
Impact of Part Time Work on the Academic Performance of International Students

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Abstract - *The study analyses the impact of part time work on academic performance of international students while they study. In doing so, the study has conducted a survey among international students who were studying at different tertiary institutes in Auckland region. The study found that there are positive as well as negative impacts on the students' academic performance while they study as well as work. The study opines that whether the impact would be positive or negative depends on time management between work and study. Findings of the study may be of interest for policy makers, educationists, and researchers.*

Keywords - *Advantages, Disadvantages, International Students, Impact, Part time work*

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I. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a widespread phenomenon that tertiary students, both domestic and international, do part time job after class schedule. Generally, students do casual works such as in restaurants or fast food chains. Available literature opine that the impact of part-time work on academic performance is different for domestic students from that of international students. This happens because of the difference of familiarity of work culture between the two group of students. New Zealand government promulgates relevant decree to impose restrictions on students working hours. Current regulation allows an international student to work maximum 20 hours per week.

There are two opinions regarding the impact of part time work on students' academic performance. While one group of researchers claim that students gain work skills and experience from job, other group believe that spending too much time on job distract students from study which contributes to poor academic performance in school. But whether the impact of part time work would be positive or negative on the students' academic performance depends on the balance of time between work and study. This paper analyses how part time work affects tertiary students' academic performance with particular focus on international students.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: the rationale of the study has been presented in section 2 while section 3 presents methodology. Section 4 highlights findings and discussion while conclusion and recommendation are presented in section 5 and 6 respectively.

II. Rationale of the study

Nowadays part time work for students is a very common phenomenon. A good number of studies has been carried out on this phenomenon. Some of the significant contributors are Greenbank, Hepworth, and Mercer. (2009); Keister & Hall (2010); Curtis (2007); Singh (1998); Shaw & Ogilvie (2010); Meyerhoff (2006); Barron & Anastasiadou (2009); Munroe (2011); Robotham (2012); Smith (2015); Robotham (2009); and Dustmann et al. (1996) respectively.

According to above mentioned studies, there are several reasons which drive tertiary students to have part time employment. Most of the students think that their study costs are higher than that they expected. Parents feel stressful to pay the expensive tuition fees and other living costs. Thus, they try to find ways to finance their own studies and to save money. They are mainly employed in the hospitality or retail industries which have high staff turnover. Part time work for students has advantages as well as disadvantages. Understanding the positive and negative consequences of taking a part time job is important for students.

Studies show that students who have study time employment do better in study and score better academic results than other students who do not work. Part time job could bring extra income and help university students to gain working experience. The most important part is skillset, such as working in an industry is a good way to improve communication skills, teamwork skills and learn about time management. Students also have chance to meet new friends. But students may feel sleepy and reduce time from study, thus it is a real challenge to balance between part time job and study. Some students may feel hard to complete assessment and be absent from class. It is essential that students should have a reasonable number of working hours and try their best to balance between work and study related responsibilities.

The above studies further reveal that students from different backgrounds have different perspective and attitudes towards part time employment. There is an opinion that there are several reasons drive students to do part time work and it does affect academic performance to some extent. First, expensive university tuition fee becomes an economic burden to many families, especially more expensive for international students. Students earn money through hard work from part time job to reduce financial pressure of their family.

And second, it is a fact that the university is a bridge links to future of a professional career but the reality of employment is that job seekers receive preference with past working experience. It is even harder to find jobs for international students whose mother tongue is not English. To consider about the career after graduation, doing part time job after school seems the only way to obtain work experience and to develop job skills. University courses require enough time to comprehend complex knowledge to pass assignments and examinations. Thus, it is a severe test for students to manage time and balance between work and study.

Students who do part time job generally have the following arguments infavour of their benefits. First, to achieve self-worth. In school, not every college student is brilliant, sometimes face the loss of self-worth and mental anguish. For this reason, some college students find another way to select the right road to rediscover the share of feeling in this area.

Second, earning money. Money is not everything but no money not acceptable in life. This concept is applicable to college students to pursue practical psychology and emphasizing self-reliance. Especially students from poor families do not want to meet tuition fee and living cost from their parents. Therefore, choose to become a part-time tertiary student which is an important way to solve the huge expenditure.

Third, exercise self. Currently, a prominent issue is the employment of college students' face. This is an unavoidable choice. For this reason, college students will exercise their space is not limited to the campus and increasingly plunge into the colourful social life. Part-time college students in order to exercise the ability to obtain social experience for future job increase eligibility. Experience is the second qualification in the market and as the market matures and business managers are increasingly employing the concept of rational, this education of gold be gradually increased.

Part-time work has some more advantages for students such as it helps to solve the economic difficulties of many tertiary international students, to improve the viability of the self; but at the same time, the downside is very obvious, such as the employer's too harsh, so that students and career and income is not hard to pay proportional, and some even cheap labour. And part of normal academic impact on students' performance cannot be ignored. Then the simple question is why are so many students choose to work part time?

