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EXAMINING THE TRANSITIONAL JOURNEY: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF A FORMER EMPLOYEES TURNED TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore and understand the experiences of Former Employees who turned back to college students. Using purposive sampling and inclusion criteria, the participating three (3) Kapalong College of Agriculture Sciences and Technology (KCAST) students who are former employees were identified. All of them participated in the in-depth interviews. This study employed a qualitative research methodology grounded in case studies to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences. Such an approach is beneficial for qualitative researchers as it guides hypothesis development through detailed investigations of small groups. Results revealed the challenges of the participants: struggling in adapting to changing social and professional environment; juggling between work and studies: and financial challenges in the pursuit of education. In response to the challenges they have encountered, they deem the following coping strategies essential; turning pressure into motivation; and empowering oneself through prayer and guidance. Upon reflecting on their entire experience, they arrived at the following insights; essence of striving for greater aspiration; importance of work experience in career progression; and education as pathway to advance career positions. It can be concluded that the transition from former employees to college students represents a transformative and enriching journey characterized by challenges, growth, and fresh opportunities. These individuals exhibit resilience and commitment as they balance work responsibilities and academic pursuits. The perspectives and diverse backgrounds they bring add valuable insights, contributing to a vibrant learning atmosphere that enhances the educational experience.

KEYWORDS: *Former Employees, College Students, Multiple-Case Approach, Qualitative, Cross-Case Analysis*

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INTRODUCTION

The transitional journey of individuals from the workforce to college entails a multifaceted process, encompassing motivations for the transition, encountered challenges, and strategies for successful adaptation. The motivations driving this shift vary, with some seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills, others aiming for a career change through higher education, and some pursuing a lifestyle alteration or exploration of new fields. Each individual's motivation is distinct, influenced by personal circumstances and aspirations. Transitioning from a worker to a student presents numerous challenges, including adapting to a new academic setting, managing increased academic demands, and balancing work commitments with studies. Financial obstacles such as tuition fees and living expenses may also pose challenges. Furthermore, individuals may navigate the expectations of family, friends, and former employers during this transition period (Rosenberg, 2018).

Recently, in the United States, individuals who shift from being employees to college students often encounter significant obstacles when returning to education. Having been away from the academic environment for an extended period, they need to adjust to new study routines, time management techniques, and digital literacy skills. Adapting to unfamiliar teaching methods, varied assignment structures, and different assessment approaches can be challenging, and they may have to juggle academic responsibilities with personal and professional commitments such as work and family obligations. To overcome these challenges, returning students need a supportive academic setting, specialized support systems, and adaptable academic paths that cater to their individual needs and situations. (Tinto, 2021).

Recently in the Philippines, former employees who have turned to higher education often face numerous challenges. One of the most common issues is financial difficulty. Many individuals who have had to rely on their previous employment to support themselves and their families are now struggling to make ends meet while pursuing their studies. They not only have to

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overcome their academic requirements, but also the financial burden, which can be overwhelming. Some former employees find themselves having to take on multiple part-time jobs or freelance work to make ends meet, leaving them little time or energy for their studies. Those who rely heavily on their family's support are also more likely to suffer, as they may not have the financial resources to cover their expenses (Autida, 2023).

Therefore, given the impact of former employees transitioning to college students on academic performance and outcomes, there is an urgency to conduct this research to address the positive and negative issues associated with this shift in demographics. The experiences of these non-traditional students serve as authentic evidence of whether their prior work experiences contribute positively to their academic competence and adaptability in a college environment. Moreover, the social relevance of this study aligns with the need to explore the benefits and challenges faced by former employees as they cross their college education. Such insights will not only aid future colleague in their preparation but also guide educational institutions in developing programs that effectively support and equip these students, ensuring they are well-prepared to meet the evolving demands of the workforce.

In connection with this, there are studies that have been conducted such as the studies of Rambe (2017) entitled *The effect of previous employment experience and entrepreneurship exposure on entrepreneurship intentions of college level students*; Grozev (2023) entitled *Exploration of the social identity processes in employed students*; Griffin (2022) entitled *A Story of Transition and Transformation: Making the Career Switch from Corporate America to Higher Education* these recent studies of the transition of former employee to college student provides valuable insights into the challenges, motivations, and experiences individuals face during this significant life change. Understanding this transition can inform workforce development initiatives and expand our knowledge of career development, adult learning, and educational pathways. By investigating the experiences of former employees turned college students, we can gain valuable insights that benefit individuals, organizations, and educational institutions. This underscores a notable gap in existing research, as there is a lack of studies that delve into the real-life experiences of former employees who turned back to college student.

The research findings will be disseminated by distributing copies of papers, reports, or summaries to key stakeholders, collaborators, and community members. This approach ensures that important individuals can easily access and engage with the study's results. By sharing these materials, the researcher hopes to enhance the study's impact within academic, collaborative, and community settings.

