single-case approach using a phenomenological design. The researchers adopted this design to identify why students engaged in work-study, the obstacles they face and the support resources available to them at WWL. Philosophy and psychology inform phenomenological research, detailing individuals' lived experiences of a phenomenon through participant accounts.

The target population consisted of all students assigned to work at the WWL under the work-study policy. The reasons for focusing on these students are that they are consistently accessible and punctual in fulfilling their duties. Furthermore, their experiences would offer significant insights into the relevance of the work-study programme. The library employed eleven (11) work-study students. These students are assigned to various sections or units in the library to perform specific tasks. They included circulation, cataloguing, security, and the photocopier section.

The division of tasks enabled students to gain practical experience in various library functions while supporting the library's daily operations. Due to the small population size, the researcher did not apply any sampling method. Instead, the study utilised the entire population of students assigned to the library. The use of the population will allow the researcher to have a comprehensive analysis of the experiences and perspectives of all students working in the library.

Based on the study's objectives, we used a structured interview guide as the sole instrument for data collection. The researchers divided the instrument into four sections: A, B, C, and D. Section A focused on the demographic data of the participants; Section B discussed the reasons why students engage in work-study at WWL; Section C collected data on the challenges faced by work-study students at WWL; and Section D concentrated on the available support for work-study students at WWL.

The researchers wrote an official letter to request work-study student data from the coordinator of the work-study programme. Similarly, the researchers obtained permission from the university librarian before conducting interviews with the students. This process helped the researchers determine the number of students assigned to WWL. Interviews were audio-recorded using a voice recorder, along with notes taken during the proceedings. The researchers transcribed the responses verbatim to ensure data accuracy and prevent any loss or inaccuracies. The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews to solicit relevant information. The acting librarian's office hosted the interviews, with each session lasting for fifteen (15) to twenty (20) minutes.

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The researchers adopted a thematic analysis approach, which facilitated the systematic identification, organisation, and interpretation of themes and patterns. The researchers thoroughly read the transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding of the content and acquaint themselves with the data. The subsequent phase entailed the development of codes and the allocation of labels. This action was followed by organising the themes to ensure they accurately presented the data. The researchers screen the themes to confirm their relevance and alignment with the study's objectives. The themes were finally refined, clearly defined, and named for the report writing. This report interpreted the themes of the research objectives, reinforced by direct quotes from the participants. Each participant was assigned an alphanumeric code to ensure anonymity and data protection. The researchers used "P1" for participants 1, "P2" for participants 2, and so on.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Table 1 showed that, out of the eleven (11) respondents, 6 were between the age bracket of 18-21 years (54.5%), forming the majority group, followed by 3 respondents, who were between the ages of 22-24 years (27.3%). Two respondents (18.2%) were between 25 and 27 years old. Regarding gender distribution, the results revealed that 4 respondents (36.4%) were female, while 7 respondents (63.6%) were male. In terms of educational level, 2 respondents (18.2%) were in level 100, and 3 respondents (27.3%) were in level 200.

Table 1

Demographic information of the respondents

Demographic characteristics	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age (years)	18–21	6	54.5
	22–24	3	27.3
	25–27 and above	2	18.2
	Total	11	100.0
Gender	Female	4	36.4
	Male	7	63.6
	Total	11	100.0
Academic level	Level 100	2	18.2
	Level 200	3	27.3
	Level 300	4	36.4
	Level 400	2	18.2
	Total	11	100.0
Department / School / Faculty	Theology	5	45.5
	Nursing	1	9.1
	School of Business	3	27.3
	School of Education	2	18.2
	Total	11	100.0

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Four respondents (36.4%) were at level 300, and 2 respondents (18.2%) were at level 400. The analysis indicated that Level 300 students had the highest participation compared to students from other levels. Table 1 showed that 5 respondents (45.4%) were from the Theology department, 1 respondent (9.1%) from the Nursing department, 3 respondents (27.3%) from the School of Business, and 2 respondents (18.2%) from the School of Education.

Theme 1: Reasons Why Students Engage in Work-Study

Financial difficulties emerged as a prominent motivation for participating in the work-study programme. Participants described employment as a means of meeting educational expenses, reducing dependence on family members, and maintaining financial stability while pursuing their studies. One participant identified financial difficulties as the primary reason for joining the programme:

> "The primary factor influencing my situation is financial difficulties. Since my time in junior high and high school, I have been self-sponsoring my studies." (P1)

Similar concerns were expressed by other participants. P2 described the programme as a means of meeting financial obligations, including tuition fees, textbooks, and educational supplies. P3 emphasised the importance of employment income in reducing the financial burden on family members:

> "The programme serves as a dependable source of income, alleviating financial strain on my family and allowing me to pursue my studies without any disruptions" (P3).