Existing literature further suggest that while some people claim that students gain work skills and experience from job, others believe that spend too much time on part time job distracts them from study and results in poor school performance. Whether students could balance between work and study, will impact on their academic performance. There is a difference on the results between domestic students and International students. The New Zealand government promulgates relevant decree to impose restrictions on students working hours. Current regulation allows an international student to work maximum 20 hours per week. This situation demands to examine the benefits and costs of part time work, and how the students balance the time between work and study. This study aims to answer this question.

III. Methodology

The study has used data from both secondary and primary sources. Secondary data have been used to

prepare the conceptual framework of the study. To collect primary data, a survey was conducted in November 2015 among the international students who were studying in Auckland region. Although international students study and live every city of the country, most them (about 80%) are belonged to Auckland region. Moreover, as the study doesn't aim to quantify dollar to dollar value, the sampling area, Auckland region, is justified.

The study has asked 20 questions to respondents which included their personal profile, study area, employment activities, future career plan, etc. We have interviewed only who were involved in part time work during survey time. Total 50 questionnaires were finally accepted to use. Details of questions and responses have been presented in findings section.

IV. Findings and Discussion

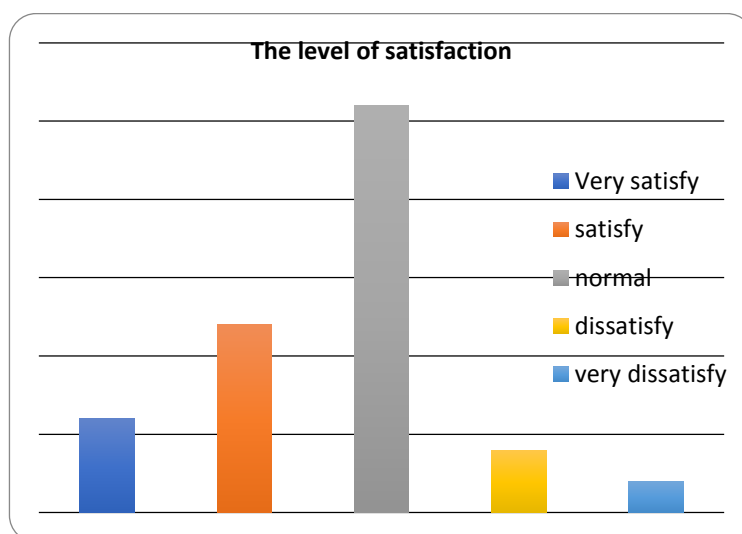
This section presents findings of the study. About 80% of respondents of the conducted survey were from Asian background of which 60% was male and 40% was female. This ratio is consistent with the real picture of the education industry of New Zealand. New Zealand international education market is largely focuses on Asian countries such as China, India, etc. Majority of the international students studying in New Zealand are from Asian countries where Asian women culturally feel shy to be part of interviewed.

The study found that the most common job that available for students to do as part time are sales, waiter/waitress, cleaner, cashier, chef and assistant. Many of them work in restaurants, takeaway outlets and textile shops. The turnover of those kind of jobs are quite high. Many companies would like to hire the students as a part time worker due to the low wage payment.

As the purpose of the study is to examine the impact of part time work on the students' academic performance and, generally they work in industries such as hospitality and tourism, the study intended to know whether the work was related to students' career interest. Only 24% of the respondents said that the work was related to their study discipline. The rest 76% respondents informed that the work was either partly related to the study discipline or not at all related to it. This scenario tells us that income is the priority for most of the international students while they study to meet their study related costs.

We tried to understand the students' level of satisfaction they get from their work. Figure 1 presents the degree of satisfaction level. It shows that most of the students are satisfied with their work irrespective of whether the work relates to their career path or not. The reason may be that the students work mostly in restaurants or shops that have high employee turnover. Managers may not pay much attention at management level of part time employees' intentions to work. Only 4% of the respondents indicated that they were not happy with their work. High level satisfaction is consistent with the overall working culture of New Zealand where employee - employer relationship is good and employees are happy with their working environment.

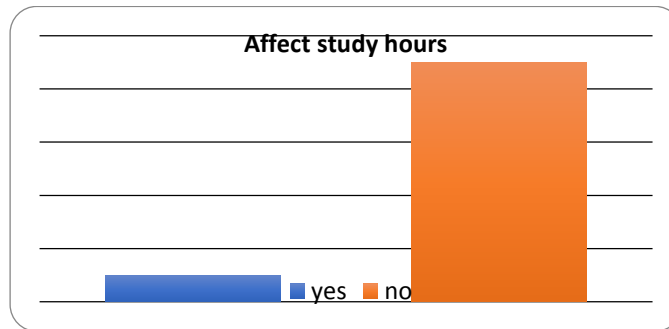
Figure 1: How do students evaluate their part time job?



Source: Survey data

Whether part time work affects students' academic performance or not is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Does the part time job affect the study hours?



