

Balancing Work and Life among Students

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Tania Ang

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Abstract

The importance of work-life balance has been gaining ground in recent years to capture a wider range of groups, including students combining full-time study with part-time employment. Finding a balance can be complex and challenging for many individuals and students. This dissertation has explored how undergraduate students balance the competing demands of work, study, and social activities. A mixed methods research design was employed using quantitative balance wheel surveys and qualitative interviews and focus group. The results showed that the small sample of students had difficulties when balancing the multiple demands of work, study, and social activities. Adverse effects of this imbalance were found in the form of missed lectures, health problems, increased stress, and lack of sleep. Nevertheless, students highlighted the benefits of working that included acquiring relevant skills, polishing CV's, and becoming immersed in the New Zealand culture. Students' in the study acknowledged it was not the responsibility of the university to monitor part-time employment. There were calls for a greater understanding of the financial situation university students' face in today's society.

Chapter One: Introduction

In New Zealand, the importance of work-life balance has been gaining ground in the last decade (McPherson & Reed, 2007). The impact of globalisation, structural adjustment, increasingly sophisticated technology and the 24 hour, 7 day working culture have changed the way work is conducted. The intensified working practices have led to difficulties in managing family and work responsibilities, while the aging population inevitably causes increases in eldercare (Lewis, Gambles & Rapoport, 2007).

Work-life balance is an important area of human resource management that has received increasing attention from the government as well as management and practitioners, academic researchers, and the popular media (De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott, & Pettit, 2005; Yesbek, 2004; McPherson & Reed, 2007). Literature surrounding work-life balance is overwhelmingly positive focusing on the corporate, for profit sector through providing evidence that work-life balance can produce many benefits for organisations such as reduced organisational turnover, and intention to leave, and increased attraction and retention of employees (De Cieri et al, 2005).

Since the 1960's work-life balance literature has tended to focus narrowly on women and the double burden of family responsibilities, which excluded employees without children or other caring commitments (Lewis et al, 2007; Ransome, 2007). Over the following years, the concept of work-life balance has broadened to capture a wider range of situations that individuals face including adequate time for leisure, community, social activities as well as childcare and dependant responsibilities. More recently, work-life balance has seen calls for the populations of interest such as management and researchers to consider a wider range of groups that had not featured strongly in the discourse such as small-medium enterprises (SME), singles, retirees, Chinese migrants, and students in full-time undergraduate studies combining part-time employment (McPherson & Reed, 2007; Harris & Pringle, 2007).

The trend for students to combine work and study has been increasing rapidly over recent years due to increasing costs of living and tuition fees. In New Zealand there has been significant increase in tertiary fees since the government lifted the freeze on tuition fees in 2003. In addition, a reduced amount of students are receiving financial allowances from the government. Hence, many students have undertaken part-time employment to meet these increasing costs and have become a vital part of survival among many tertiary students. Work-life balance among students is a newly emerging phenomenon which has received little attention and has potentially significant implications for the universities, employers, and students themselves. This sets the departure point of the current research of work-life balance among students.

The Research Objectives

The primary purpose of this small scale study is to investigate how undergraduate students manage their work and study to achieve a balanced life. Specifically, how undergraduate students' manage the juggling act of work, study and social activities. For purposes of this research the 'juggling' metaphor refers to act of managing or alternating the requirements of two or more tasks adequately for example, to juggle the obligations of a job and school. Outcomes of the study will lead to a better understanding of the work-life balance issues faced by students. The research could also contribute to the body of knowledge and is an important topic as findings and implications could be valuable to university program directors and educators through providing cognizance of the causes of students not completing degree requirements.

Background knowledge and the development of the topic will be discussed in chapter two, in the review of the literature. The literature review examines the shifts in terminology, factors behind the increasing interest of work-life, and the target group of interest tertiary students are discussed in more detail.

Subsequently, chapter three outlines the methodology and methods utilised to address the research question. A mixed methods design was used, a type of design in which different but complementary data will be collected on the same topic. In this study, surveys in the form of balance wheels were used to distinguish how students would allocate time in an ideal world. Concurrent with this data collection, qualitative data such as focus groups and interviews explored how students at a large University in Auckland managed study with term-time employment. The reason for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data was to bring together the strengths of both forms of research to compare and corroborate results.

Chapter four presents the results of the mixed methods research design. The aim of the research was to investigate how students manage the juggling act of work and study and presented the key factors which emerged. Chapter five presents a discussion of the results in conjunction with the relevant literature reviewed, to gain insight into work-life balance among undergraduate students. The findings raised several interesting issues that related to term-time employment, students, and potential academic staff responses.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction to Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is a concept that is not unique to one nation or industry and is a common concept in many developing and developed countries and across all occupations (Akdere, 2006). Drawing on the large amount of literature and research this chapter examines the concept of work-life balance. Firstly, the terms 'work' and 'life' are defined followed by a discussion of the recent shifts in focus to broaden concept of work-life balance to include individuals that have not featured strongly in the discourse. Subsequently, the main factors contributing to the increasing interest such as the changing labour market, the advancements of technology, working parents, and longer working hours are examined. In addition, the implications of a lack of balance are reviewed followed by the benefits of work-life balance in conjunction with the most preferred type of employee initiatives used to implement work-life balance including flexible working arrangements and dependent care policies. The final section of this chapter concludes with an historical overview of tertiary education in New Zealand, in particular the various changes to the way in which tertiary education is funded. Finally, a review of the relevant literature on students in part-time employment with a particular focus on the effects of term-time employment is discussed.

The major catalyst behind the research on work-family interface has been the increase of women, including those with young children and other family obligations, into the workforce (Lewis & Cooper, 1999). This trend escalated in 1960s when women began to enter male-dominated careers. During the 1970s, women dual roles and the growing recognition that many men could no longer expect the support of a full-time wife led to a focus on the interdependence of work and family. The majority of research on work and family constructed issues faced by women as individual rather than organisational problems with the focus was on role conflicts and identity dilemmas (Lewis & Cooper,

1999). The 1980s saw a period of increased competitiveness due to a decade of mergers and acquisitions, and joint ventures. The competitiveness saw a time when *stress* and *burnout* became concepts everyday life of working people. During this period a burgeoning amount of research on work-family conflict and stress among employment women and dual earner couples providing evidence that work-family stress and conflict can affect employee well-being. The shift from individual to organisational problems in the late 1980s to early 1990s saw calls for workplaces to change. Employers were urged to develop policies to support employees with family commitments. During this period much research found conflict can produce distress within both work and family domains, and that work interfering with family and vice versa are separate processes that need to be distinguished in research. Increasingly it was recognised that the experiences in work and family not only spill over between domains but also cross over to affect other family members (Lewis & Cooper, 1999).

The work-life balance phenomenon has given rise to a pressing issue for New Zealanders; creating a better balance between paid-work and other activities that are important to people outside of work (Jayne, 2003). The basic principle is that paid work should not completely crowd out other things that are important to people such as, family, voluntary work, personal development, leisure and recreation (Department of Labour, 2004).

Work-life balance is an important area of human resource management that has received increasing attention from the government (De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott, & Pettit, 2005). The past five years has seen the New Zealand government play a major leadership role in promoting work-life balance and working in partnership with project partners to find win-wins, not prescriptive solutions. The project partners included the Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Trust, Business New Zealand, and the Department of Labour (DOL, 2004). The government has also recognised the importance of the issue as contributing to sustainable social and economic development (Jones, 2006).

To encourage organisations to assist employees with work-life balance in New Zealand, the EEO recognises New Zealand organisations that enable and encourage work-life balance initiatives, through the prestigious annual EEO Trust Work and Life Awards. Not only do these awards celebrate and reward best workplaces in New Zealand, they set benchmarks examples for other workplaces in New Zealand (EEO Trust, 2003). This non-profit organisation provides EEO information and tools to employers, and raises awareness of diversity issues in New Zealand workplaces.

Work-life balance is defined by the New Zealand Department of Labour website as “effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and the other activities that are important to people” (Department of Labour, 2008a). Work-life balance is about adjusting working patterns so people are able to achieve a fulfilled life inside and outside paid employment (Pocock, 2005a; Bruin & Dupis, 2004). There is no universally correct amount of work-life balance. Attaining the ‘right’ balance is a personal decision that differs for different people at various stages of their life span (EEO, 2006; McPherson & Reed, 2007). For some, the main issue may revolve around too much work, while others may desire additional work.

Work-life balance terminology has seen a major shift since the 1960’s when the terminology focused narrowly on women and the double burden of family responsibilities, which excluded employees without children or other caring commitments (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007; Ransome, 2007). The result was an increased emphasis on ‘work-family’ and ‘family-friendly’ policies within organisations. Following this, was the shift away from work-family and family-friendly policies to the terms *work* and *life* in the 1990’s (Lewis, et al, 2007). The linguistic shift broadened to capture a wider range of situations that individuals face including adequate time for leisure, community, social activities as well as childcare and dependant responsibilities. Academics (Ransome, 2007; Harris & Pringle, 2007) have recently proposed alternatives of work-life balance that include ‘work-life integration’ and ‘work-life mosaic’ to recognise that people’s lives are

composed of more than paid employment, or that the aim is not balance but rather an integration of work and life (Bruin & Dupis, 2004; McPherson & Reed, 2007).

Ransome (2007) suggests an additional element ‘recreational labour’ is required to be reflective of the contemporary issues individuals face when balancing work and life. The conceptual article aimed to highlight the number of ways in which the concept of work-life balance was narrowly deployed. The addition of the third element ‘recreation labour’ refers to the realm of leisure, pleasure, and enjoyment reflecting the aspirations that adults wish to achieve once necessary tasks (paid and unpaid, market and non-market) have been fulfilled. The recreational activities can often overlap with ‘work’ activities for example, going out for a meal with colleagues, and may also overlap with ‘life’ for example, playing with children rather than cleaning up after them (Ransome, 2008).

Harris and Pringle (2007) used examples of four groups that have not featured strongly in the discourse of work-life balance to demonstrate the definitions need to include a wider range of the contemporary labour market; owners of small-medium enterprises (SME), single people, retirees, and Chinese migrants. The authors argue that effective work-life balance programmes need to reflect contemporary society in recognition of the external environment factors affecting many individuals. In other words, work-life balance initiatives should be extended to address migrant issues, and cover concerns of single individuals and retirees (Harris & Pringle, 2007). Although the paper attempts to broaden the concept of work-life balance, the authors failed to include other groups such as students in full-time study and part-time workers. Full-time students in paid employment during term-time face the challenge of not only balancing work and life, but are also challenged with a third issue of academic studies. Thus, full-time students juggle not only two, but three elements of life.

McPherson and Reed (2007) have acknowledged the term ‘life’ includes students combining study and paid work, older people who combine leisure activities with paid work, young people wanting time away from paid work to travel, or young people wanting

more time for leisure and social activities to maintain and balance life. The authors define the term ‘life’ to apply to “any non-paid activities that workers wish to include in their life” (pg 18). For the purposes of this research the term ‘work’ is referred to as paid employment during term-time, while the term ‘life’ includes any activities outside of paid work that are important to people, in particular students’ extracurricular activities outside of study and work.

The Rise of Work-Life Balance

The changing labour market, participation rates, technology advancements, longer working hours, and increase in working parents have contributed to the diverse workforce and given rise to work-life balance. Each of these factors is briefly examined before the discussion around the target group of interest tertiary students is discussed in more detail.

Changing Labour Market Demographics

New Zealand has a total population of 4.2 million with a total labour force participation rate in New Zealand of 68.4 per cent (Statistics NZ, 2007a). In 2007, the current labour market was considered very tight with solid economic growth since 2002 and unemployment rates at 3.7% (Wilkinson, 2008). The balance between men and women in the workforce has not changed significantly since the year 2000 with 60.2 per cent of females and 67.3 per cent of males working (Statistics NZ, 2005). New Zealand has an increasingly ageing workforce, with the working population increasing by 13.6 per cent between the years 1994-2004 with the largest increase in the 45-64 year old age bracket, up 32.8 per cent (Statistics NZ, 2005). In addition, the percentage of the population aged 65 years and above is currently 12.5% (Statistics NZ, 2007b). This is projected to increase to 17.1% in 2020, slightly below the OECD average of 17.8% (OECD, 2007). The ageing population in New Zealand indicates a possible labour shortage in many New Zealand industries, forcing employers to re-think their strategies for recruiting and retaining skilled staff. Furthermore, employers have to compete from a shrinking pool of workers and find alternative ways to attract and retain the workforce they require (Jones, 2006).

There are approximately 600,000 New Zealanders in the 15-24 age bracket (Statistics NZ, 2005), referred to as 'generation Y'. There has been evidence published (Clement, 2008) that the generation Y have very different attitudes towards work than their parents, the 'baby boomers' who were born post World War II and the early 1960's. The golden generation expect rewards, appropriate pay rises, career advancement and they want results immediately (Clement, 2008). Further evidence has been published that different generation cohorts differ in the ways they conduct their work. For example, in relation to the golden generation (those born from 1965-1981) generation Y workers have been described as fickle, high maintenance, good team players, and expect acknowledgement even when it is not deserved, and dislike working long hours (Clement, 2008).

Clement's (2008) findings indicate younger workers are aware of the challenges of balancing work and life and therefore organisations that desire to attract and retain younger workers in an era of tight labour markets should invest in addressing work-life balance issues. A recent New Zealand poll suggests that the golden generation are aware of the work-life issues and are more likely to stay with employers that offer a balanced work-life (Jones, 2006).

Technology Advancements

Advancements in technology have brought about rapid, fundamental changes to the way work is done. Computer and wireless advancements have provided organisations with increased work flexibility through working from home. The increased use of computers has required many employees to 'up skill'. Additionally, the increased flexibility that computers provide have generated increased hours of work to accommodate the different time zones of companies 'going global' (Jones, 2006).

Consequently, advancements in technology have increased the numbers of employees working from home through telecommuting (Jones, 2006). Peters and Lippe's (2007) study of the effects of telehomeworking found short-term benefits such as the potential to reduce time-pressure to harmonise professional and personal lives. In addition, benefits

to organisations include coping with staff no longer stuck in traffic jams that result in the loss of productive hours. On the other hand, long-term negative consequences that counterbalance or exceed the intended gains were found through higher levels of strain spilling over into the home domain and longer working hours. Strains experienced by men and women of the study included pressure to complete work on time, the blurred physical and mental boundaries between work and home, and the ad hoc strategy to work in isolation. In further support, telehomeworking coupled with the increased use of internet has further blurred the boundaries between work and personal times. Cell phones, laptops, pagers and electronic mail (e-mail) have resulted in many employees taking their work home, increasing employer's expectations that workers are available beyond their standard working hours (Jayne, 2003; Jones, 2006).

Other authors (Sullivan & Smithson, 2007) have suggested that the advancements in technology have brought about better coping mechanisms with the incompatible time schedules or demands from the work and family domains. Sullivan and Smithson's (2007) study on the impact of paid work performed at home found greater flexibility bought benefits to women working at home as it facilitated their role as domestic worker and mother. In addition, the interview findings revealed a strong perception among home workers that telehomeworking provided more flexibility than working on-site.

Longer Working Hours

Since the 1970's, the average annual working hours per capita declined in most OECD countries but in five countries the average hours increased; the United States (US), Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Iceland (Rasmussen & Burgess, 2007). The changes in working hours reflect three developments: changes in hours per worker, the employment rate, and the working age share of the population. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) found Australia had the fourth highest proportion of people working in the 50 hours per week bracket (Pocock, 2005a). Reasons for the increase incorporated large numbers of part-time workers who desired additional working hours, the fragmentation of working

hours and the diminishing standard working week, and increasing amount of work outside the normal working hours (Rasmussen & Burgess, 2007).

The Thirty Families report conducted by NZCTU (2003a) argued that workers in New Zealand have hours of work that are too long. The ILO has developed a number of standards relating to workers with family responsibilities, minimum wages, equal remuneration, holidays with pay, and paid maternity leave.

In particular the ILO Convention 47 in 1935 on the Forty-Hour Week gave rise to member states adopted the principle of a forty-hour week. In New Zealand, this principle of the forty-hour week was to some extent incorporated in the *Minimum Wage Act 1983*. The Act authorises the making of a Minimum Wage Order which specifies minimum rates of pay for adult and youth workers. The act requires all employment agreements to fix work hours at not more than 40 hours maximum (exclusive of overtime) to be worked in any week by any employee bound by an employment agreement (Rudman, 2006). However, the report found that in practice many workers feel they have no choice but to work longer hours in fear of being tainted as a poor worker, destined for negative treatment undesirable tasks and redundancy.

