# IS THERE AN IMPACT ON ACADEMIC STUDIES AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE WHEN STUDENTS UNDERTAKE PAID EMPLOYMENT WHILE IN FULL TIME STUDY?

**Lynette A. Cavill**

**Student number: 0229713**

**Cardiff School of Social Sciences**

This dissertation is submitted to Cardiff University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

# Abstract:

The recent phenomenon that high numbers of full-time students in the UK participate in term time paid employment has become a feature of the current higher educational landscape. A major contributory factor is the revised funding for higher education, placing a higher portion of the funding onto the individual. While student paid employment is seen in many Western societies, the structure of a full-time degree in the UK means there is a much higher workload for academic studies. This has given rise to concerns that alongside the beneficial aspects of paid employment are negative connotations, which impact on academic achievement and student experience. These concerns are associated with equality and student retention.

This research considers the impacts of paid employment for full-time students, whether there are characteristics in the employment that facilitate any detrimental impacts, whether there are vulnerable groups in the student population that will be most affected by these. The study used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, surveys to consider what is happening, interviews and diaries to examine why this is happening.

The study acknowledged beneficial aspects to student paid employment, but also identified negative impacts to both academic studies and the student experience. These were associated particularly with term time paid employment, in addition to the amount of hours undertaken. Social class was also identified to contribute, with student time management a major issue.

Parental contributions are becoming increasingly important to students to fund their degree. A relatively new concept of social contracts between students and their parents appears to be evolving over recent years, making them become joint agents within the decision-making and choices students are making regarding paid employment.

Data analysis is utilised to make recommendations for government, policymakers and universities regarding how negative impacts may be minimised.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# CONTENTS:

## Chapter One:

## Introduction

## Chapter Two

## Literature Review: Section 1

## Chapter Three:

## Literature Review: Section 2:

# Chapter Four:
# Methods of Enquiry

# Chapter Five:
# Data Analysis Section 1: Participation in TTPE

# Chapter Six:

# Data Analysis Section 2: Strategies used to manage TTPE

# Chapter Seven:

# Data Analysis Section 3: The Impacts of Paid Employment

# Chapter Eight
# Data Analysis Section 4: Debt and Attitudes to Debt

# Chapter Nine:
# Conclusion

**List of abbreviations:**

TTPE - term time paid employment

PE – paid employment

HE - higher education

PC - parental contributions

CV Curriculum Vitae

# List of Tables:

**Tables for Chapter 5**                                    **Page Number:**

## Tables for Chapter Six:

## Tables for Chapter Seven:

## Tables for Chapter Eight:

**Figure for Chapter Nine:**

Tables may be + or - 1% difference (rounding up by errors)

.

# Chapter One:

## Introduction

### 1.1 Placing the research within context

Higher education within the UK expanded at an unparalleled rate throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. Underlying this massive change in participation was the opinion of the governments of the time that national productivity would be increased, and thus compete globally, by the promotion of an 'educated workforce for the global marketplace' (Blair 1998)

Globalisation, developed through the 20th century by advances in technology, created economic interdependence between countries, promoting increased competitiveness. For economies to thrive, developed nations moved from manufacture to an 'information society', driving UK governments, both Conservative and Labour, over the past 25 years to consider the quote from Tony Blair that 'education is the best economic policy we have' to be very relevant (DfEE 1998: Introduction: 1).

In sum, the expansion in higher education was considered vital to promote a widening participation for all strata of the UK society, framed in economic motivations and social factors. But what has this expansion from an 'elite' to a 'mass' system of higher education meant for students in the UK?

The result of this drive was the evolution of a mass system of higher education from the existing elite system in place. However the reality regarding the funding for this system was that, even with increased public funding monies, review was necessary due to the increased numbers of students now entering higher education. There will always be limits on education budgets with priorities within this (DfES 2005).

This placed an increasing level of financing higher education to be more on the individual. This resulted in the replacement of subsistence grants with a student loan system and the introduction of variable tuition fees. This initiated the motivation for many students to undertake paid employment alongside full time studies (Hakim 1998, Callender & Wilkinson 2003).

