

Analyzing the Impact of Part-Time Jobs on the Academic Performance of Current Students

Ngo Thi Thuy, Tran the Quang*

Faculty of Technology and Engineering, Thai Binh University (TBU), Hung Yen, Vietnam

*Corresponding Author

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.1026EDU0462>

Received: 12 July 2026; Accepted: 17 July 2026; Published: 30 July 2026

ABSTRACT

Part-time employment has become a widespread phenomenon among university students worldwide, driven by rising living costs and the need for financial independence. While such work provides opportunities to gain income, practical experience, and transferable skills, it also poses risks to students' academic performance and well-being. This study analyzes the impact of part-time jobs on Vietnamese students' learning outcomes, situating the findings within global evidence. International research shows that moderate work can enhance career readiness and soft skills, but excessive hours are associated with reduced academic achievement (Callender, 2008; Darolia, 2014). The paper highlights both positive and negative effects, including financial support, skill development, stress, fatigue, and diminished study time. Policy recommendations are proposed for universities and students to balance employment and education, ensuring that part-time work contributes to lifelong learning and employability without undermining academic success.

Keyword: Part-time employment, academic performance, student well-being, Vietnam, higher education

INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization and rising education costs, part-time employment has become a common strategy for students to finance their studies and living expenses. Globally, more than 80% of undergraduate students in the United States work while enrolled, with nearly half of full-time students under 25 engaged in employment (Darolia, 2014). In the United Kingdom, term-time employment has been shown to negatively affect students' grades and degree attainment, with those working average hours per week being one-third less likely to achieve a good degree compared to non-working peers (Callender, 2008).

International organizations have also emphasized the dual nature of student employment. OECD (2025) notes that part-time work can foster career development, build technical and soft skills, and strengthen confidence in career planning. However, excessive working hours are linked to lower academic achievement and increased stress. UNESCO (2021) further highlights that balancing study and work is essential to protect students' health and ensure equitable access to quality education. The World Development Report (2019) stresses that while employment can enhance employability, poorly managed work-study balance risks perpetuating inequalities in higher education outcomes. ILO (2020) similarly underscores that youth employment, when not properly regulated, often leads to stress, reduced study time, and vulnerability to exploitation.

In Vietnam, part-time employment has become increasingly common, with available surveys suggesting that approximately 70–80% of university students undertake part-time work to cover living and study expenses (Vietnam Social Security, 2024). While this provides financial relief and valuable experience, many students report fatigue, stress, and reduced study time (Nam, 2019). There is an ongoing debate within academia and the media regarding whether students should focus strictly on their curriculum or delay part-time work to prioritize fundamental knowledge (Linh, 2022). Unlike countries such as the United States, Canada, Germany, or Australia, where strict regulations limit student working hours, Vietnam lacks clear national policies, leaving students vulnerable to overwork and academic decline (Hung, N., Tri, H. 2024; Hung, 2022).

Against this backdrop, this study examines the impact of part-time employment on Vietnamese students' academic performance, situating local findings within global evidence. By comparing international experiences and national realities, the paper aims to provide practical recommendations for universities, policymakers, and students to optimize the benefits of part-time work while minimizing its risks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on the impact of part-time employment on students' academic performance has produced diverse findings across different contexts. In Vietnam, several studies highlight both the financial benefits and the challenges of student employment. Surveys conducted by universities in Ho Chi Minh City show that 70–80% of students engage in part-time work, often to cover tuition fees and living expenses. Local scholars argue that while such work provides opportunities to develop soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and time management, it fundamentally challenges the traditional self-study competence required in higher education (Van, 2023). Students often struggle with autonomy and strategic learning when trying to allocate sufficient hours to their coursework (Ca *et al.*, 2021). This lack of balance risks fatigue, stress, and reduced study time, especially when students work excessive hours without any institutional guardrails (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018).

International literature provides a broader perspective on these dynamics. In the United Kingdom, Callender (2008) found that term-time employment significantly reduced students' academic attainment, with working students less likely to achieve high grades compared to their non-working peers. Similarly, Darolia (2014) demonstrated that in the United States, working more than 20 hours per week was associated with lower GPA and academic persistence, although moderate employment could have neutral or even positive effects. These findings suggest that the relationship between work and study is highly dependent on the number of hours worked and the ability to balance responsibilities.

