

The Impacts of Doing Part-Time Job on EFL Students

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Abstract

This research is aimed to investigate the impacts of doing part-time job on EFL students at a university in Can Tho city, Viet Nam. The data were gathered from a questionnaire with 103 respondents and the interviews with 10 students and three teachers. The findings showed that the advantages of students working while studying outnumbered its disadvantages. Specifically, students increased their financial potential, gain expertise, and sharpen their soft skills. However, among the debatable shortcomings of working part time, health problem was students' most concern. Consequently, the solutions and recommendations to help students having part-time jobs were proposed. These accounted for consulting useful advice from schools, teachers and friends before and while working part time, well-researching the potential working places, managing working and studying schedules, taking the advantages of group work and team spirits and finally maintaining healthy habits.

Key words: EFL students' part time jobs, positive impacts of part-time jobs, negative impacts of part-time jobs

1. Introduction

1.1 The significance of the research

Nowadays, working part-time is not a strange phenomenon for most students. That students go to work part-time has been becoming more popular than it was in the last decade (Callender, 2008; Neill, 2015). With an increase in the number of students taking part-time jobs outside the campus, its effect on students' academic performance has been questioned by many researchers (Callender, 2008; Triventi, 2014; Yanbarisova, 2015).

The ideas above provide premises for the conduction of the study. Since working part-time now has been so widespread among students, especially EFL students, it is really necessary to conduct a study to evaluate the effects of such a practice.

1.2 Research questions

What impacts does working part-time job have on EFL students?

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Definitions of part-time jobs

According to Walter (2008), doing part-time jobs as if you occupy part-time or prepare part-time or do part-time work, you work for only some hours of the day or the week.

In addition, Muluk (2017) showed that students with part-time jobs could be defined as students who worked during the semesters, with less than 20 working hours per week.

Briefly, working while learning allows an employee to work fewer hours per week than full-time counterparts. However, there is no fixed amount of hours on part-time jobs. It depends mainly on the characteristics of the jobs themselves.

2.2. The reasons why students do part-time jobs

The reasons why make students combine work and study while going to university are a hotly-debated topic that often divides opinions. According to Perna et al. (2010), students attended to work for those reasons such as paying for college, discovering job opportunities and gaining insight into the working world. According to Rajeev (2014), having a part-time job would support undergraduate students with a variety of things, including offsetting financial pressures associated with education, offering opportunities for students to network and establish connections, and assisting students in developing self-worth related to pursuing a preferred career.

On the contrary, a significant trend was that not only low-income students were working during their studies but others who did not have financial issues also pursued a part-time job (Roshchin, 2006; Beerkens, Magi and Lill, 2011). So, it is evident that students work part-time not only to earn money but

also to obtain more experience or simply to fulfill the free-time that students may have due to a credit-based curriculum (Vuong et al, 2015).

2.3. The impacts of doing part-time jobs on students

2.3.1. The benefits of doing part-time jobs

2.3.1.1. *Having the ability to earn and manage money*

Facing this problem early will help students to mature each day and no longer feel confused after graduation. Working part-time is the fastest way to help students make money with their strength, from which they can develop a more reasonable way on how to appreciate and manage money (Perna et al. 2010; Carnevale et al. 2015).

2.3.1.2. *Gaining or maintaining experience connected to future jobs*

Nowadays, before launching some certain recruiting plan, companies regularly prefer students who have relevant work experience to students who only have hypotheses in class (Yanbarisova, 2015). Students with a great deal of experience related to the profession will easily complete the assigned work. Therefore, when students are acquainted with the workplace early in life, they have more chance of getting employed (Ormiston, 2016).

2.3.1.3. *Gaining practical or soft skills*

According to many researchers, working while learning has become the new pathway to achieving the essential soft skills. Working during studies, according to Stephenson (1981) and Davies (1999), helped students become autonomous and establish social competencies linked to study. Serving 15–20 hours a week has been shown to develop critical thinking skills (Pascarella and Terenzini 2005; Pike, Kuh, and Massa-McKinley 2008). According to Yanbarisova (2015), part-time work was the best combination since it helped students to achieve useful work experience while still attesting to his skills and competencies.

