

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON
VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS IN
DAVAO DEL NORTE

KLINIE MARIE T. DUSAL^{1*}, EUNIZ MICHAILA B. DAPITON²
and GRACE P. GANIERA³

^{1,2,3}College of Office Administration, Kapalong College of
Agriculture, Sciences and Technology

*Correspondence: klinemarie.dusal@kcast.edu.ph

Pamulingan

KCAST Journal of Natural
and Cultural Sciences

Volume 2, Issue 1 (2026)

ISSN: 3082-6438

Pamulingan, an Ata-Manobo term for
"Transformation", is the official
peer-reviewed journal annually published
by Kapalong College of Agriculture,
Sciences, and Technology.

SDGs: **Goal 4 (Quality Education); Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)**

ABSTRACT

This phenomenology study aimed to explore the lived experiences of virtual assistants working remotely. Fourteen (14) participants were selected using purposive sampling, with seven (7) engaging in in-depth interviews and seven (7) in a focus group discussion. Thematic analysis of the data revealed the key experiences of accessing job platforms for application opportunities, learning to establish communication and relationships, managing time strategically, experiencing a flexible work environment, facing internet connectivity issues, and to cope with these challenges, participants embraced strategies such as work-life balance, continuous learning and skill improvement, organizing and planning tasks effectively, and motivating themselves by accomplishing goals. Reflecting on their experiences, participants highlighted the need for adaptability to changing systems, self-management and independence for growth, fulfillment through financial stability, and success through clear communication. The findings from this study are expected to provide valuable insights to virtual assistants, researcher, and others interested in the remote work landscape. the study supports key Sustainable Development Goals. The study supports key Sustainable Development Goals. It aligns with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by highlighting remote job accessibility, fair work opportunities, and career growth in the digital sector. It also contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education) through its emphasis on continuous learning, upskilling, and the importance of developing competencies needed in a technology-driven work environment.

Keywords: ***Virtual Assistants; Phenomenology; Remote Work; Time Management; Flexible Work; Philipines***

INTRODUCTION

The rise in remote work, particularly the growth of virtual assistant roles, has been a significant trend in the modern workforce. Recent studies have examined the usage patterns and experiences of Virtual Personal Assistants (VPAs), highlighting both the benefits and challenges faced by this unique group of remote workers. One key aspect of the remote work experience for virtual assistants is the nature of their design. Virtual work characteristics, such as social support, job autonomy, workload, and monitoring, have been found to impact the challenges faced by remote workers (Dubiel et al., 2018).

In Albania, virtual assistants face challenges that hinder their growth and efficiency in the gig economy. These include difficulties with payment processing due to limited international banking integration, insufficient digital security, and a lack of policies tailored to remote work. They also struggle with time management, mismatched qualifications for the tasks assigned, inadequate skills to navigate platforms effectively, and challenges in negotiating fair wages and schedules (Kapisyzi et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, virtual assistants (VAs) transitioning from corporate jobs to freelancing face significant challenges, including distractions at home and a lack of recognition, which affect their productivity and job satisfaction. Without the structured environment and formal acknowledgment typical in traditional office settings, VAs often struggle to maintain focus and feel undervalued. Despite these challenges, the benefits of freelancing—such as increased freedom, more time with family, and flexibility—are compelling. The ability to set their own schedules, enhance work-life balance, and choose projects that align with their skills offers greater autonomy and professional growth (Tudy, 2021).

Hence, studying the lived experiences of virtual assistants is urgent given the increasing rates of telecommuting and the unique issues that remote workers face. This means that boundaries between family and work, irregular working schedules, and constant client demands have to be covered to enhance productivity and avoid employee's emotional and physical exhaustion. To that end, it is crucial to critically reflect on the nature of virtual assistants' experiences, attitudes, and workload as teleworking increases. Furthermore, this study can help establish industry standards, guide professional development, and promote long-term career sustainability for virtual assistants. In addition, the study supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) by emphasizing the need for continuous learning, skills development, and accessible training for virtual assistants, and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by contributing to efforts that ensure fair, productive, and sustainable employment opportunities within the growing digital workforce.

In connection, related international studies have been found regarding the lived experiences of virtual employees, focusing mainly on the experiences of freelance workers (Blaising et al., 2021; Abug et al., 2023; Raghuram et al., 2019). These studies, however, did not focus on the specific context of virtual assistants in Davao del Norte. While these studies provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by virtual assistants and freelancers globally, they do not address the unique experiences of virtual assistants in the specific setting of Davao

del Norte. This study, therefore, aims to fill that gap by exploring the lived experiences of virtual assistants in the province of Davao del Norte.

This study provides insights into how virtual assistants manage work–life balance in a digital work environment, benefiting virtual assistants, employers, and the remote work community. The findings may support the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in developing policies and guidelines that promote fair working conditions and well-being among virtual assistants. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) may use the results to enhance curricula and training programs that develop essential skills such as communication, time management, and the use of digital tools. The Public Employment Service Office (PESO) and Job Placement Offices (JPO) may also utilize the study in creating employment programs, job-matching initiatives, and career support services.

This study is valuable to Office Administration students, particularly BSOA students, as it offers practical understanding of the virtual assistant profession and the skills required for this career path. Virtual assistants may benefit from the identified strategies and practices for maintaining work–life balance. Also, the study may serve as a reference for future researchers and contribute to the growing body of knowledge on virtual assistants, remote work, and related professional challenges.

Research Questions

This study determined the lived experiences of virtual assistants. More specifically, this study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of virtual assistants?
2. How do virtual assistants cope with the challenges?
3. What are the insights of virtual assistants?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Demerouti et al., 2001), which assesses employee engagement by balancing job demands and resources. High job demands, such as workload and time pressure, can lead to stress, while job resources, like autonomy and support, enhance well-being. For virtual assistants, managing multiple tasks and deadlines are key demands, whereas access to technology, skill development, and flexibility serve as resources that promote engagement and performance (Hakanen et al., 2008).

Additionally, Maslow (1943) proposed the Hierarchy of Needs, explains motivation through a five-tier model, from basic physiological needs to self-actualization. In the context of virtual assistants, job security and a stable internet connection fulfill basic needs, allowing them to progress toward professional growth and career success.

Also, Social Presence Theory (Short et al., 1976) highlights the importance of communication in building relationships. Social presence—the ability to convey warmth and engagement—enhances virtual assistants' connections with clients. Choosing the right

communication tools fosters trust and rapport, ensuring effective remote collaboration (Gunawardena, 1995).

