Agent’s Pesterling Mind: An Issue Behind the Wall

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Abstract

This research was carried out to understand the nature of activity of a grade 10 working student at F. Bangoy National High School. One student was selected through purposive sampling technique which acted as the participant of the study. One-on-one audio-taped, semi-structured interview was employed as way of gathering the data needed for the analysis. Results showed that personal concern and family needs were the sole reasons why a student needs to work. Also, low self-esteem and uncertainty of performance were indicative as possible outcomes of working. Hence, it’s suggested that modules may be given to working student for them to keep in pace in their lessons.

Introduction

Studying plus working entails greater sacrifices. The need to earn to sustain and provide the needs of oneself and one’s family are among the many-sided tasks that a working student is facing. Evidently, students enrolled in the Modified Work Study Program (MWSP) are manifestations that there are individuals who strive with determination and persistence to attain a degree in the Junior High School. Nevertheless, issues on their performance particularly in the acquisition or retention of concepts are considered as things to consider for them to be guided and to keep in pace with their lessons.

In developing countries, researchers have found that the majority of child and youth laborers regularly attend school (Heady, 2003). According to estimates, in developing countries alone there are 250 million children in the age group of 5-17 years who are toiling in economic activity, one out of every six children in the world today. In absolute terms, it is Asia (excluding Japan) that has the most child workers (approximately 61% of the world’s total) (ILO, 2002). Out of these 250 million working children, 120 million of them are working fulltime, a full six days a week. Additionally, some children surpass their adult counterparts and have even longer than average working days putting a strain on their human strength and abilities (UNICEF, 2004).

The purpose of this research was to understand the nature of activity of a grade 10 working student at F. Bangoy National High School. In the context of the study, working student was generally defined as an individual who frequently misses classes because of work or duty to earn money. Certainly, this undertaking sought answers to the following queries:

1. What is your purpose of working?
2. What is the implication of working in your studies?

Method

This undertaking was qualitative in nature which utilized a case study approach. Purposive sampling was utilized in selecting one grade 10 student which showed the fitted characteristics required in the study. Solely, working student was selected in the process. Meanwhile, purposive sampling was used as a technique in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Palinkas et al., 2015).

In gathering data for analysis, participant was subjected to one-on-one audio-taped, semi-structured interview. This was completed within two days with each session lasting 30 minutes to one hour. The data obtained were gauged using the following questions: (1) what is your purpose of working? and (2) what is the implication of working in your studies?

Further, the participant was informed on purpose of the research and was oriented on the mechanism of the interview. An informed consent was signed by the participant affirming his willingness to participate in the study. The interview was conducted in a place where his rights were not violated, and the place was conducive and friendly. The interview ended when the data gathered achieved saturation. Coding was performed to identify ideas or concepts that directly or indirectly answered the questions. Thematic content analysis was executed after the coding process.

Results

This part displays the results of the study that answers the questions indicated in the previous section. Themes extracted for each question are presented and discussed below.

Purpose of Working

Two themes emerge in the analysis of data, these are personal concern and family needs.

Personal concern. As the participant declares that:

“[I]t helped, I bought things, clothes, uniform and shoes that I needed”.

“I used it in my fare every day and I bought school supplies”.

Based on the above statements, this show that through working it helps the student buy or acquire the things he needed personally and for school matter. The amount he earned is
used for satisfying his wants or needs. However, little amount is spent for the self because the other amount is spent for other expenses. Certainly, a student work because of the financial constraint evident in the family.

The result above coincides with the idea whether a person is conscious or not, efforts are spent much in life in attempting to meet their personal needs (Momentum works, 2009). Everything is done in life in the quest for experiences; the experiences that are most important are personal needs. Knowing more about oneself and what is important, there is a higher extent that a person chooses positive ways to meet their needs so that they can get what they want.

Awareness of person’s personal needs is the first step toward meeting them in ways that are positive, which contributes greatly to the likelihood that a person will thrive and live a life he/she love.

