

Benefits, challenges, and coping strategies of student marshals: A qualitative study

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the benefits, challenges, and coping mechanisms of student marshals, who navigate the dual demands of academic coursework and campus responsibilities in university settings. Through narrative inquiry, a qualitative approach suited to capturing participants' lived experiences, the research elucidates the advantages accrued by these student volunteers, elucidates the multifaceted challenges they encounter, and delineates their adaptive strategies. Purposive sampling was employed to select five participants with direct involvement in marshal duties. Data were gathered via semi-structured interviews and subjected to inductive thematic analysis, enabling themes to emerge directly from the narratives without preconceived categories. The findings indicate that participants accrued distinct benefits from their service as student marshals, consolidated into four thematic categories: personal and social development, resilient leadership, augmented financial management proficiency, and professional advancement. Despite these gains, participants confronted pronounced challenges, articulated through three emergent themes: the demands of reconciling academic obligations with marshal responsibilities, deleterious impacts on physical and mental health, and impediments to effective policy enforcement. Participants further articulated coping mechanisms that coalesced into three themes: systematic time management protocols, deliberate stewardship of physical and mental well-being, and the nurturing of resilience coupled with optimism. This investigation contributes to the extant literature by elucidating the mechanisms through which students reconcile academic commitments with extracurricular work responsibilities, while proffering empirically derived strategies to safeguard their well-being and optimize performance outcomes.

Keywords: *resilient leadership, professional advancement, student mental health, time management, student employment*

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1. Introduction

Global trends highlight the prevalence of student employment. In the US, 74% of part-time undergraduates worked in 2020 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022), while Philippine youth labor participation climbed to 31.8% by January 2025 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2025). European students average 23–28 hours weekly in Western regions and over 30 hours in Central/Eastern areas (Lessky & Unger, 2022; Masevičiūt et al., 2018), and Ghana sees rising part-time study due to flexible programs (Tetteh & Attiogbe, 2019). Locally, around 216,000 Filipino undergraduates, about 8%, hold jobs in services or campus roles (Agbayani & Paglinawan, 2025).

In Philippine schools with Criminology programs, student marshals stand out as strong student leaders on university campuses. Financial constraints often drive criminology students to take on roles as student marshals, providing essential income to support their education amid economic pressures. The marshal position directly addresses financial needs while aligning with their training in law enforcement and security. The adage, “poverty is not a hindrance to education,” captures the resilience of these students, who pursue degrees despite hardships, balancing paid campus duties with academic demands to ease family burdens and afford basics like food and supplies (Decierdo et al., 2024). This necessity fosters a strong work ethic, enabling them to maintain solid grades and complete programs on time. In addition, they manage tough coursework alongside practical tasks like leading graduation processions, enforcing rules, checking campus safety, and aiding event logistics. Guided by a real commitment to leadership, service, and academic success, they create a safe and orderly space for students, teachers, and staff, much like trained security staff, but with the fresh view of peers. This approach allows student marshals to effectively balance their studies with consistent policy enforcement and discipline on campus, while fostering both strong performance and well-rounded personal growth.

The study of Dela Cruz et al. (2025) shows that student marshals act as clear signs of discipline. They help maintain order (with links like $r = .638$ to better discipline) and safety views (average agreement near 4.48). However, their wider role in improving campus management, through reporting issues, handling crowds, and building community, has not been fully studied. This gap points to a limited grasp of how students input shapes school settings, particularly with growing student numbers and changing safety needs. Even so, clear paths exist to better support them, such as training in clear talk, basic self-defense, and crisis

response, to fix issues like new member struggles or challenges for women in demanding physical jobs.

This study looks closely at the daily lives of student marshals. It highlights clashes between work shifts and classes, the ways they handle stress, and how these jobs affect growth and careers. Through their stories, it reveals hidden sides, like how odd hours harm mental health or how friend groups make rule enforcement hard. In the end, it shows broad effects on staying in school and school unity. The study follows three main goals: (1) to outline benefits from mixing marshal work with studies, such as growth in personal and social skills, leadership under stress, better handling of money from small payments, and job-related skills; (2) to detail ongoing issues, like too much work, drops in grades, health strain from long hours, and clashes when leading peers; and (3) to find ways they adapt, including strict schedules, care for body and mind, help from mentors, and a positive outlook that aids lasting health.

