

Balancing Work and Study: Effects of Part Time Jobs on Undergraduate Business Education

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the work and study experiences of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) students in Nepal. It looks at why students work, what kinds of jobs they do, how many hours they work, how flexible their jobs are, and how working affects their studies and personal growth. A quantitative research method was used for this study. Data were collected from BBA students at Prithvi Narayan Campus, Tribhuvan University, Pokhara, using a structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, and visual presentations in Microsoft Excel and MATLAB. The results showed that only 22.3% of the students were involved in part-time work. Most of them worked off campus and spent fewer than five hours per week at work. The main reasons for working were financial needs and the desire to gain practical work experience. Students who did not work mentioned difficulties in managing both work and study as a major concern. Most working students reported satisfactory academic performance and felt that their job experience would help them in their future careers. The findings suggest that moderate part-time work does not negatively affect academic performance and can help students develop useful skills. Universities can support students by providing flexible academic schedules, organized on-campus job opportunities, and work-integrated learning programs.

Keywords: Academics, part-time jobs, skills, students, time management

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Introduction

Higher education has changed significantly in recent years. More students are enrolling in universities, but the costs of tuition and living have also gone up. As a result, many students now have to balance their studies with other responsibilities. In addition to attending classes and doing assignments, students often need to work to support themselves (Applegate & Daly, 2006). Today, students cannot always rely just on family or government support. Because scholarships and financial aid are limited, many students have to find their own ways to pay for their expenses. As a result, working while studying has become a normal part of student life in many countries (Geel & Backes-Gellner, 2012). This shows that university life now includes both academic and financial responsibilities.

Higher tuition, living costs, and limited financial aid make it hard for students to focus only on academics. As a result, combining study with part time work is now a normal part of student life in many countries (Geel & Backes-Gellner, 2012; Nguyen et al., 2024). Students work for different reasons, but financial need is the most common. Many work to pay for tuition, rent, food, transportation, and other daily costs. Some want to be less dependent on parents or loans. Besides financial reasons, more students want to gain work experience while studying (Remenick & Bergman, 2021; Vaidya et al., 2024). Employers often prefer graduates with practical experience, so students see part time jobs as a way to improve their job prospects. Because of this, work and study are now closely linked in students' academic lives.

Universities are also expected to help students get ready for their future careers. This has made the link between education and work stronger. In business programs, especially, students are encouraged to get real-world experience while they study. For many students, part-time jobs have become an important part of their learning environment (Jackson, 2017). Flexible class times, online materials, recorded lectures, and academic support services can make it easier for students to manage both work and study. Research shows that students who get support from their university are better able to balance their duties and stay involved in their studies (Jackson, 2017; Perna & Odle, 2025; Summer et al., 2025). However, students' work experiences vary from place to place. In some countries, it is common for students to work while studying, but in others it happens less often because of differences in job opportunities, family support, and school systems. There is still not much information about student employment in developing and middle-income countries, such as Nepal (Khanal, 2022; Khaniya, 2024).

Many studies have looked at students' work and study experiences, but most focus on general undergraduate groups. There is less research on students in professional programs like the Bachelor of Business Administration. BBA students take career focused courses in management, finance, marketing, and entrepreneurship (Parajuli et al., 2023). For them, part-time work in business related fields may be especially helpful. BBA students may have unique challenges when balancing work and study. Their courses often include group projects, presentations, case studies, internships,

and networking, all of which take a lot of time and coordination (Berman & Ritchie, 2006; Weaver et al., 2016). Managing these demands along with part time work can be tough. However, business related work experience may help them build skills and prepare for their careers more than students in other fields. These differences show why focused research on BBA students is needed.

Students in higher education in Nepal are under growing financial pressure because of higher tuition fees, expensive living costs, and few scholarships or student loans. Many students in cities like the Kathmandu Valley work part time to pay for their studies and daily needs (Khanal, 2022; Khaniya, 2024). Nepal does not have the structured student employment policies or institutional support found in developed countries to help students manage both work and study. Most research in Nepal has looked at access to higher education or how graduates find jobs but has not focused much on students who work while studying, especially in professional programs. There is little evidence about how part-time work affects the academic results, social life, and personal growth of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) students. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the work and study experiences of BBA students in Nepal. The specific objectives of the study are detailed below:

- To identify the main reasons why BBA students engage in part-time work while studying.
- To assess the degree of flexibility offered by part-time employment in relation to students' academic schedules.