Global organizations have also emphasized the importance of managing student employment. OECD (2025) notes that part-time work can enhance career readiness and skill development, but warns that excessive hours undermine academic achievement and student well-being. UNESCO (2021) stresses that higher education systems must ensure equitable access to quality learning by protecting students from overwork and promoting supportive environments. The World Development Report (2019) highlights that while employment can improve employability and financial independence, poorly managed work-study balance risks perpetuating inequalities in educational outcomes, particularly in developing countries.

Taken together, these studies reveal a consistent pattern: part-time employment offers both opportunities and risks. In Vietnam, the lack of clear regulations on student working hours contrasts with stricter policies in countries such as the United States, Canada, Germany, and Australia, where limits are imposed to safeguard academic performance and health (Hung, 2022; Anh, 2023). This gap underscores the need for Vietnamese universities and policymakers to adopt evidence-based strategies that align with international best practices, ensuring that students can benefit from employment without compromising their education.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a secondary data analysis design, relying exclusively on published surveys, institutional reports, and international literature to examine the impact of part-time employment on students' academic performance. No primary data collection (such as interviews or student surveys) was conducted. Instead, the research integrates multiple secondary sources to provide a comparative and policy-oriented perspective.

Data Sources. Domestically, the study draws upon reports and regulations from the Ministry of Education and Training (2021), statistical releases from Vietnam Social Security (2024), and published surveys from universities in Ho Chi Minh City. These sources provide insights into the prevalence of student employment in Vietnam, with estimates suggesting that approximately 70–80% of undergraduates engage in part-time work.

Internationally, the analysis incorporates peer-reviewed studies (Callender, 2008; Darolia, 2014), policy reports from UNESCO (2021), the World Bank (2019), and OECD (2025). Together, these sources offer comparative benchmarks for understanding how student employment affects academic outcomes across different contexts.

Analytical Framework. The study focuses on three dimensions:

Academic performance (measured through indicators such as GPA, study time, and graduation rates reported in secondary sources);

Student well-being (stress, fatigue, and mental health outcomes documented in surveys and reports);

Skill development (communication, teamwork, and time management as highlighted in international and domestic literature).

Comparative Approach. By situating Vietnamese findings within global evidence, the study applies a comparative lens to identify similarities and differences in student employment patterns. Particular attention is given to the 20–24 hour weekly limit commonly enforced in OECD countries, which serves as a benchmark for evaluating Vietnam’s lack of clear regulations.

Validity and Reliability. Triangulation was achieved by integrating multiple secondary sources—government reports, institutional surveys, and international literature. This approach ensures that findings are grounded in established evidence, while acknowledging the limitation that no primary data was collected. Accordingly, the study is best understood as a literature-based policy analysis rather than an empirical mixed-methods investigation.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The findings from Vietnam reveal that part-time employment among students has become increasingly common, with surveys indicating that 70–80% of undergraduates engage in work during their studies. The majority of these jobs are concentrated in retail, hospitality, tutoring, and office support, with working hours often extending beyond weekends and evenings. While students report financial relief and valuable skill development, many also experience fatigue, stress, and reduced study time, leading to concerns about academic performance and delayed graduation (Nam, 2019).

These results align with international evidence. In the United Kingdom, Callender (2008) demonstrated that term-time employment significantly reduced students’ academic attainment, with working students less likely to achieve high grades compared to their peers. Similarly, Darolia (2014) found that in the United States, students working more than 20 hours per week experienced lower GPA and persistence rates, although moderate employment had neutral or positive effects. The Vietnamese case reflects this pattern: students who work excessive hours struggle to balance study and employment, while those who limit working time to manageable levels benefit from improved financial independence and skill acquisition.

Global policy reports reinforce these findings. The emphasizes that part-time work can enhance career readiness and soft skills, but warns that excessive hours undermine academic achievement and student well-being. UNESCO (2021) highlights the need for higher education systems to protect students from overwork, ensuring equitable access to quality learning. The World Development Report (2019) stresses that while employment can improve employability and financial independence, poorly managed work-study balance risks perpetuating inequalities, particularly in developing countries where institutional support is limited.