This work has clear value for key groups. For school leaders, it gives solid ideas to update training, oversight, and fair task split by gender, making programs work better. Teachers can use new ways to build student involvement and leadership paths. For other students and scholars, it sets a base for more studies on volunteer roles like this. On a larger scale, by noting marshals' strength and worth, it helps leaders fund key aids, like pairing new and experienced members or health talks, while urging more students to join management tasks. It also supports UN Goal 4 (Quality Education) by backing fair chances for working students, stressing skills gained for life, removing hurdles in poor or unstable areas, and pushing joint work among governments, businesses, and groups to create strong, open school systems.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Benefits Derived by Student Marshals

Part-time work presents real challenges for young students (Tecson et al., 2025), but it also brings meaningful rewards that go far beyond traditional classroom lessons. These gains show up in connected ways: early steps toward financial independence, better time management skills, real-world practice, chances to build relationships, a stronger sense of duty and awareness, sharper problem-solving, readiness for future jobs, solid personal growth, and even deeper grasp of their studies, especially when the job ties directly to their major. Pedroso et al. (2022) build on this by showing how such roles cut tuition costs, offer field-specific

know-how, and build self-reliance through networking, smart budgeting, and juggling work with classes.

Along the way, students pick up key soft skills like communication, flexibility, leadership, teamwork, and scheduling, things classrooms often cannot fully teach. Baja (2024) adds that these jobs help cover basics like supplies and daily needs, while handing students useful skills and credentials that pay off in their careers. Meanwhile, Wade et al. (2026) take it further with a cluster randomized trial on peer leadership programs in schools. They found that students in these roles gained confidence in leading, better communication, and improved mental well-being, with ripple effects like more engaged classmates and calmer classrooms. Roles like student marshals work much the same way, helping create a stronger school environment and supporting well-rounded growth that links everyday financial pressures to lasting professional gains.

2.2. Challenges Encountered by Student Marshals

Student marshals encounter distinct challenges, including financial pressures and the demands of balancing campus duties with academics, as they strive to maintain order and support institutional events. According to Bareno et al. (2024), barriers like limited financial resources profoundly impact post-secondary students' persistence, often pushing them toward part-time or full-time work despite the strain. Contrary to assumptions that poverty deters effort, these constraints frequently motivate students to secure such roles, intertwining economic survival with educational goals in resource-scarce settings like Philippine universities.

Acute financial deprivation fosters anxiety and emotional distress (Naidoo-Chetty & Du Plessis, 2021). For instance, Sebulen et al. (2023) link low income and concurrent employment to diminished academic performance, particularly in urban hubs like Baguio City, where students juggle survival needs with coursework. For student marshals, often from Criminology programs, these pressures compound with leadership-specific hurdles; Abbas et al. (2025) document struggles in reconciling academic loads with duties, exacerbated by peer resistance, heavy workloads, and inadequate institutional backing, which undermine both efficacy and personal well-being.

2.3. Coping Mechanisms Employed by Student Marshals

Student resilience emerges as a major strength for those balancing work and study, which helps them tap into adaptive skills to handle tough workplace conditions. This quality not only supports part-time students through stress but also builds a proactive outlook. Research points to linked coping strategies that fuel this resilience. For instance, Fitzgibbon and Murphy (2022) found problem-focused coping most common among working students, which is a practical way to cut stress and support mental health, while affective coping methods like acceptance, positive reframing, and balancing work with studies help manage feelings. This connects to Mutya et al. (2022), who show how positive thinking, faith, and smart time use build responsibility and focus. Olid and Motus (2023) add that students often lean on spiritual support and close ties with family or friends for emotional grounding in hard times. These studies map a path from personal mindsets to social and religious aids.

2.4. Research Gap

Existing scholarship illuminates the multifaceted experiences of working students in Philippine higher education (Tecson et al., 2025; Pedroso et al., 2022; Baja, 2024). However, it largely overlooks the distinctive context of student marshals, especially dedicated student leaders who function as quasi-security personnel under institutional safety and security offices, managing responsibilities including crowd control, protocol enforcement, and event coordination amid expanding enrollments in Northern Philippines. Although research like Wade et al. (2026) acknowledges peer leadership enhancements in confidence and communication, it neglects the *bayanihan*-oriented collaboration and inherent authority tensions marshals navigate when enforcing regulations among peers. This gap becomes evident in examinations of challenges: while financial constraints and academic-work conflicts affect working students generally (Bareno et al., 2024; Sebullen et al., 2023; Abbas et al., 2025), marshal-specific difficulties such as peer resistance, heightened visibility pressures, and limited institutional support remain underexplored, as do the corresponding resilience mechanisms (Naidoo-Chetty & Du Plessis, 2021). Coping mechanisms, including problem-focused strategies and faith-based support, appear in broader literature (Fitzgibbon & Murphy, 2022; Mutya et al., 2022; Olid & Motus, 2023), yet limited studies trace their application to sustained development within structured marshal programs.