However there is more than one issue relating to why increasing numbers of students participate in term time paid employment. The traditional roles of full-time students are now eroded by the changes within the structure of the student experience, leading to diversification within the role of being a part-time worker alongside the UK government definition of being a full-time student in higher education.

This has occurred in conjunction with a consumer society, where status and identity are seen to relate to consumer objects.   Thus the rhetoric that the catalyst for students increasingly making the decision to take on term time paid employment while in full time study is caused by widening participation may only form part of the explanation for this phenomenon.  It should also be enquired as to whether students could fund their time at university on the student support regime in place. If this is the case, then has living within a consumer society influenced the decision making process for students and, if so, to what extent?

Therefore a dichotomy exists whereby paper qualifications are necessary for life opportunities, but a certain lifestyle is desired alongside this.  This leads to the question being raised as to whether undertaking paid employment while in full time study does have an impact on studies.

## 1.2 Background:

Globalisation has become a feature of the developed capitalist societies throughout the world. In a globalised economy, industrialised countries have become so competitive regarding the cost of goods that the developed nations have had to move away from production into information and knowledge – creating a 'knowledge economy' (ESCR 2007).

This led to the expansion of higher education, to provide the skilled and educated workforce to service the knowledge economy.  Alongside this has been an underpinning equality issue to ensure the whole of the UK population has access to education and training, encompassing the diversity within all strata of Britain's multicultural society.  This has the aim to increase education levels and enhance intergenerational social mobility, accruing improved levels of social and cultural capital within the nation (HEFCE 2006).

There has been massive change in funding higher education to widen participation. In 1997, Sir Ron Dearing headed the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education to make recommendations on how higher education should develop within Britain (HEFCE 2005). He

identified the values of widening participation to higher education in terms of economic and social values within policy engagement. Juxtaposed with these imperatives, Dearing stressed continuing in education to be a 'good investment' for individuals as well as society.

The evidence regarding participation in higher education in the United Kingdom indicates that there has been a marked increase over the past fifty years (Curtis & Williams 2002). Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS 1999 and UCAS 2002) data shows that over the period of 1994 to 2000 there was a 23% increase in full time home acceptances to degree courses. The participation rate was 43% in 2009, indicating the drive to increase participation in higher education has been successful.

Research in this area, such as the Student Income and Expenditure Surveys (2003 to 2008) which can form a time series of data, indicates that patterns of consumption within the student population reflects that of young people in the same age group who are engaged in low income employment. It must be noted however, that there will be a wide difference in the future life opportunities for these two groups. For those within the low income groups this is an ongoing lifestyle, while for students, it may be argued, this is a temporary situation until they enter the labour market. These students will then be equipped to obtain graduate employment, so the time at university is a stepping stone towards improved life opportunities. This does raise questions as to whether these students are making decisions to fund a lifestyle they desire but do not 'need' while in university. Are these 'informed' choices, do the students comprehend that the demands on their time from paid employment, particularly in term time, may be detrimental to their studies? Do the students perceive there may be a risk to their levels of achievement that could lead to a lower degree classification?

The shift from 'elite' to a 'mass' system of higher education occurred within a political discourse of equality. However, this evoked a need for increased monies to fund this massive influx of students, and though the government of the day released extra funding for the post compulsory education sector, there was also a requirement to pass on a higher percentage of the cost from the public to the personal level. In the real world it has to be accepted that there are budgets and limits to funding, and there will always be priorities within these. In 1998, via the Teaching and Higher Education Act, the financial support of students began to change. The Higher Education Act of 2004 followed on from the White Paper 'The Future of Higher Education', which introduced variable tuition fees, with learning grants for lower

income household students, to promote equity of access (HEFCE 2005).  By 2004/2005 the high level objectives within education were to encourage young people to stay in learning and to promote further learning and training in the adult population, resulting in the aim to achieve maximum economic performance, with a raise in standards and opportunity for all.

