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**Part-Time Job and Students' Academic Achievement**

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## **PART-TIME JOB AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

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### **Abstract**

*Part-time jobs have been considered as one of the factors influencing student' academic achievement. This paper examines the students of English Department, at the Faculty of Teaching and Teacher Training, Ar-Raniry State Islamic University (UIN), Banda Aceh, Indonesia, undertaking part-time job outside campus. Effects of employment on students' academic achievement are investigated. A qualitative approach is utilized to analyze the impact of part-time job on students' academic achievement. Thirty (30) students were purposively chosen as the samples of this study. Students' academic result in the form GPA, the amount of time spent on part-time job, as well as types of jobs the students involve in are scrutinized to see the relation between part-time jobs and their academic result. The result of the study indicates that despite the time spent on part-time job, students' GPA are above average. However, in some cases, the time required to finish their studies is longer than those who do not have part-time jobs.*

**Keywords:** *Part-Time Jobs, Academic Achievement, Students*

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## **A. Introduction**

The trend of employment among university students has been increasing rapidly in the last decade. Some suggest that economic reasons are mainly the factor for this trend. With an increase in the number of students taking part-time job outside campus, its effect on students' academic performance of students has been questioned by many researchers (Green, 1987). Issues such as the number of hours worked, whether the student's jobs pertain to their majors, and student's workloads (Watanabe, 2005) have been discussed and scrutinized to see the relation between taking part-time jobs and academic achievement.

Furr and Elling (2000) suggest that there are many reasons why students take a part time job. First, financial problems (Furr and Elling, 2000) becomes mostly reasons some of students forced to take part time job. The average yearly costs of education and living continue to increase in Indonesia.

Second, students' involvement in employment has positive impact to develop career-related skills. It is hands-on experience that cannot be gained in the classroom alone. Whatever the reasons the students have in taking part time job, there is a popular believe that student with part time job do not tend to have higher academic achievement, because their focus time of study has been divided with their working time. Better academic achievement only can be achieved by students who spend more time on academic related activities outside of class (e.g., reading the text, completing assignment, studying, and preparing reports) (Sarah & Hudson, 2005).

So far, researches on the involvement of students taking part-time job have largely been conducted at universities in developed countries. Little, if any, has been reported on this issue when it comes to university students in developing countries like Indonesia. Therefore, the researcher sees the need to explore the issue of students' involvement in part time job at State Islamic University Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh. It is one of State Islamic universities in Indonesia, located in the province of Aceh, the province that once strucked by the biggest natural disaster in recent history, the December 2014 tsunami.



With the above illustration, this study is aimed at investigating the effects of students' employment on their academic achievement. Various factors considered to have effects of students' academic achievement are explored. This includes the type of jobs, the time spent on part-time job, students' GPA, and the time needed to finish their studies.

## **B. Literature Review**

### **1. Part Time Job**

According to International labour organization (2003), part time job is a form of employment that carries fewer hours per week than full time job. Workers are considered to be part-time if they commonly work fewer than 30 or 35 hours peer week.

When it comes to the length of time spent in part time job, different countries have different amount of working hours. In Australia (2007) part time employment is employees that work fewer hours than the full time counterparts within a spesific industry, and mostly the time worked is less than 32 hours peer weeks.

In Canada (2007), employee that is considered as part time is the one who usually works fewer than 30 hours per week at their main or only job. Almost the same, according to the Bereau of Labor Statistic, working part time is defined as working between 1 and 34 hours per week. Unlike full-time employees, part time employees may not have the entitlement given to those working full time. For example, in the United States (2009) part time employes are not entilited to employee benefits, such as health insurance.

From the definitions mentioned earlier, it can be concluded that students with part time job can be defined as student working during the semesters, with less than 20 working hours per week. Despite the variation of the amount of working hours, it is common to see students work full time during semester break.

### **2. The Effect of Working Part-Time and Students' Academic Achievement**

Concerns on the effect of part-time jobs towards students' academic performance do not come out of thin air. Most researches



indicate that there is a detrimental effect on academic achievement if secondary students work for over 15 hours a week (Stern, 1997). Such students have lower grades, do less homework, are more likely to drop out, and are less likely to enter post-secondary education. Those students who work fewer hours suffer several negative consequences.

These findings are supported by a Toronto study (Cheng, 1995), showing that students working more than 20 hours had a 16% dropout rate, and those who worked longer than 20 hours had an even bigger dropout rate of 33%.