The present study addresses this gap through a narrative inquiry into student marshals' lived experiences, elucidating their benefits, challenges, and coping strategies to inform targeted institutional interventions that recognize their contributions to campus governance.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Biddle's (1979) role theory, which posits that individuals occupy multiple social roles, such as student and employee, that shape their behaviors, identities, and interactions within society. From this sociological lens, working students navigate these dual roles, where expectations and performances can either reinforce or strain personal agency and experiences. Role theory thus provides a foundation for examining how these overlapping positions influence academic performance, well-being, and identity formation among working students.

Complementing this, Sirgy and Lee's (2016) work-life balance model offers an integrated framework for understanding the outcomes of role juggling. The model delineates positive pathways, such as enhanced commitment and constructive integration of work and life domains, alongside negative consequences like role conflict and social isolation. For working students, this highlights how balanced role enactment fosters resilience and satisfaction, while imbalances exacerbate stress and disengagement.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative design rooted in narrative inquiry, which explores participants' lived experiences through their personal stories and accounts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry aligns seamlessly with this research, as it foregrounds the unique stories of student marshals, who balance duties such as event coordination, crowd control, and protocol enforcement alongside academics. This method illuminates the benefits, such as leadership growth, networking perks, and challenges like time conflicts and fatigue, they narrate, while surfacing authentic coping strategies such as peer support or prioritization tactics.

Through subjective emphasis, storied insights over quantification, it captures the multifaceted realities of their dual roles in a Philippine educational setting, directly supporting the study's goal of informing targeted support for these vital campus contributors.

3.2. Participants of the Study

This narrative inquiry offers a fundamental framework for studying how the participants convey, elucidate, infer, and hypothesize their narrative stories (Sunday et al., 2020). Hence, this study utilized purposive sampling to select information-rich participants who could provide deep insights into their experiences as student marshals. According to Campbell et al. (2020), this approach ensured methodological rigor by targeting individuals best positioned to advance the research objectives.

The sample consisted of five student marshals, selected based on their demonstrated ability to articulate relevant narratives. Specifically, three pursued a Bachelor of Science in Criminology (one second-year, two third-year students), while two were enrolled in Bachelor of Science in Industrial Security Management (both third-year). The participants met the following criteria: (a) a bona fide student enrolled in the institution, (b) a student worker for at least 1 year, and (c) willing to be interviewed. All these participants had served as marshals for at least one year and were active from school year 2022–2025; data saturation was reached after these five interviews, as no new themes emerged. No explicit exclusion criteria were applied beyond non-compliance with these standards, prioritizing accessibility and narrative depth over broader representation.

This study was conducted in a private higher education institution in the Northern Philippines. The institution implements a structured Student Marshal Program under its Safety and Security Office (SSO), where selected students assist in maintaining discipline and campus order. Moreover, observers can pacify the vast development from other higher education institutions and the growing number of enrollees. This magnifies the distinction from other higher education institutions because of its values and the purpose as a qualifying foundation, as it is stated on the threshold of its vision, to attain not only national but global significance.

3.3. Instrumentation and Data Gathering Process

Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews, utilizing a validated guide with open-ended questions tailored to elicit rich narratives on student marshals' benefits, challenges, and coping strategies. This approach balances structure with flexibility (Rouder et al., 2021), which allows probes for deeper insights into participants' lived experiences while maintaining alignment with the study's objectives. The interview guide was rigorously content validated by three experts in social sciences and qualitative research, including the research

advisor. Content validator assessed items for clarity, relevance, coherence, and objective congruence. Subsequently, pilot testing with two non-participant student-workers confirmed the guide's comprehensibility, cultural resonance, and capacity for depth. Feedback prompted final adjustments before deployment. To ensure accessibility, the guide was translated into Ilocano, the local dialect, alongside its English version.

Before implementation, the researcher secured ethical clearance via a formal request letter approved by the research advisor and the institutional president. Interviews were conducted individually with five purposively selected student marshals (45–60 minutes each), audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. Sessions occurred in quiet, private campus venues at participants' convenience. Field notes captured contextual nuances, while member checking or sharing transcripts for review verified narrative accuracy. This streamlined process yielded saturated, trustworthy data for thematic analysis, which also upholds principles of informed consent, confidentiality (via pseudonyms), and voluntary participation.