This framework aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education) by highlighting the importance of continuous learning and skill development, and with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by promoting safe, productive, and sustainable work for virtual assistants. These theories guide the study's design and interpretation by explaining how virtual assistants manage demands, stay motivated, and maintain effective communication. They also support the study's aim to contribute to practices and policies that advance SDG 4 and SDG 8.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a qualitative research design to understand the experiences of virtual assistants. Qualitative research includes different methods that focus on exploring people's real-life experiences, beliefs, and challenges. It helps the researchers gain a deeper understanding of how individuals adapt and grow in their work. Using different ways to collect data also gives a clearer picture of each virtual assistant's journey, making it easier to see their struggles and successes (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research design to understand the lived experiences of virtual assistants, particularly in how they communicate and manage their tasks while working remotely. This was done through interviews that provided insights into their daily work, challenges, and strategies for success. Further, this design was suitable for understanding the experiences of virtual assistants in handling communication, building client relationships, and adapting to remote work demands. It is also one of the most commonly used methods for gathering data through interviews, which may be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, allowing participants to share their experiences in detail.

Moreover, phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that seeks to explore and understand individuals' lived experiences. This methodology is rooted in examining personal narratives to uncover deeper insights into how individuals perceive and interpret their reality. It follows a structured process that includes identifying key characteristics, establishing methodological foundations, and outlining specific steps for conducting the study. The essence of phenomenology lies in capturing participants' firsthand accounts, allowing researcher to analyze real-life experiences in a meaningful way. As a qualitative inquiry, it provides a comprehensive understanding of human experiences based on the perspectives of those who have directly encountered them (Badil et al., 2023).

Building on this approach, this study applies a phenomenological approach to examine the lived experiences of virtual assistants within a qualitative research design. By utilizing this methodology, the research aims to explore how virtual assistants perceive and interpret their professional realities in remote work settings. This approach allows for an in-depth

analysis of their experiences, capturing the relational and situational factors that shape their work dynamics. Through structured data collection and interpretation, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and adaptive strategies employed by virtual assistants in their evolving work environment.

Through structured data collection and interpretation, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and adaptive strategies employed by virtual assistants in their evolving work environment. However, this study has several limitations. The phenomenological study focused only on work-from-home virtual assistants in Davao del Norte and involved a relatively small sample of fourteen (14) participants, with seven (7) participants for in-depth interviews and seven (7) participants for focus group discussions. The use of purposive sampling and self-reported data may introduce selection and response biases. In addition, conducting interviews through Google Meet may have presented technical challenges. Therefore, the findings reflect the experiences of the selected participants and may not be generalizable to all virtual assistants in other locations or work settings

Research Participants

The participants of this study were selected Virtual Assistants specifically in Davao del Norte. Fourteen (14) participants were chosen for this study. Seven (7) of them undergo in-depth interviews (IDI) wherein each of them was interviewed individually via Google Meet by the researcher. Meanwhile, the other seven (7) participated in the focus group discussion (FGD) wherein all of them were gathered virtually via Google Meet and discuss among themselves the answers that they have provided to the questions that the researcher presented to them. Further, the participants were selected based on these pre-inclusion criteria: (1) must be working from home virtual assistant; (2) male or female; (3) must have a minimum of 2 years' experience as a virtual assistant; and (4) must provide an employment contract to verify their experience and employment as a virtual assistant. The exclusion criteria were: (1) not working as a work-from-home virtual assistant; (2) having less than two (2) years of experience as a virtual assistant; (3) failure to provide an employment contract to verify employment and experience; and (4) declining to participate in the study. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences, and any data collected from those who withdrew were excluded from the analysis.

To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used instead of real names, following Heaton (2022) approach. The participants themselves chose these pseudonyms based on personal preference and characteristics observed during the sessions, and the names also reflect personal traits such as positivity, energy, creativity, and optimism. For example, *Joyful* represents a positive attitude and the ability to spread happiness in work, while *Sunny* reflects a cheerful nature that lifts team morale. Names such as *Bliss*, *Cheer*, *Glow*, *Smile*, and *Happy* indicate participants who bring energy, motivation, and effective communication, whereas *Bright*, *Gleam*, *Spark*, *Shine*, *Glee*, *Beam*, and *Hope* represent creativity, clarity, enthusiasm, excellence, and optimism.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers followed a structured approach to gathering data, beginning with the development of interview questions aligned with the study's objectives. These questions were reviewed and validated by experts to ensure clarity and relevance. After finalizing the questions, the researcher obtained an endorsement letter and sought approval from their academic advisor. Once approved, the researcher directly reached out to virtual assistants, explaining the purpose of the study and inviting them to participate. Those who agreed were provided with an informed consent form to ensure ethical compliance.

Before conducting interviews, an orientation session was held to explain the study's purpose, methodology, and participants' rights, including confidentiality and voluntary participation. Permission to record the interviews was also obtained. The study used both Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and In-Depth Interviews (IDI) to gather insights, with all sessions conducted via Google Meet. Structured and open-ended questions were used to encourage detailed responses while ensuring a professional and respectful environment.

After the interviews, all recorded sessions were handled with strict confidentiality. The researcher transcribed the data accurately and shared it with participants for verification, ensuring their statements were correctly captured. Once verified, the researcher translated and analyzed the data, identifying key themes and patterns to understand virtual assistants' experiences. Findings from the analysis were synthesized to draw conclusions and formulate recommendations aimed at improving work practices and addressing common challenges in the field.

Throughout the process, ethical considerations were strictly followed to protect participants' privacy and maintain research integrity. All collected data was used solely for research purposes, and anonymity was ensured. By adhering to a systematic and ethical approach, the researchers ensured the study's credibility and reliability.

Data Analysis

The researchers used Braun and Clarke's (2006) method for thematic analysis and included data reduction to organize the information. First, the researcher became familiar with the data by transcribing the recorded interviews and reviewing them many times. During this step, they started reducing data by removing parts that were not related to the research. This helped them focus on the most important information.

Next, the researchers created initial codes and grouped them into themes. They carefully broke the data into smaller parts, highlighting meaningful phrases or ideas. These codes were then organized into themes that showed common patterns in the participants' responses. Data reduction was also done in this step by combining similar codes and removing those that did not add much value to the analysis.

In the final steps, the researchers reviewed, named, and explained the themes. They checked the themes against the full data set to ensure accuracy and consistency. Each theme

was given a clear name and definition to describe its main idea. Finally, the researchers wrote a report, including quotes from the participants and a full discussion of the findings. To ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis, the researcher had the data and findings reviewed by a professional data analyst.