Research Questions

1. What are the unique experiences of a student from a former employees turned to college students?
2. What are the challenges of a student from a former employee to college?
3. How did the former employees turned to college students cope with the challenges that they have been experienced?
4. What are the insights that can be drawn from the experiences you passed through from a former employees turned to college students?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was used a qualitative research methodology based on various case studies, to more fully comprehend the in-depth analysis of the participants experiences. Qualitative researchers should adopt this approach to direct and support the development of hypotheses, it uses in-depth and focus investigations of small groups of people. The discoveries of qualitative research are respected as descriptive instead of predictive. The technique too helps within the researcher's capacity to associate with the participants. Therefore, the researcher might report to the participants for encourage clarification and confirmation in arrange to form the information more reliable and authentic (Neubauer et al, 2019). This qualitative study employed the multiple case study technique to delve into the experiences of former employees who have transitioned to college students. Using a blend of comprehensive interviews, cross-case analysis, and observational techniques, this research sought to obtain detailed and nuanced perspectives on the intricacies of this transition. In this investigation, the researchers employed a specific type of research approach known as qualitative research. This approach enables the researcher to gain a profound understanding of individuals' experiences and thoughts. They selected a small cohort of participants and engaged in thorough discussions with the researcher to collect additional information. The findings of this study are intended not to foresee future events but rather to illustrate what individuals have already undergone. This method also allows the researcher to build a relationship with the participants, which helps the researcher get more accurate information. By doing so, the researcher is able to verify and clarify the information collected, enhancing its reliability and authenticity. A qualitative approach is considered the most appropriate method for this study, and one variant of qualitative research is the multiple-case study. Implementing a multiple-case study design in qualitative research can serve as an effective tool for exploring complex systems through in-depth information gathering. By investigating multiple cases, researchers can achieve a broader comprehension of their research question and contribute to theoretical advancements (Creswell, 2013). This qualitative research utilized the multiple-case study method to explore the experiences of former employees who have transitioned into college students. Through a blend of detailed interviews, cross-case analysis, and observational techniques, the study sought to collect rich and nuanced insights into the intricacies of this transition. The interviews were conducted with great care, and the responses were transcribed and analyzed using a comprehensive topic framework. This careful analysis and interpretation facilitated

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the identification of key themes and patterns, offering a deeper comprehension of the importance of this study and its implications for future research and practice.

Research Participants

The key participants of this study were the students at Kapalong College of Agriculture Sciences and Technology (KCAST) in Maniki, Kapalong Davao Del Norte. Participants were selected in accordance to as prescribed pre-inclusion criterion. The purposive sampling method used in determining the participants to ensure the acquisition of authentic experiences relevant to the study.

The participants of this study were the student of KCAST which are the former employee who get back in college from different courses. The researcher selected the first case through the following inclusion criteria: (a) must be a worker before proceeding higher education;(b) studying at Kapalong College of Agriculture Sciences and Technology; (c) must be a student who works as a bagger male. Additionally, the participant from this case which is from non-board course.

On the other hand, the second case was chosen by the following inclusion criteria: a) must be a worker before proceeding higher education; (b) studying at Kapalong College of Agriculture Sciences and Technology; (c) must be a student who work as repairman male. Hence, the participant of this case is from board course and shifted to non-board course.

Lastly, the third case of this research was selected through the following inclusion criteria: a) must be a worker before proceeding higher education; (b) studying at Kapalong College of Agriculture Sciences and Technology; (c) must be a student who work as water refiller male. The participant from board course has experienced more broad array of works in his working journey. Each unique case represented an individual's experience and journey in facing the challenges of transitioning from a worker to a student within the context of their respective decisions. The participants shared their struggles encountered during the transition journey, shedding light on the obstacles they have overcome and the experiences that have shaped their paths. These narratives provide valuable insights into the complexities of balancing work responsibilities with academic pursuits, illustrating the resilience and determination required to cross the transition from the workforce to higher education. As a result, these cases delved into the distinctive academic backgrounds, preparation methods and personal obstacles faced by each participant thereby contributing valuable insights into the multifaceted dynamics of a former employees turned back to college student.

Data Collection

Qualitative research offers an extensive array of data collection techniques. In-depth interviews (IDIs) are the most popular research procedures. Qualitative research involves having conversations or talks with individuals in order to gain a deeper knowledge of their opinions of the study issue and the reasons behind them (Manu, 2019).

