

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

The topic of part-time employment of secondary school students has drawn much attention from sociologists and psychologists in the West. However, local research studies in this area are few and far between. The present study attempts to obtain some empirical data on part-time work among secondary school students.

The study was designed to investigate the extent of students' involvement in part-time employment in an urban secondary school. In addition, the study also looked into the types of part-time employment of the students, jobs characteristics such as monthly income and work hours, the reasons for working part-time and also some of the influences of part-time employment on students' academic performance and social behaviour.

This study utilised the survey approach to collect data. The subjects of this study comprised 1,176 boys and 1,246 girls from Sekolah Menengah Kepong Baru, which is situated in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. The subjects were from the Form I to Form V classes.

The instrument, *Part-time Employment Questionnaire*, was developed by the researcher to obtain information on the students' personal background and their part-time jobs. The Questionnaire consisted of a total of 25 items in Bahasa Malaysia.

A pilot study was carried out to pre-test the instrument before it was used for the actual data collection. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square analysis were employed to analyse the data gathered in the research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings summarised below should be viewed in the context of the limitations mentioned (refer Chapter 1, page 14). Although the study was confined to one school in an urban community, many of the findings of the present study are found to be similar to those studies conducted in other countries in the West.

The results reveal that approximately one third of the school population worked, and the majority of them (67.8%) worked during school holidays. In actuality, the holiday workers could not be considered as part-time workers because they only worked during certain periods of the year.

The mean work hour per week is 17.0 with a standard deviation of 9.5 hours. Generally, students who worked during school holidays worked longer hours per week than students who worked during the school year. This is indicated by the finding that among those who worked '15 -20 hours' and 'more than 20 hours' per week, the majority of them were 'holiday workers'. For those who worked throughout the school year, the majority of them were found working from 5 to 14 hours per week.

The data indicated that the number of students who worked increases with grade level. Form IV and Form V students had higher percentages of part-timers. There is also a significant difference in work status of the male and female students. Higher percentage of male students was found working compared to the female students. The findings also show that student-workers came from all the social-economic status with Low SES group having the highest percentage of working students.

Most students worked in food and trade industries. Many of them worked as waiters, cashiers, sales assistants, sales promoters and general labourers. These jobs do not require high entry qualification and little training are needed. A substantial number of students, mainly boys, took up jobs in the production sector working as factory labourers, assistant carpenters, assistant blacksmiths, machine operators or packers. A few of them worked as school and music tutors, shampoo girls, delivery boys, clinic

receptionists or baby sitters.

A significant difference in the type of jobs engaged by male and female students was observed. For both genders, higher percentages of student-workers were found working in trade and food services. It is also observed that more male students were in manual, technical and skilled jobs/trade whereas female student-workers were sales assistants, tutors and clerks.

The mean monthly income of the student-workers was RM 256.00 with a standard deviation of RM 113.00. There is no significant difference in the amount of income earned per month of the male and female student-workers. In addition, the findings of the study show that students in Form III, Form IV and Form V generally earned more than students in Form I and Form II.

The results of the study reveal that students worked for many reasons. The most frequently cited reason was 'to gain pocket money'; it is followed by 'to gain work experience' and 'to occupy their free time'. Reasons like 'saving for future use', 'contributing to family income' and 'helping in family business' were less common.

The findings suggest that academic achievement was related to

student's employment. Cross-tabulation of student-workers' academic achievement with work status indicates that students who worked generally had lower level of academic achievement than students who did not work. This is true for students who worked throughout the school year.

Slightly higher percentages of student-workers than non-workers were involved in smoking, drinking alcohol, truancy (school/class), skipping co-curriculum activities and drug. The percentage in skipping co-curriculum activities is most obvious. Further analysis shows that more males than female workers were involved in the various types of deviant behaviour studied. This is true of drinking and smoking. The findings also indicate that higher percentages of the student-workers in Form IV and Form V were involved in deviance than the students from the lower grades. This could be due to the reason that there were more student-workers in the higher grades.

As regards the ways student-workers spent their earned income, the survey reveals that the majority of them tended to spend their money for personal expenses. Even though some of the student-workers utilised the earned income for their own educational expenses, family expenses and for future use, the bulk of their income were spent on personal expenses, paying for their own needs and activities. This is true for male student-workers and for those in Form IV and Form V.

5.2 Discussions and Recommendations

The findings of the study show that a considerable number of students were engaged in part-time employment. In view of the finding that a high percentage of student-workers skipped class or played truant and that part-time work has a negative effect on academic achievement, the school authority should acquire more information on part-time employment in order to have a better understanding of the situation.

However, part-time work should not be viewed negatively or generate too great an anxiety. The study discloses that the majority of the student-workers worked during school holidays. This implies that, for many students, working should not interfere with their schoolwork. Moreover, working during the long vacation may help students put their free time to good use. Besides earning some pocket money or helping in their family business, students can acquire certain job-related skills such as self-management, conformity to authority and good interpersonal relations.

Knowing the reasons for working, the school authority may be able to assist or give proper guidance. For example, for students who wish to gain work experience, the school counsellor may help them by preparing them for the demands of the job.

The findings show that students who worked generally had a lower level of academic achievement than students who did not work. The result does not necessarily indicate that working part-time has resulted in poor academic achievement. The other possibility is that students who perform poorly in school turn to employment as a way of achieving satisfaction (Tymms and Fitz-Gibbon, 1992). Further study is needed to establish the causal relationship between part-time employment and academic achievement.

The other more worrying concern is the finding that more student-workers were involved in deviance than the non-workers. However, more research is needed for a better understanding of the relationship between part-time employment and deviant behaviour. This is because there is a possibility is that many students who had behavioural problems in school may engage in part-time work. Working among these students may then result in loss of interest in their studies due to greater attraction in the job environment (Gottfredson, 1985).

The majority of the student-workers in this study spent the bulk of their income on their own needs and activities. The ability to earn their own money may have led to student-workers feeling free to spend their earnings on themselves rather than contribute the money to family expenses or saving the money. In spite of having the rights to their earned incomes,

students should know how to manage their money wisely. Parents and school counsellors should advise them on the usage of their earnings.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The subjects of this study are limited to students in an urban school. Although the results are similar to the research findings in developed countries, the conclusion may not be generalisable to the student population in Malaysia, in particular to students in rural communities. Studies should be conducted in other schools, preferably in the rural areas and with a more representative sample for conclusion to be drawn.

Although the finding of this study suggests that subjects were honest in their report of deviant behaviour, nonetheless, interviews with parents and teachers will enable the researcher to confirm the accuracy of the self-report. Hence, further studies on the relationship between part-time employment and deviance should include interviews with teachers and parents.

For the effects of work hours to be measured with greater accuracy, investigation should confine to part-time workers who work regularly throughout the school year. For example, the exclusion of 'holiday workers' as the sample will make possible the use of work hour instead of work status as dependent variable in examining the causal relationship between part-

time employment and academic achievement.