Singh (1998), in his study which factored in socio-economic status and previous achievement, states that the more hours worked the greater negative effects on student achievement. The consequences for young students working longer hours could be more severe than for older students (Barone, 1993). Many students who work find some problems balancing school and work demands (Worley, 1995). Many who work part-time have limited participation in extra-curricular activities (Hope, 1990). Many researchers indicating that employment has negatively affected students' academic achievement stated that an increase in the amount of hours worked of the most influence factors (Watanabe, 2005).

According to Furr and Elling (2000), 29% of students worked 30-39 hours per week and 39% of those students who worked full time had a negative impact on their academic achievement and progress.

The common belief in the society suggests that, because the energy and time spent at work, students would be detracted from studying, which in the end results in low GPA. Most studies conclude that this is only the case when the student's number of hours worked per week exceeds 20 hours.

Intriguing findings have been put forward by The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (1994), which is run by the U.S. Department of Education and Marx and Dundes (2006). NCES found that students working 1-15 hours weekly have a significantly higher GPA than both students working 16 or more hours and students who do not work at all. The NCES is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education.



Dundes and Marx (2006) reported that 74 percent of student-workers believed that employment forced them to become more efficient. Despite this fact, it is also reported that 64 percent of students working part-time also have a higher of stress level.

Many sources concluded that working less than 15 hours per week had little or no effect on students' academic achievement. Following an in-depth study of the topic, included in the journal of human resources, Ehrenberg and Sherman (1987) stated, "We do not find any strong evidence... that hours of work during the academic year in the range that student worked significantly reduced grade point averages."

Other studies concluded (Astin, 1975) that only on-campus employment had a positive influence on academic performance. Astin reported that the effects of on-campus employment were characterized as positive in nature, while off campus student employment is associated with lower GPA.

The positive effects of on-campus employment are due to enhanced integration with the institution, including involvement with other students and with faculty (Furr and Elling, 2000). In addition, on campus jobs often include responsibilities with academic components.

### **C. Brief Description of Research Location**

This research took place at English Department of Faculty of Teaching and Teacher Training, Ar-Raniry State Islamic University (UIN), Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

This research utilized a qualitative approach which asks broad questions and collects data from phenomena or participants (Given, 2008). To examine the effect of employment on students' academic achievement, an interview and survey were used as data collection techniques. The population of this study, which is the whole subject of the research, was English Department students registered in 2012 (119 students).

In this research, purposive sampling was used because respondents recruited as sample for this research were students working part-time. Purposive sampling is composed of individuals or groups that



provide informaton “about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Sowel, 2001).

Consequently, those who were not working part-time were not included in this research. Out of 119 students, 30 students had part-time job. For the purpose of this research, four students were choosen as participants. These students were chosen by using random sampling resulting in 2 male and 2 female students. This was done in order to see if there were any differences between male and female students when it comes to part-time employment and academic achievement.

To answer research questions, an interview technique is used. Interview is one of the techniques used in qualitative research to collect data from a person or more by directly or indirectly asking some questions to them which correlate to research topic (Sowel, 2001). Interview is one one of data collection methods used by reseachers to support their thesis or other academic writings. Usman and Akba described interview as direct questions to a person or more (Suhaimi, 2011).

Arikunto (2009) stated there are three types of interview : guided interview, unguided interview, and both guided and unguided interview. Guided interview is when the interviewer brings the list of questions that she or he wants to ask to the interviewee. Vice versa, unguided interview is when the interviewer asks freely the interviewee without the handout of questions. When applying the combination of both guided and unguided interview, the interviewer brought the outline of questions that would be asked to the interviewee.

In relation to this, the researchers chose the combination of both guided and unguided interview, which is also known as “ semi-structured interview”, to gather the information from the respondents. Semi-structured interview was chosen because the researchers would, based on respondents’ answer, follow up several questions, to get the spesific information from them.

#### **D. Research Findings**

To answer research questions, four students, selected as respondents of this study, as mentioned earlier in previous section, were



interviewed. Two female and two male students working for 20-40 hours per week were chosen. There was only one male student who works over 35 hours per week. The four of them were interviewed with the same unstructured questions. They were interviewed in October 2016.

*Q.1: How many average work hours per weeks did you spend to work part-time?*

In order to see the relation between part-time employment and students' academic achievement, the researcher needed to consider and look at the length of time spent by the students. The assumption is that the more time they spent on part-time job, the less likely they will get good academic result. This assumption was just common as they would have less time to study, or they will be tired and could not focus on their courses.

Responding to the above question, two respondents said that they worked for 20-30 hours per-week. They had to work long hours because the wage is low. To fulfill their needs, these respondents have to work long hours so the wage is enough for them to cover their needs. One respondent said he worked for over 35 hours per week because in his workplace there was still a shortage of teacher. Until additional teachers were recruited, he must teach several classes.