The researcher used a variety of specific methods to collect data and pertinent information for the study. Some of the tools she used in this educational endeavor were a voice recorder that serve as essential tools for building a solid foundation of proof that all written data and their expressions are only from the perspective of the important. The audio recorder is very helpful in the interviews. Firstly, the audio provided a factual basis for the statements made by the informants. Secondly, it provided clear examples of the emotions expressed by the participants. This technology became useful in reinforcing the strengths of the informants highlighted in this study. The voice recorder also played an important role in the conduct of the study. While the voice recorder cannot provide stationary or moving images like the previous devices, it did provide a clear voice record which was very important for the study. After the interviews, the retrieved documents helped the researcher to have a clear view about language learning in the new normal. Each recorded interview was transcribed verbatim to ensure a higher level of accuracy in data analysis.

Data Analysis

All collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was used as a method that provided a systematic element to the data analysis. This allowed the researcher to combine the thematic frequency analysis with one of the total content. Therefore, participants' interpretations were important because they provided the most appropriate explanations for behavior, actions, and thoughts. As described, thematic analysis includes the linked steps of data reduction, data display, and data inference, all of which were helpful in reviewing and plotting the data collected (Miles, 2004).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants and Informants of the Study

The study's participants of this study were KCAST students who were a former employees and get back in college. All the participants were male, and they all have their pseudonyms as they request to protect their identity. These three participants have varied situations: *Cartoon* is a male student who worked as a bagger before entering college life, *Tools* is a student who works as a repairman, *Water* is a boy who work as a refiller; By that, the researcher put her trust in them that they could supply what this study sought to find out.

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Table 1. Participants and Informants of the Study

CASES	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Code
Case 1: BAGGER	Participant: Cartoon	Male	29	IDI-01
	Informant: Chels	Female	18	IDI-02
Case 2: SHOP	Participant: Tools	Male	22	IDI-03
	Informant: Hon	Female	29	IDI-04
Case 3: REFILL	Participant: Water	Male	22	IDI-05
	Informant: Rich	Male	21	IDI-06

High school graduates who enter the workforce after graduation often possess certain advantages over their peers. It has been noted that students working after graduation demonstrate superior academic performance compared to those nonworking students in the university. These individuals attribute their competence, work ethic, and positive attitudes in their current employment to the training and experiences they acquired as working students (Fede, Gorman, & Cimini, 2018). The transition from work to school is widely recognized as a significant shift toward greater independence, as well as personal and academic autonomy, for many individuals. However, this transition marks a significant developmental milestone into adulthood, necessitating significant social and emotional adjustments for many individuals. Transitioning from a more structured environment at work and home to taking full accountability for academic, financial, and social dimensions of life can be quite daunting and overwhelming. The challenges posed by this shift, along with the pressures of adapting to a new academic and social environment, can significantly affect an individual's mental health and overall well-being (Young et al., 2020). The viewpoints and theories discussed in this section illuminated the experiences, insights, and coping strategies of Former Employees Turned College Students. Those who moved from employment to pursuing higher education encountered numerous challenges, such as a lack of cultural understanding, inadequate knowledge of their surroundings, and limited resources. Nevertheless, by developing coping strategies and effective methods, they have managed to overcome these hurdles and achieve their objectives. In conclusion, this section offers valuable insights into the experiences and viewpoints of Former Employees Turned College Students, providing readers with a deeper understanding of how they navigate the challenges they face. The findings of this study will be useful information for various research fields, particularly in education. These outcomes can be quite significant and advantageous for the following issues: The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) can utilize the findings from this study to gain deeper insights into students' perceptions of their transitional experiences. These insights can be utilized to create programs and activities designed to address the needs of students undergoing this transition, ensuring equitable opportunities and support based on their distinct educational backgrounds. Additionally, the outcomes of the study can assist school administrators by enhancing their awareness of students' viewpoints during this transitional phase.

Table 2. Challenges Faced by the Former Employees to College

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Struggling in Adapting to Changing Social and Professional Environment	• *"My workmates used to be so close to me that we would really work together, except for my classmates now, there are others who are sucks others are do not know how to managed, it really hits different. It is one of my challenges also."* -IDI-01 • *"...as he a former employee will feel anxious about socializing and creating connections with younger student, specially I know that my brother is introvert.*" -IDI-02 • *"... Challenges are quite significant. Basically, you need emotional support from your family, full support like verbal encouragement, as it greatly helps. It's a big challenge for me because my parents work, and when I come home, I have no one to talk to about the difficulties I've experienced in school."* -IDI-05 • *"Despite facing many emotional challenges that weigh on him, he continues to push forward because many support and emotionally motivate him to continue pursuing his dreams in life."* -IDI-06

