

Box 5.4

Socio-economic characteristics of part-time workers

An earlier survey by the Census and Statistics Department showed that there were about 130 900 part-time employees in the second quarter of 2002, equivalent to 4.7% of total employees.

Analysed by *sex* and *age*, females accounted for 59.4% of part-time employees in the second quarter of 2002, higher than the corresponding proportion of 47.4% for all the employees in the economy. About two-thirds of these female workers were aged 30-49, of whom 85% were married. As to male part-time workers, almost 70% were aged 20-49. For all the part-time employees taken together, the median age was 42, as against that of 37 for all the employees in the economy.

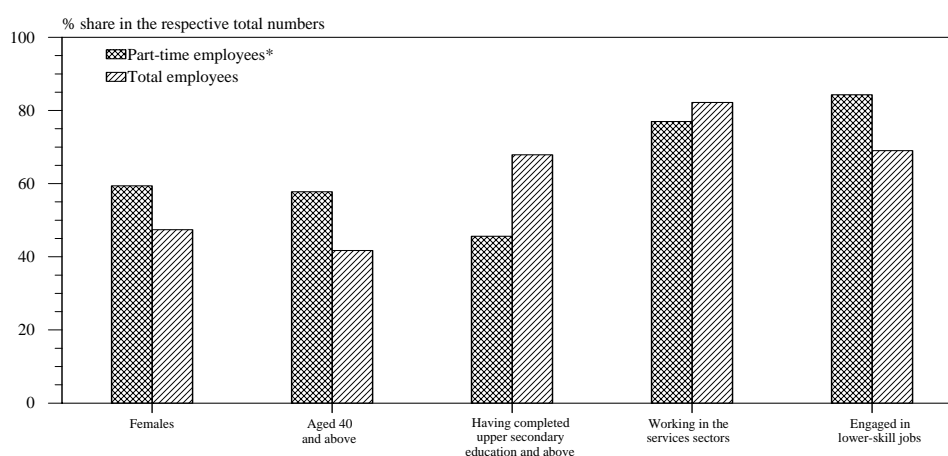
Analysed by *educational attainment*, part-time workers were generally lesser educated. Amongst them, 45.4% had attained upper secondary education and above, which was distinctly smaller than the corresponding proportion of 67.9% for all the employees in the economy. Likewise, the proportion of part-time workers having attained tertiary education, at 18.3%, was less than that for all the employees in the economy, at 27.6%.

On *occupational profile*, as part-time employees were constrained by their relatively lower educational attainment and limited time commitment, the majority of them (84.3%) were engaged in lower-skill jobs, mostly as workers in elementary occupations and as service workers and shop sales workers. The corresponding proportion for total employees was 69.0%.

Regarding *sectoral distribution*, 77.0% of the part-time employees worked in the service sectors, mostly in the distributive and catering trades, and in community, social and personal services. Construction was another major sector employing part-time workers, accounting for 15.9% of the total, while manufacturing gave a smaller share of 6.9%. By comparison, the corresponding shares for total employees in the service sectors and the manufacturing sector were larger at 82.2% and 8.9% respectively, whereas that for total employees in the construction sector was smaller at 8.2%.

As to the *major reason not to work longer hours*, 28.4% of part-time employees cited the need to take care of other family members. 24.0% attributed this to requirement from the employers, while another 18.7% and 6.5% to non-availability of desirable jobs with longer hours of work and to sparing of time for educational pursuit.

Comparison of part-time employees and total employees
by selected socio-economic attributes



Note : (*) Defined here to include employees whose main employment involves working time of less than 5 days per week, or less than 6 hours per working day, or less than 30 hours per week. For details, see Special Topics Report No. 33 published by the Census and Statistics Department.