- To analyze the impact of part-time employment on the academic performance of BBA students.

Literature Review

Many students work while studying, especially in countries with high tuition, living costs, and limited financial aid (COE, 2025). In places like the United States, student jobs are the norm. European and Asian studies also show most students work, though rates differ by country, background, and institution (Phan & Thuy T, 2024; Riggert et al., 2006). In contrast, developing and middle-income countries tend to have fewer working students, likely due to differences in job markets, family support, and available opportunities. Most students work because they need the money. Rising education costs and limited grants push many to find jobs to pay for tuition and living expenses (Broadbridge & Swanson, 2005). Besides financial reasons, students also mention wanting independence, keeping up a certain lifestyle, and gaining work experience to help with future jobs (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005). For business and professional students, working is often seen as an investment in their future careers, especially in competitive job markets (Cheng & Alcántara, 2007).

Research from many countries shows that more students are working part time than in the past. Studies from the UK, Australia, Canada, and other places find that not only are more students working, but they are also working longer hours during the school year (Bennett et al., 2023; Curtis & Shani, 2002). This trend worries educators and policy makers because students have limited time

and energy. As a result, understanding how students balance work and study has become an important research topic. Many studies point out the negative effects of working long hours while studying (McGregor, 2015). When students work too much, they have less time for classes, assignments, exam preparation, and rest. This can cause stress, tiredness, and lower academic performance. Research shows that students who work too many hours are more likely to have academic problems than those who work less or not at all (Chambers, 1992; Hall, 2010; Virtanen et al., 2014).

Studies in developing countries, including Nepal, indicate that working longer hours per week can negatively affect students' academic performance (Khaniya, 2024). Financial pressure leads many students to put work before school, which lowers their academic involvement. These studies suggest that while work brings income, it can also create serious challenges for academic success if not managed well (Wang & Chen, 2017). Still, part time work can have positive effects. Many students say working helps them build skills like communication, teamwork, problem solving, and time management (Jamieson et al., 2009; Meixner et al., 2010). Work experience can also boost their confidence and help them understand real world situations. When students connect what they learn in class with their work experiences, learning becomes more meaningful. The benefits of part time work depend a lot on the type of job and how many hours a student works. Jobs related to a student's field of study are more likely to help with learning and career growth. On the other hand, jobs with long hours, high stress, or rigid schedules can

hurt academic performance. So, the link between work and study is complex and shaped by many factors.

Existing research consistently suggests that variations in academic performance are closely linked to differences in students' working hours. Studies find that working more than 15 to 20 hours a week during the semester is linked to lower grades, slower progress, and taking longer to finish a degree (Neyt et al., 2017; Stinebrickner & Stinebrickner, 2003). This is often explained by the idea that too much work leaves less time and energy for studying (Darolia, 2014). On the other hand, working a moderate amount, like 8 to 10 hours a week, usually does not hurt academic performance and may even be linked to similar or slightly better grades than not working at all (Cheng & Alcántara, 2007; Elling & Elling, 2000).

Methods

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the work and study experiences of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) students at Prithvi Narayan Campus, Tribhuvan University, Pokhara, Nepal. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed through digital platforms, including Google Forms, Facebook, and WhatsApp. A total of 103 BBA students participated in the survey. This sample size was determined based on feasibility, accessibility, and ensuring a representative cross-section of students from different academic levels within the campus. Participants were selected using a simple convenience sampling method to minimize bias and ensure each student

had an equal chance of being included in the study. For data analysis, descriptive statistics were computed using Microsoft Excel for data cleaning and summarization. More advanced analyses and visualization of patterns related to working hours, job types, academic impacts, and social life effects were performed using MATLAB. These tools facilitated accurate presentation and interpretation of the survey results.