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Juggling Between Work and Studies	• ***"****I stopped going to school for nine (9) years, so I didn't learn that much in school because of course I was working. The challenges I faced is my mindset was focused in my work then when I went back to school, it seems like there are a lot of things I have need to study, the one also I didn't go through before and when I went back to school it was changed my perspectives but there are some that I also applied that were things I got before at work."* -IDI-01 • ***"****My brother stops his schooling 9 years ago because my parents can't afford his tuition in college, so for that years he works and after he decide to pursue college since he receives financial support and the challenges there is coping up, he needed to restore his knowledge and for me it is his biggest challenge."* -IDI-02 • *"When I started working, I focused on work and then when I got back here at school, of course my mind was divided and it happened that sometimes I lost my focus on school."* -IDI-03 • *He really focused on his work because he might get reprimanded, and when he's at school, he can focus. But there are times when he thinks about his work beforehand, so his mind doesn't just focus on one thing."* -IDI-04 • *"So, from high school experiencing pandemic, we did modular then at that time my knowledge was very stock and I was confused that's why when I work it seems like its stuck that's why when I go back to college, I am under pressure then my mind suffering mental block that time, I thought I would be able get back easily to my knowledge before, but it is very difficult, I need to spend time in studying."* -IDI-05
Financial Challenges in the Pursuit of Education	• ***"****Challenges basically what I said a while ago, he is still adopting learnings because he went through from being an employee to college, then also we went through covid before and that he started to lack a bit of learning, that's one of the difficulties he went through."* -IDI-06 • ***"****The most common challenges I faced are financial and yes you get paid, but it won't take long your money still remains because of course you have to pay bills and other expenses, it is just so different."* -IDI-01 • *"The challenges of former employees may struggle to manage his time effectively in the new environment and the financial concerns so about the expenses in college.*" -IDI-02 • ***"****In the challenges of work, of course there are many problems there one of it is the time management, the problem also in school is different the challenge I face now is the financial one."* -IDI-03 • ***"****He experienced is that basically first is financial, because of course I know him since before, it is so hard to live before because we depending on the farm income, so the challenges he really faced is financial."* -IDI-03 • *"For me, one of his struggles is really adjusting his time management. I used to feel sorry for him sometimes because he really tries to work hard even when things get tough, but he really makes an effort in all aspects."* -IDI-04 • *"Financially unstable, I have a lot of dreams that I wanted to achieve, then those are my challenges because I can't reach it because my salary is small, then there are many expenses in college, there is also many challenges there, basically the common one is financial because in college you will invest high amount of money because you wanted to finish your studies and to gain high salary."* -IDI-05

Challenges Faced by the Former Employee to College. From the gathered data through an in-depth interview among the three (3) cases, the researcher discovered their challenges. This made them distinct from each other as a former employee turned to college students.

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Firstly, Cartoon who work as a bagger before and a student now at Kapalong College of Agriculture Sciences and Technology. Based on the data that was analyzed by the researcher, it was found out that they had three (3) unique experiences. These include struggling in adapting to changing social and professional environment, juggling between work and studies, and financial challenges in the pursuit of education.

The first theme revealed that the former employee who turned back in college experienced **struggling in adapting to changing social and professional environment.** This involves the challenges faced by the participants associated with transitioning from being a worker to student also, you struggle to adapt to changing social and professional contexts, which may include challenges keeping up with new technologies, changing workplace dynamics and changing interpersonal relationships.

This result is connected with the study of Writer (2019) it is necessary to implement strategies that can facilitate the transition. He emphasizes keeping an open mind, seeking guidance and building relationships with experienced colleagues, learning from the experiences of others, developing cultural intelligence, embracing continuous learning, and being proactive in seeking professional development opportunities. In addition, it is very important to recognize the signals of change, to try and experiment with new ideas, and to accept change as a natural part of life. Asking for mentorship, asking questions, looking after your own well-being, being a team player, learning the culture, avoiding comparisons and keeping a positive attitude are also highlighted as effective strategies for adapting to a new work environment. Ultimately, adapting to change requires time, patience and a willingness to adopt new habits and behaviors.

Additionally, Kolosova (2022) stated that struggling in adapting to changing social and professional environments is a common challenge faced by various groups, including first-time managers, college graduates, youth, military transition to civilian life, and people dependent on marine resources. These people face difficulties such as building interpersonal relationships, handling professional information, intense competition and facing mental and personality changes. The adaptation process is influenced by factors such as psychophysical characteristics, skill development and exposure to climate change impacts. Proposed strategies to tackle these challenges include mentoring, gradual adaptation models, and building social capacity. Overall, effective adaptation necessitates a blend of suitable management strategies, capacity enhancement, organizational support, and measures tailored to local contexts.

The second theme indicates that a former employee transitioning to a college student experienced challenges in **juggling between work and studies**. Participants across all cases acknowledged that effectively managing time is essential to satisfy both work and educational responsibilities. This often entails prioritizing tasks, establishing clear objectives, and adhering to a disciplined routine in both domains to achieve success.