Studies such as Christie & Munro (2003) and Woodrow (1999) suggest financial considerations within the decision making to enter higher education is the greatest barrier to increasing participation from non traditional groups,  particularly those from the lower socio-economic groups. However, the barrier of cost is entirely dependent on government policy and there is overwhelming evidence that the 1998 changes to funding have had the most negative effects on students from lower income groups (Archer & Hutchings 2000, Metcalf 2003, Callender & Kemp 2000).  Today the burden of paying fees and subsistence is progressively more being borne by individuals, hence the incentive to 'earn as you learn'.

That a certain percentage of students will engage in paid employment while in full time study is certainly not a new phenomenon, and the reasons for this are varied (Hakim 1998). However, as a result of the changing student support system there are increasing numbers of full time students choosing to supplement their income by taking on paid employment.  Of particular concern is the rise in term time paid employment within the student population. Research does identify beneficial aspects to such employment via increased confidence, time management and communication skills, the acquisition of transferable skills and work experience (Callender 2008, Curtis & Shani 2002, Neill et al 2004). However, 59% of students in higher education believe their studies are affected detrimentally by the necessity of working, and would not undertake term time employment by choice (NUS 2004, Neill et al 2004, Brady 2005).  This leads to the identification that questions should be raised around whether paid employment does have an impact on levels of achievement and indeed on the whole of the student experience.

This study is an educational research project. The aim is to gather more in depth knowledge on perceptions held by student regarding any impacts or negative connotations directly related to engagement in TTPE.

**1.3 Research Question and Rationale:**

The overall research question is 'to examine whether paid employment undertaken by students studying full time in higher education impacts on potential achievement and the experience of being a student'. Thus the study will be guided by the following specific research questions:

1. What proportion of HE students undertake paid employment while in full time study and within what time frame in relation to the academic year? Does employment in 'holiday time' include Christmas and Easter vacations, which is prior to assessment in many HE institutes? What proportion of students engage in term time employment?

2. How is time managed by students who deem it necessary to engage in TTPE? What decisions are being made regarding work/life balance? Are these choices having an effect on health and well being?

3. What type of employment do HE students undertake and what is the remuneration they receive? What are the patterns within student employment? What are wages spent on? What hours do they work, are shift patterns incorporated into these hours? Is there any flexibility within the employment? What impact does this have on academic studies? Do they miss lectures, tutorials, or assignment deadlines? Is there an impact on the student experience?

4. How do HE students perceive and how important is the new fee / student support regime in determining participation in term time employment? What are the motivations behind the decision to undertake paid employment? What knowledge exists on support that is available within student finance?

5. What are the socio-economic determinants of student participation in term time employment? What are the attitudes towards debt? How important are parental contributions to student finance?

6. Are there impacts, how are these measured?

If this premise is correct, then any negative impacts arising from this relatively new phenomenon should be recorded. TTPE is gaining increasing popularity with students.

That students are now increasingly participating in paid employment while in full time study has become a feature of the higher educational landscape within the UK. However, though

there is a plethora of research into widening participation to higher education, incorporating the barriers to participation and how to overcome these, what happens to students once they attend HE is relatively overlooked (Callender 2008). This particularly relates to the growth in term time paid employment and the impact on academic attainment this may have. There are also concerns around the changing nature of financing higher education, where there is a shift from public funding to personal funding. These are associated with student retention, student dropout rate and levels of student indebtedness, all of which appear to be linked to the prevalence of student paid employment. Government and policy makers have tended to ignore the phenomenon of the marked rise in numbers of students in paid employment and what research has been carried out is limited (Callender 2008). The aims and objectives of this research project are designed to contribute further to the understanding of what impact student paid employment has to both academic attainment and the student experience, at the point of an important transition in higher education funding regimes and student support systems.

Due to the very different motivations for both entering higher education and undertaking paid employment alongside studies between young and mature students, this study will focus on gaining insight into those students who have entered higher education at an earlier age by the use of purposive sampling. The data collected will encompass the range of variations that might occur in the pattern of student paid employment. This will include those who work in term time, those who work in the holiday periods only, those who worked in the first year of their degree course but who now do not undertake paid employment alongside their studies and finally those who have chosen not to work while studying. This will also contribute to a bank of knowledge on whether there will be selective inequality, if some students have to work, while others do not.

