

A Study of Part-Time Worker Students at the Postgraduate Level

Basudeb Khanal

Lecturer, Economics Education, Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tahachal, Kathmandu

Email: khalbasudeb@gmail.com

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Abstract

This paper attempts to analyze a study of part-time worker students at the postgraduate level in economics education in Kathmandu valley. The students who continue their postgraduate studies and jobs are known as part-time working students. This paper is based on a qualitative research design. Data were collected from in-depth personal interviews. For this purpose, four students were purposively selected covering gender from the first and second semesters. This paper has two-fold findings: most students engage in part-time work to gain thirst and survival and develop future working experience in the second. However, both types of students reported that part-time jobs support a lower survival level, which has disrupted their study. Furthermore, both types of students involved in part-time work do not seem satisfied with their job and study.

Keywords: Economic education, part-time worker, job satisfaction, completing school, time management

Introduction

A job done for less than the average amount of hours invested or less than the full duration is a part-time job (Feldman, 1990). A part-time job is where a person works less than 40 hours per week (Booth & Van, 2008). However, the term has been defined variously by different organizations and scholars. For example, a Singapore government website defines a part-time employee as one under a contract of service to work less than 35 hours a week. Still, it has not set a time for work (Higgins et al., 2000; O'Reilly & Fagan, 1998). The partly active people in the workforce are known as part-time workers (Nardone, 1986). Vickers et al. (2003) argued that students and retired persons work part-time for economic support. In this context, students who continue their studies at the postgraduate level and jobs are part-time working students.

The students in many underdeveloped countries are working as part-time workers and studying simultaneously. It is mainly due to the availability of part-time work or growth in the diversity of students combining to study and work (Barron, & Anastasiadou, 2007; Martin, 2007). Robinson (1999) and *Lamb, Robinson, and Davies (2001)* examined the consequences of student participation in part-time work. Their findings explored that part-time employment did not significantly affect the likelihood of completing school.

Part-time jobs have been considered a factor in students' academic performance (Muluk, 2017). However, the rate of completion and dropout did not vary in part-time work, or part-time jobs had no adverse effect on the study (*Lamb et al., 2001*). Robotham (2012) examined that students who work less than 20 hours have a lower failure rate than those who work longer hours. He concludes that a small duration of employment may have negligible

effects on the educational outcomes of students at the tertiary level compared to a longer time. Singh's (1998) finding showed that part-time work affected standardized test scores and grades. For example, the greater the number of hours students worked, the greater the effects on standardized achievement measures. Students' previous grades also affected their later working behaviors. Students who had secured higher grades in elementary and middle school were less likely to work longer hours when they reached 10th grade. Singh and Dika (2007) explored the effects of part-time work on school achievement during high school. They estimated the actual impact of part-time work on school grades was family background, students' educational aspirations, and school engagement. *Part-time jobs have been considered one of the factors influencing students' academic achievement. However, in some cases, the time required to finish their studies is longer than those who do not have part-time jobs* (Singh, 1998; Singh & Dika, 2007; Robotham, 2012).

Although many studies have been made on part-time workers abroad, nobody has studied in Nepal. But, this issue is needed to study in economics education. Nepal is considered a developing country where most students have faced a lifetime of hardship, including severe economic poverty, limited employment opportunities, and socio-economic infrastructure. As a result, students seem forced to continue their studies by doing part-time work in formal and informal sectors. On the other hand, educational progress and advancement are essential to their social and economic growth. So, they are seeking part-time work to support their education. As a result, the number of part-time working students has increased in Kathmandu Valley urban areas. It provides ample potential part-time job opportunities for students who study in higher education. Both formal and informal sectors have made it easier for those working part-time to continue their study.

The student involved in part-time work has a positive and negative effect on their study. The social learning theory, Krumboltz (1990), suggests that an individual is guided by their heredity, environment, learning experiences, socio-economic status for career development, and choice of work. However, earlier studies have not explored the support and hindrance of work on their research. In this context, this paper's focus is to analyze students' perceptions of the level of satisfaction and the effect of part-time jobs on their study in economics education at the postgraduate level.

Methods and Materials

This paper is based on a qualitative research design. For this purpose, four students were purposively selected covering gender from the first and second semesters from two constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University of Kathmandu valley. Among them, two participants were from Kathmandu and two from outside Kathmandu.