3.4. Data Analysis

This study utilized Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, a flexible yet rigorous method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the rich narrative data from student marshal interviews. This approach was ideally suited to transform participants' storied experiences into coherent insights. The inductive method was used, where the themes that emerged from the data collection were not pre-identified. Moreover, an inductive approach was adopted for themes to emerge directly from the data (Kim, 2021) and derive broader generalizations regarding student marshal dynamics from participants' specific, situated narratives without the influence of predetermined frameworks. This methodology ensured that the findings authentically mirrored the participants' lived realities within the Northern Philippine context.

3.5. Research Ethics

This study adhered to ethical principles enshrined in the Declaration of Helsinki and institutional review protocols, prioritizing the rights, welfare, and dignity of student marshals throughout.

Before interviews, participants received comprehensive consent documentation describing the investigation's focus, procedural details, prospective benefits, potential risks such as emotional reliving of difficulties, and researcher particulars. The researcher first explained everything verbally, followed by written consent. This stressed that participation was fully voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time without affecting grades or marshal duties. All information was kept strictly confidential, which means that participants chose their own pseudonyms, such as "Marshal A", and any personal details were removed from transcripts. Recordings, full transcripts, and notes were stored securely on password-protected devices that only the researcher could access, and they will be deleted after the study is published. Interviews took place in quiet, private campus spots chosen by participants. The researcher watched closely for any signs of discomfort and offered breaks or counseling referrals if needed. No rewards were given to avoid any pressure to join. To make sure their stories were told accurately, full transcripts were sent back to participants within a week for review and changes. This member checking gave them control over their own words.

Approval came from the research advisor, school president, and Safety and Security Office through a detailed request letter. The researcher also kept a personal journal to reflect on their faculty role and ensure the analysis stayed true to what participants shared, not institutional views. In this way, the study reflected the *bayanihan* spirit of mutual trust within sound qualitative standards (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Benefits Gained by Student Marshals

Table 1 shows the benefits gained by the student marshals. Four main themes were identified: personal and social development, resilient leadership, financial management knowledge, and professional growth.

Personal and social development. Student marshals reported significant growth in personal and social skills, particularly through daily interactions that sharpened their emotional intelligence, active listening, and teamwork abilities. They described how enforcing protocols and coordinating events built clearer self-expression, enabling them to connect effectively with diverse campus stakeholders. One marshal noted, "*Explaining rules face-to-face with students and staff made me more confident in speaking up without hesitation.*" This development extended to self-awareness and relationship-building, fostering a positive environment amid

high-pressure duties. Participants highlighted routine engagements with peers, faculty, and employees as key to honing networking, dependability, and collaborative skills, which are essential for their dual roles.

Table 1

Benefits gained by student marshals

Themes	Categories	Significant Quote
Personal and Social Development	Active Communication Personal Development and Social Development	<i>“Nakatulong daytoy nga naghubog ken nangdevelop ti skills ku kasla teamwork, komunikasyon, networking, ken dependability.” (This helped me shape and develop my skills, such as teamwork, communication, networking, and dependability) (Kendal P14, L325-327 T2)</i>
Resilient Leadership	Leading by example Providing clear instructions Developing decision-making	<i>“Mangiturung wenno panagpai-tungpal, mangisuru, ken mang-ited ti instrucksyon, ken mangilawag ti rugulasyon dagituy students, employees ken daduma nga tao” (To lead or implement, to teach, to give instructions, and to explain the rules to students, employees, and other people.) (Arm Scor P10, L239-242 T2)</i>
Enrich knowledge on financial management	Developing financial management skills Financial assistance	<i>“Maisustain ti panagbayad ti tuition ken dagiti inaldaw a gastos naadal ku ti kinaresponsable a mangmanage ti kwarta tapnu makatipidak ti allowance ku” (By sustaining the payment of tuition and daily expenses, I learned to be responsible in managing money so that I can save from my allowance.) (Marc P17, L417-419 T2)</i>
Professional growth	Real-life experience	<i>“Nag-ited kanyak ti experience nga mang-aramat ti kinapudno ken kinaresponsable kas maysa nga student marshal” (It gave me the experience of practicing truthfulness and responsibility as a student marshal.) (Arm Scor P10, L243-245 T2)</i>

These findings align with Tecson et al. (2025) that part-time works reward personal growth beyond academics, and Pedroso et al. (2022) that student employment links responsibility, connections, and resilience. For marshals, such interactions cultivated proactive engagement, transforming challenges into opportunities for confident, resilient leadership.