Overseas there have been a number of international developments relating to working. In 1998, the European Union (EU) adopted the European Working Time Directive. Provisions included recommending that national legislation or collective agreements provide for an upper limit of a 48-hour maximum working hour week. The United Kingdom (UK) allows workers to “opt out” of the 48 hour limit. However, research by the Trades Union Congress in the UK showed that two out of three people who worked more than 48 hours have not been asked to sign an opt out (NZCTU, 2003b).

A number of EU countries have taken the lead from the European Union Directive and have legislated for shorter working weeks. For example, France introduced legislation providing maximum working hours for employees no longer than 35 hours per week

without provision of extra holidays, and/or financial compensation (Bronsnan & Setti, 2004).

The comparative review has found in a century of the 40 hour week movement New Zealand and neighbouring country Australia average full time working hours are above 42 hours and increasing (Rasmussen & Burgess, 2007; Jefferson & Preston, 2007). This change affects professional and managerial occupations ‘work rich’ families. In addition, it also impacts on the low paid where individuals who have to overcome inadequate income levels through working dual jobs or overtime (Rasmussen & Burgess, 2007; Lautsch & Scully, 2007; Thorntwaite, 2004). The increase in working hours in New Zealand has raised concerns for work-life balance as the longer hours create difficulties for many people aspiring to achieving a balanced life.

Working parents

Overseas, stereotypical roles such as the ‘male breadwinner’ have also decreased in dominance as participation of women in pair work has increased. Many developed western countries have seen an increase in dual earners. In Australia the male participation rate in work has declined over the last three decades, with a participation rate among males standing at 71.6 per cent in 2005 compared to 80 per cent 25 years ago (Pocock, 2005a). There has also been a trend for more women to enter into part-time work. This is due to many women utilising part-time work as a mode of re-entry into employment after child birth (Thornthwaite, 2004).

Traditionally, men have dominated the work role and women have traditionally dominated the family role. The inherited ideology assumed that living arrangements meant the male worker was obligated to financially support to his wife and dependent children and women were predominately in charge of the household domain (Chapman, 2003; Livingston & Judge, 2008; Williamson, 2007). In New Zealand, this traditional arrangement was dominated by the notion that the man was the ‘breadwinner’. This was enshrined in the ‘family wage’ in which clearly stipulated a substantial difference between award and wages for men and women by the Arbitration Court in 1922 (Deeks & Rasmussen, 2002; Rasmussen & Lamm, 2002). In 1937, the Arbitration Court set minimum wages for the first time, at 47% of men’s wages. This decision kept within the ‘family wage’ policy that men were still head of the household and were the primary earner in terms of himself and his family (Rasmussen & Lamm, 2002).

The influence of the feminist movement and the changing nature of the workforce saw a decline in the traditional model of ‘male breadwinners’ through the fall in men’s labour participation in developed and industrialised countries. The feminist movement changed the social rules for gender and attitudes to women’s involvement in paid work and major changes to the labour-force and saw an increase in ‘dual earners’ in the 1960’s (Smith, 1993). This feeds into the demands of the central liberal feminist movement for greater economic independence for women (Calas & Smircich, 2006). To paraphrase Warren

(2007) independent wages empower women to choose and gain control and power over the resources within their households.

The increase in women's participation rates has led to an increased pressure to be 'super mums', many of whom are full time workers. The term 'super mums' can be defined as women striving to be the *perfect* mother in responding to the child's every desire, listening to the child and the limitless willingness to nurture the child. For instance, the mother will always bake a birthday cake and never buy one regardless of her busy work schedule. Pocock (2003) describes how pressures of being the 'super mum' can lead to guilt. Guilt is defined as a regretful response to wrong doing and is a moral emotion associated with counterfactual thinking (Judge, Ilies, Scott, 2006). Other pressures of mothering while in paid work sit heavily on women who are caught between traditional expectations of motherhood, roles their mother played, and the expectations and financial demands of today's society. Mothers experience guilt when constantly trying to 'prove themselves' while juggling paid work and family responsibilities (Pocock, 2003). All these pressures on women lead to imbalance and pressures for balance.

Lack of Balance

Chapman (2004) indicates a lack of work-life balance can cause harm to individuals, family, the wider community and the economy. Other studies highlight similar links between work-life balance and conflict to fatigue, stress, burnout, psychological well-being, depression and physical symptoms (Pocock & Clarke, 2005; Williamson, 2007). Karatepe & Tekinkus (2006) highlights in extreme cases unresolved issues of work-life balance can lead to burnout. Burnout can be defined as the "total depletion of physical and mental resources caused by excessive striving to reach an unrealistic work-related goal" (Dessler, Griffiths, Lloyd-Walker, 2007, pg 580). Burnout consists of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and diminished personal accomplishment (Dessler et al, 2007).

Emotional exhaustion is characterised by a lack of energy and the distinct feeling that emotional resources have been depleted. Frustration, tension, irritability are common symptoms of emotional exhaustion. Depersonalisation is evident when a person feels they are being treated as objects not human and causes employees to become detached and often become cynical towards organisational members. Finally, diminished personal accomplishment is characterised by employees lacking in self-confidence and developing a negative opinion about oneself (Hartel, Fujimoto, Strybosch, & Fitzpatrick, 2007).

In the absence of work-life balance policies individuals, families, and organisations bear the costs and increased stress of unresolved conflicts between work and personal lives that can result in personal costs and organisational effects such as, reduced productivity, effectiveness, profitability and increased turnover (Wilkinson, 2008).

Longer working hours have raised growing concern about physical and mental stress affecting the long term well-being and maintenance of social relationships as well as the associated hidden costs on personal life (Pocock, 2003; Lautsch & Scully, 2007). Pocock (2003) describes the hidden costs of work affecting those who work long hours as the loss of time spent with spouse and/or family. The quality of time is affected as obstacles to intimacy such as grumpiness arise. One or both partners are likely to be 'drained' by their paid work. This in-turn, leads to a loss of communication among couples and children also become the casualties of the time-poverty created by longer hours of work. In addition, irritability, short tempers and tiredness contribute to the emotional unavailability of workers and consequently can lead to the dearth in relationships of intimacy at home for many working long working hours (Pocock, 2003). It is not just longer hours that take the toll on family relationships, but the nature of work is also important. High demand jobs with low control, low support and high pressure can also result in lower quality family interactions. The worker needs to recover from the high demands of work, thus maybe emotionally unavailable for their family (Allan, Loudon, & Peetz, 2005). Pocock's (2003) work supports this proposition from a study of 163 workers in Australia. In her study,

Pocock reported that workers who had increased work intensification also reported exhaustion and frustration over their inability to meet parental and spousal expectations.

Samad's (2006) study on the effects of work and family related factors on well-being found job and family satisfaction tend to decrease when employees' experience high levels of conflict caused by work or family related factors. Work-life conflict is defined as a form of inner role conflict in which the role of pressures from work and activities outside of work are mutually incompatible, whereby one role becomes more difficult by the participation in the other (De Cieri et al, 2005).

Benefits of Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance practices have been found to attract and retain valued employees in highly competitive labour markets (De Cieri et al, 2005). Moreover, they can inform employers about the well-being of individuals and more generally of a particular organisation (Allan, Loudon & Peets, 2005). Research has found family friendly policies can result in increases in return to work after child birth, reduced turnover and intention to leave (Forsyth & Polzer-Debruyne, 2007), higher morale and productivity and less absenteeism in organisations (Allan et al, 2005; Lambert, 2000; Yasbek, 2004). In addition, people who are contented with their work-life balance are likely to be productive workers and happier citizens who make a greater public contribution (Allan et al, 2005; Pocock, 2005a; Pocock, 2005b).

Boxall, Macky, & Rasmussen's (2003) study of labour turnover and retention in New Zealand showed extrinsic rewards such as pay, promotion and security played a strong role in employee retention and turnover. Their findings also suggest work-life balance is increasingly important for the retention of employees. Over half of the respondents in the study gave the desire to improve work-life balance as a reason for moving. These findings are consistent with Lambert's (2000) study on the relationship between work-life benefits and organisational citizenship in one of the top ten best companies to work in

America, Fel-Pro. Organisation citizenship can be defined as the additional activities that employees do to help their organisation perform smoothly and productively such as, helping co-workers and share insights on improvements. Findings suggest work-life balance initiatives were positively related to enhance organisational citizenship behaviour and the retention of employees.

Organisation Work-life Balance Initiatives

Organisations can implement various work-life balance initiatives that may assist employees to better balance their work and family responsibilities, gain improvements in well-being and provide organisational benefits. There are a large variety of family friendly policies which include but are not limited to the following: flexible working hours, job sharing, part-time work, compressed work weeks, parental leave, telecommuting, on-site child care facility, employer subsidy of childcare, and referral services (Liddicoat, 2003; EEO Trust, 2007a; Hartel et al, 2007). Some policies may be more costly, for example, the provision of an on-site childcare while other initiatives may be less costly to the employer, such as flexible annual leave. These associated financial costs to introducing work-life balance policies were reported to often dissuade New Zealand organisations from providing such initiatives (Liddicoat, 2003).

The EEO Trust Diversity Survey Report 2005 found that flexible working arrangements and dependent care are both common requests by New Zealand employees to assist with balancing work and family responsibilities. (EEO Trust, 2005). The Diversity survey report measured the pathways organisations took from their initial EEO and diversity strategies to reaping the rewards of improved recruitment, retention and productivity. In addition, Liddicoat (2003) found in her study of stakeholder perceptions of family-friendly initiatives in six large New Zealand organisations that 40% of respondents rated flexible working hours as the most important initiative to maintaining work-life balance. Therefore, flexible working arrangements and dependent care initiatives and how they attain benefits for organisations are briefly discussed.

Flexible working arrangements are fast becoming the main mechanism utilised by New Zealand organisations and employees in an attempt to gain a balanced work and life due to the benefits flexible working arrangements produce and the minimum introduction costs (EEO Trust, 2007b). In the study of the effects of flexible working arrangements in public accounting Almer & Kaplan (2002) report flexible working arrangements enhance job satisfaction and retention of valued employees. Companies which offered flexible working practices had significantly lower levels of stress, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Ayree et al, 1998; Almer & Kaplan, 2002). Typically, flexible working arrangements include a variety of forms from working fewer hours a day, to working the same number of hours but with greater flexibility over when the hours actualised (Almer & Kaplan, 2002). Other forms of flexible provisions include compressed working week, 4 day working week, phased return from parental leave, flexible start and finish times, personalised work schedules, and part-time work were reported in Thornthwaite's (2004) comparative review of data on working time preferences in Australia, Europe, and North America.

Part-time employment has also become the preferred mode of re-entry employment after child birth, particularly in New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom (Thornthwaite, 2004). In addition, *fractional working* is also commonly utilised by women as a way in which professional women can attain a degree of work-life balance. To paraphrase Grattell (2007), fractional work is a form of part-time employment, which offers optimum conditions for those working as a percentage of a whole time equivalent. In theory, fractional workers are entitled to the same career opportunities as full-time employees. However, Grattell (2007) concluded fractional working was not conducive to work-life balance as it was accompanied by heavy penalties in terms of limited career prospects, block promotion, denied opportunities for development and downgraded in terms of their status, although they were performing duties at the same professional level prior maternity leave.

The literature has revealed there is a common argument the flexible working arrangements can lead to a better work-life balance. Contrary to the documented benefits of flexible working arrangements most recent literature on work-life balance has reported that flexible working arrangements can constrain work-life balance. Fleetwood (2007) illustrated the dark-side of work-life balance namely, flexible working arrangements. In his paper Fleetwood (2007) described two types of flexible working arrangements. Firstly, employee flexible-friendly practices sought by employees typically including flexible start and finish times, job sharing and compressed working weeks. Secondly, flexible working arrangements sought by the employer this includes temporary working, unsocial hours such as 24-7 shift rotations, seasonal work, and twilight shifts where part-time work is carried out late during late evening or early morning. The friendly-working arrangements sought by the employer cannot be classified as family-friendly for example, in some cases twilight shifts are chosen as a preferred mode of employment by an employee as it may alleviate child-care problems. One parent is able to stay at home with children at night while and forgo time with their partner, while the other spouse is working the twilight shift. This form of working arrangement is commonly used, but cannot be classified as a flexible working arrangement just because it happens to fit child care responsibilities (Fleetwood, 2007). The author suggests that managers should not abandon current flexible working arrangement but become aware of the constraints to flexible working policies.

Flexible working arrangements have become widely recognised as a benefit for employees and employers. In New Zealand, the government has recently extended statutory rights to employees who have caring responsibilities under the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007. The Act allows certain employees the right to request a variation to their hours of work, days of work, or place of work. To be eligible for the 'right to request' the employee must be employed by their organisation for 6 months prior making the request as well as have the care responsibilities of any person. Upon request, the employee must explain how the variation will help them provide better care for the person concerned (DOL, 2008b). The Act requires employers to consider the

request for flexible working arrangements and the grounds upon which the request can be refused are limited. The review of the Act will be completed in 2010 and will consider whether the statutory right to request flexible working should be extended to all employees (DOL, 2008b). Overall, the Act will change the way some employees and employers make and respond to requests for flexible working arrangements and a wider range of individuals have access to flexible working arrangements.

Dependent care policies are also commonly used by organisations to assist with the growing number of workers with dependents. Changes in the labour market such as increasing participation of women in the workforce and dual income families have increased the use of dependent care policies (Pocock, 2005b). Dependent care policies are important as they have been found to be a critical factor in the retention of employees. For example, IBM implemented the first national elder care referral service so employees could find reputable care for their dependents. Furthermore, IBM committed to US\$25 million to their dependent care initiative because employees stated in the survey that quality child care was difficult to find. The funds were used to subsidise the construction of high-quality care facilities in return for IBM employees guaranteed placements within the facilities. Employees expressed in the IBM 2001 work-life survey that the dependent care benefits along with flexible working arrangements served as a retention tool when being offered other employment elsewhere (Hill, Jackson, & Martinengo, 2006).

Empirical studies (Aryee, Luk, Stone, 1998; McPherson, 2002; Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski & Rhoades, 2002) have also found that the role of a supportive supervisor or management is linked to both beneficial work-life balance policies and higher productivity. This suggests that good management is the key to translating work-life balance policies into positive outcomes such as increased retention and financial profits (McPherson, 2002). In addition, Eisenberger et al's (2002) empirical study found supervisory support played an important role in retaining employees particularly in the case of their well-being. These findings are consistent with Aryee et al (1998). Although

the studies were conducted four years apart, it can be concluded supervisory support on work-family initiatives has positive retention-relevant outcomes for an organisation.

In spite of all these benefits, not many organisations take on work-life balance policies. Barriers to the implementation of work-life balance initiatives include resistance from managers, perceived cost, increased workload for managers, and lack of time and resources (McPherson, 2002; Jones, 2006; Hill et al, 2006, UMR, 2003). McPherson's (2002) study of the role of manager in implementing work-life balance initiative presents three key reasons for management resistance to flexible work policies: possible inequalities among staff, difficulties in prioritizing procedural barriers, and traditional management styles. However, creating a supportive organisational culture is not merely enough to reduce employee/employer reluctance to utilise the benefits of work-life balance policies. Waters & Bardoel's (2006) focus group findings identified a number of informal barriers that limit the progress of work-family policies in the higher education industry. The results confirm that there are a number of informal barriers for employees accessing the work-family policies such as poor communication of policies, management attitudes, and long administrative processes. In addition, De Cieri et al's (2005) study provided empirical data that a negative work culture, working environment and attitudes of supervisors create barriers to the implementation of work-life balance. Therefore, the initiatives need to be implemented through a linked series of strategies that create a supportive culture through integration into the organisation core business strategies and through management accountability for positive outcomes (Waters & Bardoel, 2006; McPherson, 2002; Hill et al, 2006). Jones (2006) supports these (Waters & Bardoel, 2006) Australian studies by suggesting that misconceptions between employers and employees about work-life balance create barriers. In many cases there appears to be a disconnection between what employers perceive their employees face in their work-life and the reality of what employees actually face. Moreover, a UMR (2003) qualitative study of perceptions towards work-life balance in New Zealand found that perceived barriers to implementing work-life initiatives were perceived cost, increased workload for managers, lack of time and resources, and lack of expertise and knowledge. For example, managing a flexible

workplace requires careful planning, clear and frequent deliverables, core hours, leveraging of technology and shifting of employee responsibility.

Other reasons for the limited number of organisations adopting work-life balance policies may be due to the lack of awareness or understanding of the work-life balance issues. Yasbek's (2004) review of academic literature and surveys of firms and experts summarise the main costs and fears of costs by employers for implementing work-life balance policies. These include: direct costs of policies that involve payments, such as paid parental leave, costs of equipment to facilitate working at home, temporary reduction in productivity from disruptions, and reduced morale of these employees not benefiting from policies. Conversely, Yasbek (2004) concludes that employers need to consider the benefits arising from work-life initiatives, not simply focusing on the perceived costs of implementing such initiatives.