Family needs. He asserts that:

It helped, financially, in buying food in the house, little things needed in the house.

It helped me in providing assistance to my parents in the house.

Most of the students work in order to provide the needs of their family. Correspondingly, students served as an aid of their parents in providing food in the table. Financial constraint entice student to work to help their parents in running the operations in the family. A bigger household and the absence of one family figure either the father or mother is the reason students resort to early employment. Bigger responsibility and their tremendous concern to their family have encouraged them to attach themselves to employment despite of their young age.

The findings above affirm with the result of ILO (2002) which states that one in three children aged under 15 engaged in working in Sub-Saharan Africa. while in developed countries, only 2% of children in the same age group are involved in work. In addition, Siddiqi and Patrons (n.d.) observe other reason as: “The most important reason is poverty. Children work to ensure the survival of their family and themselves”. Because people are poor, children become the essential workforce in a family. Poor families must make difficult decisions that forces them into decide between immediate money from the labour market or income from standard occupations after education. With daily food instability and the acute financial constraints in their lives there is no way to think of future financial stability in poor households and for poor children.

**Implication of Working in Studies**

Low self-esteem. Miko not his real name declares that:

“I am afraid to attend class for the coming day for I will be called or I cannot give an answer. I don’t have the confidence for I do not know the lesson”.

“If we a have a quiz or oral recitation, I felt afraid for I didn’t attend the class”.

It is established that working or employment affects student’s confidence in the class. It affects his self-confidence or self-esteem. To note, self-confidence is an essential component of student’s success in class. However, if this is not developed, this will lead to poor performance or dropping out from class. Arguably, student’s self-esteem plays a significant role in his/her flight inside the classroom. Hence, teachers may be keen on their students especially those who are identified as working to give them the necessary consideration for them not to be afraid in attending classes.

The findings of Mohammad (2010) highlight the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in the pre-university students. The results demonstrated that there was significant positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. Moreover, there was significant difference in academic achievement between boys and girls. Further, this affirms the findings of Sadaat, Ghasemzadeh and Soleimani (2012) which revealed that there was significant difference in self-esteem among male and female students. However, male students for family self-esteem received higher scores than female students.

Uncertainty of Performance. Another remark by Miko (not his real name) which highlight a puzzling effect on his studies is:

“I am not sure of my performance if it is good or not for I rarely attend classes. It depends on the teachers if they will give me consideration. It is very hard maam for I am not sure if I can pass. There is a possibility that I will get low scores in my subjects”.

The certainty of passing the subject cannot be assured if student demonstrated irregular attendance. Lack of focus and poor retention are possible effects of working or employment. Thus, this will result to poor performance. Meanwhile, students need to spend more time for them to cope up with the lessons missed or discussed by the teacher. In doing so, this will give them better opportunity not to obtain failing remarks in their subjects.

The findings of Beffyet al. (2010) found a negative impact of part-time employment on French undergraduate and postgraduate students. They found that working part-time significantly reduced the probability of graduation. In addition, in a different study conducted in the United Kingdom by Dustmann, Micklewright and Van Soest (2009), while examining the impact of
employment of 16-year-olds on several outcomes and applying a structural modeling approach, they found that part-time employment has a negative, although very small, impact on exam results for girls, but there was no impact for boys.

Discussion

Personal Concern. The meaning of this theme in the perspective of the participant is fulfilling or sustaining their personal needs through working. Each person has a unique set of Personal Needs (above basic survival needs) that must be met in order to be at their best; they are critical in order to thrive. As important as Personal Needs are, few people are aware of them; as a result, they generally go about meeting their needs unconsciously, often in ways that are at odds with living a fulfilling life (Momentumworks, 2009).