Resilient leadership. Resilient leadership refers to the abilities each student marshal has that help them to become adept and adaptable in maintaining a clear vision, good relationships, and stability within their team or organization. This theme also includes leading by example, guiding and directing people with self-confidence, and fostering determination

and perseverance in leading the communities. Student marshals claimed that they have to be strong in providing clear instructions and leading the people in a way that they are not to be doubted, especially in the institution. This shows that no matter what happens, they cannot be easily altered and swayed by other people to destroy their image. Also, they have to stick to whatever instructions are relayed so as not to subvert their authority. This shows that they valued and respected their designated chief. Exhibiting a robust decision-making process in implementing rules and policies in the institution is also another important aspect for a student marshal to inculcate and disseminate information to all. They need to be rigorous and decisive while demonstrating their principles and dignity as strong and pliable leaders. Furthermore, student marshals learned to stand and take the initiative to make decisions and to accomplish their work effectively and efficiently.

These results resonate with Cherry (2023), who describes leadership as inspiring and motivating through guidance, influence, and moral integrity; the qualities marshals embodied by prioritizing institutional standards over personal sway. Pedroso et al. (2022) further corroborate, noting student work cultivates career-relevant soft skills like responsibility, adaptability, problem-solving, and leadership unavailable in classrooms alone. For marshals, this unconventional integration drove sustainable campus contributions, positioning them as emerging leaders equipped for future professional demands in criminology and security fields.

Enrich knowledge on financial management. Enhancing financial management literacy equips student marshals with essential competencies in budgeting, resource allocation, and prudent decision-making, thereby enabling effective navigation of economic constraints. Participants in this study articulated that enrollment in the scholarship program instills fiscal discipline, facilitating the management of quotidian expenditures, prioritization of necessities over frivolities, and sustained academic pursuit with minimal parental financial reliance. Consequently, marshals adeptly surmount obstacles such as fulfilling basic sustenance needs and maintaining scholastic progress.

These observations converge with Baja (2024), who emphasized that concurrent employment and study enable students to defray tuition, scholastic materials, and routine costs, cultivating an appreciation for fiscal prudence and protracted resource utilization to sustain educational focus. Pedroso et al. (2022) also assert that student labor mitigates tuition burdens while promoting proficiencies in expenditure orchestration and accompanying vocational

exposure. Participant narratives and extant literature affirm financial management's important role in promulgating economic autonomy and academic resilience among student marshals.

Professional growth. Professional growth embraces the ongoing enhancement of skills, knowledge, and experiences, enabling educators to refine career trajectories and adapt to evolving global demands. This process cultivates new competencies that empower individuals to address professional challenges and deepen expertise in their fields.

Participants emphasized how their roles as student marshals served as a vital avenue for such development. One marshal noted, "*collaborating with colleagues taught me to complete tasks efficiently without sacrificing quality.*" Through event assistance, instruction, and supervision as exemplified in the "one of a kind" initiative, they acquired practical experiences transferable to future careers, fostering a positive mindset and tangible professional benefits.

The results echo the findings of Paglinawan and Orbilla (2025), which assert that students may gain positive experiences that can be acquired throughout their employment while studying. These experiences influence socialization and networking while practicing their profession, building practical skills, boosting self-esteem, and working independently, which could lessen their stress. Moreover, working students are more likely to gain real-world experience, surpassing students who are exclusively focused on their studies, thereby developing independence and overall well-being. Resources, including subject matter expertise and developmental aspirations, contribute significantly to students' personal growth and career opportunities (Lyz et al., 2023). This emphasizes that students can also gain and enhance their practical capabilities, which helps them boost their self-esteem through collaborating with diverse people. It is at this juncture that they also learned the value of camaraderie by keeping in touch with their fellow student marshals, taking into account their personal development.

4.2. Challenges Encountered by Student Marshals

Table 2 illustrates the three essential themes derived from the challenges encountered by student marshals in their work and study. These three notable challenges experienced by student marshals are: striving to balance work and studies, physical and mental health issues, and challenges in implementing policies.