This review of work-life balance literature indicates a majority of research has primarily been directed at the organisational perspective and the outcomes of work-life balance policies within a company, and to a lesser extent on the individual experiences of balancing work and life. The organisational perspective has led to much research focusing on the effects of managing paid-employment and family or dependent care responsibilities. Recent research has called for work-life balance research to encompass a wider range of subjects and to expand the issues workers faced by workers such as, single people, self employed, retired people, and immigrant issues. There has been less emphasis given to how tertiary students manage work, life, and study. Full-time undergraduate students face the juggling act of not only part-time work and life, but a third element to the work-life balance spectrum, that is, academic studies. In the following section, an overview of the tertiary education in New Zealand is examined, followed by a review of research available on work-life balance among students.

Tertiary Education in New Zealand

In New Zealand, the number of students enrolled in tertiary education has increased dramatically since 1990, from 140,463 students to 287,107 in 2003 an increase of 49 per cent (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005a). Another trend has been the reduction in the percentage of students aged 18-24 years, from 56% in 1990 to 43% of the total in 2002 (Ministry of Education, 2005). This decline suggests that the growth in the change has come from mature students (those over 24 years of age). These older students are not financially dependent on their parents, and are likely to work to support their own families and or spouse, and pay a large proportion of tertiary education themselves (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005b).

In addition to the increasing enrolments another trend has been the increasing tertiary fees. In New Zealand has seen the government institute radical changes to the way in which tertiary education is funded. Until 1989, fees for domestic students were very low, the average full time student fees were less than \$300 (NZUSA, 2008a). In 1990 the Labour Government introduced a flat tuition fee of \$1,250 for full time study. In 1992 the incoming National Government abolished the \$1,250 flat tuition fee. Institutions became responsible for setting tuition fees and at the same time the government set up a student loan scheme which allowed students to borrow the cost of their tuition. Although, institutions introduced a flat fee over time differentiated fees were introduced for different disciplines and levels of study for example, business, medicine, and law (NZUSA, 2008a). In the 1990's, fees rose by an average of 13% per year (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005a).

In 2000 to 2003 the Labour-Alliance government implemented an agreement with tertiary institutions to freeze tuition fees at around \$4,500 in 2001 in exchange for government funding. However, the government lifted the freeze in 2003 and the fees began to increase once again. In an attempt to reduce the tertiary fees the government implemented a 5% cap on fee increases. In the 2003 budget the government introduced

the Fee and Course Costs Maxima Policy aimed at maintaining affordable tertiary education. Fee maxima levels were announced for 2004, 2005, and 2006, and fee maxima levels for 2007 were announced in the 2006 budget (NZUSA, 2008b). However according to NZUSA (2007a), irrespective of the policy there has still been a creep upward in university fees. For example, the maxima levels announced in the 2003 budget were set significantly above the 2003 average fees levels, and the maxima levels for 2007 are 2.5 higher than the 2006 levels. In the 2004 Income and Expenditure Survey revealed that 79% of students agree that fees are too high, while two thirds believe public tertiary education should be fully funded.

The consequence of the increasing fees has seen a significant fall in the number of students enrolled in New Zealand tertiary education. As previously stated since 1990 to 2003, the number of enrolments increased significantly by 49%. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education (2007a) reported tertiary enrolments began to fall from 2005 to 2006 enrolments fell by 2.5% and from 2006 to 2007 student enrolment in tertiary education fell a further 1.5%. Domestic enrolments in the year 2006 to 2007 fell by a lesser amount 1% (444,000 enrolments) while the number of international student fell by 6.4% (2,710 enrolments), indicating the third consecutive year that international enrolment decreased (Ministry of Education, 2007a). The fall in international enrolments is reflective of other external factors such as the rise in the New Zealand dollar and the attractiveness of other education markets.

As of June 30 2007, 712, 405 people have utilised the student loan scheme. A fifth of the population age 15 years and over (167,420 students) took out a loan from the student loan scheme, of that 2.7% (60, 016 students) were new borrowers. The total amount borrowed in the year 2006 was \$1,099.8 million. Ninety three percent of borrowers borrowed to pay course fees, 62% borrowed to help meet course-related costs and 48.5% borrowed to meeting living costs (Ministry of Education, 2007b). These numbers do not add up to 100% as there are many overlaps of borrowing. Some students may borrow all three at a time, while others may borrow only for course-related costs.

The changes in the way student loans are funded has seen fewer tertiary students (37%) having access to student allowances and of those the average student allowance has been significantly reduced to \$70 per week. Furthermore, only 25% of students in the under 25 years of age bracket, received an allowance while studying (NZUSA, 2008b).

The New Zealand Union of Students' Association (NZUSA) is a federation of student associations and the largest student body in the country. NZUSA advocates for the common and collective concerns of students representing students at Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics. On Thursday 10 April, 2008 the New Zealand student debt reached \$10 billion marking a significant in history for students in New Zealand (NZUSA, 2008C). In response to this milestone NZUSA and many student bodies around New Zealand collectively collaborated with events and protests highlighting the inequity of the student loan scheme and the un-sustainability of the debt-laden generation. In 2005, an OCED survey that compared New Zealand and other countries including Australia, Canada, the UK on terms of affordability of higher education in relation to high living costs and low national incomes (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005b; NZUSA, 2006). The OCED report confirmed New Zealand's high tuition fees and comparably low levels of government funding of tertiary education (NZUSA, 2006).

As a result, rising tuition fees and reduced student allowances have led many students to rely on the government student loan scheme combined with paid employment to finance their tertiary studies (Watts & Pickering, 2000; Curtis, 2005; Gilmore & Manthei, 2005a). Other reasons for term-time employment identified by Curtis (2007) were lack of financial contribution from parents and the need to finance living expenses. In addition, the casualisation of work and the wider availability of jobs in the service industry have further contributed to the increase in term-time employment (Bradley, 2006). Curtis & Williams (2002) reported half the respondents in their study of UK undergraduates in part-time employment considered they could not afford to remain at university without the additional income paid employment provides.

Research on Students

The cost of living has increased significantly for example, over the last year accommodation costs have increased \$26 from \$116 to \$142 per week (NZUSA, 2008B). In order to meet the cost of education, living costs, and reduce the size of student loans, many students report working during the academic calendar. The type of employment undergraduates generally obtain are low paid in industries such as retail and hospitality with the common job titles as shop assistants, bar staff, and waiter's (Curtis & Shani, 2002; Curtis & Williams, 2002; Curtis, 2007). The demands of a 24-7 work culture and longer opening hours have led many students to work unsocial hours. Moreover, students who work late hours have reported turning up to lectures late the next morning, or are absent from lectures to accommodate the demands of their part-time employment (Broadbridge & Swanson, 2005).

The increasing number of undergraduates in term-time employment has generated research on the positive and negative effects of term-time employment on students academic progress (Watts, 2002; Curtis & Shani, 2002; Carney, McNeish, McColl, 2005; Manthei & Gilmore, 2005a). The adverse effects of term-time employment have become the main driver for the majority of the research.

A New Zealand study conducted by Manthei and Gilmore (2005a) surveyed 83 Arts undergraduate students on their academic workload, paid employment during the academic year, earnings and expenditure, and their recreational and cultural activities. Findings indicated 81% of students surveyed had at least one paid job during term-time. About half the students surveyed felt that term-time employment had a detrimental effect on their academic studies with 50% of respondents stating worries about money made it difficult to study. Two thirds of students (60%) reported that working hours, study and recreational/leisure activities per week were out of balance. Students indicated their ideal time allocation for study, work, and leisure suggests students are willing to spend more hours in study and leisure activities and fewer in paid work. This is confirmed by the

average ideal weekly total of 50.9% exceeding the current 47 hours of study, work, and leisure time allocations (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005a).

Curtis & Shani's (2002) study in one department in Manchester Metropolitan University provided evidence of adverse affects on academics studies of students taking paid employment during term-time. The negative effects on students were: having less time to study (45 per cent), money needs taking over from university (31 per cent), difficulty concentrating during lectures (26 per cent), increased stress (25 per cent) and missing lectures in order to work (22 per cent). Tiredness, lack of time to study, and increased stress were the main negative effects of working (Curtis & Shani, 2002). This, in turn, affects students' learning during lectures as well as students' self directed study. In addition, interviewees' expressed the opinion that their part-time employment had detrimental effects on their studies due to lack of sleep, or restricted time to complete university assignments properly and complete the requisite background reading (Watts & Pickering, 2000).

The adverse effects centre on the degree to which part-time employment during term-time and academic responsibilities tended to produce a conflict of interest. Pickering & Watts (2000) found that this conflict resulted in feelings of pressure and a sense of being pulled in two directions, firstly, achievement in academic studies, and secondly social activities and/or in the work environment. In further support of the conflict, Grube, Cedarholm, Jones & Dunn (2005) interviewed ten Master's students on their balance between student and professional roles, the graduate students expressed feeling torn by competing interests and responsibilities. Sacrifices such as reduced social activities, family time, and reduced partner/spouse activities were reported by many of the participants to achieve what they deemed a balanced lifestyle.

Carney et al's (2005) study to examine the relationship between part-time work, mental and physical and academic performance within a Scottish university highlighted the worrying state of students' health. Students rated themselves lower in terms of physical

and mental health compared to the general population age and sex normative values. The survey contained eight dimensions of physical and psychological well-being including; physical functioning, role limitation due to physical problems, role limitation due to emotional problems, social function, mental health, energy/vitality, pain, and general perceptions of health. Except for physical functioning, all the above intervals were negative indicating that the level of student health perceived by students was significantly below that of the population norm for all aspects of health. The authors proposed that student life itself imposes a unique set of pressures. The results showed that being in debt and part-time employment has both slight but significant detriment effect on both mental and physical health of students.

In the study of hospitality undergraduates, Jogaaratnam and Buchanan (2004) indentified part-time work and study related stress. The findings suggest that full-time hospitality students experienced greater exposure to stressors than part-time students. Time pressures were the most often mentioned stressor by students' particularly female undergraduates. Stress can be viewed as a positive or negative experience in the lives of today's university students. Further stressors identified affected students friendships and relationship such as social rejection, loneliness, and conflicts with friends; romantic problems for instance conflicts with spouse; academic alienation such as disliking studies, dissatisfaction with school. Social mistreatment for example, being taken for granted, being ignored, let down or disappointed by friends; assorted annoyances such as heavy demand from extracurricular activities and dissatisfaction with physical appearance. Students surveyed offered suggestions to manage 'time related stress' to refer to campus services or counsellors who have expertise in the area. Alternatively, Jogaaratnaum and Buchanan (2004) proposed to programme directors was to offer classes in one-per-week session (one three-hour class instead of three one-hour class per week) thus, reducing time related stressors students face such as travelling time to class (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005b).

In contrast to the adverse effects, wider benefits and advantages have also been reported as a consequence of term-time employment. Positive effects of term-time employment include the acquisition of transferrable skills, enhanced employability, increased confidence in the working environment, ability to survive financially at university, relating theory learnt in lessons to practical situations experienced at work, and the improvement of organisational and time management skills (Watts & Pickering, 2000; Watts, 2002; Curtis & Williams, 2002).

Many students' stated enjoying their part-time employment, with students reporting a good working atmosphere working with colleagues and customers, and the additional social life that comes with work (Curtis, 2007). Manthei and Gilmore (2005b) amplify these findings in their study that found a minority of students reported they would continue to work even if they had no financial need. Other benefits include benefits of part-time work include gaining valuable work experience, increased confidence, and acquisition of skills and enhanced ability to deal with people (Curtis & Shani, 2002). These studies have suggested full-time students have become accustomed to term-time employment and further that part-time employment has become a part of undergraduates' weekly routine (Curtis & Shani, 2002; Curtis, 2007).

Contrary to many empirical studies, the findings of Bradley (2006) found little support for the claims that academic grades of working students are inferior to those of non-workers, or that increasing hours of work are associated with decreasing grades. This finding was supported by no difference in grade point average (GPA) of non-working and working students, with a correlation close to zero between number of hours worked and GPA. Interestingly, unexpected subgroups of students who both worked longer hours and achieved relatively high grades arose within the sample. Suggesting, longer hours are not associated with lower academic grades. Bradley (2006) aimed to examine the nature, extent and correlates of paid work amongst a sample of 246 university students in Queensland, Australia.

The university under investigation in Watts and Pickering's (2000) research discouraged students from taking employment during term-time for more than 12 hours a week, and those students who kept to this guideline did not feel that their academic work had suffered. It may be that a term-time employment does not lead to adverse effects if hours of work are kept to a minimum of 12 hours per week (Curtis & Shani, 2002). On the other hand, Carney et al (2005) suggest working fewer hours does not necessarily create benefits for students. Alternatively, the authors suggest effective time management on the hours of employment per week and self directed study will enable students to effectively balance university, work and student life. Similarly, Jogaaratnam & Buchanan (2004) suggested effective management of time and stress via attending non-degree courses on time management may help students increase their work-life balance, and positively influence job satisfaction and overall quality of life.

In the area of application, Thompson (2002) suggests universities include and discuss work-life issues in their curriculum for several reasons. On a personal level, students are concerned about their ability to establish themselves in careers and 'have a life' at the same time. Students should also learn that many organisations view work-life initiatives as a strategic imperative that reduces the stress associated with managing both work and life. Moreover, students that are able implement work-life balance into their student life are in effect acquiring the necessary skills for effective time management.

Academic support for students in full-time study and part-time employment is a relatively under-researched area. Curtis (2005) attempts to investigated the attitudes of academics towards providing support for full-time students in paid employment during term-time with 22 semi-structured interview carried out among university lecturers. The interviews concluded that academic staff was unaware of the extent of student employment and the possibilities of providing support. Moreover, the majority of staff in the study appeared to feel unqualified to give advice, were struggling with their own workloads, increasing responsibilities and did not feel inclined to take on the support of working students as an extra duty. However, Watts and Pickering's (2000) suggest a greater understanding from

academic staff on the situation of term-time employment and the reasons for term-time employment may benefit students.

Reflection

The struggle to achieve a balanced work-life is a wide-spread phenomenon, affecting women and men across organisations and countries. Research in the area of work-life balance has focused on the benefits it brings to the employee and employer. Thus, many organisations utilise work-life balance as a mechanism to retain workers, reduce absenteeism, and promote a better well being for employees. Furthermore, existing literature on work-balance proposes a lack of balance can lead to many negative outcomes for instance stress, burnout, depression, and lower work contributions (Pocock & Clarke, 2005). The term work-life balance has broadened to capture a wider range of people and working situations. McPherson and Reed (2007) have suggested the term work-life balance is not exclusively limited to those in professional roles but also includes students combining in full-time study and term-time employment.

The demands of the 24 hours a day, 7 days a week work culture is affecting both those in the professional industry and tertiary education. Increased numbers of students are taking on paid-work resulting in adverse effects on undergraduates' academic studies and well-being. Full-time students in term-time employment may experience similar effects of those in frequently studied in professional roles when balancing work and life. The review of relevant literature indicates existing research on term-time employment predominately focuses on adverse effects of term-time employment on academic progress. There appears to be a limited amount of research literature in regards to the present study of how tertiary students manage work and study to achieve a balanced life. It is the recognition of this gap in the literature that has inspired the research presented in this study.

Drawing upon the large amount of work-life balance literature, the present study aims to investigate how undergraduate students manage the competing demands of work, life and study. The following section outlines the methodology and methods utilised to address the research question.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The review of the relevant literature on the situation faced by tertiary students suggest that they have become increasing reliant on the government loan scheme, combined with term-time employment, to meet financial needs whilst studying. In addition, the review indicated that term-time employment can lead to adverse effects on academic studies and overall well-being. The review of literature found little research has been published on the ways in which undergraduates' manage the juggling act of paid employment and academic studies. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to gain a more in-depth understanding of how undergraduates manage the competing demands of work, life and study.

This section outlines the methodology and methods adopted to address the research question. In addition, justification of the methodology and methods utilised is discussed. The ways in which ethical requirements were fulfilled are also described. The approach to analysis is discussed before the results chapter.

Methodology

The study employed a mixed methods methodology via quantitative and qualitative approaches that examine ways in which undergraduate students juggle acts of paid employment and academic studies. The methodology applied involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The central premise is that combining quantitative and qualitative approaches allow for better understanding of research problems than any individual approach (Creswell, 2003).

Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods research is a design with “philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007 pg 5). It can give insight into complex social phenomena by producing findings that illuminate the complexity of the study (Giddings & Grant, 2006). Another strength of mixed methods design is that the breadth of findings can bring value to the research process by highlighting the shortcomings in each of the methods used and compensating for them. It can also highlight the constraints and biases in measuring or interpreting data. When the research findings are contradictory, they can reveal researcher assumptions that would not otherwise have been known (Giddings & Grant, 2006).

Mixed methods triangulation design is desirable for the present study as it obtains different but complementary data on the same topic (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Triangulation is an approach to data analysis that synthesizes data from multiple sources. It is a one-phase design in which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods during the same time timeframe and equal weight (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). For the purposes of this research, the convergence model of triangulation was utilised. The convergence model provides the research process with valid and well-substantiated conclusions about a single phenomenon. This is achieved by comparing the different types of qualitative and quantitative data and comparing and contrasting the different results separately. Practically, this means taking quantitative results like surveys from a sample and following them up with in-depth interviews carried out with a few individuals to produce wider or more in-depth results (Creswell, 2003).

Advantages of this model include the ability to conduct effective comparisons and contrast qualitative and quantitative sources of data results. Data were collected during the phase of research at approximately the same time, thus making the design efficient with each data type was analysed separately and independently. The specific data sources and methods used will be discussed in the following section.

Given the high sense of exploratory work required by the study, a qualitative methodology that involved focus groups and interviews was adopted for the research. A qualitative research design further allowed the study to seek in-depth information that could not have been answered using survey method alone. Hence, the research design created an increased understanding of the situations, experiences and meanings of a unique group of people, and gained access to information that answers the why and how of a certain topic (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). Learning how students balance work, life and study in a socially constructed, complex and ever changing world makes a qualitative research all the more appropriate for this study. The qualitative research allows for the researcher to gain an insight into the 'how' and 'why' of students attain work-life balance. The level of detail obtained through the design reinforces the credibility of this strategy.

Secondary Data

Archived records were utilised to gather historical background on how undergraduate students balance work and life. Archived records examined for the purposes of this paper include: surveys and statistics around education in New Zealand including student income and expenditure surveys, and the student loan scheme within New Zealand. These data have been discussed in the literature review.

Primary Data

Sample Recruitment

Participants for the study were randomly selected. Focus groups and interview participants were arbitrarily chosen from public spaces within a university campus in New Zealand. The researcher approached students providing information about the study, inviting them to take part in the focus group. Participants for interviews were recruited from the Business degree programme of the same university. The researcher invited students to participate in an interview during class hours. Lecturers, from whose classes students were chosen for the study, were first briefed by the researcher, so that they could encourage their students to participate as well. A Participation Information Sheet

(refer to appendix one) was given to the respondents outlining the research objectives in the study, protocol of confidentiality, and a request that they indicate their willingness to participate. A follow up email invite was sent to participants who had volunteered, including the proposed session time, details about of the focus group or likely interview questions. Following the email, text messages were sent to potential interviewees' to confirm the interview time.

Participants were selected on the basis that they were:

- Full-time undergraduate students;
- Involved in part-time employment for up 20 hours a week.

The selection criterion ensured the focus group consisted of people with common characteristics and potentially similar experiences of balancing work and university life.

Participants for the survey were recruited from two classes in the business degree programme of the aforementioned university. The survey was completed by students attending lectures. Although the basic mission of the study was to examine how undergraduate students were balancing work and academic life, the broad methodology used also resulted in information about areas of life that students wished to devote more time to.

Balance Wheel Survey

In broad terms a survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population of interest (Creswell, 2003). A balance wheel survey was utilised for descriptive purposes with the overall intent of the quantitative data to obtain numbers and followed up with individual interviews to probe and explore the results in more depth (Creswell, 2003). Balance wheels are commonly used in stress management courses to pin point the sources of stress.

Material

A Balance Wheel Survey (*Refer to appendix two*) was voluntarily self-administered during lecture time on the Wednesday 14th May and Tuesday 22nd May 2008. The balance wheel is considered a type of survey that is innovative and provides an interpretive component. The concept of the balance wheel was adapted by the researcher from the wheel of wellness model, which is a popular model used by counsellors to assess the wellness of a client, developing appropriate interventions to enhance wellness, and then evaluates the effectiveness of the interventions (Myers, 2003).

Procedure

Students at the New Zealand University who participated in the study were from two classes undergoing core paper requirements for business degree programmes. One of the classes was sitting for a required first year paper and the other a required third year paper. The variation in 'years' was deliberately made to ensure a wider range of respondents for the study. In total, 66 surveys were administered and there were 55 respondents (35 from the first core year and 20 from the third core year) scoring a response rate of 83%. The survey included demographic questions on study status (part-time or full-time), as well as age and gender to allow later analysis. Students completing the balance wheel survey were asked to draw two balance wheels, demonstrating the relative percentage of time spent in academic, employment, social, family and any other personal activities in the last 24 hours (*Refer to appendix two*). The first wheel was to demonstrate their *current* work-life activities in the past 24 hours. Students were then asked to draw a second wheel portraying their *ideal* balance of activities in an ideal world.

Advantages of self administering the balance wheel surveys include any doubts regarding the balance wheels could be clarified on the spot as well as rapport with respondents can be established, completed surveys were collected within a short period of time, the topic of the research was introduced to students before administering the surveys this assisted with the higher response rate (Sekaran, 2003). On the hand, the drawbacks include the unavailability of students to complete surveys, some lecturers may reluctant to give up

class time for the surveys to be administered in class, and finally, respondents may be concerned about the confidentiality of information causing respondents to fill surveys untruthfully (Sekaran, 2003).

Focus Groups

Focus groups are small structured groups with selected participants to explore how and why people make the decisions they do. Focus groups can be defined as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment” (Litosseliti, 2003, pg 1). Moreover, focus groups are designed to use group dynamics to yield insights that might not be accessible without the kind of interaction found in a group (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

Among the advantages of using focus groups is that they yield a set of focused data on a chosen topic. The data can also reveal experiences and reasons of specific behaviours elicited in short periods of time (Langford & McDonagh, 2003). In addition, focus groups allow identification of personal problems and self disclosure in a study, and avoid the trend of focusing on a single train of thought (Gallagher, Hares, Spencer, Bradshaw & Webb, 1993). On the other hand, drawbacks of focus groups include results that may represent a false consensus. Feeling pressure to conform, some group members may feel the need to be vocal or high status participants. Another drawback is the qualitative data from conversations are difficult to formalise or use as statistically secure evidence (Langford and McDonagh, 2003). Therefore in overcoming these limitations, the researcher encouraged participation but was careful not to pressure participants into creating false consensus. The use of an assistant moderator appears beneficial in overcoming some of the drawbacks as a second set of eyes and ears increases both the accumulation of information and validity of analysis (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Materials

The focus group was pre-organised through developing a questioning route (*Refer to appendix three*) that included the opening, introductory, key questions and ending

questions (Kruger & Casey, 2000). The inclusion of these questions ensured a list of sequenced queries that helped complete conversational sentences. This ensured the focus group had a good conversational start; that tough questions were not asked at the beginning; that questions flowed smoothly from one to another, and there was no abrupt end.

The questioning route was designed to answer the following key questions:

1. What are the important areas of life?
2. What are the sources of stress?
3. What is your ideal balance?
4. Do you have a student loan?
5. Do you receive a student allowance? Does this help with your expenses?
6. Have you ever experienced any negativity towards your part-time work, in the sense that it was interfering with your studies?
7. Under what condition would you stop working?

Despite attempts to recruit a small group of students to participate in the focus group, the response rate was low. Five students indicated their willingness to participate, but were not able to comply due to tight class or work schedules. Another reason for the low response rate may be due to the fact that April – the month the surveys were carried out – was assessment period for the students involved. Undergraduates also seemed to be reluctant to take part in research studies without some kind of compensation (vouchers) for their time. It was found that approaching students in the waiting areas outside their classrooms was a more desirable method of obtaining interview candidates. Another desirable method was to randomly approach students from the targeted classes and ask if they were willing to be part of the focus group, and arrange a suitable venue and time thereafter for such a session.

Procedure

Originally, the study aimed to conduct a focus group on April 14th, 2008, consisting of 5-7 participants, to identify key issues and challenges that undergraduate students face when balancing studies and work. The month of April was deliberately chosen as it represented the busiest time for assessments during the semester to fulfil the aim of maximum issues for work-life balance. However, it was not anticipated that this busy time would affect the reluctance of students participating in the research due to the demands of assessments. Due to low response rate, the focus group scheduled for April 14th was cancelled. In its replacement, was a focus group held May 20, 2008, with 3 participants (2 males, one female) who met a participant's house. The duration for the session was approximately one hour. Refreshments were provided and a discussion agenda was given to participants to read prior to the talks.

To answer questions 2 and 3 in the aforementioned list, participants were asked to list what they regarded as important areas of life with numerical values of 1 to 5 (1 being the most important and 5, the least). Participants were then asked to draw these important aspects into a balance wheel, according to how they prioritised those aspects over the last 24 hours. In addition, a second balance wheel was drawn by the students to represent their ideal balance of work and life in an ideal world. This task enabled students to reflect on their current and ideal work-life balance and allowed further discussion on the issues and challenges faced when managing work and study. This pilot balance wheel survey proved to be a success in determining students' activities for work-life balance. Therefore, the success of the balance wheel surveys in the focus group led to the extended use in a larger group, as noted in the earlier in the survey section.

Due to the small size of the meeting, the discussion among the focus group members was not audio taped. Instead, the moderator kept record by taking notes of what was said. This created a less formal and friendlier environment for students who may be averse to speaking into a tape recorder. Also, the moderator was to quote verbatim from the notes

the most interesting observations raised by the participants (Kruger & Casey, 2000). The moderator also used probing to request additional information, relying on proven and courteous lines such as “could you explain further, please?” and “could you give me an example of that, please? Alongside probing, a five-second pause was practised after each participant spoke. Kruger and Casey (2000) suggest that this technique often prompts and elicits additional.

Interviews

In-depth interviews allow for an increased understanding of situations and experiences that students in this study faced in juggling work and study. Such interviews also provided historical data at times on reasons for term-time employment. The researcher was thus able to gain access to information that answered the why and how of a certain topic (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

There are several advantages of using interviews when conducting studies. Firstly, they can reduce the interviewee’s anxiety in comparison to surveys, as it builds rapport between the questioner and the audience. Interviewers have the ability to probe in ways which quantitative research is incapable of obtaining. Secondly, a relationship can be formed and used to the interviewees’ and interviewers advantage. For example, the interviewer can use examples or experiences stated in case studies to probe for details and specific description of the perspectives that their current target may hold on the same subject. Finally, interviews can enable the researcher to explore and understand complex issues that are difficult to articulate in written documents (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

In contrast, disadvantages that occur during interviews include difficulties for the researcher to set aside their own perspectives which can lead to data misinterpretation (Greenfield, 2002). There is also a risk of developing personal relationships that in some circumstances may cause the interviewee to give a false response. For example, the interviewee may only try to give responses that will impress the interviewer. In some cases, the interviewer could be inexperienced and the data collected can be misconstrued

and/or the interviewer could probe the respondents to the answer he/she wants to hear. While interpreting interview results, it can be difficult to do so without being biased. Bias can occur through errors in recording, memory lapses and interpretation (Sekaran, 2003). Moreover, it is important not to assume what a person says during an interview is what they will say when put in other situations. Other shortcomings include interviewers misunderstanding interviewees' language, interviewees being unwilling to articulate important points, and assumptions made by interviewer that can be incorrect (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

In trying to overcome such limitations, the interviewer in this study refrained from making judgemental and negative comments during the interview process. This enabled the interviewees to feel comfortable to say what they felt without hesitation. Allowing the respondents to pick the time and location for the interview allowed for a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere where the interviewees appeared to express genuine feelings. The moderator looked for nonverbal cues such as obvious discomfort, stress or problems that the interviewees experienced – such as frowns, nervous tapping of hands and legs, and other body language unconsciously exhibited by respondents (Sakaran, 2003). All these cues were noted along with what the interviewees actually said. In addition, extensive preparations made by the moderator before an interview, including doing in-depth reading of interview methods, and taking care to treat the responses received in the most ethical manner possible minimised possibilities of bias in the focus groups process.

For this, the Greenfield (2002) approach that outlined five stages for a successful interview was used. Stage one involved preparation, i.e. obtaining extensive background information on students in term-time employment through extensive literature search (chapter two). The preparation included checking the audio tape recorder for proper functionality; acquiring maps of interview locations so that both the moderator and the audience can turn up punctually for the session.

Stage two involved introductions to those present on the purpose of the research and interview. Although the mission of the study was outlined in the preliminary email to the respondents, and backed up by the information participation sheets distributed to them later, reminding them of the agenda just before the meeting would make a professional, neutral and non-threatening start point.

Stage three centred on the uneven conversation where respondents may give misleading impressions and occasionally give answers to questions which might change the course of conventional conversation. Greenfield (2002) suggests the role of the interviewer is to listen to the respondent's view while keeping in mind neutrality, "a stance vis-à-vis the content of what that person says" (Greenfield, 2002, pg 213). This means providing the necessary rapport to develop the conversation without introducing personal bias. Having a uniformed set of questions – and well-rehearsed cue lines – enable the researcher to say the least and hear the most during the session.

Stage four involved preparing the interview for a subtle closing, so that an abrupt exit can be avoided. At this stage, the interviewer would ask "do you have any further thoughts?" or "is there anything else you would like to say on managing work, life and study?".

At stage five, the interviewer makes quick summary sheets of the interview to ensure all main points and research questions were addressed. Finally, a letter of appreciation is sent to the respondents, on top of the customary handshake and thank you, to show how much their time and feedback was valued.

Materials

The interview questions were developed from the discussion held at the focus group level. The questions were constructed with care to ensure that the interview appeared as a relatively unstructured conversation, and that the interviewer was merely there to elicit responses, not to influence them. The ways in which undergraduates balance work and

university was the main topic of the interview. (*Refer to appendix four*). The interview areas are as follows:

- What are the sources of stress experienced when managing work, life and study?
- List the important areas you (the undergraduates') life
- What kind of impact do you think term-time employment has on academic studies?
- What are the mechanisms used to manage the juggling act of work, life and study?

Procedure

The response rate was low, with five participants indicating their willingness to participate in an interview. Due to the difficulties of obtaining interviewees and time constraints, only two interviews were conducted using a standardised open-ended interview structure archived on May 14th and 28th, 2008. Both interviewees were asked the same questions in the same order. The duration of each interview was approximately 30 minutes. Both interviews were conducted in person; the first was held at the interviewer's home, at the request of the interviewee. The second took place at a cafe, mutually agreed to by both parties. Both interviewees' consented for their sessions to be tape recorded.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was required as it involved undergraduate students. The level of risk involved was low and ethical consideration was submitted to the Low Ethical Risk Subcommittee.

Strategies were implemented to protect the identities of participants, including assigning a code to each interview transcript, assigning pseudonyms to names of participants, and refraining from naming the University under investigation. Participation rights were ensured in several ways. Participants were informed about the research through a Participation Information Sheet (*Refer to appendix one*) that assured them all information gathered would remain confidential. Upon receiving this information sheet, participants

were given time to ask questions regarding the nature of the research. Finally, they were given a consent form (*Refer to appendix five*) that informed them of their right to withdraw at any time during the research or up unto a particular point when data analysis was being carried out.

All response data was managed in compliance with ethical practices of storage and destruction of information. Softcopies of all the data collected will be stored in the researcher's personal AUT data files within which a locked file will be created specifically for the research. Access to the data will require entry of a user name and password (known only to the researcher). All consent forms will be stored in Professor Judith Pringle's AUT office in a locked filing cabinet. On completion of the Research Dissertation, the soft copy information will be permanently deleted. Hard copies will be stored for up to 6 years after which it will be destroyed by AUT's commercial office document destruction service. Full low risk ethical approval was gained from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (*Refer to appendix six*).

Approaches to Mixed Methods Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried through several steps. Initial data analysis for both qualitative and quantitative data was conducted separately. Firstly, the survey data was analysed through the proportional measurement of categories within the balance wheels. These categories were then summarised and tabulated. Secondly, the responses to interpret focus groups and interview transcriptions were analysed through coding, theme development and the interrelationship of themes. Thirdly, all merging of data sources was carried out to gain a complete picture of themes. Finally, comparison of the results was conducted through a discussion of the final research project (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

These steps are further discussed in relation to the present study. The balance wheel survey analysis entailed a measurement of each activity with a protractor to calculate the

proportion of the space of the wheel indicated by respondents. The proportions were calculated to percentages of a 24 hour time cycles for subsequent analysis. The percentages of a 24 hour time cycle were then tabularized into an excel spreadsheet. The percentage change for each activity from the current to ideal was calculated and cross-analysed with qualitative findings.

