

Does Combining Study and Work Affect NU Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance?

Student employment has become increasingly popular in many countries. A substantial amount of empirical evidence suggests that employment has an adverse impact on student academic performance/progress.

This exploratory analysis examines employment among NU undergraduate students and its relationship with academic effort (time investment) and performance (GPA). The analysis uses data on 1,726 first-, second-, and fourth-year undergraduate students who participated in student surveys in spring semesters 2016 and 2017.

Overall, 42% of the respondents reported that they worked for pay during the year. The percentage of working students was 34% for first-year, 41% for second-year, and 51% for fourth-year students. Students who were employed reported working 11 hours per week on average—with 11% working more than 20 hours per week.

Results in Figure 1 suggest that working students invested slightly less time studying out of class compared to non-working students. The difference, however, was relatively small.

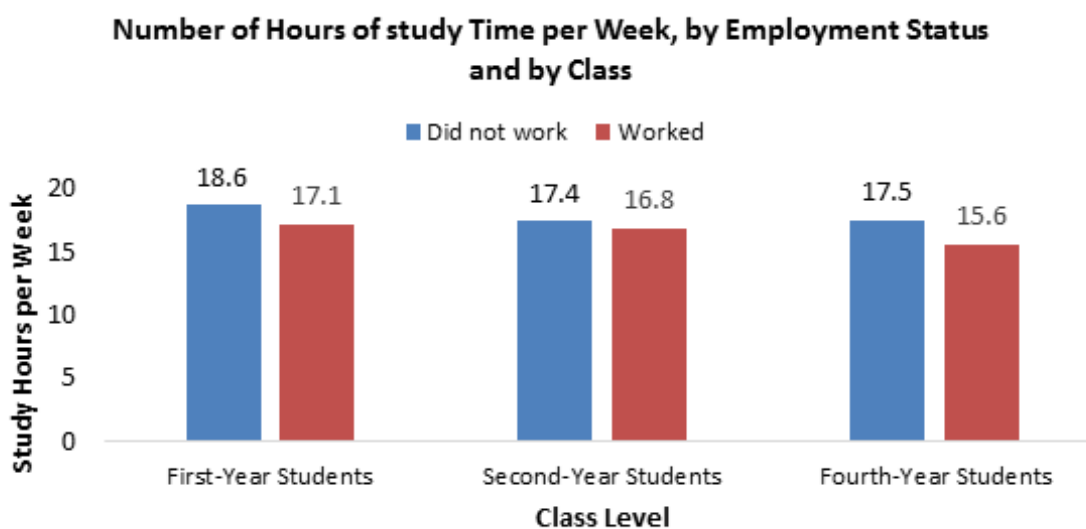
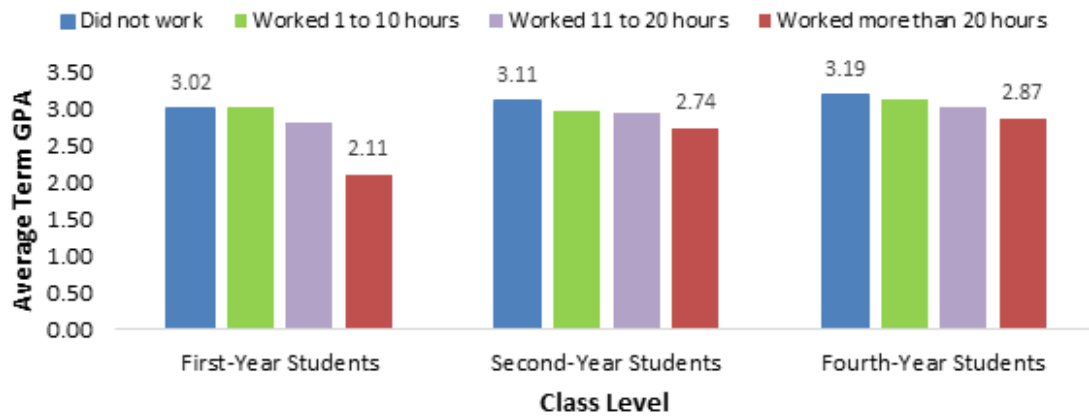


Figure 2 suggests that the academic performance of students who worked up to 10 hours per week did not appear to suffer (relative to that of non-working students). The performance of students working 11 to 20 hours per week appeared to suffer slightly. The performance of students working more than 20 hours per week, however, appeared to suffer much more—though this group constituted only a small minority.

Figure 2. Average Term GPA, by Employment Status and by Class



In sum, survey results indicate that four in ten NU undergraduate students (third-year students excluded) worked for pay at some point during the academic year. Unfortunately, the duration and nature of student employment are unknown at this point (due to lack of data). Results suggest that there is a threshold (number of hours of employment per week) above which student employment has negative consequences on academic performance. Additional data/analyses are needed to clearly identify that threshold and draw relevant implications for student support/guidance.

=====

We invite you to write to IR (ir@nu.edu.kz) and (1) share your thoughts and experiences relative to the topic under discussion in this **IR-MFF** issue and/or (2) suggest a question/topic that you would like us to address in a future issue of the **IR-MFF**. A PDF version of the current IR-MFF issue is attached to this email.

The IR-MFF is published every last Friday of the month or, if the relevance and timeliness of the topic require, earlier (August through November and January through April). Analyses are *limited to 300 words or less (narrative text) and one or two graphs/tables*. If you need more detailed information (methodological or otherwise), please contact IR at ir@nu.edu.kz.

