

Chapter 3

Work and Employment and Vocational Training

This section explored a range of issues about young people who had worked for pay including age at starting work, type of jobs, the job market, access to job training and job satisfaction. Work for pay was defined as receiving cash for work.

3.1. Rates of Work

Over half of all young people surveyed (54.9%) had worked for pay at some time. There is little difference between young people from urban areas (51.8%) and rural areas (55.8%), or between males (57.7%) and females (52.1%). The percentage of young people who had ever worked for pay increased with age, from 32.3% for the youngest group, to 64.7% for the 18-21 age group and 85.7% for the 22-25 age group. Just over one quarter of school/university students reported to be full-time students as well as working for pay at some time (26.4%). Of those at school, 5% reported that they were looking for a job at the time of the survey. Among those who had no current paid job, 9.9% were looking for a job and within that group about

one third (32.2%) did something towards finding a job in the week before SAVY took place.

Of the survey respondents 34.5% currently had a job for which they were paid. Again as expected, there is an increase in percentages by age, with 14% in paid work in the 14-17 age group, increasing to 41.2% in the 18-21 group and 65.5% in the 22-25 age group. Young people were asked at what age they first worked for pay. The mean age for acquiring a paid job is 16.5 years, though rural youth on average start to work earlier than urban counterparts (16.1 years compared to 17.6 years).

While the vast majority of young people under 15 are not in the work force because they are at school, just under 7% of this age group reported to have worked for pay. Of the total sample who had worked for pay, 13.2% had done so by age 15. Twice as many rural youth worked before 15 years (15%) compared to urban (7.3%), with higher percentages of underage workers in ethnic minority groups (21.5%). The reasons for underage work have previously been reported to include poverty, the need to support family, exploitation and the increased opportunities of modernization¹. The *Labor Code of Viet Nam* states the minimum official working age as 15 years.

Across age groups young people consistently

TABLE 4 Current Paid Work by Occupation

Main occupation	Urban-rural residence %		Gender %		Age Groups %			Total Survey %
	City-Town	Rural	Male	Female	14-17	18-21	22-25	
Trained craftsperson or similar	31.9	27.2	26.6	30.3	17.9	31.5	29.8	28.3
Unskilled labor	26.6	27.6	30.2	23.9	38.5	30.6	19.4	27.3
Unskilled agricultural jobs	7.5	32.6	24.7	28.4	38.2	24.2	23.4	26.4
Professional technician	11.3	2.7	3.6	6.3	-	1.9	9.6	4.8
Private service, guard, salesperson	7.1	2.9	3.3	4.6	2.9	3.2	5.0	3.9
Office Staff	9.0	1.2	1.9	4.7	0.2	2.1	5.5	3.2
Mechanic	4.6	3.2	5.9	0.7	0.4	3.3	5.0	3.5
Skilled farmer, forester, fisherman	1.0	2.7	3.4	1.0	1.8	2.8	2.0	2.3

reported that it was difficult to find a job (64.1%). 28.3% were neutral when asked whether it was easy or difficult to enter the job market, with only a small number perceiving it to be easy: around 5% urban and 8.6% in rural areas.

Of the total sample, about 12% reported to be neither working or in school. The figures for male and female are not very much different, with 10.3% for male and 15.4% for female. It is surprising that, while the figure for unmarried young people is 10.1%, 28.4% of married people are neither working nor studying. The reasons may include the difficulties married people have in finding a job and the fact that newly married women in the sample have children and were not working at the time of SAVY.

3.2. Types of Employment

Table 4 summarizes the respondents' occupations by age, gender and residence. More than 50% of working youth have a simple job (i.e. non-skilled work in the agricultural or non-agricultural sector). Handicrafts are the next highest category, and that

includes traditional family businesses that attract many young employees. The urban work pattern is significantly different from that of rural. More than 60% of rural youth have a simple job compared to 34.1% of their urban counterparts. Urban youth tend to report occupations that require a higher level of professional skills.