Focus group data was analysed and divided into a set of precise categories, particularly the similarities and differences of data analysed. Once the categories were established, the numbers of instances that fall into each category were counted. The categories allow for source assessment of reliability and validity with the use of multiple codes when the same body of material is examined by others (Silverman, 2001). However, in this study the results were coded by the sole researcher of this dissertation. The analysed primary data was analysed through a cross-comparison with primary data findings.

Full interview transcripts were personally transcribed by the researcher into a word document for the data to be colour coded and analysed into common themes. The interview data was analysed through various steps. Firstly, the recorded interview was manually transcribed into a word document. Secondly, the interview data was organised through colour coding and structured in accordance with the interview objectives. The colour coding process involved bringing together and analysing all the data bearing on major themes, ideas, concepts and interpretations. During this process, general insights, vague ideas and hunches are refined, explained, discarded, or are fully developed (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Thirdly, a categorisation process was used to identify recurring regularities in the data and to evaluate the plausibility of those developing categories. In order to rule out alternative explanations of the data, pattern-matching technique was applied by constantly comparing the emerging categories against the collected data for credibility and centrality (Greenfield, 2002). Finally, the interview, focus group, and survey findings were summarised into tables and are discussed in the following section.

Summary

In summary, the present research employed a triangulation mixed methods design in which different but complementary data were collected on the way in which students manage work, study, and social activities. The research will draw on surveys in the form of balance wheels that were used to distinguish how students would allocate time in an ideal world. Concurrent with this data collection, qualitative data such as focus groups and interviews explored managing term-time employment for undergraduate students at a large University in Auckland. The subsequent chapter discusses the results and findings of the mixed methods approach.

Chapter Four: Results

The aim of the results was to provide some insight into how students manage the juggling act of work and study. Firstly, a summarised overview of the participant profiles is provided followed by findings from the surveys, focus group and interviews. A summarised overview of the balance wheel survey, focus group, and interview participant profiles is examined followed by the main findings that emerged.

A total 60 students participated in the current study. Of the 60 participants, 55 students took part in the survey, 3 students participated in the focus group, and 2 students were interviewed. Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 (below) illustrate the participants' profiles.

Table 4.1 Profile of survey respondents by age

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
1. 20 years and below	17	6	23
2. 21-24 years of age	10	13	23
3. 25-29 years of age	4	2	6
4. 30-35 years of age	1	1	2
5. 36 years and above	1	0	1
Total	33	22	55

Table 4.1 indicates a large proportion (84%) of respondents were from age groups 1 (20 years and below) and group 2 (aged between 21 years to 24 years), total of 23 participants in each group. Age group 3 (between 25 years and 29 years) comprised of 6 participants. Age group 4 (between 30 years and 35 years) and group 5 (36 years of age and above) were comprised of only two participants in the age group 4 and one participant in age group 5. Males made up 60% of participants and the remaining 40% were women. Two thirds of participants were undertaking a first year paper (63%) while 36% of respondents were completing a third year business paper. The majority

of respondents (93%) were full-time students with only a small number (7%) of part-timers making up the sample.

Table 4.2 Profile of focus group participants

Participant	Gender	Degree Programme	Age	Part-time Occupation	Approx hours per week.
P1	Male	Business (Advertising)	22	Cinema Attendant	25 hours
P2	Male	Business (Advertising)	23	Waiter	30 hours
P3	Female	Hospitality & Business	19	2 Jobs: Waitress & Retail	20 hours Combined

Table 4.3 Profile of interview participants

Interviewee	Gender	Degree Programme	Age	Part-time occupation	Approx hours per week
Interviewee A	Female	Business	21	Tutor	6 hours
Interviewee B	Male	Business	22	Cinema Attendant	15-20 hours

All students in this part of the study were from a younger age in full-time study combined with term-time employment (Table 4.2 Table 4.3). Participants of the focus group are referred to as P1, P2, and P3 for purposes of this study (refer to table 4.2). At the time of the focus group, P3 was the only student employed in two jobs. All part-time employment was within the service and hospitality industry. Table 4.2 illustrates the interviewees' profiles. The first interviewee (referred to as interviewee A) is employed as tutor and works for approximately 6 hours per week including preparation time for tutorials. The second interviewee (referred to as interviewee B) was employed as a cinema service attendant for up to 15-20 hours per week. Both interviewees are currently completing their final year in the Business degree programme.

Quantitative Results

The balance wheel findings suggest undergraduates' important areas of life differ by age and gender. As previously stated students in the 20 years and under age bracket

and ages between 21 and 24 made up the majority of respondents, 83.6%. The differences in age are firstly discussed followed by the gender differences.

The balance wheel data found 22% of students in age group 1 spent the most time on university study in their current balance wheel with an average study time of 11hours (47%). In addition, eight (35%) of students in age group 2 reported University study had the greatest time allocation with an average of 11 hours (47%) in their current balance wheel. This is probably reflective of the assessment time the surveys were administered. Findings from the ideal balance wheel found 16 students of age group 2 decreased their study time with an average decrease of 35.8% (down 12.5%). Students aged 20 years and under also reported a decrease in the amount of University study time with 11 students decreasing their study time. Of the 11, 4 students did not include university study in as part of their ideal balance wheel.

Findings illustrate time spent on University study decreases as age increases. Students in age group 4 reported work and family was most important in their ideal balance wheel over and above university study. Although they reported a decrease in the amount of time spent on family and work from their current to their ideal balance wheel, work and family were the two factors still ranked as most important with the average amount of time spent work 34% (8 hours) and family 73% (18 hours). The sole respondent in the age group 5 also reported similar results to age group 4. Work and family were the most important factors. Work was reported as currently occupying 48% (11 hours) and family 5% (1 hour) of time allocation. However, in the ideal balance wheel family increased 29% with a total of 34% (8 hours) and work decreased 15% with a total of 33% (8 hours) of time allocation in the ideal balance wheel.

Social activities were found to be less important with students in age group 4 with one student indicating a 2% increase from 5% to 7% of social activities. Social activities were defined by the student sample as clubbing, drinking, watching movies, computer games and shopping. On the whole social activities were found to be less important in the older age groups 3, 4 and 5 in comparison to age groups 1 and 2. Eleven (48%) students aged 20 and below increased social, leisure, and entertainment (television,

movies, computer games) activities times with an average increase of 14% in their ideal balance wheel.

Students in age group 1 (39%) placed employment as part of their ideal work-life balance when they currently are not employed in any sort of term-time employment. In comparison, 8 of the ten students in age groups 3, 4, and 5 were already in some sort of employment. Forty seven per cent of students 20 years and under reported increases in family time with an average time allocation increase of 3 hours (11%), including one student stating a 5% increase in their housework duties (4% to 9%).

The balance wheel results suggest age group 1 students desired to increase sleep by 47% in their ideal work-life balance wheel. The survey data also indicated that as age increases lack of sleep was less reported by students. The desire to sleep declined in the age group 2 years with only 9 students (40%) students' reported a desire to increase sleep in their ideal balance wheel. The desire to increase sleep was not reported among any other age groups in the study. These findings indicate that older students may be more accepting with their sleeping patterns.

Balance wheel survey analysis shows that 2% of students aged 20 and under reported 'procrastination' and 'mucking around' in their current work-life wheel, in which was evidently eliminated in their ideal balance. Procrastination was not reported among any other age groups.

Results by Gender

Gender results were analysed in order to gain insight into the differences in the nature of what each gender wants from their current to ideal work-life balance. Gender differences were analysed through tabulating the top activity each respondent reported the longest time allocation towards (both current and ideal), into 2 separate excel files one for each gender. The number of times the same activity was reported by each respondent was calculated. The activities were then divided by the total number of males and females and multiplied by 100 to get the percentage of each activity. The figures were then placed into pie graphs. Each top activity that respondents allocated

the most time towards was calculated into a excel document. In some instances top activities were given the same time allocation for example work 25%, study 25%, and sleeping 25%. Therefore, all three activities were calculated into the table as they all represented top priorities of time allocation. All percentages were rounded to one decimal point.

The figures below illustrate the top activities and time allocations for both females and males.

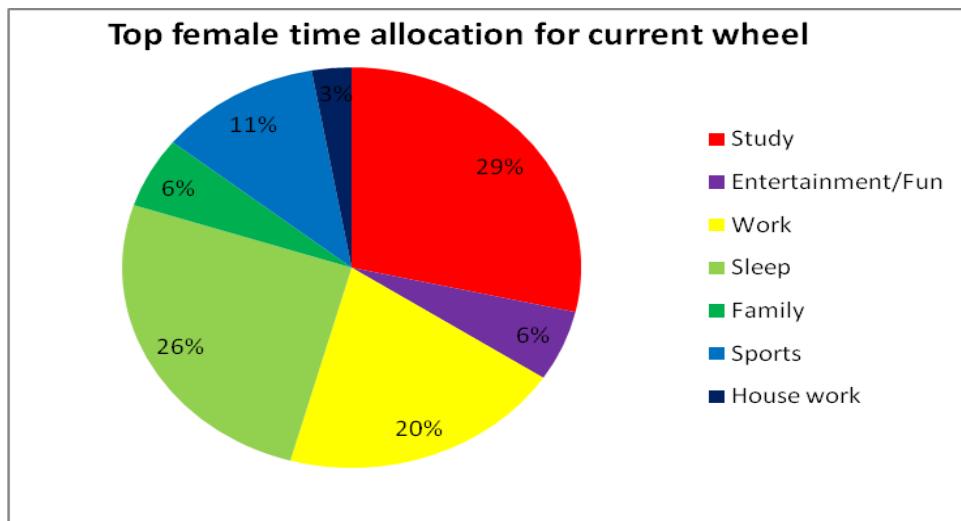


Figure 1: Top Female current time allocation

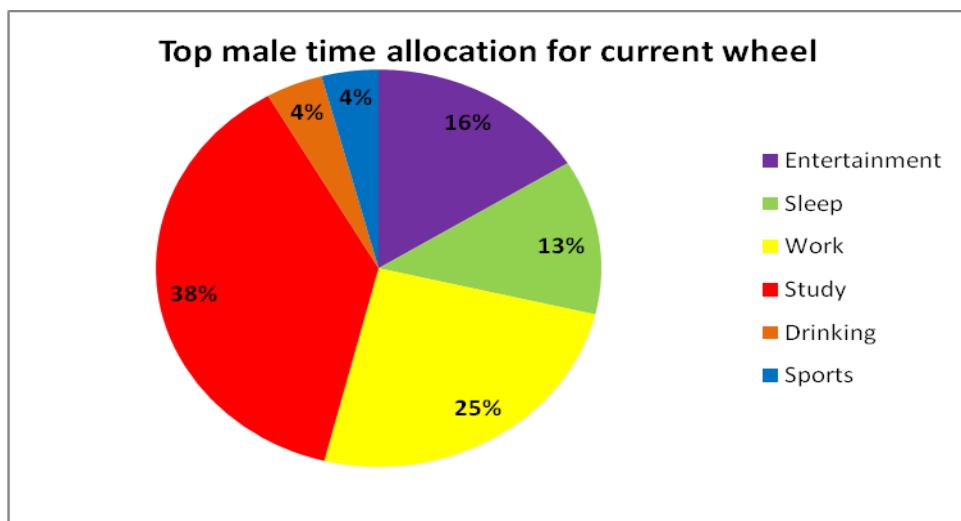


Figure 2: Top male current time allocation

The figures 1 and 2 (above) illustrates a summary of current time allocation both male and females. Both males and females reported in their current balance wheel spending the majority of time on study, males 38% and females 29%. Twenty percent of females

allocated time on work in comparison to 25% of males. The second highest time allocation for males is entertainment with 16% of time spent including watching TV, music, computer games and relaxing. The two main differences between genders are the inclusion of housework (3%) for females and the inclusion of drinking (4%) for males. Interestingly males did not spend time with family within the last 24 hours of the survey undertaken, while females spent an average of 11% with family, including 'helping mum' with housework. Sporting activities were undertaken by both genders with similar time allocations males 4% and females 6%. Sleeping was also found to be a major time allocation with males sleeping 13% and females 26%. These high percentages of desirable sleeping times are likely to derive from the younger age groups 1 and 2 in which the analysis by age found students desired to increase sleeping hours.

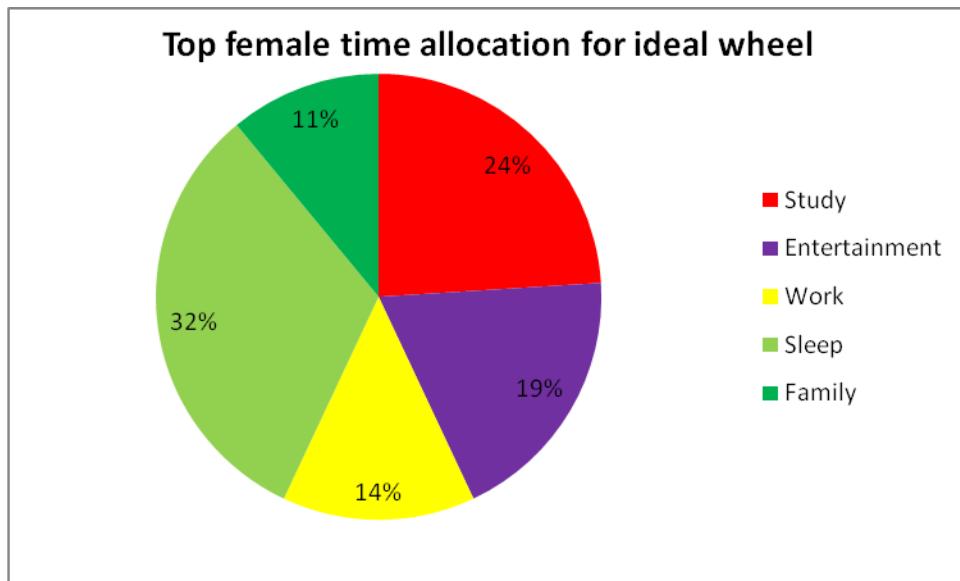


Figure 3: Top female ideal time allocation

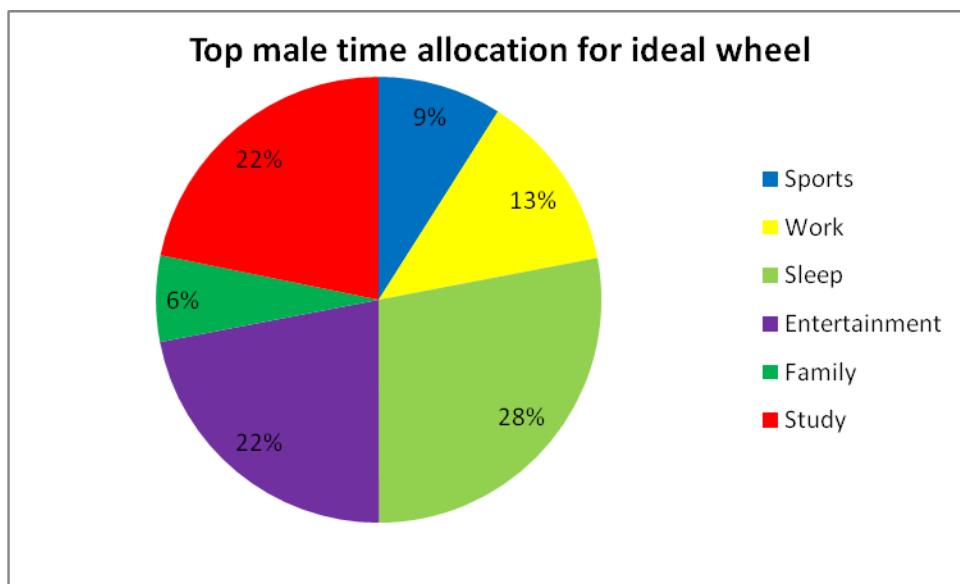


Figure 4: Top male ideal time allocation

Findings for ideal balance wheels (Figures 3 and 4) found both males and females would allocate more time towards sleeping with 32% of women and 28% of males. Females indicated they would spend the same 11% of time with family, reduce time allocation for studying by 5% from 29% to 24%, and increase entertainment 13% from 6% to 19%. Entertainment remained the second most important activities for males increasing 6% from 16% in their ideal to 22% in their ideal world. Entertainment included activities such as surfing the internet, hanging out with friends, and drinking. Sporting activities for males increased 5% in their ideal world from 4% to 9% where as

females did not include sporting activities in their ideal balance wheel. Family time was indicated by 6% of males as part of their ideal balance. Work was reduced by females 6% from an initial 20% to 14%. Similarly, males reduced work 9% from 25% to 13%.