2.3.2. Drawbacks of doing part-time jobs

2.3.2.1. *Negative influence on students' college outcomes*

There seems to be evidence that working limits the amount of time available for students to connect with teachers and professors and possibly inhibits social

and academic integration or participation. Some researchers have identified that “the more time a student devotes to employment, the less he or she has for either academic or social activities” (Fjortoft, 1995). Because of doing part-time jobs, students struggled to focus and pay attention during the learning process, which influenced the outcomes of the courses they attended. (Derous and Ryan 2008; Kosi et al 2013; Nguyen et al. 2013; Muluk 2017)

2.3.2.2. *Negative influence on student's health*

One of the side effects of working part-time is exhaustion, which has a significant impact on students' health. First-year students, in particular, are often uncomfortable with the new speed and way of learning at university classes, so returning to work part-time will surprise them and trigger exhaustion and stress. The effect of tension between work and studies has been identified as a cause of students' mental health decline (Nguyen et al, 2013).

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research participants

The English-majored students with different academic years were invited to participate in this research on a voluntary basis. They have part-time experience with a variety of jobs. Concretely, among 103 participants, the third year students made up with 49.5%, the last-year students, the second-year students and the first-year students accounted for 22.3%, 17.5 % and 10.7% respectively.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 35 questions and included two parts. Part one consisted of six questions which investigated the students' general information. Part two included 29 statements listed in a table with 5 scales (Strongly agree, agree, no idea, disagree, strongly disagree) to find out the positive and negative effects of doing a part-time job on EFL students.

3.2.2 Interview

In order to make the study more reliable, the paper-based interviews were delivered to 10 students and three teachers who were their counselors to answer questions about the factors that affected students while doing part-time jobs.

3.3 Data analysis

To analyze data from the questionnaire, the SPSS was employed. Specifically, the Descriptive tests

were run to find Mean, Standard deviation and Frequency based on the five-point scale of Likert. The meanings of these statistics are explained as follows:

- 1.00 - 1.80: Strongly disagree
- 1.81 - 2.60: Disagree
- 2.61 - 3.40: No idea
- 3.41 - 4.20: Agree
- 4.21 - 5.00: Strongly agree

The data from the interviews were presented under conversations and scenarios. Then, their meanings were explained with the device of interpretation analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results from the questionnaire

4.1.1 The types of part-time jobs that students do

Table 1. The types of part-time job

Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Service Staff	71	44,9
Tutor	22	13.9
MC/PB/PG	9	5.7
Sale Workers	39	24.7
Giving out leaflets	3	1.9
Other jobs	14	8.9

Table 1 shows the types of part-time jobs that students do. Accordingly, 103 students have many choices of jobs. The most popular job was to become a service staff, accounting for 44.9% (the highest proportion). The second selection of job was a sale workers, accounting for 24.7%. Beside that, tutor was another popular job that students chose to do while attending college, accounting for 13.9%. The other jobs such as shipper, designer and collaborator were also chosen with 8.9% (the four proportion). The promotion activities for enterprises (MC/PB/PG) made up 5.7% of the choice. Finally, a few students were giving out leaflets while going university, making up 1.9%.

4.1.2 Reasons students work while learning

Table 2. The reasons students work while learning

Reason	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Salary	42	19.35
Experience	69	31.8

A chance to improve skills	52	23.96
Work environment	53	24.43
Other reason	1	0.46

The table 2 shows the reasons why students decided to work part time. Among them, wishing to have more experience was the first reason students worked while learning, accounting for the highest proportion (31.8%). The second and third positions with quite similar selection rates were the working environment (24.43%) and a chance to improve skills (23.96%). Furthermore, the salary was one of the most significant factors that students considered when looking for part-time work (19.35%).

4.1.3 Students' opinion about the advantages when doing part-time jobs

Table 3. Students' opinion about the advantages when doing part-time jobs

Statements	Mean	SD
Improving financial capacity	4.00	.874
Gaining experience to apply in future jobs	3.71	.994
Developing soft skills	4.26	.740

1.1.1 Table 3 shows that students strongly agreed that working part-time helped to develop their soft skills (Mean= 4.26, SD=.740). Whereas, working part-time, students could also improve their financial capacity and gain experience to apply in future jobs, but with slightly lower scores (Mean= 4 and 3.71, SD= .874 and 994 respectively)

4.2.4 Students' opinion on disadvantages when doing part-time jobs

Table 4. Students' opinion on disadvantages when doing part-time jobs

Statements	Mean	SD
Learning distraction	2.47	1.178
Health problems	3.52	1.118

According to Table 4, students agreed that their health was affected when working part-time (Mean=3.52, SD=1.118). Meanwhile, they also

denied that their learning was distracted by their working while studying (Mean=2.47, SD=1.178).