Ethical Considerations

The study ensured confidentiality by keeping all participant information anonymous and securely stored, with no identifying details included in the reports. Informed consent was obtained by clearly explaining the purpose of the study, procedures, and participants' rights, including the option to withdraw at any time without pressure. Participant welfare was prioritized by conducting interviews respectfully, avoiding sensitive questions, and creating a safe and comfortable environment throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presented the data generated that was essential to the study. The data consisted of responses gathered from in-depth interviews with 7 participants and focus group discussion with 7 participants, who were virtual assistants residing in the District of Davao del Norte. These responses were transcribed and analyzed with the assistance of analysts in education, resulting in accurate categorization of themes.

Experiences of Virtual Assistants

This question explores the lived experiences of Virtual Assistants in Davao del Norte. It aims to delve into their work journey, the growth they have experienced both personally and professionally, the challenges they have faced, their support systems, and their overall well-being as virtual assistants. By understanding their stories, the researcher aims to shed light on the unique challenges and successes these virtual assistants have faced while navigating remote work. Table 1 was presented below.

Many theorists and authors have presented ideas that align with the experiences shared by the virtual assistants interviewed in this study. Their insights and reflections help to deepen the understanding of the virtual profession industry in Davao del Norte and provide a human-centered perspective on the opportunities and challenges faced by these professionals. The following were the virtual assistant's experiences:

The first theme found in this study was that virtual assistants are accessing job platforms for application opportunities. The theme highlights the crucial role of job platforms in helping virtual assistants (VAs) secure opportunities, particularly those in remote areas. Platforms like Upwork, OnlineJobs.ph, and Fiverr connect VAs with clients, making them essential for finding work. Even with challenges, participants emphasized that job platforms offer access to a wide range of clients.

In support of the theme, Signore et al. (2023) emphasize the critical role digital job

searching platforms play for virtual assistants (VAs). Their literature review highlights the importance of features like the Web Application Framework and Artificial Intelligence in enhancing user experience and job matching. As VAs increasingly depend on platforms like Upwork and OnlineJobs.ph, these technological advancements are essential for connecting them with clients. The study also stresses the need for improved usability, which is crucial for VAs to thrive in a competitive job market.

Table 1
Lived Experiences of Virtual Assistants

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Accessing Job Platforms for Application Opportunities	<i>"I started on Upwork because their platform is big, and there are a lot of clients looking for VA services." - FGD-01</i> <i>"I visit websites like Upwork, Online Jobs, Fiverr, My Desk, those kinds of platforms. Then, you just create a profile there, do ID verification, and also take an IQ test, which you can easily find on Google." - IDI-01</i> <i>"I applied on OnlineJobs.ph because they were one of the platforms hiring a lot during the pandemic, along with Upwork and Online Jobs. I did get replies from clients on Upwork, but nothing pushed through due to some problems, like internet issues, or I read the interview invitation too late." - IDI-06</i>
Learning to Establish Communication and Relationship	<i>"At the start, we always set clear communication with the client. I ask questions they can fully understand." - FGD 1</i> <i>"Communicate with the client, tell them about your previous experiences so they have some knowledge. Then you should also understand their expectations towards you to meet them halfway." - IDI-03</i> <i>"My strategy is to update them on the progress of the tasks, especially those that cannot be completed immediately. They ask for timelines, so I update them, and if there is no update after three days, I follow up and provide another update. This way, they know I have not forgotten. You just have to be honest." - IDI-05</i>
Being Able to Manage Time Strategically	<i>"You have to finish the work for each client within their given time. You cannot exceed their time limit because you will have to work double, which can be overwhelming. You need to manage your time well." - IDI -01</i> <i>"Time management, like you have different clients during the day and different clients at night. You should not have clients with the same dates or times, they should not overlap. It is up to you to choose which clients you take, but they should not have overlapping schedules." - IDI-03</i> <i>"I prioritize urgent tasks, emails, and things that need to be done immediately. Once I finish the urgent tasks for my main client, I move on to the urgent tasks for my second client. After completing all the urgent tasks, I then slowly work on the other tasks that can be delayed. The most important thing for them is the urgent tasks, so I focus on those." - IDI-05</i>

**Experiencing
Flexible Work
Environment**

"My experience as a VA is different from the corporate world, of course. In my line of work, my time is flexible, so I have a good work-life balance. Some VAs have timers and take screenshots to prove they are working, but I do not have that. My client is very lenient and trusts me. My shift starts at 3 am, but if I see something is not urgent, I just go back to sleep. It is not a very strict job. My client's business is seasonal, a landscaping business based in Canada." - ID1-05

"For me personally, I really want flexible working hours. The kind where I do not need to report to the office." - FGD-01

"Right now, I have two clients, and thankfully, both are flexible. They use time trackers, and all their tasks are non-voice. So, I work full-time on my computer, and on the side, I do part-time work on Upwork. It is non-voice data entry, so I just switch between the two." -ID1-06

**Facing Internet
Connectivity
Issues**

"Most of the time, you need internet, and you have to inform the client if there is an issue. You cannot do anything about it because there are no other internet providers here." - ID1-01

"My experience as a VA spans almost 9 years. Since we work from home, internet interruptions are common. We need to have a backup or hotspot in case clients need something urgently, so we can solve things quickly. Being a VA is enjoyable because you can work anytime, anywhere, just bring your laptop. It is a good balance because sometimes the work can be stressful, but there is also time to enjoy it." - ID1-02

"Usually in the Philippines, there are brownouts and power outages, so you need to have a backup internet connection." - ID1-03

Moreover, another study of show that online job resources are very important for job seekers, including virtual assistants (VAs). Their survey of 768 job seekers looks at which platforms and strategies help people find jobs successfully. The results reveal that higher-income job seekers tend to use more strategies and get more callbacks than those with lower incomes. The study also notes differences in platform use based on factors like gender, education, and race. This highlights the need for job platforms to meet the varied needs of VAs, showing how crucial these resources are in helping them find job opportunities (Dillahunt et al., 2021).

The second theme expressed in this study was that the virtual assistants are learning to establish communication and relationships. This theme highlights how virtual assistants work on improving their communication skills to better understand their clients' needs and expectations. Effective communication is essential for building trust and creating a professional connection with clients. Many participants discussed various methods they use to ensure clear, honest, and regular communication. They also emphasized the importance of being respectful, responsive, and transparent, which fosters stronger teamwork and mutual respect. Given the remote nature of their work, virtual assistants must put extra effort into building and maintaining these relationships, which leads to smoother collaboration and greater client satisfaction.

This result is further supported by the study of Rohatinsky et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of strengthening connections through regular communication and

relationship-building in remote work settings. For virtual assistants, maintaining open, honest, and frequent communication with clients is essential to establishing trust and building strong professional relationships. Similar to how effective mentorships rely on mutual respect and constructive communication, virtual assistants who use clear and respectful interactions are better able to meet client expectations. This leads to improved collaboration. In a remote work setup, utilizing tools like video calls or messaging platforms allows virtual assistants to stay connected, ensuring a smoother working relationship and fostering long-term partnerships despite the physical distance.