Summary

The balance wheel surveys results indicate that time allocations differ by age and gender. Students in the younger ages indicated a large amount of current time allocation was spent on university studies. This is probably reflective of the assessment period when surveys were distributed. Time spent on university studies decreased and the ages increased. Older students reported spending less time on academic studies and more time on work and family activities. One interesting factor was younger students placed part-time work in their *ideal* balance wheel when were currently not employed in any form of part-time work. There were two main differences in the gender analysis in current balance wheel surveys, the inclusion of housework for females and drinking for males. Male students did not report spending time with family in their current balance wheel, but included family time in their ideal balance wheel. On the other hand, females time spent with family remained the same. The desire to increase sleep was reported by both genders and more common among the younger ages. The next section presents the qualitative findings from the interviews and focus groups.

Qualitative Results

The interview and focus group findings indicate the most important areas of life for students were academic studies and family. When questioned if there was enough time to include all important aspects into current life interviewee A stated “*not really*” and described their current work-life balance as a set of scales in which study was tipping the balance from the start of the semester as she constantly wanted to be on top of her studies. Work and life were the least important thus, is it not surprising interviewee A stated her sources of stress resulted from frustration that centred on not achieving high enough grades and fulfilling expectations.

On the other hand, interviewee B described “*Doing what gives me enjoyment like relaxing*” as an important aspect and described their current work-life “*pretty well balanced.*” Other important areas included health (exercise), cooking, and friends as important aspects of life.

Focus group participants were asked to define work-life balance. Students defined work-life balance as simply not enough time for social activities. P2 on defining work-life balance “*Work-life balance is about dividing your personal life, and organising work and leisure to meet your expectations.*” P3 on the other hand simply stated “*No social life*” and P1 suggested work-life balance is “*Not enough time for things (priorities) that someone wants to do.*”

Reasons for Employment

The findings suggest that term-time employment was not negatively perceived by students studied. Focus group participants agreed financial security was the main reason for work particularly for the essentials to survive (rent, food, transport). Respondents of the focus group and interviews were then asked to comment on what they spend their money on. None of the respondents owned a car thus, all respondents spent money on transport via bus or train. Other common non-essential expenditures included buying clothes, cigarettes, alcohol, mobile telephone bills, movies, and sports gear.

Similar results were found by students interviewed, stating money and experience as main factors of employment. In terms of work experience the interviewees’ expressed the importance of gaining work experience to polish their Curriculum Vitae’s (CV) through gaining references and acquiring work skills as a positive outcome of term-time employment. Students perceived the outcomes of work far outweighed the negative aspects of term-time employment such as less time for social and family activities.

Interviewee A: “*In the past, working was to just fill my time. Now it's about gaining experience and getting a good reference on my CV.*”

Focus group P2: "*I work to gain independence, responsibility (at work and managing money), work experience, and polish my CV.*"

P1 pointed out further important reasons for term-time employment was to be immersed in the New Zealand culture. As a migrant from Malaysia but residing in NZ for 7 years, P1 felt it was important to learn about the Kiwi culture. Working enabled P1 to be immersed and integrated in the New Zealand culture. P2 agreed and suggested working improved English communication skills and was now able to pick up on the slangs such as "Cheers" and "G'day mate".

Another factor of term-time employment raised by respondents was the inadequacy of the student loan system. P2 said she felt there was a lot more financial pressure on today's students. Indeed, P1 and interviewee B said aside from gaining work experience involved in part-time work was also because they didn't want to get into further debt with their student loans. In addition, P2 stated she received a government allowance; however, this was merely enough to cover her rent. In addition, she mentioned she had signed a petition in protest of the increasing student fees the previous week (Thursday 10th April, 2008), adding that particular day was a significant day in history as it marked \$10 Billion student debt milestone. When asked how she found this information, she said "*The student union at my university sent emails to all students and were on campus that day giving out flyers.*"

Both interviewees' stated receiving parental financial support that covered weekly rent and allowance, both interviewees still opted for term-time employment. Interviewee B stated the main reason for this was the small amount of allowance did not cover his spending habits and often led to stress over financial stability.

Interviewee B: "*On top that (monthly allowance) I still need to work because it doesn't cover my expenses of my current life style. I need money for going out with friends and having drinks. My spending habits are more than income. So I prefer to work so I don't have to be stingy.*"

Relevance of Part-Time Employment to Degree Course

Term-time employment was reported as relevant chosen career path by both interviewees.

Interviewee B: *"I am interested in service aspect of business. My current job is 100% service related therefore my job gives me an inside look on how customer interaction, service generally works. Due to high amounts of traffic and pressure it's unique in a sense that you're thrown into the deep in and gain firsthand experience. You learn how to deal with it (pressure) at the same time learning to be polite."*

Interviewee A: *"I would like to work in academic industry, lecturing and researching. So tutoring relates to my career field and also my field of study. It (tutoring) makes sure I complete all readings and helps me revise for exams. I don't find it adds extra stress on me."*

Two of the three focus group participants stated their part-time work was loosely related to their course of study. P1 stated the information technology component of his course had explored the use of Microsoft Excel, and from past experience of conducting data entry and stock taking tasks at work, he found he was familiar with Microsoft Excel when it came to his course work. This suggests there was a positive spillover from work to study.

Managing Work and Study

The majority of respondents had few mechanisms in place to manage work and study. Only one student indicated a timetabling system to effectively manage study and work.

Interviewee A: *"I try and make a timetable or mental list of things that I need to do and are important for me to complete. For example, 3 hours study, 3 hours me time, 3 hours for family. But it doesn't always work. I end up feeling restricted and stressed out if I can't finish my studies within 3 hours".*

This indicates that students lacked the knowledge or have not given much thought on effectively managing work and study. Results show many students are prone to focusing on one activity (study or work) at a time, an all or nothing concept.

Interviewee A: *"I have no time for exercise or swimming especially when assignments and exams (crisis period) are around the corner. I usually just think that the 2 hours of swimming would be a waste of time when I can just study at home. Basically, I'd rather be studying."*

P1 of focus group: *"I generally feel very tired after work and don't feel like doing any self directed learning or my assignments. I'll only do that (study) when it's close to exams or assignment due dates"*

When crisis periods arise (assignment deadlines and exams), students are forced to balance work, life, and study. The main challenge of the crisis period reported by students in the focus group was time restraints, *"Not having enough time for anything outside of study and work. Sometimes I even have to miss lecturers just to finish my assignment"* (P1).

On the other hand, interviewees had similar time allocation challenges but offered insightful reasons for the problems:

Interviewee B: *"For me time allocation is a challenge. But saying that I don't have enough time is basically an excuse. I have enough time, but the way I allocate time may be a problem area. I allocate too much time to one area for example, doing nothing. So it's really up to me make that move."*

Interviewee A on the challenge of time allocation:

"In your first class, we are given our assignment/exams due dates. So you know when everything is exactly due. Therefore, I think it is our (students) fault if we leave everything to the last minute. If you start early then everything will be alright."

Other challenges include tiredness after work and preferring to relax than study. In addition, students stated having little time for anything outside of work and university such as sports, family, music and friends. Another key challenge is distinguishing the line between work and study. Work can become a priority rather than study, and often leads students' to miss lectures in order to finish assignments. Two respondents of the focus group (P1 and P2) thought term-time employment had a negative effect on academic studies as there was little time to do extra reading and due to overtime at work P2 did not have much free time to study. A lack of social activities including, relationship, movies, and entertainment was also identified by respondents.

Interviewee A on social activities: "*I don't have the time to socialise. But the good thing is all my friends are in the same situation and course as I am. We all work hard for what we want and tend to not see each other when assignments are due.*"

On the other hand, interviewee B said his part-time work did not affect his social life. Only on the odd occasion did his work affect social activities for instance, a birthday dinners often clashed with his working hours (4pm to 11pm). However, interviewee B stated work as being more important than his social life as was willing to forgo certain things in order to get some benefits.

Only one student commented on the difficulties of term-time employment. Participant 2 said his part-time employment was essential as he received no financial support for family or the government allowance, suggesting P2: "*Working and studying is hard. If I had my way I would not work. But I need the money.*" In addition, P2 stated that he had constantly worked part-time from his first year at university and expected to be working part-time in throughout his degree course.

The qualitative findings on managing work and study indicate that students often lack knowledge and awareness of balancing the two. As an alternative, students tend to focus time on either work or study but not simultaneously.

Adverse Effects on Health

The main effects of study and employment identified by interviewees were eating patterns. Interviewee A stated in times of crisis periods she would turn to consuming “*mood food such as pastries and pies*” to stay happy and stress free. Interviewee B stated his eating patterns were not regular due to his unsocial working hours (4pm-11pm). Due to this, he was unable to have dinner at a set time.

Interviewee B comments on eating patterns: “*Breaks at work do not allow me to have a proper dinner break. It allows me to have a quick snack, but not a proper meal. On some occasions I get stomach problems. I attribute my stomach problems to that (lack of proper dinner).*”

Other effects on health mentioned by interviewees include sleeping patterns and tiredness. Interviewee A reported feeling tired and lethargic. She attributed this to “not enough sleep from too much studying.” The consequence of interviewees B’s working hours meant self directed study was carried in the early hours of the morning. This resulted in abnormal sleeping hours, which often led him to miss morning lectures.

Both interviewees stated these affects were short term effects of crisis periods and did not perceive they had major impacts on their health. However, over a long period they would have detrimental effects on health and well-being.

Interviewee A describes the adverse effects of work on health and well-being:

“I don’t think my eating and sleeping patterns have a major impact on my health. But if this continued over a long period of time I think it would have adverse affects on my health and maybe lead to weight issues due to my mood food consumption.”

Perceived Role of the Academic Community

Interview respondents were asked whether they had previously received academic support on term-time employment and how they thought the University could assist in work-life balance and study. As far as receiving academic support there had been

little support received. Interviewees' attributed this to the fact that it is uncommon for students to discuss their personal life with lecturers unless it has significant impacts on academic studies.

Interviewee B on academic support: *"I didn't receive much support (from academic staff). Due to the fact that I didn't really put it out in the open to lecturers that I worked part-time. I guess I didn't express my concern that it would affect my studies."*

Respondents acknowledged that it was not the sole responsibility of the University to monitor students' part-time employment. When questioned if the University should issue guidelines regarding appropriate number of hour's students undertook outside of their studies, both interviewees thought this would have little influence. Interestingly, there were suggestions for the students themselves to be responsible for their own time management. Furthermore, interviewee B said *"I think it's up to the individual to decide to amount of hours worked not the University. I also think that students at this level have the ability to prioritise their student life and manage their own time."*

There were calls for greater understanding on the part of the academic staff towards the situation of term-time employment. As P2 suggested *"I think lecturers don't understand how expensive it is to study now-a-days."* Suggestions for greater understanding manifest in a questionnaire at the beginning of the semester for classes. This would allow lectures to gain an understanding of the hours worked and if a time table re-arrangement is needed particularly if a majority of students are in the same situation.

Interviewee B on questionnaire: *"My suggestion is at the beginning of the semester have a questionnaire for each class. Asking if you are in paid employment, how many hours of work. It can help the lecturer or programme director gain how many hours of work and other commitments early in the semester."*

Interviewee A called on the university to play a prominent role in advertising jobs within the university itself and also jobs that relate to students' study area to gain relevant work experience.

Interviewee A on job opportunities: "*The University should encourage undergraduates to work in their related study area. Because if you graduate with a good degree, so what? You don't have valid experience. Employers would probably employ another person with the same grades and degree but with the relevant work experience*"

Both interviewees suggested good time management was a skill required to maintain a healthy balance. Interviewee B: "Good time management. Making the effort to and not procrastinating." Interview A went further suggesting an effective time management skills is timetabling the important aspects into a daily planner.

Interviewee A: "*Know how to draw the line between how much is enough for study. Drawing a timetable or mental list helps me. For example, decide how many hours are needed for each activity 3 hours study, 2 hours for me time, 3 hour for friends and family. Then timetable accordingly.*"

Summary

The analysis suggests that students had few tools in place to balancing both work and study. Students tended to focus solely on either work or study at one time for instances focusing on part-time employment until assignments were due, and then the shift of focus rotated to study. In addition, findings indicate students' important areas of life differ by age and gender. Young students aged between 18 and 25 years of age tend to have longer study hours than those aged between 26 and 35 years of age. Moreover, older students allocated a majority of time towards family or work. In an ideal world the younger students placed the desire to increase sleep as a top priority while older students' top priorities remained with family and or work. Other main findings include financial security as the main reason of term-time employment. Nevertheless, students highlighted the positive outcomes of work were found to

outweigh the negative aspects of term-time employment including the importance of gaining work experience and polishing CV to create better job opportunities upon graduation. Finally, students studied suggested the importance of self discipline and time management as a more significant role in managing work and study rather than academic support.

The current chapter summarised the results of the data collection. In the following section, a discussion of results in conjunction with relevant literature is examined. Following this, the final chapter concludes the study with recommendations for further research.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The previous chapter has established the key factors which emerged from the research. This section discusses the findings from the balance wheel surveys, focus group, and interviews in conjunction with the relevant literature reviewed, to gain insight into work-life balance among undergraduate students. In particular, the small scale study aimed to comprehend how students manage the competing demands of work, study and social activities. The findings raised several interesting issues that pertained to term-time employment, students, and academic staff. These are discussed below and aim to give some insight into the complex nature of work-life balance among students.

The three most notable findings of this research are: (a) how students balance work, study, and social activities (b) the positive perceptions of paid employment during term-time by students, and (c) respondents' perception of the role of academic support.

As stated in chapter three (methodology), a mixed methods design facilitated the comparison and validation of the quantitative and qualitative results. Additional validation of results was conducted through talking to students directly about their experiences; two semi-structured interviews were conducted with one focus group. In relation to the reliability it should be noted that the trustworthiness of balance wheel surveys may not represent honest answers from all respondents. For instance, one respondent reported their ideal balance would include a 100% time allocation towards sexual activities. These responses were withdrawn from the sample. One method of increasing the validity of the study was through member checking (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Following each interviews and focus group areas of ambiguity were sought clarification and tape recording of all face-to-face interviews was undertaken. Recording accuracy was checked at the conclusion of the interviews and focus group by comparing the researcher's written notes with respondents. Any discrepancies and omission were reconciled on site (Silverman, 2001).

Credibility of the study was strengthened through triangulation, which verified data through various sources, such as other participants, individuals external to the study, and supervisory support. For instance, verification was conducted through mentioning previous responses to subsequent participants and ascertaining if they agreed. If more than one participant mentioned the same idea or issue, the researcher felt more trust in respondents' comments.

A) Managing Work and Study

Findings suggest that the small sample of students investigated have few tools in place to manage their work-life balance. In order to manage the juggling act of work and study students focused on one factor at a time, either study or work. The few balancing tools may be attributed to the lack of work-life balance knowledge among students. As previously stated in the literature review, work-life balance is defined by the New Zealand Department of Labour website as "effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and the other activities that are important to people" (Department of Labour, 2008a). More recently, authors (McPherson & Reed, 2007) have extended the definition of 'life' to reflect the contemporary society and extend the concept to address issues work-life balance discourse (Harris & Pringle, 2007). For example, the term 'life' can refer to non-paid activities such as recreation, travel, voluntary work, personal development people aspire to include in their daily life. This extension of the term 'life' has broadened the focus from typical activities outside of work such as family responsibilities to incorporating a wider range of people such as students combining study and paid work, young people wanting time away from work to travel (McPherson & Reed, 2007).

The focus group participants' saw work-life balance only in terms of the social and leisure aspects and did not factor work into their definitions of work-life balance. These definitions given by focus group participants are reflective of Ransome's (2007) additional work-life balance element of 'recreational labour' referring to the realm of leisure, pleasure, and enjoyment of individuals wishing to include more recreational

activities. This suggests that Ransome's (2007) third element may not only apply to those in professional roles, but also to full-time students in term-time employment. The failure of focus group participants to factor work into their definition of work-life balance may be due to students' not giving much thought to balancing work and life or the adverse effects that may impact on their academic study, health and overall well-being. To overcome this lack of awareness, Thompson (2002) suggests universities should include and discuss work-life issues in their curriculum for several reasons. On a personal level, students are concerned about their ability to establish themselves in careers, academic study and 'have a life' at the same time. Incorporating work-life balance into degree curriculum ensures students attain the appropriate knowledge of work-life initiatives as a strategic imperative that could reduce the stress associated with managing both work and life. Additionally, students that are able implement work-life balance into their student life are, in effect, learning how to be supportive managers and gain knowledge of creatively managing employees.