Comparing Vietnam with international practices reveals a significant gap in regulation. Countries such as the United States, Canada, Germany, and Australia impose strict limits on student working hours—typically 20 hours per week during term time—to safeguard academic performance and health (Hung, 2022; Anh, 2023). In contrast,

Vietnam lacks clear national policies, leaving students vulnerable to overwork and academic decline. Public debates in the country continue to question whether student working hours should be strictly capped by law (Hung, N., Tri, H. 2024). This regulatory absence explains why many Vietnamese students report stress, sleep deprivation, and reduced participation in extracurricular activities.

From these findings, several lessons emerge. First, moderate part-time employment can provide financial support and valuable skills, but excessive hours are detrimental to academic success. Second, institutional support and clear regulations are essential to balance work and study. Third, universities should encourage students to seek jobs aligned with their field of study, thereby maximizing the benefits of employment for career readiness. Finally, national policies should consider adopting international best practices by setting limits on working hours and providing financial aid to reduce the need for excessive employment.

Policy Recommendations

Based on a secondary data analysis and comparative literature review, this study proposes a set of policy recommendations aimed at optimizing the benefits of student part-time employment while minimizing its risks. Since no primary data collection was conducted, the recommendations are derived from published surveys, institutional reports, and international evidence, particularly from OECD countries, UNESCO, and the World Bank. By situating Vietnamese practices within this global framework, the following suggestions are intended to guide universities, enterprises, and government agencies in developing balanced strategies that safeguard academic performance and student well-being while enhancing employability. The findings of this study suggest that effective management of student part-time employment requires coordinated action at multiple levels. To maximize the benefits of employment while minimizing its risks, universities, enterprises, and government agencies must work together to establish supportive frameworks.

Role of Universities

Universities should take the lead in guiding students toward balanced employment practices. This includes:

Establishing clear regulations on the maximum number of working hours during the academic term, ideally aligned with international standards such as the 20-24-hour weekly limit applied in OECD countries;

Creating structured programs that connect students with part-time opportunities relevant to their field of study, thereby enhancing career readiness and employability;

Providing counseling and training in time management, stress management, and financial literacy to help students balance academic and work responsibilities;

Offering financial aid, scholarships, and student loan programs to reduce the necessity of excessive employment.

Role of Enterprises

Employers play a crucial role in ensuring that student employment is educationally meaningful and socially responsible. Recommended actions include:

Designing flexible work schedules that accommodate students' academic commitments.

Offering internships and part-time positions that align with students' academic disciplines, thereby contributing to skill development and career preparation;

Ensuring compliance with labor laws and protecting students' rights, including fair wages, safe working conditions, and reasonable workloads;

Collaborating with universities to create work-study programs that integrate practical experience with academic learning.

Role of Government

Government agencies must provide the regulatory and financial framework to safeguard students' well-being and academic success. Key recommendations include:

Establishing national policies that set clear limits on student working hours, similar to those in the United States, Canada, Germany, and Australia;

Expanding financial support mechanisms, including need-based scholarships and subsidized student loans, to reduce reliance on part-time employment;

Promoting partnerships between universities and enterprises to create structured, career-oriented part-time opportunities;

Monitoring compliance with labor standards and enforcing protections for student workers, particularly in sectors prone to exploitation.

By aligning the efforts of universities, enterprises, and government, Vietnam can create a balanced framework for student employment. Such a framework would allow students to benefit from financial independence and skill development while safeguarding their academic performance and well-being. In the context of international integration, adopting global best practices will strengthen Vietnam's higher education system and contribute to building a resilient, competitive workforce for the knowledge economy.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on the impact of part-time employment on students' academic performance by situating the Vietnamese experience within a global framework. From a theoretical perspective, the paper enriches the discourse on student employment by highlighting the multidimensional effects of part-time work-financial independence, skill development, and career readiness on the one hand, and stress, fatigue, and reduced academic achievement on the other. By integrating insights from international research (Callender, 2008; Darolia, 2014; OECD, 2025; UNESCO, 2021; World Development Report, 2019), the study demonstrates that the balance between study and work is a universal challenge, yet one that manifests differently depending on institutional support and regulatory frameworks.

Practically, the findings underscore the importance of equipping students with time management skills, encouraging them to seek employment aligned with their field of study, and providing institutional support to mitigate risks. Vietnamese universities can play a pivotal role by developing structured programs that connect students with relevant part-time opportunities, offering counseling services to manage stress, and promoting extracurricular activities that safeguard student well-being.