Additionally, another research also shows that remote work can both create challenges and offer opportunities for building relationships. Virtual assistants working from home may miss casual conversations and social breaks, which are key for building trust and teamwork. However, technology such as video calls and instant messaging helps keep communication ongoing. Even though these tools cannot fully replace face-to-face interactions, they still allow virtual assistants to stay connected with clients. The main challenge is maintaining strong relationships in a technology-based setting, which can affect the quality of communication and the feeling of being part of a team (Jämsen et al., 2022).

The third theme revealed that virtual assistants are being able to manage time strategically. This theme examines how participants effectively handle tasks for multiple clients, each with its own set of deadlines and priorities. They share the challenges they face in balancing these demands, highlighting the stress of meeting varied expectations. To manage this complexity, participants emphasize the importance of finishing tasks on time and avoiding overlapping schedules. They prioritize urgent work first, using techniques like setting clear deadlines and creating structured schedules. This strategic approach not only boosts their productivity but also helps them maintain a high level of client satisfaction. Furthermore, by mastering time management, virtual assistants can adapt to the fast-paced nature of their work environment, ultimately allowing them to excel in their roles and contribute to their clients' success.

This result is supported by Negulescu and Doval (2021), who noted that time management helps boost performance and lower stress by allowing people to work smarter, not harder. By using schedules and prioritizing tasks, individuals can make better use of their time. Time management also includes making space for relaxation and activities that support personal well-being, such as socializing or exercising. The authors also emphasized that time management is key to the success of projects, as it directly impacts efficiency.

In addition, this result was further supported by Jackson (2009), who explained that good time management and planning can help improve productivity and quality of life. However, these skills can be hard to develop. Important steps like setting realistic goals, staying organized, delegating tasks, and taking time to rest are key to managing time well. Jackson also pointed out that procrastination and aiming for perfection can make it harder to finish tasks, often causing more stress and delays.

The fourth theme expressed to this study was that the virtual assistants experiencing flexible work environment. This theme highlights how VAs appreciate the freedom and flexibility

that comes with their job. Many participants mentioned that their role gives them the ability to better manage both their work and personal lives. Unlike traditional office jobs where people have fixed hours and locations, VAs have the freedom to work from different places, whether at home, a café, or anywhere they choose. Some even have the option to set their own schedules, allowing them to work during the times that best suit them. This flexibility helps reduce stress, improves productivity, and makes their work experience more enjoyable and fulfilling.

This result relates to a study by Setiyani et al. (2019), which emphasized that a flexible work environment has a positive influence on employee motivation and engagement. Similar to the virtual assistants in this study, who enjoy flexibility in their work setup, the study found that flexible working hours improve both motivation and engagement, particularly for millennials. The ability to manage work and personal life more freely, as seen with virtual assistants, is a key factor in reducing stress and making work more enjoyable. Additionally, employee motivation plays a role in strengthening the connection between flexible work hours and overall engagement.

Moreover, this result aligns with a study by Dwomoh et al. (2024), which demonstrated that flexible working arrangements positively influence job satisfaction, work-life balance, and employee performance. Similarly, the virtual assistants in this study benefit from a flexible work environment, allowing them to manage their personal and professional responsibilities more effectively. The study found that this flexibility leads to enhanced productivity and overall job satisfaction. For virtual assistants, much like the employees in the study, the ability to control their schedules reduces stress and promotes a more balanced and fulfilling work-life experience.

The last theme found under this research question was that virtual assistants are facing internet connectivity issues. The theme focuses on the common issue of internet connectivity problems faced by virtual assistants (VAs). Since their work depends heavily on a stable internet connection, participants shared how disruptions can affect their ability to complete tasks and communicate with clients. These interruptions not only delay their work but also make it harder to stay connected with clients, which is essential for remote jobs. Many virtual assistants highlighted the need to inform their clients right away when they experience internet issues. This helps manage client expectations and allows both sides to adjust plans if needed. Some participants also mentioned having backup options, like using mobile data or going to coworking spaces with reliable internet, to minimize the impact of these problems. These approaches show the VAs' ability to adapt and stay professional, even when faced with technical challenges.

This theme is supported by Bhuiyan (2020), who highlight the growing global reliance on the internet for both personal and professional purposes. With the rise in internet users from 16% to 48% of the world population between 2005 and 2019, stable internet access has become essential for many, including VAs who rely on it to perform their tasks effectively. However, issues such as poor coverage, especially in rural areas, can disrupt their work, leading to challenges in meeting deadlines and communicating with clients. Bhuiyan discussed the difficulties in providing consistent wireless internet services in rural regions due to low revenue

potential and infrastructure challenges, which mirrors the connectivity struggles VAs encounter in remote locations. This further emphasizes the need for VAs to have backup plans and quickly inform clients when internet issues arise to maintain professionalism and manage expectations.

Another study that shows poor internet does not stop people from doing their tasks. Virtual assistants, like students, also face slow or unstable internet but still continue to work. They find ways to solve the problem and finish their work. This shows that internet problems are not a barrier but a challenge they can overcome. This shows the importance of being patient and not giving up (Bahinting et al., 2022).

Virtual Assistants in Coping with the Challenges

This research question looked into the ways they deal with difficulties and take advantage of opportunities in their work. The findings showed that virtual assistants use different methods to handle challenges, like managing their time well, overcoming communication problems in remote work, and keeping a good work-life balance. They also take opportunities to improve their skills and grow in their careers. Table 2 was presented in the following page.

The first theme expressed that the virtual assistants are continuing their learning and skill improvement. This theme highlights the importance of continuous learning and skill improvement for virtual assistants (VAs). Participants emphasized that in this line of work, learning is an ongoing process. VAs need to stay updated with new trends, tools, and practices to remain competitive and meet their clients' needs. Whether it is understanding different cultures, mastering new software, or improving communication skills, continuous learning allows them to offer better services. This ongoing learning also boosts their confidence, helping them take on tasks more efficiently and adapt to the changing demands of the job. Additionally, it empowers them to explore new opportunities, making them more valuable in the virtual assistant industry.

This finding is supported by the study of Rawson (2000), which emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) for improving performance. Just like health professionals, virtual assistants must engage in lifelong learning to stay competitive and meet evolving client needs. CPD involves regularly reflecting on one's performance, identifying areas for improvement, and participating in formal and informal learning activities. The concept of CPD, as described in this study, aligns with virtual assistants' need to continuously learn and improve their skills. By doing so, they reduce performance gaps, adapt to new challenges, and provide better services.