Furthermore, Brummelhuis (2021) supports this theme by highlighting that balancing work and study is a prevalent issue for many individuals seeking to progress in their careers while pursuing education. The cornerstone of achieving equilibrium in this situation is proficient time management, realistic goal setting, and task prioritization. Crafting a schedule that accommodates both work and study, sharing this plan with your support network, and allocating time for crucial elements such as rest, nutrition, and exercise are vital. Establishing achievable goals and accepting that certain tasks may need to be postponed can aid in minimizing stress and avoiding burnout. Additionally, concentrating on long-term objectives, identifying burnout symptoms, and seeking assistance when necessary are crucial methods for successfully managing the demands of both work and study.

Moreover, the study's findings resonate with Boakye (2021), who provides insights into the difficulties individuals face in balancing work and education. He emphasizes the significance of social support systems in attaining work-life balance, particularly for women managing both work and study. Women who juggle these responsibilities often depend on the backing of family, colleagues, and supervisors to maintain their well-being and balance their duties. Boakye underscores the necessity for organizations to adopt family-friendly policies that benefit working mothers and enhance career opportunities for women. In addition, the sources underline the impact of employer and co-worker support on individuals trying to balance work and study responsibilities and emphasize the importance of a supportive work environment in terms of success. Overall, it highlights the critical role of social support systems, flexible working arrangements and understanding from employers and co-workers in helping people effectively manage the demands of work and study at the same time.

Lastly, the theme revealed that one of unique experiences as a former employee transitioned to college student is **financial challenges in the pursuit of education.** They believed experiencing financial challenges is most common for him as a worker and pursuing higher education. Having this kind of experiences can feel him some quite difficult because there are changes his life can happen it can be before he can buy what he wanted and now that he is a student he has a limitation in all aspect specially his money is not enough to buy any unnecessary things.

In addition, the study of Perdana (2024), highlighted that the is financial challenges in the pursuit of education should defines the significance of government policies and help that support fair and equitable get to education, by providing financial help to families in require. In addition, collaborative approaches between government, schools and communities have to be be strengthened to overcome these financial challenges and make an comprehensive and evenhanded educational environment.

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Furthermore, as per Mori (2019), financial challenges in the pursuit of education have been broadly considered in different settings. He highlights the impact of education finance change and charge confinements on state and local education investing, emphasizing the imbalances in school consumptions due to contrasts in property riches he examines also the critical holes in college participation between high-income and low-income students, attributing this dissimilarity to rising college costs and the complexity of the financial help handle also he delve into the financial issues influencing higher education, such as enrollment development, workforce supply, and operational costs, shedding light on the financial flow inside academic institutions. These collectively emphasize the multifaceted financial obstacles confronted by students and educational institutions within the pursuit of education.

Table 3. Coping Mechanisms of the Former Employees to College

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Turning Pressure into Motivation	• *"When I am at work, I just try my best, and when I come to school, I still try hard also when I am having problems in financial, I am just finding some strategies to be motivated"* -IDI-03 • *"His efforts are always top-notch. Sometimes, he faces problems that he doesn't even mention due to our hardships, so he just tries to handle it himself."* -IDI-04 • *"I really pushed myself to pursue college because it's really great to experience a lot of things there. And my family just became my motivation because I want to repay their sacrifices for me in the future, even if it's just pressure, I turned it into motivation."* -IDI-05 • *"He, was to firmly hold onto his dreams in life of finishing his studies. What motivated him, I guess, was his family because he saw the hardships they faced and the difficulties they experienced."* -IDI-06
Empowering Oneself through Prayer and Guidance	• ***"****Just pray, just fight because no one can help in our selves but us, then ask for advice from those who have more experience."* -IDI-01 • *"He overcomes his challenges and responsibilities through a prayer he prayed for it and his prayer works."* -IDI-02 • *"Trust in yourself the ask guidance for the presence of God, read books, and ask for advice from those who know more or have more experience."* -IDI-03 • *"My brother is active in church, first, he prays that he can handle everything. Then, he also enjoys reading books, and of course, he never forgets also the advice from our family."* -IDI-04
Drawing Inspiration and Motivation from Mentors	• ***"****I asked my acquaintances who have a lot of experience in the work, then what they told in me, what they advised in me, I followed it, then also I always prayed to God."* -IDI-01 • ***"****He seeks for academic support, guidance and advice from others who have the same experience as him"* -IDI-02 • *"My boss has been a great help to me because he motivated me to pursue my studies. He told me that he sees potential in me and believes in what I can achieve. He advised me to keep going no matter how tough life gets and never to surrender because it's just part of my future success if I work hard."* -IDI-05 • *"One of the biggest contributors to that aspect of his life is actually his boss. His boss motivated him by telling him to continue his studies because he has the potential to be a great person someday. It's true, he really does have potential; he's a bright kid, and I know him well."* -IDI-06

Coping Mechanism of the Former Employee to College. There are three (3) major themes that emerged in the study. It was found out that Former Employees turned to college students coping mechanism in their transitioned journey. These includes turning pressure into motivation, empowering oneself through prayer and guidance and drawing inspiration and motivation from mentors.