A mixed method approach will be taken to combine both qualitative and quantitative data. Data to consider what is happening will collect the demographics of the students and incidence, amount, type and pattern of paid employment via the use of a questionnaire. Data on the motivations and perceptions around paid employment will be collected via follow up semi-structured interviews, on a purposive sample of the respondents of the questionnaire, to ensure data collection on the range of patterns within student employment. Finally audio diaries will further investigate the time management of a sample of these respondents in two ways. One audio diary will be recorded daily for a week to consider both the practical and

emotional elements of the work/life balance, whilst the other audio diary will be recorded weekly over eight weeks for more reflexive data regarding both positive and negative experiences in relation to their time management.

Prior research studies within this area indicate students from lower income groups undertake more paid employment, working the longest hours, which is deemed to have the greatest impact on academic studies (Callender 2008, Metcalf 2003, Norris 2008). Thus this study will focus on collecting data from two universities in Wales, to represent a diversity of institutions in the higher education sector.  The study will also be designed as a longitudinal study on the same sample, over year 2 and year 3 of their degree course. This will enquire as to whether perceptions in these students on any potential impact from paid employment, to their studies or the student experience, has caused them to make changes in the pattern of their paid employment throughout their third year.

There is the ideology held that the returns from holding a degree are high, increasing life opportunities from high income employment, but as the numbers of degree holders increase will this remain true? Brown & Hesketh (2004), Ashworth (1997) suggests there will be in inflation of credentials graduate employment. Increasingly the degree must be from the right course, at the right university, at the right degree classification (TLRP 2008).

**1.4 Structure of study:**

**Chapter Two: Literature Review section 1:**

This chapter identifies the steps from globalisation through to the creation of a knowledge economy, which requires to be serviced by knowledge workers. The resulting 'educated workforce' needed to utilise the talents across the whole population of the UK. Policies to widen participation, aimed to not only increase participation within higher education but to promote equality through equal representation of all groups of UK society, are considered alongside meritocracy and finally students as consumers.

**Chapter Three: Literature Review section 2:**

This chapter discusses the history of student paid employment and the development within the UK of elite to a mass system of higher education. The higher educational funding implications from this development to a mass system of higher education then includes discourse on the structure of the degree course in the UK, students as employees, parental contributions and student debt. That typology of the student paid employment is described by equality issues, motivations and choice, and finally the incidence of term time paid employment. Both beneficial and detrimental impacts reported as direct results of paid employment ends the chapter.

**Chapter Four: Methods of Enquiry:**

This chapter describes the methodological dimensions of the study, the methods chosen and why, the ethical considerations for collecting the sample with access methods outlined and how the research was carried out. Reflection on the role of the researcher and the limitations of the study are explored.

**Chapter Five: Data Analysis Section 1: Participation in TTPE**

This chapter analyses all those students who work, in what timeframe within the academic year, and equally important who does not work. Sociological factors are considered to identify whether there are patterns within certain student groups. Decision-making, agency and levels of choice are explored as to the motivations to undertake TTPE. Finally the employment characteristics and how wages are used are scrutinised. Running through all four analysis chapters are the use of tables, bar charts and graphs showing the quantitative data collected, and quotes from the qualitative interviews and diaries.

**Chapter Six: Data Analysis Section 2: Strategies used to manage TTPE**

This chapter looks at the strategies students use to fund their higher education and paid employment, where necessary. Monies from public sources and personal funding sources are identified and explored, including parental contributions, seen to be increasingly important in current higher education funding. Contracts and negotiations between students and parents are evolving that involve participation in TTPE, because of perceived negative impacts when

long hours are undertaken in employment. The hierarchy of prioritisation within time management strategies are examined, especially in relation to the work/life balance.

**Chapter Seven: Data Analysis Section 3: The Impacts of Paid Employment**

This chapter begins by measuring any impact to academic studies, observing whether there are any student groups particularly vulnerable here. The beneficial impacts are considered. The impact to the student experience is then measured, considering societies and sport participation by students, and any voluntary work undertaken. Again student group patterns are explored here. Student perceptions on the impact of TTPE are examined.