One respondent said that he had no definite working hours. This is because his working hours depends on how many students enroll in his course; but he estimates he spent about 10-15 hours per week doing part-time job.

*Q.2: What type of job did you have?*

This question was asked in order to get the insight of the nature of work that the students involved in. This was intended to see the level of stress and energy used to do their jobs. Two of the respondent worked at boarding schools. They were recruited as scout coach, not as teachers. One of the respondents said that he worked as private English tutor, and the other one work as a delivery man.

Considering the nature of their jobs, it is safe to conclude that their area of works were not physical works that demanded strength and





stamina. In this sense, they were not exposed to dangerous working conditions. This information is important because the researcher was able to draw a conclusion that the respondents' work outside campus still relates to their area of study.

*Q.3: What are your reasons for taking part time job?*

Two of the interviewees answered that the reasons why they take part time job is to seek experience of work. By having the experience of work, it will make them easier to find a job in future.

"For me, it is a good opportunity to try to apply my teaching skill. As a students at English department, someday I will find it easier to get a job because of my experience".

Another reason why they work is to earn money. One of the respondents answered that the reason she worked is to earn money to pay her college tuition fees and looked for networking.

"For me, besides having the chance to practice my teaching skills, at the same time I earn money to help pay my tuition. There are times when my parents can not send me money because of their financial condition".

Another respondent said that the reason he worked was to spend leisure time and to improve his skills in teaching.

*Q.4: Do you think part time job has negative or positive impacts on your academic achievement?*

Three respondents said that working while attending class does not have a negative impact on their academic achievement. Furthermore, they did not argue that they experienced a disruption in concentration, so that they had to pay extra attention and had to have a good time management. Besides, the interviewees said that part time job is only distracting their thesis because of the time to meet the lecture and to look for the materials of literature review is not sufficient.

Out of four respondents, one respondent mentioned that sometimes, when the he must work overtime, he finds it difficult to manage his time. Although working overtime is not regular, nevertheless



it has caused him difficulties in time management and resulted in stress. This finding is somewhat in line with the statement out forward by Dallam and Hoyt (1988) arguing that the length of time spent by students on part-time jobs has negative influences on students' academic achievement.

In a similar vein, the other interviewee answered that working part time has a negative impact on his academic achievement:

"Sometimes, when I have to attend the class and do my assignments, I have to go to work as well, and I am not able to attend a class. It was really effected the result of my examination. I got several bad results from my examination and it has affected my time to complete my studies and it has delayed my time to graduate"

The above statement shows that despite good GPA, some students have to sit in a remedial in order to improve the result of their courses. This is why some of them have to spend more than eight semesters to finish their study. The above findings has confirmed the result of the research conducted by Furr and Elling (2000) who state that working long hours have negatives affects on students' achievement.

## **E. Discussion**

In this section, the researcher analyzes and discusses the effect of employment on students' academic achievement. In line with the analysis of questionnaire, interview analysis result shows that among four interviewees, two of them said that the average hours they work per week is 20-30 hours, but because of the low wages given by their workplace, they have to take many working hours. While one of the other interviewees who worked for over 35 hours per week stated that part time job had negative impact on their academic achievement and had caused stress on their daily activity. It is in line with the study conducted by Furr and Elling (2000) which found that students who worked for over 35 hours during attending the college faced negative impact on their learning process. The same findings in the study carried out by Dundes and Marx (2006) also show that student who are working part time job increased the



level of stress. Consequently, students find it difficult to concentrate and pay attention to the learning process, which in the end influences the results of classes they attend.

While in many instances the GPA of students taking part-time were still good, when it comes to the time they need to go finish their study, there are cases where students have to spend more times to graduate.

Finally, from the information gained during the interview, the researcher found that the common reason why many students take part time job is due to the demand of financial needs and because of the need to have work experiences.

## **F. Conclusion**

The data gained from questionnaire and interview, and analysis of the data related to the effect of part-time job on students' academic achievement, it can be concluded that working part time job do not have any significant effect on students' academic performance. The result of their GPA, despite working outside university, were still high.

Nevertheless, majority of students involved in part-time job up to 20 hours per week finish their study in nine semesters or more. Working longer hours has an effect on the time of study completion and students' stress level as well.

Furthermore, the common reasons mentioned by respondents in relation to why they need to take part time job are due to income needs to fulfill their education needs such as tuition fees, or school stuffs and looking for experience to advance their skills in the future.

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