The first theme revealed that the former employee turned into college student are making one thing this one is **turning pressure into motivation.** In order to relieve stress and anxiety during his transitional journey experience. Based on the data gathered, positivity helped the participants to visualize success and boost their interest and motivation towards achieving their goals.

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Moreover, Barbara (2021) stated that turning pressure into motivation involves using stressful moments to your advantage instead of letting them become your downfall. By focusing on solutions to the challenges caused by pressure, individuals can use the energy of pressure to increase their motivation and achieve their goals effectively. It is imperative to develop positive coping mechanisms to manage pressure stress, as this can lead to higher motivation and better performance. Identifying the "why" of goals and finding purpose in your efforts can help transform stress into motivation, allowing people to perform better under pressure. Additionally, starting the day with mindfulness, practicing positive thinking, and celebrating wins can help reduce stress and maintain high levels of motivation throughout the day. Finally, accepting pressure as an opportunity for growth and focusing on achievable goals can increase motivation and success in difficult circumstances.

According also to Dou (2022) stated that turning pressure into motivation is a concept that highlights how challenges and setbacks can make people respond better and become stronger. Pressure, whether from external circumstances or an internal desire, can drive people to succeed and achieve their goals. Successful people often thrive in difficult circumstances, using pressure as a catalyst for better performance. In addition, pressure can increase confidence and spiritual qualities, promote patience, endurance, flexibility and inner strength. It also suggests that pressure can motivate employees, offset the negative effects of high tensions and improve work performance and satisfaction. Basically, the ability to transform pressure into motivation is to recognize the internal changes that pressure can bring about that lead to positive responses to life's challenges. By accepting pressure as a tool for growth, individuals can harness its transformative power to overcome obstacles and achieve success.

The second theme disclosed that the former employee turned to college student are **empowering oneself through prayer and guidance** to overcome the difficulties and challenges they have been experienced. Also, empowering himself through prayer and guidance requires seeking strength, clarity and wisdom through connection with a higher power or inner self. Prayer allows people to find comfort, guidance and motivation, while spiritual or practical guidance helps navigate life's challenges and promotes personal growth and resilience. This holistic approach nourishes the mind, body and spirit, leading to a more empowered and purposeful life.

The study theme is supported by Muenter (2024) that empowering oneself through prayer and guidance requires strength, courage and guidance from a higher power to deal with life's challenges. Prayer is a source of comfort, guidance and perseverance in difficult times and helps people find hope, peace and resilience. Through prayer, people gain strength, focus on the positive, and trust in God's promises, enabling them to face obstacles with determination and faith. Prayer, does not guarantee a problem-free life, but it gives people the inner strength to overcome their struggles. It acts as a pillar of strength to face challenges and make wise decisions. By connecting with a spiritual source through prayer, people can release stress, anxiety and fear, creating space in their lives for peace and wisdom.

In addition, Faith (2023) states that empowering yourself through prayer and guidance involves seeking comfort, inspiration, and strength through deep prayers that guide personal growth and self-mastery. These prayers can help a person overcome self-doubt, accept their true worth, and face challenges with courage and grace. To strengthen yourself through prayer and guidance, it is important to understand the keys to a more effective prayer life, including knowing who you are talking to, asking for forgiveness, praying with a friend, praying the word, and memorizing scripture. In addition, practical prayers with purpose and direction play a vital role in aligning yourself with God's will, seeking clarity and taking steps to fulfill your unique calling. By praying for confidence, self-esteem and guidance, people can find strength, believe in themselves and trust God's plan for their lives.

Lastly, the third theme revealed that the former employee turned to college student are **drawing inspiration and motivation from mentors** which made an important tool for them to cope up with the challenges and struggles they have been faced. The data revealed that the former employee turned to college student are being inspired and encouraged by mentors means tapping into the wisdom, experience and guidance of those who have walked similar paths before us. Mentors serve as guiding lights of knowledge and encouragement, aiding us in navigating our paths with their insights and support. Their life experiences impart meaningful lessons, while their faith in our capabilities fosters confidence and resolve. This reciprocal relationship enables us to surmount difficulties, clarify our objectives, and experience both personal and professional development.

This concept is reinforced by Rangel (2021), who noted that mentors can be a significant source of inspiration and motivation for individuals aspiring to grow and flourish in their careers. Acting as role models, mentors demonstrate what can be achieved through their accomplishments and character. By recounting their own experiences and challenges, mentors illustrate that it is possible to overcome obstacles. Those mentors who actively support the career advancement of others, prioritizing their interests over personal gain, embody a powerful example of progress within their fields. They offer encouragement, accountability, and motivation to help mentees reach their highest potential. Mentors assist mentees in cultivating their strengths rather than concentrating on their weaknesses. Open-minded and broad-minded mentors can inspire mentees and transform perceived failures into sources of hope and understanding.