**Chapter Eight:  Data Analysis Section 4: Debt and Attitudes to Debt**

Debt, though not a direct impact, is a major influence on the decision-making regarding TTPE. This chapter explores attitudes towards debt, inclusive of perceptions on the affordability and cost of university, and whether the students perceive the debt to be an investment for their future.  Finally the type of debt students have are considered.

**Chapter Nine: Conclusion**

A conclusion is made at the end of every chapter, so this chapter draws together all the findings of the study, relating these back to the literature. Recommendations are made for universities, policymakers and government that may be helpful to minimise any impact of paid employment.

# Chapter Two

## Literature Review: Section 1: The creation of the relatively recent phenomenon of increased engagement by students in TTPE

### 2.1 Overview of the literature review sections:

Since the advent of globalisation, which has created an economic interdependence between countries, developed nations have moved away from low skill production associated with high levels of manufacturing industry into the information and knowledge service sectors. It is suggested that this has resulted from the technological advancement in world economies thus creating a requirement for a 'knowledge based' economy (Adnett 2006). From this the UK government now promotes widening participation in both further and higher education, framed in economic motivations and social factors. This drive has rapidly transformed the post compulsory education sector, with Tony Blair defining the need for an 'educated workforce for the global marketplace' in the 1990s and releasing increased funding to accommodate this widening participation (Blair 1998). Thus the elite system of higher education has evolved into a mass system, with the reality that even with increased public funding monies for the sector the funding system needed to be reviewed due to the increased number of students. There is debate over the benefits of higher education versus the funding of it, incorporating three major factors. These are the need of the country regarding national economic growth, the earnings of a graduate versus a non graduate, to justify allocation of the costs for higher education, and the differences between the average and the marginal student, which will influence decision making for these students (Ashworth 1997).

There will always be limits on education budgets, with priorities set within these (DfES 2005). Therefore the burden of financing higher education has become more firmly placed on the individual. As the value of subsistence grants became eroded, to be replaced by student loans and the introduction of variable tuition fees, more and more students are taking on paid employment alongside full time study (Hakim 1998, Callender 2008). This has occurred in conjunction with the creation of a consumer society, where status and identity are related to consumer objects. Thus a dichotomy exists whereby paper qualifications are necessary for life opportunities but a certain lifestyle is desired alongside this. However the

question must be raised as to whether the decisions made on undertaking paid employment while in full time study has an impact on those studies, on both levels of achievement and the experience of being a student.

The following two chapters review the literature around student 'earning while learning'. The first chapter will consider the literature around the concept of globalisation, concentrating on economic globalisation, and the effects of this on developed nations regarding the perceived need for establishing a 'knowledge based' economy. This has resulted in the drive to widen participation to all strata of society, increasing the number of students entering further and higher education, to provide a skilled workforce. Literature here suggests meritocracy within graduate employment should now apply, particularly within management structure career pathways. However, there are critiques of the ideologies that imply a degree will instantly raise life opportunities through the benefits of graduate employment. These will be explored. Literature considering inequalities within educational opportunities and the challenges to widening participation policies, arising from the diversity of the social strata existing in British society today, will also be examined here.

The second chapter will consider the existing literature providing empirical findings regarding students who undertake paid employment while in full time study. This will include the increasingly important role parents play in the finances of students and the agency students have within the labour market. This is in addition to considering educational decision making, through entering higher education to the attitudes towards debt students hold, given that relatively high levels of debt resulting from obtaining a degree now appears to be a feature of the present educational landscape. This encompasses the diversity of higher education institutions and experiences and outcomes of the students. Literature to date relating to both the measured and perceived effects TTPE has to achievement levels and student life are examined.

## 2.2 Introduction

This chapter gives a comprehensive outline on how the higher education system within the UK has the evolved from a system of elitism within participation to mass participation, and the justifications by government regarding this change. An analysis of how globalisation relates to the perceived necessity of acquiring a knowledge based economy leads to how this dictated the policies of government to endeavour to widen participation in higher education, to compete in the global marketplace. The motive to widen participation in further and higher education is primarily for economic reasons, but is also associated with social factors aimed at increasing the social capital within a community, the aim to promote social inclusion.