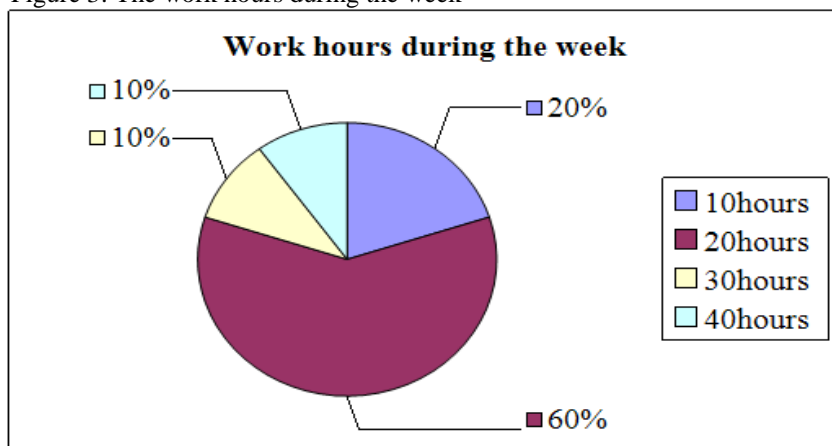
Source: Survey Data

Figure 2 shows that only 10 per cent of the students think that part time jobs reduce their study time. Whereas a majority, ninety per cent of the students think that part time jobs do not affect their study time. Experience says that if students could balance the study time and part time work, it would not affect the study seriously. Another reason might be that some students work over the allocated or planned time. That additional work load doesn't only reduce the study time but also makes them feel too tired to concentrate on studies.

In New Zealand, the minimum wage is \$15.25 per hour and international students can work maximum 20 hours per week. Studies found that 40% of the respondents are paid wages lower than the minimum wage. Forty two per cent are paid wages equal to the minimum wage. Only 18% of the students get paid wages higher than the minimum wage. Ironically, many students do hard work but get the minimum or lower than minimum wage. Their income and work load is not balanced.

One of the survey questions was whether the students had any study plan while they worked. We found that there were 21 (42%) students out of 50 who had a study plan while 29 (58%) students did not have any study plan. If students have study plan, they know clearly what time to study and what time to work. The study plan can help them manage their study and work well. Educational institutions can play a vital role teaching learners about time management by practicing work plan. This is very important for international students as they are unfamiliar with the work and study culture in foreign country such as New Zealand. Figure 3 presents how many hours international students work per week.

Figure 3: The work hours during the week



Source: Survey data

Figure 3 shows that 20% of the students work five to ten hours per week. Sixty per cent students work ten to fifteen hours per week. Ten per cent students work over twenty hours per week. According to New Zealand law, an international student can work maximum 20 hours per week during study time. If students work more than 20 hours per week it reduces the study time which may have negative influence on their academic performance.

The study also found that there are several reasons that drive students to do part time work and it does affect academic performance to some extent. Firstly, expensive university tuition fee becomes an economic burden to many families, particularly for international students. Students acquire money through hard work from part time job to reduce financial pressure of their parents. Second, university is a bridge that links to future career. The reality of employment is that applicants receive preference with past working experience. It is even harder to find jobs for international students whose English is a second language. It indicates that findings of this study is consistent with the existing literature of this field.

The study further wanted to know the main purpose of students' involvement in part time work during their study time. Respondents' purpose of work is presented in Table 1.

Table1: The purpose of working

The purpose of working	Numbers
Money	32 (64%)
Gain working experience	33 (66%)
Make new friends	16 (32%)
Make use of leisure time	26 (52%)
Get to know society and practise yourself	24 (48%)

Source: Survey data. Note: Respondents' responses reflect frequency only, not necessarily be equal to 100%.

Table1 shows that most students work to gain experience (66%) followed by 64% for raising disposable income. Combining these two categories, it appears that about two third of international students work part time during their study time for reducing the burden of cost of education on parents and also to be familiar with new work environment. This picture draws the attention of policy makers regarding tuition fees and hence the price of exporting education to Asian countries.

The study tried to explore whether students are aware about the impact of part time work. In doing so, we asked respondents how the work affects their academic performance. We found that most of the respondents were aware that because of work they wouldn't have enough time to study. Data indicate that students feel tired and do not have enough time to study while doing part time work. However, considering their career after graduation, doing part time job during study seems the only way to obtain work experience and develop skills for future employment. University courses require enough time to comprehend complex knowledge to pass assignments and examinations. Thus, it is a severe test for students to manage time and balance between work and study.

V. Conclusion and policy implication

This study aimed to examine the impact of part time work during study for international students. A survey was conducted to collect primary data and it was found that students work mostly in the service industry with lower wages. Majority of international students work in restaurant or shops that have high employee turnover. Most of the work does not relate to their career path. Many students work long hours than what they are entitled to work. This situation does not only reduce the study time, but also makes them feel too tired to concentrate on their studies. Students who have a study plan know how to manage time such as what time to study and what time to work. The study plan can help them to manage their study and work well. Tertiary education providers may play vital role to teach students to practise study plan. Study plan should be an integral part of teaching curricula for international students.

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