Results and Discussion

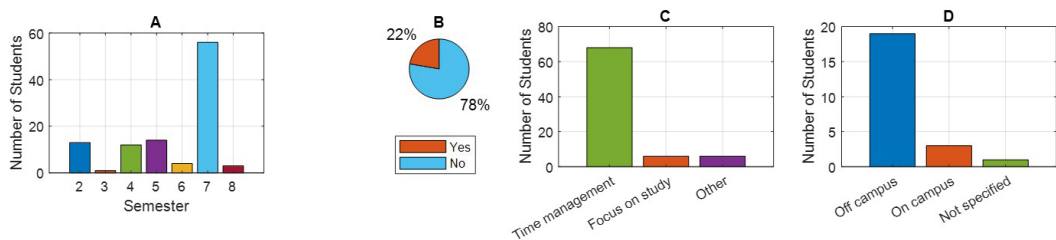
The study analyzed responses from a total of 103 BBA students. Among the respondents, 77.7% were female, 19.4% were male, and 2.9% identified as others. The majority of participants were from senior academic levels, with 54.4% studying in the seventh semester, followed by 13.6% in the fifth semester and 12.6% in the second semester. Regarding perceptions of part time employment, an overwhelming majority

of students (96.1%) believed that part time jobs are necessary for students, while only 3.9% disagreed. Despite this strong positive perception, actual involvement in part time work was relatively low. Only 22.3% of respondents reported having experience with part time jobs, whereas 77.7% had never engaged in part time employment. Among the respondents who reported having part-time work experience, 60.0% were male and 40.0% were female, indicating that male students constituted a larger proportion of the working student group.

For respondents without part-time work experience, the primary reason cited was difficulty in managing time, reported by 85.0% of non working respondents. Other reasons included a desire to focus on academic studies (7.5%) and various personal reasons (7.5%). This indicates that time management remains the most significant barrier to student employment.

Figure 1

Part-time work experiences and perceptions of BBA students: (A) Semester-wise distribution, (B) Perceived necessity of part-time jobs, (C) Reasons for not working, (D) Employment location.

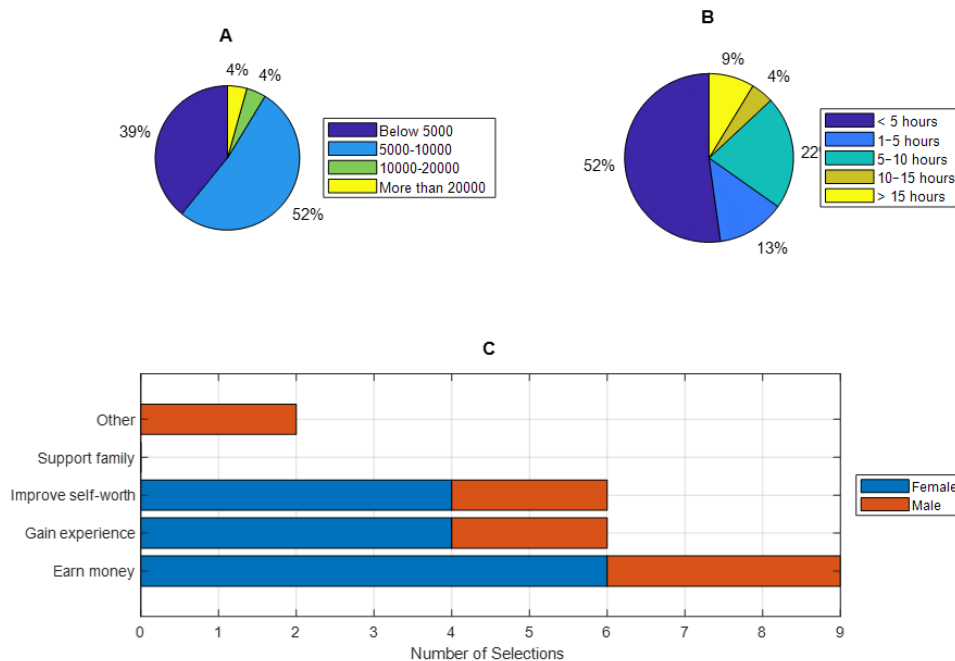


Analysis of respondents who were engaged in part time work (22.3%) revealed that most were employed off campus (82.6%), while 13.0% worked on campus. The main motivations for undertaking part time employment were earning money (39.1%), gaining work experience (26.1%),

and improving self worth or personal development (26.1%), while the remaining 8.7% cited other reasons or did not specify their motivation. Information about part time job opportunities was primarily obtained through family and friends (60.9%), followed by online sources (26.1%).