As globalisation is powered by capitalism, of which a feature is consumerism, the effect that living within a consumer society may have for students is also examined, in the context of the decision-making around undertaking paid employment, and in particulate TTPE, while in full-time study.

## 2.3 Globalisation as an economic entity.

> *'One of the big debates at the moment concerns the theme of globalization. This is a completely amazing thing, because only about 10 to 12 years ago it was hard to get people to talk about it, to use the notion of globalization at all. And now only a decade later, everybody's using it'*

(Giddens as cited in Edge 2008:1)

Globalisation has evolved from the creation of modern society, so is not a new concept. However, it has become a crucial and central part of modern sociology. It was over 200 years ago that the notion that 'we are unavoidably side-by-side' was expressed by Kant regarding the population of the world (Held 2002). This has increasingly become the case as globalisation has progressed over the past century, with the ideology that 'we are one planet.... we are a global community' (Stiglitz 2002: xv) now permeating throughout societies, indicating a need to have rules devised to achieve social justice for all nations within this global community.

Rudd Lubbers, an academic on globalisation, gives a definition of 'a process in which geographic distance becomes a factor of diminishing importance in the establishment and maintenance of cross-border economic, political and socio-cultural relations' to globalisation (Australian Apec 2008). Steiger (2003) visualises globalisation as the product of a capitalist process, which drives it forward constantly. There is encompassed two fundamental concepts, the increase of cross-border movement that gives the sense that the world is now one state, and cultural hybridisation, which gives the sense the world is now one society. The processes of globalisation act as a motor to drive along economic, political and social change, creating a post modern society following modernity. This has affected the individual within societies, via identity, personal interpretations and substance of life (Edge 2008).

> *"Globalisation... is not just 'out there' - to do with very large scale influences. It is also an 'in here' phenomenon, directly bound up with the circumstances of local life."*

(Giddens 1994: 80-1)

While Britain was a leader in the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, there was, alongside, an inherent desire to achieve a global economic stability. Today this equates to high competition within the manufacturing industry, creating a free worldwide market place for goods. Leith (2006) & Adnett (2006) promote that foreign producers made it difficult for domestic producers. Price and output competition led to Britain unable to compete because of a lack of natural resources and high labour costs. And this was not just a phenomenon within the UK, all developed nations began pulling away from the traditional manufacturing industries, becoming involved in information and knowledge technology, causing a shift towards a knowledge-based economy.

Many see globalisation as an economic entity, an integration of national economic systems due to the international trading. With the advent of technological advances within communication and transport the world has become smaller, businesses and industries now able to compete on a global basis. This has led to the concept of economic globalisation, defined as 'the removal of barriers to free trade and the closer integration to national economies' (Stiglitz 2002: ix). Left critics of globalisation define the word quite differently, presenting it as worldwide drive towards a globalised economic system dominated by supranational corporate trade and banking institutions, which are not accountable to

democratic processes or national government (Stiglitz 2002). Whichever way the concept is defined, it is accepted that while globalisation exists within its present form, a country's economy is dependent on its ability to compete in a global marketplace.

## 2.4 Knowledge based economy.

*'The knowledge economy has come to symbolise the global, technological and social transformation of the late 20th and early 21st-century'.*
(Brown et al 2001:235)

Because labour markets are now local, national and international, skills are high on the agenda to achieve high production, and obtain social justice, equity and social cohesion. An argument is put forward that social mobility will also be enhanced due to the increase of professional careers (Brown et al 2001).

Adnett (2006) considers a knowledge economy is an economy knowledge driven, introducing the concept that meritocracy will apply, creating opportunities for individuals in all strata of society. Education is thus a priority on agendas to 'deliver opportunity, prosperity and justice', with a belief that higher levels of education will incorporate 'the more we learn the more we earn' (Brown 2003:142).