At the policy level, Vietnam should consider adopting international best practices by establishing clear regulations on student working hours, similar to those implemented in many OECD countries, where limits of approximately 20–24 hours per week during academic terms are commonly applied (OECD, 2025). Additionally, expanding financial aid, scholarships, and student loan programs would reduce the necessity of excessive employment, thereby protecting academic outcomes. National policies should also encourage partnerships between universities and enterprises to create part-time opportunities that are educationally meaningful and career-oriented.

In conclusion, fostering a balanced approach to student employment is not only an educational priority but also

a strategic imperative for Vietnam in the context of international integration. By aligning local practices with global standards, Vietnamese higher education can empower students to benefit from part-time work while safeguarding their academic success and well-being, ultimately contributing to the development of a resilient and competitive workforce in the global knowledge economy.

REFERENCES

1. Callender, C. (2008). The impact of term-time employment on higher education students' academic attainment and achievement. *Journal of Education Policy*, 23(4), 359–377.
2. Darolia, R. (2014). Working (and studying) day and night: Heterogeneous effects of working on the academic performance of full-time and part-time students. *Economics of Education Review*, 38, 38–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2013.10.004>.
3. Hung, N., & Tri, H. (2024, May 13). Should working hours for university students be restricted? [In Vietnamese]. *Báo Xây dựng*. <https://baoxaydung.vn/co-nen-siet-thoi-gian-lam-them-voi-sinh-vien-192240513223839214.htm>.
4. Hung, D. (2022, October 12). How many hours can Vietnamese international students work abroad? [In Vietnamese]. *VnExpress*. <https://vnexpress.net/du-hoc-sinh-viet-nam-duoc-lam-them-bao-nhieu-gio-4523548.html>.
5. Linh, M. (2022, April 2). Debate over the view that students should not rush into part-time work but should first build a solid academic foundation [In Vietnamese]. *Dân Trí*. <https://dantri.com.vn/nhip-song-tre/tranh-luan-ve-quan-diem-sinh-vien-dung-dai-di-lam-som-phai-hoc-bai-ban-20220401221328631.htm>.
6. Vietnam Social Security. (2024, August 12). Proposal to extend student working hours to 24 per week: Ensuring social security is the students' right. *Vietnam Social Security*. <https://vss.gov.vn/english/news/Pages/external-information.aspx?CateID=0&ItemID=12223>.
7. Ministry of Education and Training. (2021). Circular No. 17/2021/TT-BGDĐT on standards for higher education training programs and the formulation, appraisal, and promulgation of training programs [In Vietnamese]. <https://congbao.chinhphu.vn/van-ban/thong-tu-so-17-2021-tt-bgddt-33957/36167.htm>.
8. Nam, H. (2019, March 4). Students rush into part-time jobs and "forget" to graduate [In Vietnamese]. *Dân Trí*. <https://dantri.com.vn/giao-duc/sinh-vien-lao-vao-lam-them-quen-ca-ra-truong-20190304105344302.htm>.
9. Anh, P. (2023, June 27). Australia limits working hours for international students [In Vietnamese]. *VnExpress*. <https://vnexpress.net/australia-gioi-han-gio-lam-them-cua-sinh-vien-quoc-te-4624955.html>.
10. Van, M. T., & Huyen, P. T. T. (2023). Developing students' self-study competence to meet educational innovation requirements [In Vietnamese]. *TNU Journal of Science and Technology*, 228(12), 166–173.
11. Ministry of Education and Training. (2018). Circular No. 30/2018/TT-BGDĐT issuing regulations on the management of international students in Vietnam [In Vietnamese]. <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/EN/Giao-duc/Circular-30-2018-TT-BGDDT-issuing-Regulations-on-management-of-international-students-in-Vietnam/419551/tieng-anh.aspx>.
12. Ca, N. D., Khang, N., Anh, H. T., Duong, P. N., & Giang, N. H. (2021). Students' self-adjustment in learning motivation [In Vietnamese]. *Vietnam Journal of Educational Sciences*, 46, 31–35.
13. UNESCO. (2021). Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education. UNESCO Publishing. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/reimagining-our-futures-together-new-social-contract-education>.
14. World Bank. (2019). World Development Report 2019: The Changing Nature of Work. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2019>.
15. OECD. (2025). International Students in Higher Education. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/en.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
16. ILO. (2020). International Labour Organization. (2020). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs. Geneva: International Labour Office. https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_737648/lang--en/index.htm.