Additionally, this theme is also supported by the study of Parisi et al. (2019), which talks about lifelong learning in both humans and animals. Lifelong learning is the ability to keep learning and improving skills throughout life. This ability helps with developing skills and improving long-term memory. Just like these living beings benefit from lifelong learning, virtual assistants can also improve their work by continuously learning new skills. The study shows that while there are challenges in making lifelong learning work in machines, the same ideas can help virtual assistants adapt and succeed in their jobs. By embracing lifelong learning, virtual assistants can handle new information and experiences better, making them more

competitive and capable in their roles.

The second theme expressed that virtual assistants are organizing and planning task effectively. This theme focuses on how virtual assistants (VAs) effectively handle their tasks by staying organized and planning ahead. Participants emphasized that managing time well and prioritizing urgent tasks is crucial to their success. They highlighted the importance of keeping their work organized to prevent confusion and reduce stress. To achieve this, VAs use various tools such as Excel spreadsheets, notepads, and digital calendars. These tools help them track their tasks, set reminders, and plan their schedules efficiently. By staying organized and planning effectively, VAs can meet deadlines and ensure their work processes run smoothly, ultimately leading to better service for their clients.

Table 2
Coping Mechanisms of Virtual Assistants

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Continuing Learning and Skill Improvement	<i>"For continuous learning and impact as a VA, your top priority is to prioritize. You should also have a broad understanding of your work. Even if you are frustrated, you need to love it."</i> - IDI-02 <i>"The impact of this job on me is that I get to understand other cultures, especially in Canada, and how life works there. It expands my knowledge beyond the Philippines. I get to understand their personalities and how to please them, what makes them happy. It is a learning process every day. I always try to please them so they can increase my rate."</i> - IDI-05 <i>"I believe in lifelong learning, so I learn daily. Continuous learning helps me stay updated with the latest tools and techniques."</i> -FGD-01
Organizing and Planning Task Effectively	<i>"For that one, time management is still important, and you need to be organized with your files so you do not get confused and forget where you put them. You need to be proficient in Excel and other computer-based knowledge."</i> - IDI-03 <i>"Like I mentioned before, if all the deadlines are tight, I prioritize the most urgent tasks. I weigh which ones need to be done first so I do not get overwhelmed. Sometimes, if I see that everything is happening at once, I feel like I am going to lose my mind. It is like, "Oh my god, they are all messaging me, and it is all urgent!" Sometimes, I get overwhelmed and lose focus. So, what I do is I look at what is most important and prioritize that. I just focus on what I need to do first, what will help me meet the deadlines. If you prioritize the most urgent tasks. I weigh which ones need to be done first, so I do not get overwhelmed, focus, you lose track because you have so much on your mind, everything is a deadline."</i> - IDI-04 <i>"I prioritize tasks based on urgency. For example, if I receive a task, I will finish the most urgent one first. I ask my client which tasks are the most urgent or need to be done first, then I push back the less important ones. I also use a notepad to keep track of what needs to be submitted first, second, third, and last. That helps me stay organized and avoid confusion."</i> - IDI-06

**Motivating
Oneself by
Accomplishing
Goals**

"For me, I always have a goal, so I set specific and measurable daily goals. Achieving them keeps me motivated every day." - FGD-01
"After completing big tasks, I reward myself with small things like snacks or a quick break. This motivates me to finish my work." - FGD-04
"I schedule regular exercises to stay alert and motivated throughout the day." - FGD-05

**Embracing
Work-Life
Balance**

"As I mentioned earlier, being a VA is great, but it can be tiring because it is mostly night work. Few VAs work during the day. It is about balancing work and personal life. For me, if I have personal issues, I do not bring them to work because it affects my performance. I set them aside. When I am bored and losing motivation, I travel and have coffee with friends while online. But even while at a coffee shop, when it is work time, it is work time. It is a commitment." - IDI-02
"I want to share how I balance work and personal life. Even though we need to work, I set strict working hours and do not go beyond them. This helps me separate work from personal life." - FGD-01
"I work for my family, so I do not sacrifice my personal life for work. I take regular breaks and spend time with my family." - FGD-02

This finding resonates with the results of the study by Nwanakezie et al. (2021), which highlights the important role of managers in achieving organizational goals. Managers coordinate activities, organize resources, and plan tasks effectively to ensure success. Virtual assistants (VAs) can benefit from these managerial functions by setting clear objectives, prioritizing urgent tasks, and maintaining organized work processes. Effective planning helps VAs understand what needs to be done and how to do it, while good organization enables them to communicate clearly and manage their time well. By applying these management skills, VAs can enhance their productivity and provide better services to clients.

Moreover, this finding supports by the study of Chernyi and Uotila (2024), highlighting the importance of understanding their role within their clients' businesses. It suggests that employees can do better in task prioritization by focusing on the values, culture, and identity of the organizations they work for. By being aware of how they present themselves and their skills, VAs can build better relationships with clients. This connects to how managers need to understand their organizational identity to make better decisions. They should also pay attention to external factors; staying informed about industry trends and client needs helps them prioritize tasks effectively. Finally, knowing that context matters helps VAs adjust their approaches based on the specific needs of each client, leading to better organization and improved outcomes for their clients. Leading to improved organization and outcome.

The third theme was motivating oneself by accomplishing goals. This theme explores how virtual assistants (VAs) stay motivated by setting and achieving goals. Participants shared various strategies they use to maintain their drive throughout their daily tasks. One common method is breaking larger goals into smaller, manageable steps. This approach allows VAs to track their progress and celebrate small victories along the way, which boosts their motivation.

Additionally, participants mentioned the importance of rewarding themselves after completing tasks. These rewards can be simple, such as taking a short break, enjoying a favorite snack, or engaging in a brief activity they enjoy. Maintaining healthy habits is also crucial for motivation.

This is synonymous with the study which emphasized the importance of work motivation for virtual assistants (VAs). Diefendorff et al. (2022) noted that work motivation affects attitudes, well-being, behavior, and performance. It refers to the direction, intensity, and persistence of job-related actions. Goals are essential for understanding motivation because they represent the outcomes that VAs aim to achieve. The goal-setting process involves choosing realistic goals based on their feasibility and desirability, followed by goal striving, which includes planning and effort needed to reach those goals. Research shows that VAs must prioritize and balance their goals, as many objectives exist in real life.

This result also aligns to the study of Gollwitzer and Bargh (2023), which emphasize that motivation strength is influenced by the desire for outcomes and the perceived feasibility of achieving them. Their research suggests that self-regulation of motivation and goals can be achieved by setting specific, challenging goals and enhancing the desirability and feasibility of future outcomes.