4.2 Results from the interviews

4.2.1 Interviews with students

In the first group question, namely "*What academic year are you in? What's your part time job? How many hours do you work per week?*", The results showed that most students worked as a waitress, receptionist, teaching assistant, collaborator and tutor. The average number of working time was from 20 to 30 hours per week.

The second question asked about students' opinion in the reasons and impacts of doing part-time job. Almost students agreed to work because they wanted to improve financial support, get experience and develop necessary soft skills.

With the question: "*What positive effects do working part-time jobs have on you?*" Students admitted that they could earn money, learn new things, handle many situations at work, become more active, accumulate experience and expand social relationship. Because of doing part-time, they also could balance time and improve many skills.

When being asked about the negative effects of working part-time jobs, students thought that doing part-time had negative impacts on them. First, it distracted their studies, especially when the work coincided with school schedules. Furthermore, they didn't have enough break time so they could not fully recover after their work.

4.2.2 Interviews with teachers

The first group question asked about the reality of students' job and the number of students working part-time. The results showed that it was difficult for teachers to grasp the reality of students doing part-time jobs but admitted that there were several students in their class worked while learning.

The third question asked about the types of job that students did and their impacts. Then, it could be claimed that students usually worked as service staff, tutors, PGs, assistants and tour guides. Each teacher had a different perspective on the influence. In terms of the disadvantages of working part-time, it was clear that the teachers held different perspectives on the issues. Specifically, two claimed that working part-time, students experienced a decline and distraction in their study. Meanwhile, one teacher specified that the negative impacts of working while studying existed mainly among the first and second year students. Regarding the remaining groups of students – the third and the last year ones, there was almost no more shortcomings of doing part-time jobs while learning since these groups were mature

enough to arrange their working and studying schedules.

Interestingly, the result was also found to contradict the claims made by students who stated that they did not undergo any distractions in their learning process as a result of working part-time apart from health problems. Consequently, it is necessary that more evidence should be provided before the confirmation of the negative effects of doing part-time jobs on EFL learners.

4.3. Discussion

Firstly, the results from the data confirm that a certain number of students have a part-time job while attending university and the students. These students came from various academic years. Among these, third-year and last-year students tend to work more than other students because they are familiar with the living environment, learning environment and working environment.

Secondly, the results show that there are many kinds of part-time jobs that were held by EFL students such as service staff, tutors, sale workers, promotion activities. In addition, through the interview for teacher, it was realized that students also work as tour guides and teaching assistants. These jobs are linked to the major they are studying at the moment. Furthermore, one of the most striking findings from the data is that most students have the same viewpoint on the benefits of working part-time. They recognize that improving financial capacity, gaining experience for their future jobs and developing soft skills are the significant effects when working part-time. In addition, the interviews show that students can have more relationship, learn new knowledge and be better at time management.

Finally, the remarkable result to emerge from the data is that students have different opinions about the negative impacts of doing a part-time job. While EFL students only admitted health problems were the negative effect of their part-time job, they made a further claim that working part-time was not a reason making them distract their study. However, through the results of interviews, some affirmed that the part-time job has affected students' learning process. This has created two contradictory opinions and urges other research to confirm the claims.

5. Conclusions and implications

5.1 Conclusions

Through the conduction of the present study, it can be concluded that most EFL students have a part-time job while studying. When finding a job, students are absolutely interested in the salary and experience they will get. Moreover, working part-time, students can improve financial capacity, gain

experience for future jobs and develop soft skills. This study also shows that students often face health problems when doing a part-time job. However, attending working part-time has not been found to have a significant impact on students' academic outcomes.

5.2 Implications

Regarding students, since it is obvious that there are both positive and negative impacts of doing part-time jobs, students are advised to know how to maximize the positives and minimize the negatives so that they could balance their study and work effectively. They should determine what their aims are for working part time in order to choose the most appropriate job. In addition, they should find out the information about their potential working place, and consider their schedules to make sure that their work will not affect their learning.

Regarding teachers and schools, it is assumed that they should find methods that are appropriate and more effective to help students balance their study and work. Moreover, the school should hold a part-time career counselling and supporting center to help students who want to work part-time so that they will feel more secured and willing to work while study.

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