Self-employment accounts for the largest percentage of occupational types (35.3%), followed by small family enterprises (19.9%) and private enterprise (8.7%) (see Table 5). State-run enterprises account for only 6.7% of working youth. It is expected that the number of young people working for state-run enterprises will further decrease when one quarter of state-run enterprises are privatized (a total of 4,000 enterprises) in the near future. It is most likely that the creation of new jobs will occur through private enterprise, small business and joint-venture enterprises.

3.3. Job Satisfaction

78.2% of working youth are satisfied with their current job (urban, 81.6%; rural, 77%), with the

TABLE 5 Current Paid Work by Employment Sector

Employment Sectors	Urban-rural residence %		Gender %		Age Groups %			Total Survey %
	City-Town	Rural	Male	Female	14-17	18-21	22-25	
Self-employed	26.9	38	31.7	39.4	30.1	34.0	38.7	35.3
Small, family enterprise	20.6	19.6	24.	14.7	27.0	21.2	15.5	19.9
Private enterprise	13.3	7.2	7.6	10.0	8.0	9.8	8.0	8.7
State-run enterprises	8.3	6.2	6.4	7.1	4.4	6.5	7.9	6.7
Government institution, military	7.2	3.0	3.0	5.3		1.9	7.8	4.0
JV with government, co-op, private	4.7	2.6	2.4	4.0	1.2	4.2	3.0	3.2
Communist Party institution,	1.4		0.5	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.3
Co-operative enterprise	0.9	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.4
Foreign-owned enterprise	4.6	1.4		3.4	0.1	3.0	2.4	2.2
Other joint-venture	3.0	1.4	1.3	2.5	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.8
Other	8.9	20.2	21.1	13.1	27.2	16.6	13.9	17.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE 6 *Employment Satisfaction Levels and Job Seeking*

Breakdowns		Currently employed (satisfied with current job)	Currently looking for another job	Actively looking for job last week (one week before survey)
Urban-rural residence	City-Town	81.6	16.2	45.1
	Rural	77.0	15.4	42.1
Sex	Male	75.2	15.8	43.9
	Female	81.6	15.4	41.8
Age Group	14-17	73.4	7.2	29.4
	18-21	77.2	22.9	47.2
	22-25	81.1	21.6	44.9
Geographic Region	Red River Delta Region	80.6	18.4	44.3
	North East Region	77.9	13.4	43.2
	North West Region	78.6	10.4	32.6
	North Central Region	69.9	15.8	40.9
	Coast Central Region	73.8	17.0	33.9
	Highland Region	77.3	9.2	54.
	South East Region	80.8	15.1	47.5
	Mekong River Delta Region	78.3	15.8	41.7

highest satisfaction recorded by females (81.6%) compared with males at 75.2%. Even in unskilled agricultural jobs, a majority recorded job satisfaction (73.3%), even though this satisfaction rate is a little lower than the rate for other occupations.

