Theme 10: Findings

Describing findings

Task 1

Read the paragraphs below and answer the questions.

1. What is the function of the first sentence?
2. How many different ways is the data described? e.g. percentages
3. Why is the data described in different ways?
4. Does the writer comment on possible reasons for these results or discuss possible implications?

Students were first asked if they currently had a part-time job. Sixty per cent (24) of respondents indicated that they were working, while forty per cent (16) were not. However, it should be noted that there was a significant difference here regarding gender. Of a total of 28 male respondents, 24 were currently in part-time employment (86%), while out of 22 female respondents, only six were in part-time employment (27%).

For the fourth question, students were asked how often they exercised. Respondents had to choose from a limited number of responses and a large majority (70%) selected 2-3 times a week. Ten per cent of the respondents indicated that they exercised four times or more per week, while 18 per cent claimed that they did physical activity 2-3 times a month. Only two per cent (i.e. one student) admitted that he or she never exercised.

Task 2

1. What kind of data is being described here?
2. Which answers are included in the description?

The final question asked students to recommend improvements in the student services department at the university. Only 20 of the 50 respondents to the questionnaire chose to make any recommendations. There were a wide range of answers. However, the most common suggestions were for the office opening hours to be extended (six students) and for the department to give students more help with finding private accommodation (five students).

Task 3

1. Why is there no data in this summary?

The second question asked staff at the university to rank four different tasks in order of difficulty on a scale from 1 (most difficult) – 4 (least difficult). The tasks were: giving presentations, organising conferences, writing reports and dealing with difficult students. Unfortunately, there was a lack of understanding on the part of several respondents. Many of them failed to rank the tasks in order and instead gave, for example, two scores of 3 and two scores of 4. This misunderstanding invalidated the question.

Task 4

Complete this report of a survey carried out on a university campus by inserting suitable words from the box into the gaps.

sample conducted slightly respondents generally

random questions majority questioned minority

mentioned interviewees common questionnaire

**STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF PART-TIME WORK**

*Introduction*

With the introduction of course fees and so increases in student debt, more students are finding it necessary to work part-time. The survey was conducted to find out how this work affects student life and study. The research was done by asking students selected at random on the campus to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix 1). Fifty students were questioned on Saturday April 23rd, with approximately equal numbers of male and female students.

*Findings*

Of the respondents 20% currently had part-time jobs, 20% had had part-time jobs, but half had never done any work during university semesters (see Table 1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who were working were next asked about the reasons for taking the jobs. The most common reason was lack of money (56%) but many students said that they found the work useful experience (32%) and others mentioned social benefits (12%).

*Table 1: Do you have or have you had a part-time job?*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Men | Women | Total | % |
| Have a job now | 8 | 7 | 15 | 30 |
| Had job before | 4 | 6 | 10 | 20 |
| Never had job | 14 | 11 | 25 | 50 |

The twenty-five students with work experience were next asked about the effect of the work on their studies. A significant\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (64%) claimed that there were no negative effects at all. However, 24% said that their academic work suffered\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ while a minority \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (12%) reported serious adverse results, such as tiredness in lectures and falling marks.

Further \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ examined the nature of the work that the students did. The variety of jobs was surprising, from van driver to busker, but the most \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ areas were catering and bar work (44%) and secretarial (32%). Most students worked between 10 and 15 hours per week, though two (8%) worked over 25 hours. Rates of pay were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ near the national minimum wage, and averaged £5.20 per hour.

The final question invited students to comment on their experience of part-time work. Many (44%) made the point that students should be given larger grants so that they could concentrate on their studies full-time, but others felt that they gained something from the experience, such as meeting new people and getting insights into various work environments. One student said that she had met her current boyfriend while working in a city centre restaurant.

*Conclusions*

It is clear that part-time work is now a common aspect of student life. Many students find jobs at some point in their studies, but an overwhelming majority (88%) of those that it has a damaging effect on their studies. Most students work for only 2-3 hours per day on average, and a significant number claimed some positive results from their employment.

Obviously, this survey was limited to a relatively small \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by time constraints, and a fuller study might modify our findings in various ways.

[Adapted from: Bailey, S. (2003), *Academic Writing*. 4th edition. London: Routledge, pp.230-232]

Task 5

1. Using Excel, turn Table 1 into a bar chart.
2. Experiment with the formatting: add a title, change fonts and colours.
3. Replace the Table 1 with your chart

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Module Learning Outcomes Covered | Academic Literacies Covered |
| ML5 | AL5 |
| Choose an item. | AL8 |
| Choose an item. | Choose an item. |