Data were collected from personal interviews and group discussions to collect respondents' views and perceptions about part-time work (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). The personal interview covers reasons for involving part-time jobs, job satisfaction, and the effect of a part-time job on their educational career and professional development. Their narrations were recorded, transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted per the study's objective.

An overview of Part-time works in Nepal

Thapa (Nd.) stated that there are many forms of part-time work and work levels in the larger urban areas of Nepal. These works include content writing, data entry, freelancing as a programmer, web designer, video editor, digital marketing, modeling, blogging, photography, and tutoring. However, most of these works have been confined to metropolitan cities like Kathmandu, Pokhara, Biratnagar, Bharatpur, and Birgunj. Therefore, their number and frequencies decrease in other urban areas.

Most students who come to study higher education in Nepal have a weak economic environment. They have few employment opportunities, and it is harder to study and work. On the other hand, the working environment does not develop. So students prefer a part-time job. If anyone is looking for a first job, then part-time jobs can also be a good start. People also do part-time jobs in Kathmandu because they are not earning well from their profession (Thapa, Nd.).

Students' perception regarding the part-time job and their impact on quality education are not identical. Some experienced the very adverse effect of their part-time job on their study and concluded that better academic achievement is not possible without leaving a part-time job during the study period. However, some students say that if properly time is managed, there has a low impact on a part-time job in the study. It indicates that more or less part-time job has affected students' academic achievement.

Reason for working as a part-time worker

The reason for selecting a part-time job is an issue of the study of economic education. The student perceptions and views indicate that most students are involved in a part-time job for several reasons. It is determined by their family background, economic status, and interest. Movement of the female respondents reported that:

My family's economic status is not so strong. My parents cannot provide all the expenses for my study in Kathmandu. So, I have been compelled to do work as a part-time worker.

She has further stated that her father is a small farmer. He also works as a mason in the village. Her mother is a housewife, and she usually works in agricultural activities. They have little arable land, but she does not know the actual amount. However, she said, "*we have only nau Halko Melo of arable land (using nine pairs of the oxen-plow in a day) for farming.*"

It shows that the economic status of the family is poor. So she needed ancillary jobs to support her self-financing for her study (Robinson, 1999). She does not want to burden her parents with her study. So, she is involved in part-time work. Thus, she engaged as a part-time worker along with her study.

One of the male participants worked in three institutions in a day. His economic status is relatively well as compared to the female participant. They said that:

My father is a teacher in a public school. So my parents can manage financial resources for my study. We have one hector of land in Surkhet. But I am involved in a part-time

job in Kathmandu. *I want to be self-sustain in my student life. I don't want to put any financial burden on my parent. So I am doing this job.* However, my father always stated that involve in a full-time job hindered my study. So then I joined a part-time job.

This type of involvement is correlated with the findings of *Lamb, Robinson, and Davies (2001)* contend to self-sustain in the financing of the study.

Next, the male participant worked in a commercial bank in the post of junior assistant. He has two houses in Bhaktapur. His father and mother are involved in being a businessman. Their family economic conditions are looking well as compared to other participants. However, he is working in the job market. He said that: said family's financial status is comparatively good. So I do not need to do a job for my study. But I want to make my career in the banking sector. So I have started to work in a commercial bank.

I chose this job to earn experience for career development. So, the present work will be helpful to make my future bright in the banking sector.

A Newar community female participant has also worked in a commercial bank at Bhaktapur. They have three *ropani* agricultural lands in the Bhaktapur district. Her father worked as a government officer, and her mother was involved in tomato farming. However, she is working in a bank. She stated that:

Working at the bank job has taken as a prestigious job for us. I want to make my career in the banking sector. So, I had been involved in this job and my study. I am not doing this job for an economic reason but to earn a better future.

These examples have been taken to analyze why students are involved in a part-time job and their studies. The result reveals that those from the lower economic groups stated that part-time jobs are a means of gaining a livelihood. Therefore, it can conclude that students with weak financial backgrounds seem to be working for a living along with their studies, while students with good economic backgrounds are gaining experience for future work. Furthermore, Krumpoltz (1976) added that people select different occupations or work for their career development based on their heredity, learning experience, and economic and social status. Hence, students from the higher financial background can develop their careers through part-time jobs.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an essential aspect of a part-time worker. It has many facets to analyzing how people feel about the job they like or dislike. It is mainly due to job satisfaction, and job dissatisfaction varies based on their economic condition and work situations. However, all participants agreed that job satisfaction correlates to future careers and quality of study in economics education. In this context, one participant stated:

The salary payment is lower than the existing labour laws and my expectation. However, it is sufficient to maintain my expenditure in Kathmandu to continue my study. If the office gives me a scooter, it will help me move forward with my studies

and work. Despite *these limitations, I am happy with this job*. Now I can support my family financially, even if only a little. My studies are also moving forward with work.