Then, the interviews revealed that virtual assistants are actively embracing work-life balance. This theme highlights the significance of balancing work and personal life, especially for virtual assistants (VAs) who encounter challenges due to the flexibility and remote setup of their jobs. Participants share how they handle separating work responsibilities from their personal lives. Some set strict boundaries, like designated work hours or specific areas in their homes for work, to create a clear distinction. Others focus on time management, ensuring they allocate enough time for family, hobbies, and self-care. This balance is essential to avoid burnout, maintain productivity, and enjoy a fulfilling personal life while meeting professional demands.

This finding is supported by Caringal-Go et al. (2022), who explored how employees manage work-life balance (WLB) while working from home. The study found that employees use different strategies to handle both work and personal demands. These include physical strategies like organizing time, tasks, and workspace; cognitive strategies like practicing self-care and balancing work with rest; and relational strategies like spending time with family and staying connected with co-workers. These approaches are similar to how virtual assistants manage their work-life balance. The study highlights that these strategies help employees maintain a good balance between their work and personal lives, showing the importance of supporting remote work to improve well-being.

Insights of Virtual Assistants

This research question focused on the experiences and perspectives of virtual assistants (VAs) in Davao del Norte, exploring how they manage tasks, adapt to challenges, maintain work-life balance, and achieve professional growth. The study aimed to delve into the insights of VAs regarding their strategies for success in their careers. By understanding their perspectives, the research sought to uncover valuable insights into how these virtual assistants

navigate their daily responsibilities, the challenges they encounter, and the approaches they use to foster their personal and professional development in a rapidly changing work environment. Table 3 was presented above.

The first theme that emerges is that virtual assistants' adaptability to changing system is essential. This theme emphasizes the necessity for virtual assistants (VAs) to be flexible and quick to adapt to changes in systems and technology. Participants highlighted the importance of staying updated on the latest tools and trends, as well as being proactive in learning new skills. They noted that the rapid evolution of the virtual landscape requires VAs to quickly familiarize themselves with new software and platforms to ensure efficient service delivery. Furthermore, many virtual assistants pointed out that effective communication with clients is crucial during transitions, as it helps clarify expectations and fosters collaboration. By embracing a mindset of continuous learning and adaptability, VAs can not only meet their clients' evolving needs but also enhance their professional growth.

This finding is supported by the study of Nejad et al. (2021), which explains how important adaptability is for handling changes and challenges at work. Adaptability, which means adjusting mentally, behaviorally, and emotionally to deal with uncertainty, is linked to better well-being and job satisfaction. The study shows that being adaptable helps people manage work stress, stay engaged, and find purpose in their jobs. For virtual assistants (VAs), this means that their ability to adjust to new systems and technologies not only helps them meet client needs but also improves their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

Table 4
Insights of Virtual Assistants

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Adaptability to Changing System is Essential	<i>"You need to adapt quickly to the current trends because my client is always trying out different systems until they find the perfect one. You need to be quick to learn and understand."</i> - IDI-05 <i>"You need to know what you are doing as a VA. Second, you need to be adaptable, especially if you are new to the field. Time management is crucial, and you need to be able to adjust and work hard. You should always be researching because everything is available on YouTube. Those are essential for VAs because you will learn how to understand tasks on your own. You also need to know how to ask questions and work hard because you will not always be spoon-fed. You need to be able to understand and research what you need to do, especially if you are new to it."</i> - IDI-06 <i>"Keep learning and adapt. The virtual world is always changing, so staying updated is crucial for success."</i> - FGD-06

**Self-
Management
and
Independence
Require One for
Growth**

"It is a big help personally and professionally as a VA because you learn how to manage yourself. You are on your own. When you are in a corporate job, you are used to just doing your duty to earn money. There are bosses who just take calls. You are used to that routine, "Hi, thank you for calling." But as a VA, you manage yourself and your work. Personally, you prove to yourself that you can do it even without a lot of people around, a corporate environment." - IDI-04

"I like the independence of the job. Being my own boss is very empowering." - FGD-04

"Based on my personal experience, flexibility is my favorite because unlike other jobs where you are stuck in one place, I can work anywhere. The freedom is very satisfying for me." - FGD-01

**Success
Through Clear
Communication**

"My tip for aspiring VAs is to communicate clearly and regularly with clients. Communicating helps in understanding each other. It builds trust and ensures we meet client expectations." - FGD-04

"While in my case as a VA, using voice or how we speak, communication is very important and commonly used. So, working as a VA has improved my communication and time management skills. It has really helped in other aspects of my life." - FGD-01

"First, communication skills are important. You do not have to be eloquent, but you need to understand the client's needs. You also need patience. You will be dealing with demanding clients who might even curse you out, but it is part of the job. You need to understand them to meet their satisfaction." - IDI-02

**Fulfilment
Through
Financial
Stability**

"Salary is the main thing, and the idea of working from home and being with my family is very fulfilling for me." - IDI -01

"The salary is really good, especially when you have multiple clients. It gives you a great sense of fulfillment." IDI-03

"There really are changes when it comes to life. I am very fulfilled, especially since I can provide for my family's needs, and we get to travel." - IDI-05

Moreover, this is also supported by the study of McLoughlin et al. (2021), which highlights the importance of adaptability in the workplace as jobs and structures evolve. Their research focused on project managers and showed that adaptive performance is critical, especially in unpredictable situations. While adaptability may not be part of formal competencies, it plays a key role in handling emergencies and stress. For virtual assistants (VAs), this adaptability is essential in managing changing tools and processes. Like project managers, VAs need to adjust quickly to new systems, ensuring they stay effective and provide high-quality services to clients.

The second theme that emerges is that virtual assistants' self-management and independence require one for growth. This theme highlights how being a virtual assistant (VA) fosters personal and professional growth by encouraging self-management and independence. Participants emphasized that working as a virtual assistant requires strong self-discipline, as they must create their own schedules, meet deadlines, and complete tasks without direct

supervision. This level of independence not only enhances their ability to manage time efficiently but also builds confidence in their decision-making skills. Additionally, the flexibility that comes with remote work allows virtual assistants to adapt to different clients' needs, further improving their problem-solving abilities and resilience. Over time, these qualities contribute to significant personal growth and career advancement, as VAs learn to handle multiple responsibilities, prioritize tasks, and navigate challenges on their own. This independence empowers them to continuously improve and succeed in their roles.