Table 2*Challenges encountered by student marshals both work and studies*

Themes	Categories	Significant Quote
Striving to balance work and studies	Challenges with time management Conflicting schedule of duty hours Difficulty in balancing both studies and work responsibilities	<i>“Kurang ti panagbalanse ti skedyul” (Lack of balance in the schedule.) (Marc P18, L441-443 T2)</i>
Physical and mental health issues	Physical barrier Mental fatigue	<i>“Naibagak nga karit ti bagi ti mental health ta haan ku maiwasan ti anxiety, stress pressure ti panag student marshal, maapektaran ti amin nga bagi ken panagpanpanunot” (I can say that a challenge to my mental health is that I cannot avoid anxiety, stress, and the pressure of being a student marshal, which affects my whole body and my thinking.) (Marc P19, L459-461 T2)</i>
Challenges in implementing policies	Challenges in implementing policies Difficulty in prioritizing responsibilities/inefficiency of work and academic	<i>“Panangipatungpal kadagiti polisiya ket mabalin a mangdadael iti relasyon wenno mangited iti tension nga haan pagkikiinawatan” (Implementing policies can sometimes damage relationships or create tension when there is no mutual understanding.) (Clyde P1, 27-30 T1)</i>

Striving to balance work and studies. Striving to balance work and studies demands effective time management and self-discipline, as students prioritize essential tasks over distractions through goal-setting and structured scheduling. This process not only sustains productivity and well-being but also builds resilience despite competing demands. Participants corroborated these dynamics, frequently citing scheduling conflicts as their primary hurdle, which one marshal explained, *"clashing class times and duty shifts made it tough to plan ahead, often forcing me to skip marshal hours for urgent assignments."*

Their accounts reveal a clear pattern: simultaneous academic pressures, such as complex projects from instructors, compounded difficulties in juggling responsibilities, leading some to temporarily postpone duties. Yet, these very challenges improved their independence, with another noting, *"learning to push through without help made me stronger at handling stress."* This participant's corroboration highlights how navigating such tensions enhances adaptive capacities, aligning personal experiences with broader time management principles.

These findings align with the study of Payusan et al. (2022) that despite the benefits, students faced various hurdles affecting their poor academic performance, such as busy schedules and time allocation. Student marshals are often adept at finding ways and strategies to overcome time management issues, wherein students can directly plan how to navigate inevitable situations, which helps them balance their work and study through exhibiting a positive mindset. This context aligns with Sirgy and Lee's (2016) work-life balance theory, where they posit an integrated framework identifying four types of inverse relationships between work-life balance and life fulfillment, which may have influenced them to think positively and stay focused on their fields while carrying out their responsibilities and completing their academics. This model discusses the positive outcome, which can equally combine work-life balance and the commitment to undertake a positive role.

Physical and mental health issues. Physical and mental health issues refer to situations that impact one's morale that may include issues including physical problems and mental and psychological well-being. These could be manifested in the forms of injuries, illness, stress, anxiety, and depression. Participants conveyed that another challenge they experienced is physical and mental health issues, whether concerning their work or their academics. It may be difficult to employ dual responsibility, as it affects holistic well-being and demands more effort to be committed to obligations. The lack of rest and time to perform work and academics leads to energy exhaustion and discomfort in the body, resulting in overfatigue. Student marshals experienced stress and anxiety due to responsibilities both in academics and work. Sometimes they feel pressured and overwhelmed, which affects their motivation to stay focused on their responsibilities.

These results match Wapaño (2024) that working students are likely to experience stress and have less time to focus on their studies, just like the marshals' experiences with mental strain harming their health. Alampay and Garcia (2019) also support this and found that feelings of keen anxiety and desperation in balancing time impact the emotional and psychological aspects of students' morale. Emotional constraints can affect the performance of student marshals and their connections to other people, making it difficult to obtain motivation to stay focused.

Challenges in implementing policies. Challenges in implementing policies refer to factors that cause students to experience predicaments in implementing such policies while maintaining the peace and stability of the institution. Implementing such policies and

regulations sometimes leads to resistance, misunderstandings, or misinterpretations among both students and employees. This is one of the challenges encountered by student marshals while performing their responsibilities, and as mentioned by one of the research participants, *“it is challenging to implement policies with others because it may sometimes destroy the relationship and create tension between student marshals and the students and employees within the institution.”* This highlights that student marshals cannot be exempted from experiencing such challenges because they are the front-liners in keeping the institution secure while maintaining stability and integrity. They hold the responsibility to implement and uphold policies while performing their duties, so it is inevitable to be resilient and adapt to institutional changes.