The only tool utilised to balance work and study identified by one interviewee was a timetabling or mental list of things to be completed. The timetable or mental list contained set time allocations for each task for instance three hours for study, two hours for family and four hours of work. However, the respondent acknowledged this mechanism had reverse set of outcomes such as stress if activities were not completed in the set amount of time.

Students' were found to shift their focus from work to study during 'deadline times' when coursework assignments were due or examination period was looming. Balance wheel survey data found that the majority of young students (aged between 18 years and 24 years) current time allocations were assigned to a large amount of study time of 11 hours out of a 24 hour cycle. This is reflective of the assessment period at the time balance wheel surveys were administered. During this demanding time, students had no choice but to shift the balance to focus on study. Not surprisingly, the small number of students investigated faced time pressures of lack of time for self directed study and activities outside of paid work and university study. This in-turn increased stress levels among students with assessment deadlines looming. These findings are

receptive of typical imbalance consequences of increased stress, fatigue, depression and in extreme cases burnout which can lead to emotional exhaustion reported by many authors of the work-life balance discourse (Pocock & Clarke, 2005; Karatepe & Tinkinkus, 2006; Williamson, 2007).

The result of time pressures to fit in study and work meant students reduced sleeping hours. The lack of sleep was confirmed by the balance wheel data where students in the younger age group (20 years old and under) desired to increase sleeping times by 47% in their *ideal* balance wheel indicating that during crisis periods students reduce sleep to make up for study time. Students interviewed reported lack of sleep was mainly due to too much study and led respondents to feel lethargic and tired. Watts and Pickering (2000) highlighted that lack of sleep and tiredness can lead to reduce concentration during class time and self directed study.

Another challenge students' faced was distinguishing the line between work and study. Students had little control over working hours, and often found that work could become a priority over study. This situation often led students to miss lectures in order to finish assignments. High demand jobs with low control, low support and high pressure have also been document in work-life balance literature primarily pertaining to those in professional roles (Allan, Loudon, & Peetz, 2005).

Findings suggest the importance of social activities decrease as age increases. Overall, there were very few students in the older age groups (*refer to chapter four, table 4.1 pg 56*), these older students reported less time allocations for social activities in their current balance wheel. On the other hand, young students (aged 20 years and below) chose to increase their social activities in their ideal world with an average time allocation of 14% in a 24 hours cycle. However, these findings seem to contradict the interview findings where the young interviewees (aged 21 years and 22 years) stated work and study did not affect their social lives to a significant extend. Instead, the young interviewees' reported that in order to gain some benefits, it was essential to forgo certain aspects of life including social activities. The difference in social activity perceptions may be due to the slight age differences and maturity levels of the

students'. In addition, the views of 2 students cannot be taken as representative of the student population. It is difficult to be certain about the perceptions of the social activities however, there are suitable signs suggesting maturity levels played an important role. The balance wheel survey data found the older respondents social activities generally came second to family or work.

Respondents' reported making sacrifices in order to compensate for lost study time as a result of imbalance of work and study. One example is forgoing sporting activities in favour of increasing studying time. Students' reported such sacrifices would not have negative impacts on their health and well-being in the short term, but possibly in the long term. Carney et al (2005) suggest that students combining part-time work and university study should be aware of the consequences on health and well-being. The study reported that students overall, rated themselves low in terms of physical and mental health with the norms for the general population. It is possible, that students rate themselves lower in terms of mental and physical health due to the sacrifice of exercise and social interaction during crisis periods.

In summary, the small sample indicated students' have few tools in place to manage the multiple demands of work, full-time study, and social activities. Due to the lack of balance students' reported time related pressures when assessments were due and often reduced sleeping time to complete assessments. In addition, it was common for students' to sacrifice other activities to compensate for lost study time.

B) Positive Perceptions of Term-Time Employment

A common response from the study, both the balance wheel surveys and interviews, were the positive perceptions of term-time work. As noted earlier, focus group participants were found not to factor work into their balance. These positive perceptions of employment from interviewees were found to outweigh the negative aspects of term-time employment such as less time for social and family activities. The positive outcomes of work identified included gaining work experience and polishing CV's. Similarly, balance wheel survey results confirm that students placed work

experience as a positive aspect of university life, 39% of young students' (aged 20 years and under) placed employment as part of their ideal work-life balance even when they currently were not active in term-time employment. This suggests that students have become aware of the values of work experience and are accepting of work as part of a full-time students' weekly routine so that they can reap the benefits upon graduation. Curtis and Shani (2002) found students perceived work experience as enhancing employability upon graduation, enhancement of skills and confidence, and an increased understanding of how businesses are run. A similar positive perception of employment was documented in New Zealand by (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005a; Manthei & Gilmore, 2005b) and overseas studies (Curtis, 2007; Curtis & Williams, 2002; & Jogaaratnam & Buchanan, 2002).

Negative effects of term-time employment reported by students centred around the adverse effects on academic studies, little time for social and entertainment activities, and health problems. Two focus group respondents expressed concern that part-time work provided little time to do extra readings and little time to study. This may be attributed to the fact that both respondents being employed for an average of 25 hours per week, with one respondent working two jobs. These students however, did not state if this had a significant effect on their academic grades. It may be that there was no significant impact on academic grades as Bradley (2006) reported in his study of the effects of part-time employment on GPA's of working students was only marginally lower than that of their non-working counterparts, suggesting there was no difference between non-working and working students in academic achievement.

Financial security was reported as the main reason for employment. Financial income was needed for covering essentials such as accommodation, bills, and food. Likewise, Watts (2002) found the most common essentials for expenditure were food, accommodation, bills, and transport (costs of running a car) while non-essential expenditure included: buying clothes, cigarettes, alcohol, and paying mobile telephone bills. Results from the small amount of students' illustrate financial assistance was received by respondents in the form of student allowance from government and parental financial support. However, students described the financial assistance of

both parents and government allowance as insufficient to cover their weekly expenses and extra finances were needed. Therefore, students' turned to term-time employment to cover these additional expenses. This finding indicates that the government student allowance may not provided sufficient funds to students as reported in NZUSA (2008a). Furthermore, a similar result of insufficient parental monetary assistance was also reported in the UK study Curtis (2007). Curtis and Williams (2002) also found 95% of undergraduate students studied stated financial security as main reasons for term-time employment. Elsewhere, financial concerns and student debt was reported as the main driver of term-time employment (Watts, 2002; Curtis, 2007).

Manthei and Gilmore (2005b) and Curtis (2007) found an outcome of term-time employment was that it helped students enhance their enjoyment of life and social activities. Conversely, a small number of respondents in the study did not find results suggesting employment enhanced social activities. The majority of the small sample reported reasons for employment were not only to gain experience and financial security, but to be immersed into the New Zealand culture. One international student from the focus group stated part-time work allowed them to be immersed into the New Zealand culture which improved his English communication skills and led to a greater understanding of the Kiwi culture.

Results indicated that students' interviewed were employed in part-time work that was relevant to their chosen career path and degree course. Other respondents from the focus group stated their part-time work was loosely related to their career paths in terms of the information technology skills acquired during their course study and part-time work. The relevance of term-time employment to chosen career may reflect students' positive perception of term-time employment as students' are able to gain firsthand experience and knowledge in their chosen career paths and also feed aspects of workplace experience into their academic studies. This result, is somewhat different to Watts (2002) which indicated that students' interviewed in the study reported their part-time jobs were not related to the content of their degree course. It may be a feature of the students at the particular university under investigation. Further

research into the relevance of part-time work and degree course is suggested to gain a clarification of the significance of related employment to degree course.

C) Perceived Role of Academic Support

Results from the interview found students received little academic support from lecturers in regards to term-time employment. The main reason given by students was they rarely discussed their personal lives with lecturers unless there were significant impacts of employment on academic studies. This may explain the findings of an empirical study conducted by Curtis (2005) who identified that academic staff were unaware of the extent of student employment and the possibilities of providing support.

Respondents of the present study acknowledge it is not the responsibility of the University to monitor student's part-time employment, but that of the students. Balance wheel survey analysis shows that 2% of students aged 20 and under reported 'procrastination' and 'mucking around' in their current work-life wheel, which was evidently eliminated in their ideal balance. Interviewees had similar issues of 'procrastination' but described this as the inability to manage time sufficiently. Course handbooks are often given to students' in class at the beginning of semester. The handbook includes all aspects of the course including assessment deadlines. Therefore, students are well aware of assessment deadline 7 to 12 weeks in advance and students' stated there should be no reason for lateness of assessments and inadequate time to complete assessments.

Respondents suggest that good time management skills via timetabling important activities into a planner to reduced 'procrastination' and 'mucking around' and maintain a healthy balance. Jogaaratnam and Buchanan (2004) support the finding suggesting effective management of time and stress may help students increase their work-life balance, and positively influence job satisfaction and overall quality of life. To better manage time these authors suggest students consider attend a non-degree

course relating to the management of time, stress, and other similar courses focusing on coping skills.

Although there were no complaints from students in this small study on the lack of academic support in regards to term-time employment. There were calls for a greater understanding of the situation of term-time employment and the reasons for term-time employment, namely increasing course fees and living costs as similarly cited in Watts and Pickering (2000). Students' of the current study further suggested a greater understanding from the University and lecturers could be gained through a questionnaire administered at the beginning of each semester, aimed at students to provide details of employment. Students also suggested for the University to provide jobs within the university. Questionnaires would include gaining information on students' employment, hours of work, and other commitments to be administered at the beginning of each class. This would ensure lecturers and Head of Departments gain an indication of the number of students undertaking employment early in the semester and assess if any class time alterations would be necessary. However, students at the current university do have preference over class times if there are multiple streams. Hence, students have some opportunity to choose convenient class times that suit their schedules. In addition to questionnaires, students' suggested the university should encourage part-time employment that is related to their field of study. This indicated that students see the benefits of acquiring transferrable skills from course work to part-time work. Finally, one respondent called on the university to play a prominent role in advertising jobs within the academy itself. This finding is supported by a New Zealand study Manthei and Gilmore (2005b) in which the authors suggest jobs on campus reduce the travelling times from each 'work' site (classes, study space, employment). The study found class time and working hours totalled 39.7 hours per week excluding the travelling times, a figure equivalent to the traditional 40 hour work week. Thus, providing jobs within the university would significantly reduce the travelling times.

The main implication for academic staff and programme directors is staff should be aware of the causes for students not finishing degree requirements. Graduation rates

and increased student retention are topics often discussed among administrators in higher education (Jogaratnam & Buchanan, 2004). Furthermore, with the number of student tertiary enrolments beginning to fall in the past two years (Ministry of Education, 2007a) which may not be necessarily related to student ability, universities may need to turn their attention towards providing work-life balance as a tool for attracting and retaining students. It is well documented in work-life balance literature that work-life balance initiatives through flexible working arrangements can result in reduced turnover and intention to leave (Forsyth & Polzer-Debruyne, 2007; Lambert, 2000; Allen et al, 2005 & De Cieri et al, 2005). Although universities may be unable to provide the exact work-life balance initiatives to organisations, simple activities and strategies to help student cope and effectively adapt to the multiple balancing demands such as offering classes in one-per-week-sessions (Jogaratnaum & Buchanan, 2004). Also, ensuring students have the support and understanding of term-time employment from tutors and lecturers may improve retention and reduce dropout rates as students are more capable of managing the competing demands of work, study, and social activities efficiently thus future research into the types of work-life balance initiatives suited for the universities is suggest.

Overall, the findings in regard to the role of the academic community suggest a greater understanding of the reasons of term-time employment is needed. The small amount of students' in the current study suggests a greater understanding can be gained through the administering questionnaires at the beginning of the semester to gain knowledge information on student employment, hours of work, and other commitments. Moreover, students recommended promoting students to obtain jobs within their related study field may produce transferable skills directly to the classroom. Finally, making jobs available within the university and advertising them may assist with balancing work and life as travelling times may be reduced significantly.

Summary

In summary, the present study identified that students' had difficulties in balancing work, life, and social activities. The competing demands on students' time arising from the need to support him/her financially, complete programme requirements, and maintain social activities outside of work and study can be a challenging task. The small scale study found students' have few tools in place to manage the multiple demands and often resorted to sacrifices in order to compensate for lost time when assessments deadlines were due. However, the small number of students investigated reported that term-time employment was positively perceived in terms of gaining work experience, adding value to their CVs and employability upon graduation. In addition, students' reported financial hardship as a reason for employment as government and parent allowances were insufficient to cover students' weekly expenses. Finally, this study identified that students' acknowledged they are primarily responsible for their term-time employment and indicated that good time management and reduced 'procrastination' were skills needed to maintain a healthy balance. Nevertheless, students' suggested the use of questionnaires for lecturers to gain information on term-time employment, encouraging students' to obtain employment in their field of study, and advertising jobs within the university itself may assist with balancing work and life. With tertiary enrolments beginning to fall in the last two years, universities may wish to consider work-life balance among students as a mechanism to counterbalance this falling trend and to assist in retaining tertiary enrolments.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The intention of the study was to investigate how undergraduate students manage their full-time study, part-time work, and social activities to achieve a balanced life. Since most of the past literature on work-life balance pertained to the employees in the corporate sector, the present study aimed to shift existing literature of work-life balance into the emerging phenomenon of undergraduates combining full-time study with term-time employment.

The literature review found work-life balance is becoming increasingly important due to the enhanced demands of a 24 hour, 7 day work culture, longer working hours, and increasingly sophisticated technology advancements which further blur the distinctions between paid work and personal time. In addition, the review of relevant literature established an increasing trend for students to combine part-time employment and full-time undergraduate studies. The main reasons for this combination were due to the increasing tuition fees and high living costs. More importantly, the review of literature identified that in the past two years there has been a decrease in the tertiary enrolments in New Zealand.

The empirical research process employed a mixed methods methodology via quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide insight into how students manage their juggling act of work, study, and social activities. The quantitative method in the form of balance wheel surveys were utilised to explore how students would allocate time to work, study and social activities. Students were asked to complete two balance wheel surveys, firstly their *current* time allocation and secondly, their *ideal* time allocation enabling time comparisons between students' current and ideal times. Concurrent with the balance wheel surveys, qualitative methods included one focus group and two interviews to gain in-depth understanding of how students achieve a balanced life.

Results from the data collection indicated that there are three notable findings that related to (a) how students balanced work and study, (b) the positive perceptions of paid employment during term-time, and finally (c) findings regarding the perceived role of academic staff. The majority of students from the quantitative data methods indicated there were no formal tools in place to manage part-time work, study, and social activities. Alternatively, students would focus on either work or study at one time. This strategy employed by students often led to time pressures and time-related stress. Interestingly, balance wheel participants' and interviewees' perceived the benefits of part-time work outweighed the negative aspects of term-time employment. Students felt the benefits of part-time work enhanced their employability upon graduation and polished their CV's.

The students in the small sample acknowledged that it was the responsibility of the student to manage the competing demands of work and study, and not the university. However, there were calls from students for the university to understand the situations surrounding employment such as financial necessity. In addition to the greater understanding students suggested the university provide more jobs within the university itself and encourage students to obtain part-time employment within their field of study to acquire transferable skills into the classroom. With tertiary enrolments reducing in the past two years, universities may wish to consider work-life balance as a mechanism to retain and attract students'. Much research surrounding the discussion on work-life balance has highlighted work-life balance initiatives can improve retention and reduce absenteeism. Thus, there is no reason why these benefits cannot be transferred into the university area. It is suggested that future research into the types of work-life balance initiatives suited for the university is to be conducted.

Limitations of the Study

Any conclusions drawn from this study must be tentative as they are limited by the nature of the sample which was taken from a degree programme in one University. The sample itself was relatively small and restricted to undergraduate students. It is therefore not possible to claim that the findings are representative of all

undergraduates who work part-time during term-time. Difficulties in recruiting a small group of volunteers for focus group and interview parts of the research also contributed to the small sample. The main reasons for the low response rate were due to the overlapping classes or work commitments. In addition, recruitment of participants was carried out during the busiest time for assessments hence; this busy time may have contributed to the reluctance of participation. Perhaps this is an indication of the pressures faced by students and to some extent, the lack of balance among students.

A limitation that surfaced during the analysis of data was the lack of depth from interview responses. These responses may have offered more information had the questions been different or at least worded differently. A possible change would be that the interview questions ask “Can you tell me if and how work-life balance would improve your current situation?”

During data collection things that may impact on work-life balance were not collected. Specifically respondents were not asked if they had either children or dependent relatives or if they lived at home or were flatting. Therefore, findings pertaining to women spending more time at home could not be discussed in depth.

