



*Implications of work on Academic Performance: A Case Study on
International Students in a Private Tertiary Institution.*

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Agenda

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Literature**
- 3. Data analysis**
- 4. Academic results**
- 5. Student responses**
- 6. Conclusions**

Overview

A study undertaken in a private tertiary institute to understand if work impact studies.

Students lacking engagement in a given semester.

Focus of students, commitment towards work.

Decision to do the study looking at student engagement.

Absence, non-participation in class discussion, late arrival, excuses for missing exams or class tests etc.

First year students academic results are different to the second and third year.

Literature

A study by McInnus, James and Hartley (2000) found that first year students who work part-time were likely to spend fewer days on campus.

Experiences in work does vary among students, such as flexibility of work hours, working in a field related to study, number of hours worked, type of work etc (Ford, Bosworth & Wilson, 1995; McInnis & Hartley, 2002).

In a 30 year study (1966-1996) in the US, Astin (1998) reports that 74.1% of first year students valued financial security very much.

Another study conducted in UK by Callender and Kemp (2000), a representative sample of 2,054 full-time and 747 part-time undergraduate and post graduate certificate in education students, they found that 60 percent of full-time students and 40 percent of part-time students had financial difficulties which had a negative impact on their studies.

Paid work tends to impact upon the academic performance of students negatively. (Callendar & Kemp, 2000; Hall, 2010)

Context

Diversity of students

- Students from Asia, South America, Africa and Europe; 19 nationalities
- English 2nd language
- Most students have previous work experience
- Near equal distribution between male and female
- Students range from 18 – 36+ years
- Most students work part-time.
- Students majoring in Accounting, Business and Information Systems.

Method

- Data collection during semester 2, 2015, Survey conducted during lecture.
- Students were briefed over the survey in the previous week and seeking maximum participation.
- Twenty-one objective type questions using a five point Likert scale and two open-ended questions.
- Distribution of respondents, first, second and third year classes.
- Data entered in MS-Excel and SPSS.
- GPA of students computed at the end of the semester for each of the three years.
- Analysing data using one way Analysis of Variance, Exploratory Factor Analysis and Descriptive Statistics.

Questionnaire responses

- Total number of respondents 145.
- 70% (n=102) respondents having previous work experience.
- 34% (n=50) students work during evening/night shifts.
- 66% (n=96) students are dependent on work during the semester.
- 31% (n=45) respondents commented on work effecting their studies.
- 23% (n=34) mentioned development of communication skills at work.

One-way Analysis of Variance

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.		
Opportunity to advance skills					
Male students	3.45	0.952	0.045	n = 56	The mean higher for males may suggest workplace environment helps advance skills.
Female students	3.05	1.146	0.045	n = 61	
Reduced work hours during semester					
Age 24 to 29	3.60	1.007	0.025	n = 53	The lower age group has a higher mean that could indicate less working hours may could lead to more time in studies over the semester.
Age 36 and over	2.50	1.512	0.025	n = 8	
Spending time to prepare before/after work					
Age 18 to 23	3.33	1.028	0.035	n = 30	The lower age group has a higher mean that suggests they spend time preparing for classes before/after work.
Age 36 and over	2.38	1.408	0.035	n = 8	
Current work helps career after graduating					
Yes	3.11	1.249	0.043	n = 97	Higher mean for those replying yes to indicate their current work helps in a career.
No	2.47	1.219	0.043	n = 19	

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factor 1; Skills at Work; Cronbach Alpha 0.674

- Advancement of skills
- Satisfaction from work
- Social skills benefitted from work

Factor 2; Importance of work; Cronbach Alpha 0.671

- Dependence on work
- Difficulty to find work
- Stress at work
- Weekend and night shifts

Academic Results of Semester 2, 2015

Mean GPA Results over the semester, n = 145

Outcome

- First year students had a comparatively lower GPA to the second and third year students.
- Responses from open-ended questions indicates a certain amount of difficulty to balance work and study during a given semester.
- Male respondents indicated an increase in their skills at the workplace when compared to the female respondents.
- Younger students (24 to 29 years) responded to reduced working hours to enable them to concentrate over studies in a semester.
- Many respondents believe their existing work environment would help them with a career in the future.
- 18 to 23 year old respondents prepare for studies either before or after work.

Student responses to open ended questions

“I got the opportunity to work as a trainee accountant, so it helps me put in practice what I've learnt and still learning.”

“I rather put more effort and time at work than school because it gives me money to survive and work experience will lead me to be a professional worker.”

“We don't want to work really but we have to, to support our studies here as well as to support our living expense & help our families back home. The work takes too much time and leave us a bit of time to study and mostly we are tired and exhausted. Time management is really important to us.”

“The main impact of my job on my studies being an international student is that it really financed and support my studies. Without my job, I cannot afford to finance my studies.” And another comment, *“If I work too much it has a negative impact on my studies but if I did not work, I would go nuts.”*

Student responses continued...

"I work in a nail and beauty salon. I serve many customers. The customers vary from many age group and characteristics. I can learn a lot of English as well as train at my job".

"Communication skills, problem management, computer skills and Accounting techniques such as payroll."

"I separated my working days and studies to ensure that I can gain the most from both work and study. I will only work when I am available as I put my study as first priority."

"I have 2 kids and have no time to study. I find it very hard."

Conclusion

To address the problems of non active engagement by students during semester, lecturers play a key role by providing adequate support.

Emphasizing reduction in hours worked during semester

Academic results of 1st year students lower compared to 2nd and 3rd year.

Future Research to see if there is any difference in gender, age and nationality

THANK YOU



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