These results support the study anchored in the role theory by Biddle (1979), which reveals that working students can be employed as students and employees. This emphasized the sociological perspective that each individual's roles are crucial in society, which may influence both their behavior and identity. This theory also offers more perspective on how individuals can mold their experiences. Hence, despite the dual role of student marshals, this may help them enhance their capabilities and navigation skills in implementing and enforcing policies.

4.3. Coping Strategies Employed by Student Marshals

Table 3 presents the three (3) notable themes that emerged as coping strategies used by the student marshals to address the challenges they encountered. These include proper time management, managing physical and mental health, and cultivating resilience and optimism in the performance of duties.

Proper time management. Proper time management, defined as prioritizing responsibilities through clear goals, structured time frames, and delineated activities, proves essential for student marshals to maximize productivity. Research participants consistently emphasized its important role in organizing tasks effectively within designated periods, enabling them to balance academics and duties while avoiding overlapping schedules that could hinder focus. For instance, participant Armscor emphasized time as a "genuine factor" in overcoming conflicting schedules, allowing completion of responsibilities without compromising health or personal time for family and relaxation.

Table 3*Coping strategies employed by student marshals*

Themes	Categories	Significant Quote
Proper time management	Creating and managing schedules within the time framework, Balancing responsibilities and academics Avoiding conflicting schedules and staying focused to achieve productivity.	<i>“Panagkaurnos ti oras ket maysa a wagas tapno matulonganak kas student marshal, nakatulong kaniak a mangileppas iti amin a trabahok a diak ag-stress” (Time management is one way that helps me as a student marshal; it allows me to finish all my tasks without feeling stressed.) (Clyde P4, L81-83 T2)</i>
Managing physical and mental health	Maintaining and managing physical and mental health/ improving mental clarity Developing good habits to overcome obstacles/ strengthening or building a good mindset to navigate problems Seeking guidance and providence from God	<i>“Ti panangbalanse ti panagbiyag ket napateg tapnu maiwasan ti mental overload maiadjust ti panunot kadagiti naduma-duma nga sitwasyon nga ihandle ti struggles iti maipapan ti academic ken panag tungpal iti amin nga responsibilities” (Balancing life is important to avoid mental overload and to adjust one’s mindset to different situations, helping to handle struggles related to academics and the fulfillment of responsibilities.) (Armscor P13, L301-302 T2)</i>
Cultivating resilience and optimism in the performance of duties	Resilience and adaptability/ cultivating resilience and optimism to manage problems Being self-independent and or self-reliant	<i>Naibagak nga coping strategy ko daytoy ta ti panangaywan iti bagi ket maysa a wagas tapno maaramid ken makatulong daytoy tapno agtalinaedak a nasalun-at ken mangipamaysa bayat a tungpalen dagiti responsabilidad ko. (I can say that this is my coping strategy because taking care of myself is one way to accomplish tasks, and it helps me stay healthy while fulfilling my responsibilities.) (Clyde P5, 101-103 T2)</i>

These participant insights align seamlessly with established literature. Logsdon (2023) corroborates this by noting that while time management demands discipline in behavior and attitude, it becomes steadfast in goal pursuit when one prioritizes tasks through structured schedules, echoing participants' strategies for navigating hierarchies and preventing burnout. Similarly, Mutya et al. (2022) reinforce the value of work-study-life balance, positive thinking, and simultaneous responsibility handling, which participants exemplified through avoiding non-essentials to promote efficiency, concentration, and personal development. These lived experiences of student marshals validate the literature's theoretical frameworks, demonstrating that disciplined time allocation not only drives academic and role-based success but also preserves well-being.

Managing physical and mental health. Managing physical and mental health requires a balanced lifestyle through regular exercise like jogging and hiking, nutritious eating, adequate rest, and proactive self-care to reduce stress and anxiety. Student marshals emphasized developing good habits such as sufficient sleep and avoiding unnecessary stress to maintain poise despite demanding responsibilities. They described relaxation activities like reading or hiking to enhance fitness, including psychological clarity by staying organized and self-respecting through body care.

Participant insights align with this approach. Participant 1 noted that a positive mindset sharpens focus on academics and duties, while Participant 4 highlighted prayer and seeking divine guidance as effective ways to overcome mental and emotional challenges. These practices help student marshals prioritize well-being, preventing overwhelm when balancing obligations.