This finding aligns with the study by Logan et al. (2020), which discusses the importance of building self-management and independence skills over time. The study explains that these skills need to be developed through a structured and gradual process, starting early and continuing as individuals grow. Similarly, for virtual assistants, managing themselves and working independently are key factors in their growth. Just as people learn to manage tasks through practice, virtual assistants develop self-discipline and decision-making abilities that help them improve personally and professionally.

In addition to the study by Ridosh et al. (2023), which highlights the development of self-management skills over time, particularly in young adults. The study shows that self-management improves as individuals grow, with some demographic groups demonstrating different rates of progress. Similarly, for virtual assistants, self-management and independence are essential for their personal and professional growth. Just as self-management develops through various stages, virtual assistants also gain independence by managing their tasks, setting priorities, and learning how to work without constant supervision. Both findings underscore that self-management is a gradual process that fosters long-term growth and success.

The third theme that emerges is that virtual assistants achieved success through clear communication. This theme emphasizes the importance of clear and effective communication as a fundamental aspect of a virtual assistant's success. Participants noted that maintaining open lines of communication with clients is essential for building trust and fostering strong working relationships. They shared that regular updates and feedback help align their work with clients' expectations, ensuring that tasks are completed accurately and on time. Additionally, effective communication allows virtual assistants to better understand clients' needs, preferences, and goals, leading to more tailored and satisfactory service.

This finding aligns with the study of Ilavarasi (2024), which emphasizes the crucial role of clear communication in achieving success in professional environments. The study highlights that establishing clear communication channels enhances workplace productivity, ensuring smooth information flow and minimizing misunderstandings among team members. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of active listening, which helps VAs understand client needs and perspectives, thereby building trust and improving job performance. Providing constructive feedback is also vital, as it fosters continuous improvement and helps VAs meet client expectations more effectively.

Furthermore, this finding aligns with Aebissa (2023), who emphasizes that effective

communication is essential for personal and professional success. The article highlights that clear communication fosters strong interpersonal relationships, which are critical for building trust and respect with clients. Furthermore, it points out that effective communication is key to conflict resolution, enabling VAs to address misunderstandings efficiently and maintain harmony in their work environments. Aebissa notes that the ability to express objectives and plans clearly is vital for achieving goals. The importance of active listening and empathetic communication is also underscored, as these skills allow virtual assistants to understand their clients' needs better and foster stronger connections. These insights illustrate how clear and effective communication serves as a foundational element for virtual assistants in their roles.

Also, the fourth theme that emerges was that virtual assistants' experienced fulfillment through financial stability. This theme highlights how virtual assistants (VAs) find fulfillment through the financial stability their work provides. Many participants emphasized that earning a steady income as a VA not only supports their families but also empowers them to pursue personal goals and improve their overall quality of life. The financial rewards enable virtual assistants to cover essential expenses, reduce financial stress, and invest in their families' well-being. Participants noted that this reliable income allows them to engage in meaningful activities, such as traveling, pursuing hobbies, and spending quality time with loved ones, which enhances their happiness and satisfaction.

This finding relates to the findings of the study of Brzozowski and Visano (2019), which emphasized that financial satisfaction significantly impacts overall life satisfaction, especially for those experiencing financial stress. Many virtual assistants noted that their steady income not only supports their families but also enables them to pursue personal goals and enhance their quality of life. This reflects the authors' conclusion that financial well-being is crucial for life satisfaction. Additionally, the research highlights the link between financial stress and dissatisfaction, showing how reliable income reduces financial stress and allows individuals to meet essential expenses. Participants emphasized that their stable earnings enable them to engage in meaningful activities, such as traveling and spending quality time with loved ones, leading to increased happiness and satisfaction.

In conclusion, the study revealed that participants experienced various aspects of being a virtual assistant, such as managing time strategically, working in a flexible environment, building communication and relationships, dealing with internet connectivity issues, and using job platforms to find opportunities. To cope with challenges, they focused on balancing work and life, improving skills, planning tasks effectively, and staying motivated by achieving personal and professional goals. Participants also shared valuable insights, emphasizing the importance of adaptability, self-management, financial stability, and clear communication as key elements for success.

These findings underline the importance of employers supporting virtual assistants through services that address their well-being and professional development, along with providing technical training. A supportive and collaborative work environment can also reduce challenges such as isolation and connectivity issues, leading to a more positive experience for remote workers.

The findings of this study contribute to a better understanding of the experiences, challenges, and coping strategies of virtual assistants. They highlight the importance of communication, adaptability, self-management, and continuous learning for success in the virtual assistant profession. The findings may guide employers in developing programs that promote employee well-being, technical skills, and effective communication. Educational institutions may use the results to strengthen curriculum and training related to virtual assistance, while government agencies such as PESO, JPO, DOLE, and CHED may use the findings in designing employment and skills development programs that support the growing virtual assistant industry.

Future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies with a larger and more diverse group of virtual assistants from different regions and industries. Quantitative or mixed-method approaches may also be used to validate the findings. Further studies may examine the effects of remote work on job performance, work-life balance, mental well-being, and career development, as well as the effectiveness of support programs for virtual assistants.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researchers express their deepest gratitude to Almighty God for His guidance, strength, and blessings, which made the completion of this study possible. They also sincerely thank all individuals who extended their support and assistance throughout the research process. The researchers are also grateful to the panel members for their guidance, encouragement, and valuable feedback, which strengthened the quality of the study. Heartfelt thanks are extended to their family and friends for their unwavering love, understanding, and encouragement, which provided constant motivation and support throughout their academic journey.

REFERENCES

- Abug, N. B., Navales, B. B., Calderon, R. S., De Jesus, E. R., & Garcia, E. N. (2023). Personal and professional balance among freelance workers: A status quo analysis. *International Journal of Business, Technology and Organizational Behavior*, 3(3), 197–211. <https://doi.org/10.52218/ijbtob.v3i3.275>
- Aebissa, M. (2023). Effective communication: The key to success. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, 27(5), 1–2. <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/effective-communication-the-key-to-success-16363.html>
- Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is qualitative in qualitative research? *Qualitative Sociology*, 42(2), 139–160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7>