The perspective of the participant aligns with the idea of Schifferdecker (2017) which claims that employment help teenagers learn to manage their money. Also, it can teach teenagers work skills they will need their whole lives, such as how to fill out an application, how to interview well, how to work responsibly, and how to get along with co-workers and superiors.

Family Needs. In the perspective of the participant, these are the things needed by the family. This could be in the form of money or food. UNICEF states that working student is both a cause and a consequence of poverty (UNICEF, 2009). Poverty is the factor itself why student work, but at the same time, factors produced by poverty are connected to working student. Students’ working is related to country’s economic condition.

The result corroborates with the idea that poverty is the most powerful factor of producing working children. This is evidenced by the fact that working student is a consistent issue in developing countries, and not in developed countries (UNICEF, 2009).

Low Self-Esteem. This refers to the lack of confidence in the subject. Baumester, Campbell, Krueger and Vohs, (2003) as cited by Arshad et al., (2015), claim that self-esteem has become a household word. Teachers, parents, therapists, and others have focused efforts on boosting self-esteem, on the assumption that high self-esteem will cause many positive outcomes and benefits—an assumption that is critically evaluated in this review. Appraisal of the effects of self-esteem is complicated by several factors.

The statement above coincides with the idea that low self-esteem can lessen a student’s desire to learn, her ability to focus, and her willingness to take risks (Shore, 2017). However, positive self-esteem, is one of the building blocks of school success; it provides a firm foundation for learning.

Uncertainty of Performance. This refers to the uneasiness of obtaining passing or failing remarks in the subject. Some studies find a positive association for working a few hours on campus but a negative association for working many hours off campus (Dundes & Marx, 2007). Riggert, Boyle, Petrosko, Ashe, and Parkins (2006) concluded that there is still much diversity and contradiction in the findings of the studies on student employment, which may be partly attributed to the differences in methodology and outcomes reported.

The perspective of the participant affirms the findings of Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner (2003) as cited by Dadgar (2012) which revealed that a one-hour exogenous increase in hours worked per week reduced GPA by 0.16 points. Meanwhile, Broadbridge and Swanson (2006) confirm that many students have problems with balancing the workload they take on and obligations related to their studies. Another study by Manthei and Gilmore(2005) as cited by Kosi et al., (2013) suggest that students who are engaged in paid employment primarily sacrifice their social life and devote less time to extra-curricular activities, such as voluntary work and sports. Robotham (2012) shows that working students cut down time devoted to reading study materials, as well as time for leisure and social activities. This view is in line with the finding that time allocated to study-related activities tends to diminish with rising hours spent on regular paid employment, but additional time spent on paid jobs is not fully compensated by a reduction in the study-related time budget (Orr et al., 2011).

Assertion

Based on the results of the study, the following were identified as answers to the questions raised in the previous section namely; personal concern and family needs were the reasons why a student was seeking employment or working; and the implications of working in studies were manifesting low self- esteem and demonstrating uncertainty of performance.

Certainly, students’ engagement in employment while studying is not an ordinary task. This was carried out for the benefit of the members of his family and for oneself. Lack of finances and the absence of breadwinner were considerably the reasons why students engaged in employment. Combining the two activities entails strong physical mind and body. Consequently, performance in school has been affected. Posing low scores in quizzes and exams were indicative of the dilemma or difficulty experienced by students. In addition, lack of confidence could be developed due to fear because of frequent absences. However, there were indications that employment or working also resulted to better outcomes. Due to early experiences in working, some students became responsible, enhanced their communication skills and more matured in responding to the challenges in life.

Commendation
From the assertions generated, the stipulated activities were highly suggested; namely, modules may be given to working student for them to keep in pace in their lessons; regular monitoring may be initiated by parents and teachers by providing feedback form to be noted by their parents and teachers; personality enhancement workshop may be given to students in order to develop their confidence; tap stakeholders who can provide scholarships for competent and skilled working students; and select a peer-buddy to the identified working student who can teach or update him to the lessons missed or discussed.

References