Limited family financial support was also evident in the account of P4, who relied on occasional assistance from an older sibling. P6 similarly described participation as a way of meeting educational expenses while working towards personal goals. For P7, income from the programme helped address tuition and other study-related costs, while P8 emphasised the importance of employment income for accommodation, transportation, food, study materials, and internet access. Beyond financial necessity, some participants associated the programme with greater independence. P5 explained that employment provided an opportunity to reduce reliance on an existing sponsor:

> "I decided to work because I did not want to depend entirely on my sponsor for everything." (P5)

Professional and personal development constituted another motivation. Participants recognised opportunities to acquire practical experience, develop transferable skills, and prepare for employment after graduation. P1 specifically identified cataloguing, classification, and knowledge of library operations as additional motivations for participation. P5 and P6 also viewed work-study as an opportunity to gain practical workplace experience, while P7 anticipated developing teamwork and collaboration skills. P9 highlighted the potential contribution of work-study to professional preparation:

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> "Frankly speaking, my engagement in work-study has proven to be instrumental in enhancing my transferable skills, such as time management, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving" (P9).

The same participant also valued opportunities to interact with students from different academic disciplines, mentors, and professionals. P10 associated the combination of employment and academic responsibilities with accountability, discipline, and personal growth. P11 similarly emphasised autonomy, independent decision-making, and increased self-confidence. The participant further noted:

> "My employment on campus has significantly strengthened my connection to the university, thereby enriching my overall experience." (P11)

Taken together, the participants' accounts indicate that engagement in the work-study programme was motivated by both financial and developmental considerations. Although meeting educational expenses featured prominently, participants also valued opportunities to develop practical competencies, assume greater personal responsibility, and prepare for future employment.

Theme 2: Support Mechanisms for Work-Study Students

Participants described several sources of support that helped them manage their academic and employment responsibilities. These included institutional financial assistance, flexible working arrangements, guidance from university personnel, psychological support, and assistance from family members or external sponsors. However, the accounts also indicated differences in participants' access to support and identified additional services they considered necessary. Flexible scheduling was among the support mechanisms described. P1 identified the work-study programme itself as a form of institutional support and reported receiving guidance from a library supervisor on managing academic and employment commitments. P2 similarly acknowledged flexible scheduling arrangements provided by library management, which allowed students to work during periods without scheduled classes.

Nevertheless, access to financial assistance was not uniform. P2 reported that the university offered a scholarship for Ga-Adangbe students but explained that the eligibility requirements prevented participation in that particular scheme. This account highlights a distinction between the availability of financial support and individual eligibility to receive it. Other participants described institutional arrangements that provided assistance with educational expenses. P3 reported that the work-study programme helped reduce tuition-related financial pressures and identified career development services as another form of institutional support. P4 described access to a flexible internship arrangement aligned with the academic calendar. P5 particularly valued scheduling flexibility and the administration of payments:

> "The coordinator oversees the timely payment of work-study students, enabling them to complete their semester examinations." (P5)

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Psychological and financial support were also mentioned. P6 reported the availability of stress and mental health support through the university's psychology department. P7 identified bursary services and participation in the work-study programme as sources of financial relief that helped reduce concerns about educational expenses. Not all support originated from the university. P8 described receiving financial assistance from family members and an external sponsor introduced through a lecturer.

This experience illustrates how personal networks and institutional relationships could provide additional financial assistance. Alongside existing support mechanisms, several participants identified areas where further institutional assistance was needed. P9 suggested greater consideration of working students when preparing academic timetables, together with assignment extensions and access to online classes or recorded lectures. The participant explained:

> "Providing extensions for assignments and projects could help mitigate the stress associated with academic deadlines." (P9)

P10 recommended dedicated academic advisors, mental health counselling, and workshops on time management. P11 similarly called for additional scholarships, dedicated administrative offices, and counselling services to address difficulties associated with combining employment and academic responsibilities. These accounts indicate that participants recognised several forms of financial, academic, and psychological support. At the same time, their experiences suggest that the accessibility and adequacy of support varied, while some participants continued to identify unmet needs requiring institutional attention.

Theme 3: Challenges Associated with Work-Study Students

Despite the perceived benefits of the programme, participants described difficulties associated with balancing employment and academic responsibilities. These challenges included competing schedules, limited time for academic activities, financial constraints, physical and psychological exhaustion, reduced social participation, and restricted access to developmental opportunities.