Figure 2

Part-time employment patterns among BBA students: (A) salary range, (B) weekly working hours, and (C) motivations for part-time work by gender.



With respect to workload, more than half of the working students (52.2%) spent less than five hours per week on part time work, while 21.7% worked between five and ten hours per week. In terms of earnings, 52.2% of respondents earned between NPR 5,000 and NPR 10,000 per month, whereas 39.1% earned less than NPR 5,000. Only 8.7% reported earning more than NPR 10,000. A majority of working students indicated that their salary was not sufficient to meet their needs.

Concerning work study balance, 56.5% of working students reported that their academic and work responsibilities were balanced (Yes or Moderately yes), 30.4% stated that they were not balanced (No

or Moderately No), and 13.1% did not comment on their balance. Job satisfaction levels showed that 39.1% of respondents were satisfied with their part time jobs, and 30.4% were moderately satisfied, whereas others expressed dissatisfaction. Furthermore, 52.2% of working students believed that their part time job experience would be beneficial for their future career, while others did not share this view. Common problems reported by working students included low salary, time management difficulties, and other work related challenges.

Regarding academic performance, a large proportion of respondents (77.7%) did not specify their previous semester grades.

Among those who reported grades and were engaged in part time work, the most common grade was B+ (30.4%), followed by B (21.7%). Also, only 18.4% of all respondents clearly recommended part time employment for BBA students, while the majority (80.6%) remained neutral or did not provide a definitive recommendation.

This study found that only 22.3% of BBA students had part time jobs, while 77.7% had never worked, showing a low participation rate. In contrast, studies from developed countries report that 40 to 70% of undergraduates work during their studies (Scott-Clayton, 2012). Some research from developing and middle income countries also shows lower employment rates, suggesting that factors like economic conditions, academic workload, and cultural expectations affect whether students work (Curtis & Shani, 2002). In this study, 85% of non working students said that managing their time was the biggest barrier to having a part time job. Other studies have found similar results, showing that balancing schoolwork and job commitments is a major challenge for students in many countries (Chong & Noor, 2023).

The main reasons students took part time jobs in this study were to earn money and gain work experience. This matches international research, which also finds that financial need and skill development are the main reasons students work (Kurniawan & Idris, 2023). Most students here worked off campus and less than five hours a week, which is less than the 10 to 20 hours per week reported in some other countries (Dundes & Marx, 2006; Hall, 2010). Most working students in this study reported

getting B+ and B grades, which supports earlier research showing that moderate part time work does not always harm academic performance. However, few students strongly recommended part time jobs, reflecting mixed opinions seen in other studies (Douglas & Attewell, 2019; Smith et al., 2025).

Conclusion

The study found that only a small number of BBA students have part-time jobs, and most of these jobs are off-campus with just a few hours each week. Students who work usually want to earn extra money and gain practical experience. The results also show that working a moderate number of hours does not harm academic performance. Most working students manage to balance their studies and jobs well and see part-time work as helpful for their future careers. On the other hand, students who do not work often struggle with time management and personal responsibilities, which makes it hard for them to take on a job.

Even though most students see the benefits of part-time work, few actually have these jobs because of time limits, not enough flexible job options, and low pay. These results show that universities in Nepal need to do more to help students find work. Schools, especially those with professional programs like the BBA, should create flexible job options, such as on-campus jobs, partnerships with local businesses, and work-based learning programs. Helping students with time management and career planning would also make it easier for them to balance school and work.

These findings are important for policy decisions. University leaders and policymakers can use this information to create student-focused job programs that support both academic success and career growth. By offering more work-based learning and flexible job options, students can get practical experience without hurting their studies.

There are some limits to this study. It only looks at BBA students from one campus at Tribhuvan University, so the results might not apply to other schools or programs. The data comes from students' own reports, which could be affected by memory or wanting to give a good impression. Also, some students reported that they had on-campus jobs. However, such opportunities are not common in Nepali universities, so there is a chance that some students misunderstood this question and selected the wrong category.

Future research should look at students from different universities and fields to make the results more widely useful. Studies that follow students over time could show how part-time work affects grades and careers in the long run. Interviews or focus groups could also give a better understanding of the challenges students face when trying to balance work and study.

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