Moreover, Wider (2019) highlights the importance of seeking inspiration and encouragement from mentors as a beneficial approach to enhancing one’s artistic journey. Mentors are crucial in guiding, inspiring, and motivating artists to unlock their full potential. By drawing from the knowledge and

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experiences of seasoned artists, individuals can acquire valuable insights, refine their skills, and maintain motivation in their creative pursuits. In the realm of art, mentoring encompasses not just skill enhancement but also personal development and self-exploration. Mentors facilitate artists in accessing their creativity, tackling challenges, and discovering joy and relaxation within their artistic practice. Through sharing their knowledge, experiences, and networks, mentors empower artists to pursue new avenues, sharpen their abilities, and ultimately achieve their artistic aspirations. The inspiring and motivating role of mentors is a transformative experience that can encourage artistic development, foster creativity, and instill a sense of purpose in artistic endeavors, significantly influencing an artist's journey, igniting innovation, and leading to notable artistic accomplishments.

Table 4. Insights of the former employees to college students which they can share to others

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Essence of Striving for Greater Aspiration	• *"It is up to them where they want to in work or go to school, but in my case, I chose to go to school because we can't just focus on one thing but we can learn more in school."* -IDI-03 • *"His advice to others is to strive hard and choose the path that will uplift them, and of course, focus on schooling and listen to the advice of your parents."* -IDI-04 • ***"****If you've work, and you feel it suited with you just stay there but if you have dream to had something higher that you want to reach in your life, don't stop exploring and find out there where you are suitable."* -IDI-05 • *"… he can give to people who are in the same situation as him is that they just focus on their goal even if it is very hard, they should have a high fighting spirit to finish their studies because it will help them a lot in life in the future that's why they should they just stay positive."* IDI-06
Importance of Work Experience in Career Progression	• *"This experience, gives me advancement because I already have experience in the field of work, and soon if I can be a professional, I am more advanced because I already know how to talk to people and know how to communicate with them. Two things have been given to me in education and in my former work because it gives me advancement because I worked before, I am still growing and now when I go to school, I am still growing so it gives me double help."* -IDI-03 • *"His current experiences are providing him with advancements because the challenges he's facing now will eventually become his testimony in life once he graduates."* -IDI-04 • *"The experiences that I went through have a great influence on my goals now to continue and finish college and to have better work someday and to be able to buy what I want in life and to help my family, and to have a better future someday."* -IDI-05 • *"In terms of experiences, there are a lot of experiences. Being an employee is very difficult. And to reach the goals in his life and then in the future he can get a proper job and then also the most important thing is that he can take on the responsibilities in his life so that he can help his parents someday."* -IDI-06
Education as a Pathway to Advanced Career Positions	• *"I realized that it's more tiring when you work in a small position, than when you finish college and then applying for a high position."* -IDI-01 • *"I think he realizes not to settle for less and working in a low position with low salary is really hard so he realizes he should never settle for less and he finish to college or he really wants to pursue college to have a work in higher position and with a higher salary."* -IDI-02 • *"It's better to go to school than to work first, it is because of course my mind is tired it can be divided between work and education."* -IDI-03 • ***"…*** *his perspective in his schooling now is probably the exhaustion he experienced from working and the difficulties he encountered. These challenges are what molded him into who he is now and where he has reached in his education."* -IDI-04

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Insights of the former employees to college students which they can share to others. After retrieving and analyzing the data gathered from the participants, it was revealed that the former employee who turned to college students have various insights into their experience. The researcher identified three (3) themes: essence of striving of greater aspiration, importance of work experience in career progression and education as a pathway to advanced career positions.

The first theme revealed that some of the former employees turned into college students have the **essence of striving for greater aspirations**. The essence of striving for greater aspirations according to participants is to always seek one's full potential through ambition, determination and the courage to transcend limitations. It's about dreaming big, setting ambitious goals and working hard to achieve them despite obstacles.

This theme was supported by Arhin (2018) who highlighted the essence of working towards higher ambitions is to set specific and meaningful goals that align with your values and strengths. When goals are based on intrinsic value, they become more meaningful, meaningful, and attainable, and contribute to overall happiness. By identifying and using their strengths, people can increase their confidence, participation, life satisfaction and improve their quality of life. In order to pursue your goals, it is important to be prepared to overcome obstacles and challenges. This is because it requires self-reflection, determination and the ability to adapt to unexpected situations. Ultimately, the way to pursue greater ambitions is to seek self-discovery, personal and professional growth and development.