Conflicting academic and work schedules were among the challenges reported. P1 described feeling pressured by lecture schedules and experiencing difficulty allocating sufficient time to assignments, projects, and examination preparation. The participant also reported that some departments or offices were unwilling to adjust working arrangements to accommodate academic commitments. P2 similarly described difficulties managing academic deadlines alongside employment responsibilities, emphasising the need for effective time management and planning. P3 reported that scheduling conflicts sometimes made it difficult to fulfil both academic and workplace obligations:

> "At times, there are conflicts between work schedules and class timetables, making it a challenge for me to report at work" (P3).

P9 also described overlapping lecture and work schedules, which occasionally resulted in missed classes and difficulties maintaining academic participation. The participant further reported that demanding schedules limited opportunities for relaxation

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and other personal activities. Financial difficulties remained a concern even among participants receiving employment income. P4 considered remuneration insufficient to cover tuition, educational materials, and living expenses. Additional medical expenses were described as contributing to financial hardship. Physical and psychological exhaustion constituted another challenge. P5 associated the combination of academic and employment responsibilities with extended working hours, insufficient rest, sleep difficulties, and physical fatigue. The participant stated:

> "Efforts to balance these responsibilities lead me to burnout and physical exhaustion" (P5).

Comparable experiences were expressed by P10 and P11. Both participants described prolonged working hours, inadequate rest, and the mental and physical demands of maintaining academic and employment responsibilities. P10 referred to difficulties arising from limited rest, while P11 emphasised the strain associated with meeting expectations in both settings. Participants also described the consequences of limited time for social and extracurricular engagement. Although P6 acknowledged the professional skills gained through work-study, the participant reported occasional isolation from peers because of limited opportunities to participate in social activities. P7 similarly described reduced opportunities to maintain relationships and participate in campus activities:

> "I frequently miss out on opportunities to participate in clubs, sports, and other campus activities that enhance my experience." (P7)

The same participant reported experiencing workloads that exceeded the expected working hours for students. P8 identified additional difficulties involving group study sessions, collaborative learning, and participation in career development activities. The participant also expressed concern that some departments or offices did not assign students to positions aligned with their academic development.

These findings indicate that participants experienced challenges extending beyond financial concerns. Difficulties involving time allocation, competing institutional expectations, physical and psychological well-being, social participation, and access to academic opportunities were evident across the accounts. Although participants recognised the developmental value of employment, they also described tensions between the demands of work and their responsibilities as university students.

Discussion

Motivations for Work-Study Participation

The findings indicate that financial necessity was a prominent motivation for students participating in the university library work-study programme. Participants associated employment income with their ability to cover tuition, educational materials, accommodation, transportation, and other living expenses. Several also described employment as a means of reducing dependence on family members or external sponsors.

These findings are consistent with research identifying financial necessity as an important reason for students to undertake employment while studying (Jack & Bassett,

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2024; Nidogon Višnjić et al., 2024; Verulava & Jorbenadze, 2022). Financial concerns may be particularly relevant when students depend on limited or irregular sources of assistance. However, the participants' experiences also demonstrate that financial motivations were not restricted to situations involving a complete absence of support. For some, employment represented an opportunity to exercise greater financial independence while continuing to receive assistance from other sources.

The findings further suggest that financial considerations were accompanied by expectations of professional and personal development. Participants valued opportunities to acquire library-related competencies, improve teamwork and communication skills, and develop experience considered useful for future employment. These expectations are consistent with research indicating that student employment can contribute to the accumulation of work experience and skills relevant to subsequent employment opportunities, although the potential benefits depend on the extent and nature of employment (Bartolj & Polanec, 2021; Jackson, 2024; Nidogon Višnjić et al., 2024).

The library environment provided a particular context for these developmental expectations (Bischoff et al., 2024; Taylor & Sandoval, 2024). Participants identified opportunities to learn cataloguing, classification, information service practices, and workplace collaboration. However, the present findings primarily reflect participants' perceptions of these opportunities rather than independently measured improvements in competence or employment outcomes. The coexistence of financial and developmental motivations suggests that the work-study programme served several purposes for the participants. Employment was viewed as a means of addressing immediate financial needs while also providing opportunities for practical learning and preparation for future careers.

Institutional Support and Student Experiences

The findings identified several mechanisms through which participants received assistance in managing their academic and employment responsibilities. These included flexible work schedules, tuition-related financial assistance, bursary services, guidance from supervisors, psychological support, and assistance from family members or sponsors. The importance of institutional support for students who combine employment and higher education has been emphasised in previous research (Anderson & Zaber, 2025; Summer et al., 2025). Universities can respond to the circumstances of working students by developing policies that accommodate employment commitments, expanding opportunities for campus employment, and strengthening student support services (Cady et al., 2023; Remenick & Bergman, 2021; Taylor & Sandoval, 2024).