The next participant has not found satisfaction in this job. He reported that:

The office pays me a lot less than the workload. I am not satisfied with this job because I see the future of this job so well. I am doing this job only to complete my master's level study. When I finish my studies, I quit this job.

But another participant observed being *fully satisfied with this job*.

Now, I am working temporarily, but I have a handsome salary. After a year, my work will be permanent. Then, I will get a provident fund. So I am satisfied.

A similar level of satisfaction has also found in the next respondent. Her manifestation is as follows:

A job in the banking sector is very prestigious for me. I am a student of management. It gives me pleasure to work in a bank. However, I am always afraid about my job transfer to remote areas. Nevertheless, it is no doubt that I am happy with this job.

From the discussion with participants about job satisfaction in their working field, it is inferred that there are variations in the satisfaction level of the part-time workers due to several factors like salary, job transfer, workload, and the like. For example, one participant from a lower economic status has observed being fully satisfied in a part-time job due to financial support from their parents. Another participant involved in the commercial bank has also been satisfied with their job. S/he has been involved in this job only to gain experience and study. But one participant has not been happy with this job due to less salary than the workload.

Aziri (2011) stated that the work situation is a prime determinant of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Hence, the student who has been compelled to work to manage their study's financial resources become satisfied. Furthermore, the students involved in the job for future career development are also satisfied (Lamb et al., 2001). These findings show that the students involved in a part-time job for future career development have been satisfied compared to those who cannot see a good job. It indicates that earning and future career development are the main determinants of job satisfaction among economics education students.

Effect of a part-time job on the study

The effect on work is another aspect of part-time worker students. Therefore, it is equally important to analyze the impact of this work on students' studies. Their views on the subject are as follows.

Working with the study, not being able to take the whole class, and not having enough time to study has affected our studies. To secure good marks, we can't manage time to submit the assignment on time and fully participate in classroom activities, such as presentation, discussion, and project work. *So, sometimes they felt that if we dropped out, we could study well.*

However, she becomes hopeful that the job and study can continue simultaneously if time manages. The most important thing is not doing the job but time management.

Nonetheless, by doing a job, we cannot get an excellent grade like an A or A+ at the postgraduate level, but a satisfactory degree can achieve. Singh (1998) also reported that the more hours of part-time work, the greater the negative effects on student achievement. Hence, she advised other friends that if you can manage your time for the job and study, doing the job will likely hamper your study.

Some students have not felt the positive effect of a part-time job in their studies. They have stated:

The involvement of part-time jobs has certainly affected our study. We have not allocated time to study to prepare project works and assignments on time. We have no time to read at the library, consult reference books, and be well prepared for the examination. Therefore, there is no positive correlation between a part-time job and a learning environment.

Thus, the analysis concludes that most students have not strongly agreed with the *positive correlation between a part-time job and a learning environment. They claimed that if we dropped out of this job, we could achieve a good grades in our studies.* Therefore, it can conclude that part-time work hinders all students from securing excellent marks at the postgraduate level. However, some students reserve a good grade when properly managing their time. But, the level of agreement varies based on the nature of the job, working hours, distance from the campus, workplace, and place of residence. Their consensus indicates a negative relationship between employment and their study, as the findings of Singh (1998). He shows that students' achievement and rendezvous with education are reduced by involvement in part-time work compared to Stem's (1997) findings. He showed minimal negative impacts on educational attainment through a part-time job.

Conclusion

The students have a diverse perception of engaging in part-time jobs in their studies. They are involved in a part-time job for various reasons such as self-sustain and carrier development in the job market in the future. The study also indicates that students' involvement in part-time work differed in gender. Moreover, present earnings and future career development are the main determinants of job satisfaction for students as part-time workers. Likewise, students' involvement in part-time work has been reported that the part-time hinders their postgraduate study. This paper concludes that students involved in a part-time job are difficult to manage time to secure better grades.

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