The exclusion of high school students and post-graduate students may have resulted in the exclusion of different sorts of respondents and as a consequence, limited the range of insights this study might have provided. As stated earlier, the sample consisted of only undergraduates in one university. Furthermore, the majority of the small sample consisted of younger students in which the study had not anticipated.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is it provides an exploratory research into how students manage the juggling act of work, life, and study. Furthermore, this study sought to provide greater understanding of the ways in which work-life balance among students

is managed, the perceptions of term-time employment and the perceived role of academic support should provide.

Future Research

The results of the current small scale study highlight some important issues and questions which can be used as future research problems. As previously noted, future research is suggested for investigating the types of work-life balance initiatives suited for the university and also into the relevance of part-time work and degree course is suggested to gain a clarification of the significance of related employment to degree course. Future similar studies could also usefully explore the following issues. Firstly, research addressing the stressors arising from balancing work and study. These results may provide institutions and students with an indication if stressors are primarily related to work or other external factors students' face. Second, it would be worthwhile to conduct a longitudinal study tracking those students who work part-time in high school through to university. This could establish if there are work-life balance issues throughout high school and university (Watts, 2002). Finally, future similar studies could explore in more depth the following questions: what role should the university should play in helping students' achieve balance and to what extent do academic staff have a role to play in helping students reach this balance? This would assist in clarifying the roles each party should play in achieving balance among students. Finally, the increasing trend for students to combine part-time work and full-time study has raised increased interest and amplified the importance of a new phenomenon that is, work-life balance among students.

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Appendix

Appendix One: Participant Information Sheet

The following page is the participation information sheet that was sent out to potential respondents. This information sheet was based on the ethical guidelines and ethical information sheet exemplar provided by AUT.

Participant

Information Sheet



10th January 2008

Balancing work and life among undergraduates

Dear Respondent,

I am a Master of Business student at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). The research undertaken will assist me to complete the research component of my Master's Degree. The research under investigation is work-life balance among students. As full-time students in paid part-time work, you have been identified as a potential respondent for this research. Part of my research is to conduct one focus group to identify key issues surrounding balancing university and paid part-time employment. Following the focus group individual interviews will be conducted to further investigate the findings from the focus group. As such, I am asking you for your cooperation in my research by participating in the focus group or interview.

The research will investigate work-life balance among undergraduate students. Questions asked during the interview and focus groups will revolve around the following areas:

- What are the important areas in life for you?
- What is the ideal balance position?
- What are the sources of stress?
- On average what is your weekly income and hours of part-time work?
- Demographic questions such as age and gender.

The outcome of this research project will provide an indication of stress experienced, and identify strategies utilised by tertiary students to achieve a balanced life.

Furthermore, findings may provide insight into the reasons of why students discontinue their course. This information may prove to be valuable to university program directors and educators.

Participation in this study involves a focus group for up to 1 hour or an interview for up to 30 minutes. You may request for a copy of the research findings. Please be aware that participation is voluntary and that you may withdrawal at any time without any penalty.

The only cost to you is your time. There are also no risks from participating in the focus group or interview relating to privacy and confidentiality. Be assured the information you provide is confidential. Any personal information will be collated and will appear in the written dissertation in summary form only. The final Dissertation resulting from this data will be seen by my supervisor, appointed external examiners and will be stored securely.

As stated above, this research will assist me to complete the research component of my Masters Degree and will not be used for any other purpose. Your participation in the interview is greatly appreciated.

If you have any concerns regarding the nature of this project contact the Project Supervisor:

Name: Professor Judith Pringle

Email: Judith.pringle@aut.ac.nz

Phone: +64 9 921 9999 extn, 5420

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Researcher Contact Details

Name: Tania Ang

Email: Tania_ang@hotmail.com

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *June 3rd, 2008*, AUTEC Reference number *08/68*.

Appendix Two: Balance Wheel Survey

The following page is the balance wheel survey which was voluntarily self-administered during lecture time on the 14th May and 22nd May, 2008.

Work-Life Balance among Students

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the survey. If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to ask.

Please indicate the following:

1. Gender:

Male Female

2. Student Status

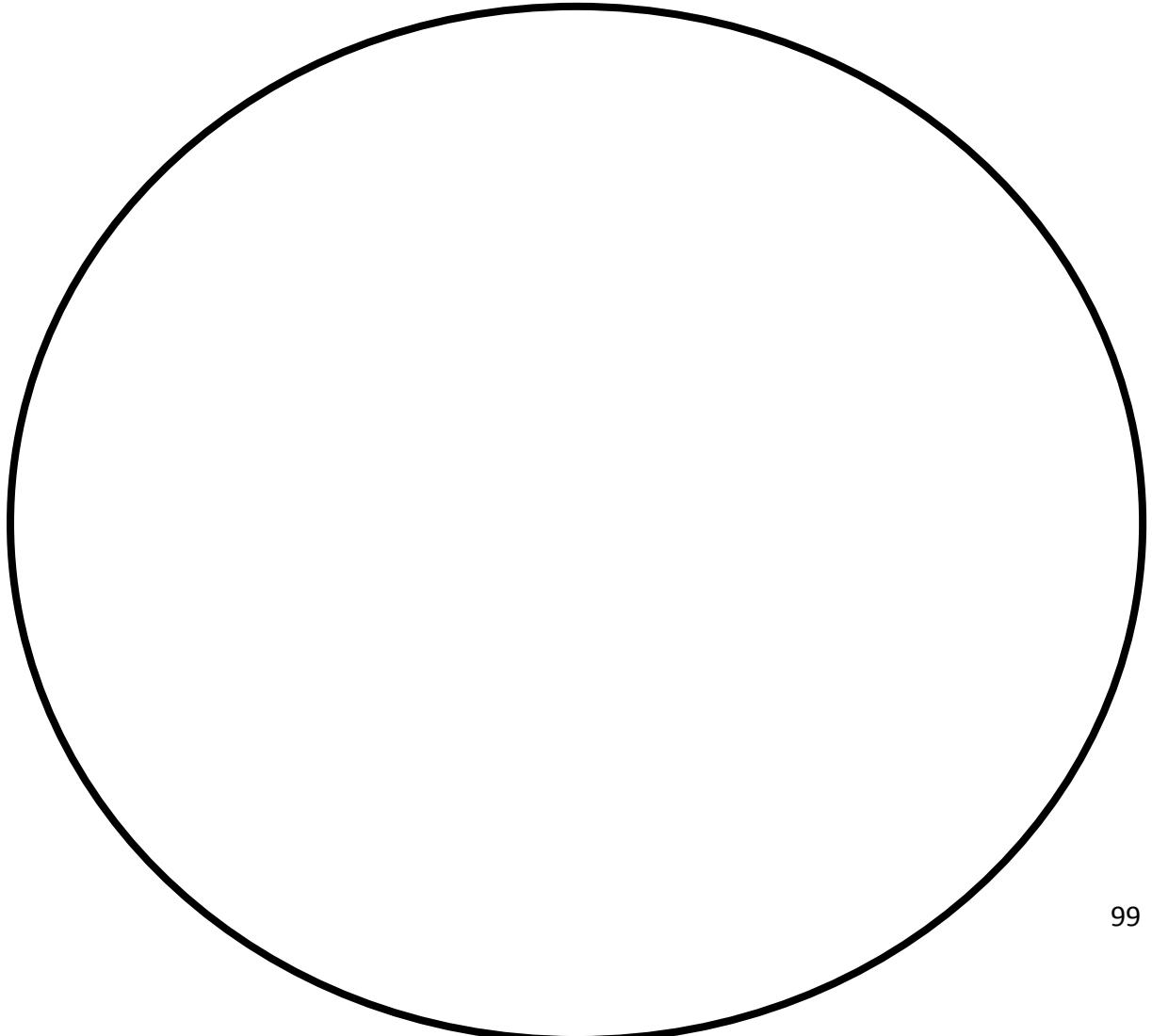
Part-time Full-time

3. Age Bracket

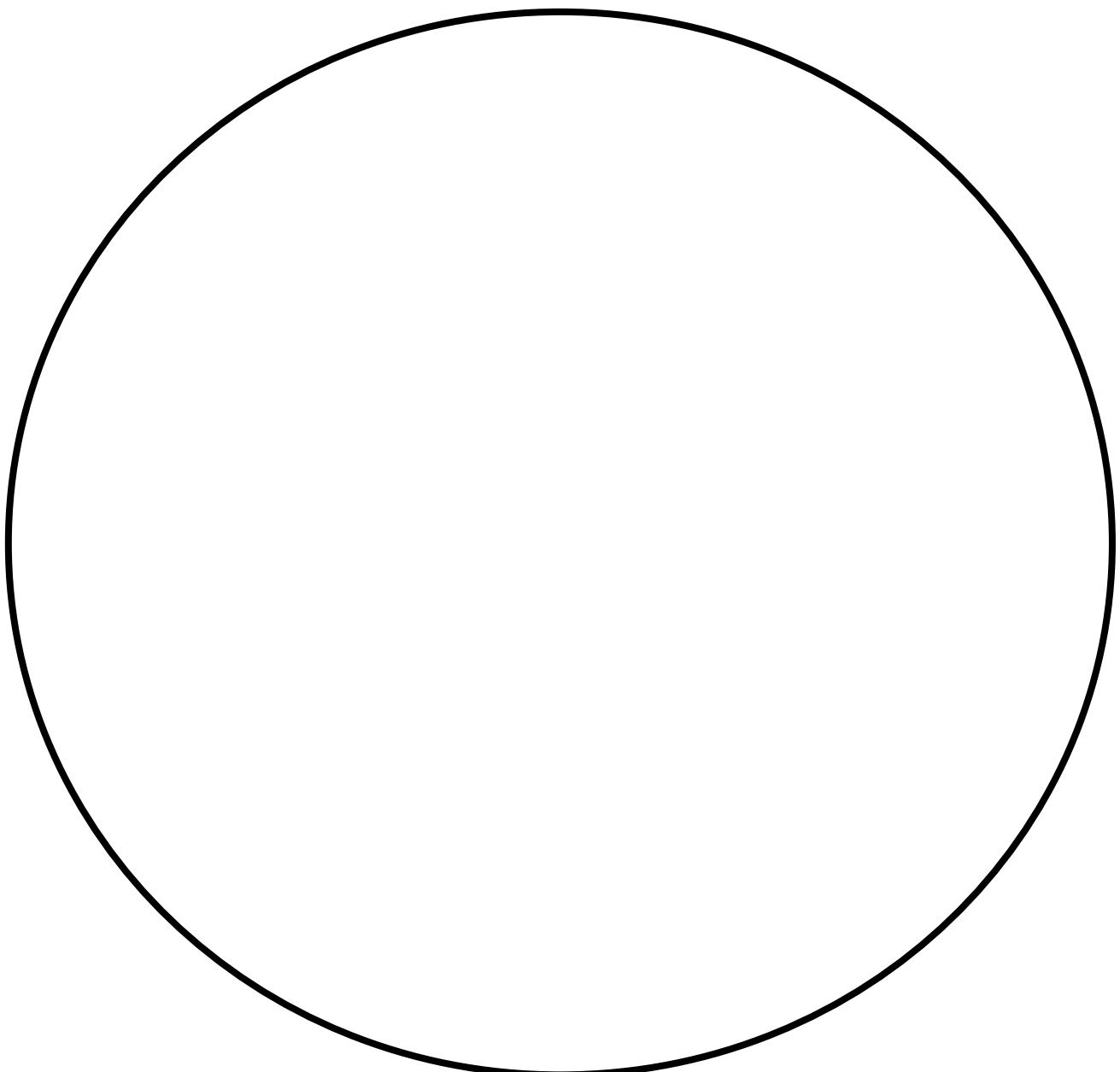
Under 20 21-24 25-29 30-35 36-40 40 above

Balance Wheel 1: Draw your **current work-life/study** (last 24 hours) in graph below.

E.g. Study, work, social activities, sports, family, shopping, computer games.



Balance Wheel 2: Draw your **ideal** work-life balance in the below graph. Include all things that are important and would like to include in your life.



Thank you for your time.

Appendix Three: Focus Group Questioning Route

The following page is the focus group questioning route developed to ensure the focus group structure was in accordance with Kruger & Casey (2000). The focus group outline ensured the opening, introductory, key questions and ending questions were included.

Aim: To provide a general overview of challenges students face when balancing work and study.

Overview of discussion questions:

1. What are the important areas of life?
2. What are the sources of stress?
3. What is your ideal balance?
4. Do you have a student loan?
5. Do you receive a student allowance? Does this help with your expenses?
6. Have you ever experienced any negativity towards your part-time work interfering with studies?
7. Under what condition would you stop working?

Session Structure

The welcome:

Good afternoon. Thanks for taking the time to join our discussion of work-life balance among students.

Opening:

1. Tell us who you are
2. What are you studying
3. Where you work and the approximate hours per week.
4. What you enjoy doing when you are not working.

Introduction:

1. What is the first thing that comes into your mind when you hear about WLB?

Work-life balance: *The juggling act of paid work and the activities outside of paid work that are important to people. E.g. sports, child care, music, community involvement etc.*

2. Think back to when you first started working and studying. What were the main reasons for this?

Key Questions:

1. What are the important areas of your life? (list)
 - a. Exercise 1: draw your current life in a pie graph. Divide it into the major parts.
2. What are the challenges you face when working and studying? (list)

3. What is your ideal balance?

- a. Exercise 2: Now draw your ideal life. May include any sort of activity.
(Show example).

Closing:

Summarise written notes with respondents. Ensure areas of ambiguity are clarified.

Anything missing from the focus group that you think needs to be here?

Thank them for their participation again.

Please sign the **consent form**. As it shows I have asked and you have given me the permission for your participation in this focus group.

Appendix Four: Interview Questions

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to participate in my research. I am currently undertaking research on work-life balance among students. The research will complete the requirements of my Masters degree.

As a full-time student in part-time employment you have been identified as a potential respondent with beneficial information. The interview will take approximately 30mins. May I audio-recorded interview. Yes/no? If yes, data will be transcribed personally by me into a word document. You may request to see a copy of the transcript to verify that it is accurate. You are also entitled to request a copy of the research findings. I will now proceed to commencing the interview and audio recording.

1. What are the important areas of your life at the moment?
2. How would you define your work-life balance?
3. Do you have time to fit all this in to your life on weekly basis?
4. Do you have a part-time job? Occupation, hours, weekly income?
5. What are the main reasons for working?
6. Do you earn money for leisure or is it a necessity for living? Student loans?
7. Support from parents?
8. Does your part-time job relate to your chosen career path?
9. Have you ever received academic support from lecturers in regards to part-time work?
10. How do you think the university could assist in work-life study? Timetables, more jobs at university, advise working hours?
11. What are the areas that you have trouble balancing out & why? E.g. Time
12. What are the sources of stress? How do you deal with this?
13. Are there any effects (Work-life balance) on your health?
14. In your mind, what tools and attributes would you require having a balance work-study life? Time management, self discipline.
15. What would be your ideal work-life balance?

We've now come to the end of the interview. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for taking the time to participate in my study. Are there any further questions about my research or anything else you would like to add?

Appendix Five: Consent Form

The following page is the consent form that was given to focus group and interview respondents. This information sheet was based on the ethical guidelines and ethical information sheet exemplar provided by AUT. The consent form was signed off by respondents and stored in the research supervisor's office in a locked filing cabinet.

Consent Form: Interviews



Project title: **Balancing work and life among undergraduates**

Project Supervisor: **Professor Judith Pringle**

Researcher: **Tania Ang**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 10th January 2008
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will be audio-taped and transcribed by the researcher
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research on completion (please tick one):
Yes No

Participant's

signature:

.....

Participant's

name:

.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on June 3rd, 2008 AUTEC Reference number: 08/68

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Consent Form: Focus Group



Project title: **Balancing work and life among undergraduates**

Project Supervisor: **Professor Judith Pringle**

Researcher: **Tania Ang**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 10th January 2008.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group is confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the focus group
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which I was part, the relevant information about myself including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will not be used.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one):
Yes No

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's name:

.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

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Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on June 3rd, 2008 AUTEC Reference number08/68.

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix Six: Ethical Approval

The following page is the letter of ethical approval by the AUTEC committee for the current study. This research received full approval on the 3rd June, 2008. AUTEC reference number 08/68.



MEMORANDUM

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

To: Judith Pringle

From: **Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTEC

Date: 3 June 2008

Subject: Ethics Application Number 08/68 **Balancing work and life among undergraduates.**

Dear Judith

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by a subcommittee of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) at their meeting on 21 April 2008 and that I have approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTEC's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTEC's meeting on 16 June 2008.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 3 June 2011.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 3 June 2011;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 3 June 2011 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are

provided to participants. You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

Please note that AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the AUTEC and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely



Madeline Banda

Executive Secretary

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Tania Ang tania_ang@hotmail.com, AUTEC Faculty Representative, Business