In the present study, flexibility in working arrangements appeared particularly important to participants who needed to coordinate employment responsibilities with scheduled classes and examinations (Cady et al., 2023). Guidance from supervisors and the administration of payments were also identified as useful forms of assistance. However, the findings do not suggest that all participants received the same support or that existing arrangements consistently met their needs. Differences in scholarship eligibility, access to institutional services, and the flexibility provided by departments were evident in the accounts. Participants also proposed additional measures, including academic advising, more adaptable timetables, access to recorded lectures, counselling, and increased financial assistance (Summer et al., 2025).

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An important distinction therefore emerges between the existence of support services and their perceived accessibility or adequacy. Although several participants acknowledged available mechanisms, others reported difficulties that existing arrangements had not fully addressed. These findings suggest that institutional support should be considered in relation to students' actual academic and employment circumstances. The participants' recommendations point to areas where closer coordination between academic departments, library supervisors, and student support services may help address competing responsibilities (Bischoff et al., 2024; Naidoo-Chetty & Du Plessis, 2021). Nevertheless, the present study does not establish the effectiveness of these proposed measures, which would require further evaluation.

Challenges of Balancing Work and Academic Responsibilities

The findings demonstrate that participants experienced several difficulties associated with maintaining simultaneous academic and employment commitments. Conflicts between class timetables and work schedules, insufficient time for assignments and examinations, and reduced opportunities for social participation were recurrent concerns in the interview accounts. These experiences are consistent with the distinction between work-study conflict and work-study facilitation, which recognises that employment may create competing demands while also providing potentially beneficial experiences (Kulik, 2025; Owen et al., 2018; Prokes & Klusacek, 2025). Participants reported that overlapping responsibilities could interfere with lecture attendance, individual study, group activities, and preparation for examinations. These findings are also relevant to the broader literature examining the relationship between student employment and educational outcomes. Existing evidence suggests that the consequences of student employment may vary across different educational indicators and according to the intensity of work commitments (Ecton et al., 2023; Neyt et al., 2019; Prokes & Klusacek, 2025).

The findings also identified physical and psychological difficulties associated with balancing these responsibilities. Participants described fatigue, insufficient sleep, stress, and experiences they characterised as burnout. These accounts are consistent with research linking academic and employment demands to burnout and difficulties in academic adjustment among employed students (Drăghici & Cazan, 2022; Kulik, 2025; Prokes & Klusacek, 2025). Research on students undertaking part-time employment has similarly identified difficulties involving sleep, health, and academic responsibilities (Verulava & Jorbenadze, 2022). Nevertheless, these findings should be interpreted in relation to the study's qualitative design. Participants' accounts demonstrate how they perceived the consequences of balancing employment and study, but they do not independently establish clinical burnout, changes in academic achievement, or causal relationships between employment and health outcomes.

Another important finding concerns the effects of employment on students' participation in university life. Participants described reduced opportunities for extracurricular activities, social interaction, collaborative learning, and career development events. These experiences suggest that the challenges of work-study participation extend beyond managing academic deadlines to include other aspects of students' educational experiences (Summer et al., 2025). Taken together, the findings indicate that participants perceived both advantages and disadvantages in their employment experiences. While work-study offered financial and developmental

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opportunities, competing responsibilities sometimes restricted their ability to participate fully in academic, social, and personal activities.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the challenge of balancing work with academic responsibilities presents a distinctive set of opportunities and difficulties for students engaged in work-study at the Walton Whaley Library (WWL) of Valley View University, located on the Oyibi Campus. The study underscores the remarkable resilience and adaptability exhibited by these students in managing their dual commitments. It also emphasises the critical role of effective time management, institutional support, and personal discipline in achieving their goals. By addressing these obstacles and nurturing a supportive environment, the university can facilitate the academic and professional growth of work-study students, ensuring a balanced and enriching educational experience. The study recommends that WWL conduct periodic surveys on work-study programmes. The feedback on the survey will help the library identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. The university should offer scholarship packages or bursaries to support students, especially those who are in need. Access to financial support will help students alleviate their financial burdens. The university can also solicit funds from associations and various philanthropic organisations to support students.

This partnership would help students effectively balance their academic responsibilities with their work obligations. Work-study students must have access to support services, such as tutoring, seminars, and workshops. The training must also include time management and stress management. The study suggests that WWL should implement more adaptable working hours to better align with students' class schedules. This initiative will enable students to balance work and learning. The results offer valuable insights for library management and the coordinator of the work-study programme to improve the condition of work-study students as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of library services.

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SA: Conceptualization, investigation, writing – original draft. FBA: Methodology, formal analysis, writing – review & editing. EMT: Data curation, validation, writing – review & editing.

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Conflict of interest statement

Authors state no conflict of interest.

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