The result supports the findings of the study by Fitzgibbon and Murphy (2022), which revealed that problem-focused coping strategies became the most prevalent and significant coping mechanism tool that lessens stress and helps students develop mental health. Acceptance, positive thinking, work-study-life balances, seeking spiritual guidance, and self-trust strategies are emotion-focused coping mechanisms to help student marshals' emotions and feelings.

Cultivating resilience in the performance of duties. Cultivating resilience and optimism in the performance of duties means developing firm decisions and setting a good mindset to steer, adapt to challenges, and maintain impetus and optimism amid setbacks in life. The final theme derived from the coping strategies employed by student marshals is cultivating resilience and optimism in performing their duties. This manifests their willingness to change, improve, and adapt strategies that foster themselves in dealing with diverse people. Their optimism serves as their bullet to explain clear instructions, build positive relationships, and engage in active listening while interacting with other people. They could also build social networks and sharpen practical skills that prove valuable in new environments or professional settings.

Defining a constructive and affirmative mindset constitutes a critical competency for confronting challenges; through dedication to this orientation and the stability of emotional limitations, individuals can avert psychological hindrances. Promoting resilience and self-reliance empowers students to navigate adversities effectively and formulate judicious

decisions. Furthermore, resilience among students promotes adaptability to multifaceted transformations and facilitates self-improvement. Concurrently, self-reliance enables students to exercise agency, address dilemmas independently, and sustain accountability in the absence of direct oversight.

This corroborates the study of the Center for Creative Leadership (2023) that resiliency is among the perspectives one can consider when entering a work-employment relationship. This concept allows individuals to identify their abilities and skills to adapt widely to the difficulty or problematic conditions in a workplace. Individuals who enter this situation always remember to put effort into considering factors that may improve their lifestyle positively. Parttime students who have been exposed to difficulties and distress have always considered themselves positive thinkers, and they have the potential to conquer any predicaments in life. This concept aligns with Van Breda (2018), who describes resilience as a process yielding positive outcomes through focused resolution mechanisms. Building on this, Mostafa and Lim (2020) highlight how students' resiliency reflects individual efforts to enhance human potential, as evidenced by self-satisfaction in productive roles. They further connect this to emotion-focused strategies such as strategic planning, constructive refocusing, and situational restructuring that enable active participation and support throughout the resilience process.

5. Conclusion

Student marshals derive not only economic but also holistic enhancement as working students, such as personal and social development, resilient leadership, enriched knowledge on financial management, and professional growth. Student marshals face various challenges not only from external factors but also from personal issues such as striving to balance work and studies, physical and mental health issues, and challenges in implementing policies. Student marshals exhibit resilience and adaptability by engaging effective strategies, among others, proper time allocation, sustaining emotional and physical health, and cultivating resilience and optimism in the performance of their duties despite the many challenges they encountered. Moreover, student marshals play a dual role, which develops their behavior and identity. Finally, student marshals manage to cope with role expectations through clarifying priorities, integrating roles, and practicing self-care.

It is recommended that the institution, through the Office of Student Services (OSS), strengthen and contextualize support for the program by offering targeted training and

seminars to enhance student marshals' professional development. These trainings may include effective time management, mental health and well-being, and other self-improvement initiatives. Moreover, the Safety and Security Office (SSO) should offer expanded training on earthquake, fire, gun, landslide, and flood safety, alongside basic life support and disaster risk management seminars. Furthermore, the institution's Human Resources Office should incorporate into faculty and management orientation programs a reminder to respect and adhere to policies enforced by student marshals.

Student marshals are encouraged to refine their time management skills by creating and adhering to schedules, balancing responsibilities with academics, avoiding scheduling conflicts, and maintaining focus to boost productivity. They should also sustain self-care practices, such as cultivating a resilient and positive mindset to support physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Additionally, student marshals are urged to seek support from family, peers, and mentors to enhance self-confidence, build motivation, and alleviate burdens.

Future research may utilize a quantitative research design to gather rich data necessary from a larger population. Using this design will enable an accurate and measurable comparison across demographics and institutions, strengthening the generalizability of the findings. While the study highlights significant experiences, expanding the sample size by utilizing statistical methods will provide strong evidence to inform institutions' policies and student support programs.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

This study adhered to ethical principles enshrined in the Declaration of Helsinki, prioritizing the rights, welfare, and dignity of student marshals throughout the data gathering.

AI Declaration

The author declares the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing this paper. In particular, the authors used ChatGPT in translating the significant quotes of the participants and grammar editing. The author takes full responsibility for ensuring proper review and editing of contents generated using AI.

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