- Badil, M. D. M., Aslam, Z. A. Z., Khan, K. K., Ashiq, A. A., & Bibi, U. B. (2023). Phenomenology qualitative research inquiry: A review paper. *Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences*, 4(3), 9–13. <https://doi.org/10.54393/pjhs.v4i03.626>
- Bahinting, M. A., Ardiente, M., Endona, J., Herapat, M. A., Lambo, D., Librea, H. J., Librando, M. C., Libron, J. B., Petaluna, M. J., Ygot, G., Taneo, J., Cabello, C., & Minyamin, A. (2022). Stronger than the internet connectivity: A phenomenology. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 2(6), 465–476. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6791820>
- Bhuiyan, M. J. R. (2020). *Solutions for wireless internet connectivity in remote and rural areas* [Master's thesis, University of Oulu]. OuluREPO. <https://oulurepo.oulu.fi/handle/10024/17028>
- Blaising, A., Kotturi, Y., Kulkarni, C., & Dabbish, L. (2021). Making it work, or not. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 4(CSCW3), 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3432925>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brzozowski, M., & Visano, B. S. (2020). “Havin’ money’s not everything, not havin’ it is”: The importance of financial satisfaction for life satisfaction in financially stressed households. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 21(2), 573–591. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-019-00091-0>
- Caringal-Go, J. F., Teng-Calleja, M., Bertulfo, D. J., & Manaois, J. O. (2022). Work-life balance crafting during COVID-19: Exploring strategies of telecommuting employees in the Philippines. *Community, Work & Family*, 25(1), 112–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2021.1956880>
- Chernyi, A., & Uotila, J. (2024). Prioritization of organizational stakeholders: A managerial decision-making perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 185, 114882. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.114882>
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499–512. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499>
- Diefendorff, J. M., Kenworthy, M. E., Lee, F. C., & Nguyen, L. K. (2022). Work motivation. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.013.37>
- Dillahun, T. R., Israni, A., Lu, A. J., Cai, M., & Hsiao, J. C. (2021). Examining the use of online platforms for employment: A survey of U.S. job seekers. *Proceedings of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3411764.3445350>

- Dubiel, M., Halvey, M., & Azzopardi, L. (2018). A survey investigating usage of virtual personal assistants. *arXiv*. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1807.04606>
- Dwomoh, J. A. N., Opoku, O. A., Mensah, A., Bashiru, A. W. A., & Kelvin, D. P. (2024). Assessing the dynamics of employee benefits for virtual and flexible work arrangements of Obapack Company Limited, Ghana. *Journal of Production Operations Management and Economics*, 43, 21–29. <https://doi.org/10.55529/jpome.43.21.29>
- Gollwitzer, P. M., & Bargh, J. A. (2023). Two routes to the self-regulation of motivation and goals. In *Oxford University Press eBooks* (pp. 183–190). <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197662359.003.0031>
- Gunawardena, C. N. (1995). Social presence theory and implications for interaction and collaborative learning in computer conferences. *International Journal of Educational Telecommunications*, 1(2–3), 147–166. <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/15156>
- Hakanen, J. J., Schaufeli, W. B., & Ahola, K. (2008). The job demands-resources model: A three-year cross-lagged study of burnout, depression, commitment, and work engagement. *Work & Stress*, 22(3), 224–241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370802379432>
- Heaton, J. (2022). “Pseudonyms are used throughout”: A footnote, unpacked. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 28(1), 123–132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004211048379>
- Ilavarasi, N. D. (2024). Enhancing workplace productivity: A review of effective communication techniques and their role in fostering team collaboration and conflict resolution. *International Journal for Multidimensional Research Perspectives*, 2(4), 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.61877/ijmrp.v2i4.132>
- Jackson, V. P. (2009). Time management: A realistic approach. *Journal of the American College of Radiology*, 6(6), 434–436. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacr.2008.11.018>
- Jämsen, R., Sivunen, A., & Blomqvist, K. (2022). Employees' perceptions of relational communication in full-time remote work in the public sector. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 132, 107240. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2022.107240>
- Kapisyzi, B. D., Drishti, E., Kopliku, B., Duhanxhi, I., & Dergjini, A. H. (2024). A study of freelancers' work experiences in the Albanian gig economy—is there any meaning after all? *Research Square*. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-4788150/v1>
- Logan, L. R., Sawin, K. J., Bellin, M. H., Brei, T., & Woodward, J. (2020). Self-management and independence guidelines for the care of people with spina bifida. *Journal of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine*, 13(4), 583–600. <https://doi.org/10.3233/PRM-200734>
- McLoughlin, E., & Priyadarshini, A. (2021). Adaptability in the workplace: Investigating the adaptive performance job requirements for a project manager. *Project Leadership and Society*, 2, 100012. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plas.2021.100012>

- Negulescu, O., & Doval, E. (2021). Ergonomics and time management in remote working from home. *Acta Technica Napocensis Series: Applied Mathematics, Mechanics, and Engineering*, 64(1-S1). <https://atna-mam.utcluj.ro/index.php/Acta/article/view/1500/1223>
- Nejad, H. G., Nejad, F. G., & Farahani, T. (2021). Adaptability and workplace subjective well-being: The effects of meaning and purpose on young workers in the workplace. *Canadian Journal of Career Development*, 20(2). <https://doi.org/10.53379/cjcd.2021.70>
- Nwanakezie, I. S., & Ogoni, I. K. (2021). Task development procedures for effective educational management. *International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management*, 3(1), 106–133.
- Parisi, G., Kemker, R., Part, J. L., Kanan, C., & Wermter, S. (2019). Continual lifelong learning with neural networks: A review. *Neural Networks*, 113, 54–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neunet.2019.01.012>
- Raghuram, S., Hill, N. S., Gibbs, J. L., & Maruping, L. M. (2019). Virtual work: Bridging research clusters. *Academy of Management Annals*, 13(1), 308–341. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2017.0020>
- Rawson, M. (2000). Learning to learn: More than a skill set. *Studies in Higher Education*, 25(2), 225–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713696137>
- Ridosh, M. M., Adams, W., Magaña, F., Sawin, K. J., & Holmbeck, G. N. (2023). Trajectories of self-management and independence in youth with spina bifida: Demographic predictors of growth. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 49(3), 508–517. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.13065>
- Rohatinsky, N., Cave, J., & Krauter, C. (2020). Establishing a mentorship program in rural workplaces: Connection, communication, and support required. *Rural and Remote Health*, 20(1), 5640. <https://doi.org/10.22605/RRH5640>
- Setiyani, A., Djumarno, D., Riyanto, S., & Nawangsari, L. C. (2019). The effect of work environment on flexible working hours, employee engagement and employee motivation. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 9(3), 112–116. <https://doi.org/10.32479/irmm.8114>
- Short, J., Williams, E., & Christie, B. (1976). *The social psychology of telecommunications*. Wiley.
- Signore, C., Della Piana, B., & Di Vincenzo, F. (2023). Digital job searching and recruitment platforms: A semi-systematic literature review. In *Lecture notes in networks and systems* (pp. 313–322). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-42134-1_31
- Tudy, R. A. (2021). From the corporate world to freelancing: The phenomenon of working from home in the Philippines. *Community, Work & Family*, 24(1), 77–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2020.1809994>