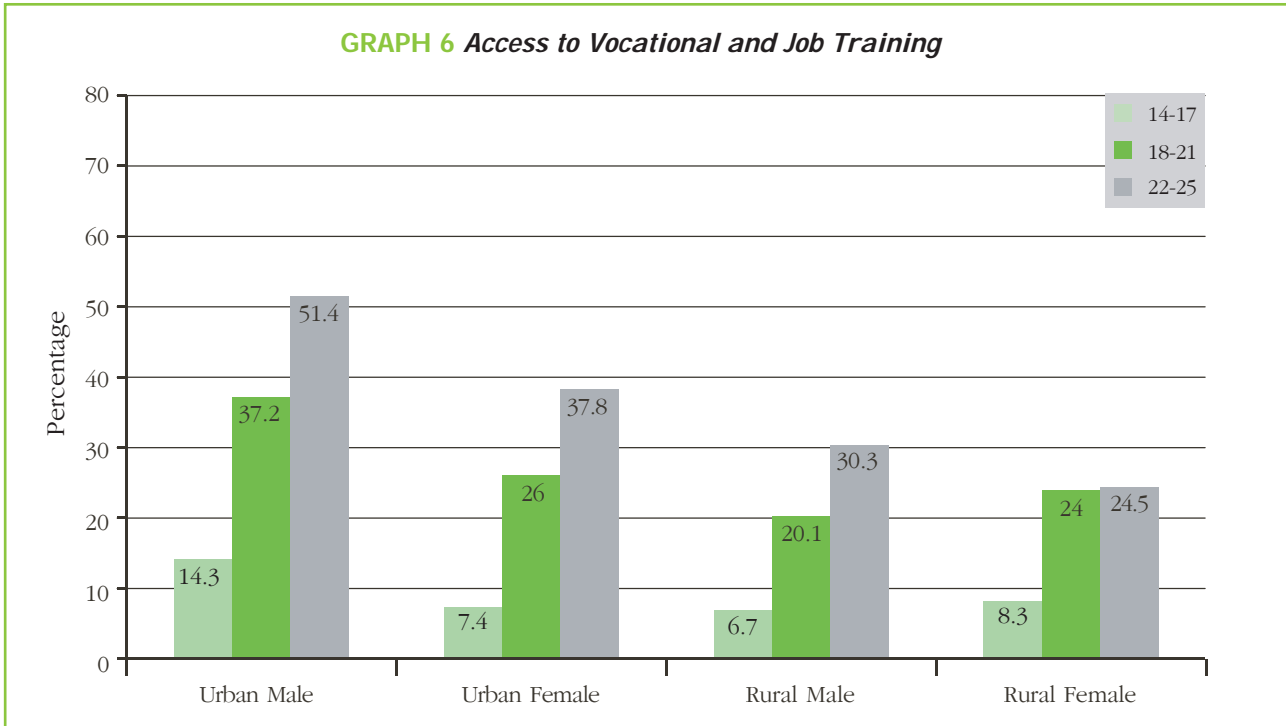
There is not a great deal of difference between regions in relation to job satisfaction. All regions recorded percentages between 70% and 80%, with the highest satisfaction in the Red River and South East Regions (80.8%) and the lowest in the North Central at 69.9%. These are further elaborated in Table 6.

22.7% of working respondents reported that they were looking for another job, though only 7.2% of the youngest group was looking. The overall percentage is very similar to the percentage of youth who were not satisfied with their current job (21.8%). However less than half of those who were looking for a job (42.9%) had actively looked for work the week before the survey took place. Those

most actively seeking work were young men aged 14-17 (74.9%), followed by 22-25 year old males at 58.8%.

3.4. Vocational Training

18.9% of respondents had been involved in some form of job training, with 13.3% of the total sample having completed such training and 5.6% being trained at the time of the survey. Of those who had received job training, 67.1% found a job in the area they were trained for, which is a relatively high figure. However, about a third (32.9%) could not find the job they were trained for. Factors affecting the low percentage of young people entering vocational training include limited training opportunities and the cost of training, as well as a perception that vocational or job training is less economically rewarding and less prestigious than academic training.



Urban youth have more access to vocational training, at 26.6% compared to 16.5% in rural areas. A large disparity can be seen in vocational training opportunities for young people from ethnic minorities (5.2%) compared with their Kinh counterparts (21.2%) (see Graph 6).

3.5. Work as a Priority for Youth

In questions relating to future aspirations (see Chapter 10) young people identified work as the

highest priority (49.6%). It is worth noting that the figures are not much different between age groups, male and female, or rural and urban locations. This demonstrates that many young people are concerned with serious issues despite being at a transitional period in their lives. When invited to make recommendations to government about what could improve young people's lives, 40.5% suggested that increased opportunities for work should be the number one priority for the government in terms of improving the lives of young people.



1. Khanh VD, Thu Thuy VT, Koan BK, Phong LH, Phuong NQ. Labor and Employment. In: Haughton D, Haughton J, Phong N, editors. Living Standards During an Economic Boom: The Case of Viet Nam. Hanoi: Statistical Publishing House; 2001. p. 141-70.