Moreover, Busch (2020) expressed that the essence of striving for greater ambitions is to have meaningful and realistic goals that align with your values, allow you to grow, contribute and live authentically. Identifying your true aspirations requires introspection to understand your needs, strengths, and interests. Working, on dreams that are meaningful to you increases your happiness by providing purpose, fulfillment, and authentic self-expression. This will encourage you to use your strengths, increase your confidence, take risks and enjoy life. After all, the essence of aspiring to something higher is staying true to yourself and your values.

The second theme revealed that the former employees who turned back in college saw the **importance of work experience in career progression**. Work experience plays an important role in career advancement because it gives people the opportunity to develop critical skills, gain practical knowledge and build professional relationships. Through practical experience, individuals not only improve their professional knowledge, but also demonstrate their capabilities to employers and become more competitive in the labor market. Work experience allows individuals to explore different industries, jobs and work environments, enabling them to make informed decisions about their careers and promoting mobility. Also, work experience is the foundation for career growth and advancement by providing the tools and experience people need to succeed in their field.

Moreover Bossu (2018) states that the importance of work experience in professional promotion has been found in various studies. He emphasized the value of work experience in shaping career and professional development. Work experience plays an important role in career advancement and can have a significant impact on an individual's path in an organization or industry. He discussed the evolution of the concept of corporate development over time, emphasizing the relationship between corporate governance and corporate development. He emphasized the importance of understanding and considering actions at different stages of an individual's life. Also, gaining work experience, skills and achievements through work is important for advancement.

Meanwhile, the study of Ogunyemi (2020) emphasized that work experience is important for advancement. He says combining work experience with degree training can improve graduates' job prospects, academic careers and starting salaries. Work experience is essential for the transition from education to work, and a lack of experience is a major concern for employers hiring young people. Furthermore, in a study of bank employees, work experience did not significantly moderate the effect of advancement on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, but had a significant effect of advancement on these work attitudes that will result in the impact of work experience.

Lastly, the third theme revealed that the former employee to college students saw **education as a pathway to advanced career positions,** also education is an important pathway to advanced career positions, equipping people with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to succeed in their field. It promotes critical thinking, problem solving and specialized skills, making professionals more competitive and capable of handling complex tasks. Higher education also opens doors to networking, professional development, and advanced degrees that require a deep understanding of industry-specific concepts and practices. Ultimately, a strong educational foundation is the key to career advancement and long-term success.

Similarly, the findings of this study align with those of Floyd (2022), who noted that education serves as a pathway to higher career positions by providing specialized knowledge and skills that facilitate professional development and advancement opportunities. There exists a diverse range of career paths in education, including reading intervention, special education, adult education, ESL, and curriculum and instruction. These fields offer educators the chance to operate in various environments and address specific educational needs, ranging from literacy initiatives to adult education and curriculum design. In summary, education is essential in creating pathways to advanced career opportunities by equipping individuals with the requisite knowledge, skills, and expertise needed to excel in their selected professions and attain higher levels of responsibility and leadership.

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Meanwhile, Maier's (2022) research highlighted the fundamental role of education in advancing careers. It indicates that individuals with higher education credentials, such as a bachelor's or graduate degree, are more likely to progress in their careers. The significance of training extends beyond enhancing productivity; it also facilitates career growth and development by improving employees' capacity to learn new information and adapt to advanced technologies. Furthermore, the transition from educational settings to the workforce is regarded as a crucial phase that impacts the initiation of a successful career, making lifelong learning vital for career advancement. Thus, pursuing higher education is essential for those aspiring to achieve and thrive in elevated career roles, as education is a pivotal element in career development and progress.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the journey of former employees transitioning to college students is a transformative and enriching experience marked by challenges, growth, and new opportunities. These individuals show strength and dedication as they juggle work and school. The insights gained from their unique perspectives and diverse backgrounds contribute to a dynamic learning environment and enrich the educational landscape. Through their dedication to learning, adaptation to new academic settings, and integration of prior work experiences into their studies, former employees turned college students exemplify the power of lifelong learning and the pursuit of new horizons. As they embark on this educational journey, they bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, and perspectives that enhance their learning outcomes and contribute to their overall success. With a spirit of perseverance and a drive for continuous improvement, these individuals embody the transformative potential of education and serve as inspiring examples of growth, resilience, and achievement in the pursuit of higher learning.

From the beginning, the panel members placed their trust in the researcher regarding this topic, anticipating a genuine commitment to the research. Meeting their expectations, the researcher devoted substantial time and energy to ensure the research was meaningful and valuable in academic circles. Throughout the research process, the researcher put in significant work, from conducting interviews and transcribing data to analyzing and presenting findings. Despite facing various obstacles, the researcher remained steadfast in completing the study. While taking a risk by accepting this challenge, the final outcome reflects the researcher's utmost dedication, driven not only by academic obligations but also personal passion. The researcher hopes that this study will resonate with readers and be recognized as a credible addition to the field.

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