There is a challenge to governments across the globe to create a work force that is both educated and trained. Brown (2003) and Brown et al (2004) perceive that to achieve this, higher education must be widened to all the population and barriers broken regarding the social background of all members, to create a pool of human resources for the country's economy to utilise. The OECD (1996) identifies that it is not a new concept for knowledge to have a role within economies, and that this will become increasingly important. What has come about in more recent times is the idea of a need for a strong knowledge base to enhance innovation in a scientific and technologically advanced era. Strategies to achieve this must include a massive investment in education.

## 2.5 Widening participation.

The knowledge economy gives rise to a challenge for governments to develop workforce employability which, for the UK, has led to the concept of widening participation outside compulsory education to the whole of society (Brown 2003). This maximises the chances of releasing the talent potential of the workforce.

> *"Knowledge, skills and human capital have become more important than capital or natural resources."*

(Brown 2003:145)

The value of human capital and education is promoted from the recognition that many employees are not now working with 'tangible' products but are required to manage information, inclusive of production, handling and distribution. This interlinks the economy with learning (OECD 1996). However, Brown & Hesketh (2004) asks does a knowledge-based economy actually increase the demand for skilled workers. Are the problems experienced within employability for graduates about matching the skills to specific jobs, or about the aspirations of graduates not matching reality?

The human capital assumptions that create the basis for policy making need to be adequate frameworks of public policy and human resource management. Brown (2003) asks what will be the skills needed for future employment, as the knowledge-based economy develops, is there a 'talent pool' or a 'talent war' if one considers the competition within graduate employment. Brown (2003) also foresees that as technology advances society will have a demand for more skilled workers in technical and scientific fields, necessitating formal education and training to supply 'knowledge workers'. The age where a worker starts on the factory floor then has the option to work up to management level appears to be over.

> *"Traditional methods of managing employees and developing skilled workers inside companies are breaking down".*

(Capelli et al 1997 as cited in Cortada 1998)

The size and dimension of knowledge work has increased and intermingled into all aspects of most employment. This is a concept identified strongly through the developed world, with

Brown et al (2001:235) defining 'Prosperity and social justice depend on the creation of a highly skilled workforce'. Today, 84% of the world's expenditure on education is spent by the developed nations, though they form only 21% of the world population. Knowledge driven capitalism has resulted, with Tony Blair stating talent is the 21st-century's wealth. Thus 'Blairite' Britain became target driven (Brown et al 2001: 238).

> "People are born with talents and everywhere it is in chains. Fail to develop the talents of any one person, we failed Britain. Talent is 21st century wealth".

(Tony Blair, Labour party conference speech Bournemouth 1999 as cited in Brown et al 2004:1)

It is highlighted that from this social and economic policy agendas are now linked to education, encouraging talent to emerge from all strata of society. The question regarding societal inequalities will remain however, as it is essential a level playing field for opportunity be available for all, and this is a factor underpinning this thesis. Leitch (2006) identifies the strength Britain has is a strong infrastructure for education and vocational training. The weakness is in the number of adults with both literacy and numeracy problems.

**2.6 Policy agenda related to widening participation.**

The ODPM/SEU report 'Improving services, Improving lives' indicates a positive link between adult learning, social capital, health and family life from research in this area, which encourages social cohesion within communities (NIACE 2005). Within policy, the high-level objective for education in 2005 was a promotion that young people should stay in learning to increase the skills of the adult population. This was to maximise economic performance and spread opportunity through society (DfES 2003, HEFCE 2002).

> "Class divisions and other fundamental lines of inequality, such as those connected with gender and ethnicity, can be partly defined in terms of differential access to forms of self actualisation and empowerment."

(Giddens as cited in Brown et al 2004:3)

Brown (2003) looks at the increase in social mobility, as there are more careers within professional and managerial employment available. These jobs are no longer for a small elite band of workers. There will be a spread of opportunity that will encourage the talented

individual to carry on in education. This would indicate that widening participation will not interfere with obtaining graduate employment, as with technology increasing there will be an increasing demand for educated workers, but will the status here be decreased, as the number of these jobs increase?

When considering the social strata within Britain around who works and in what employment, there is a higher amount of workers from the lower classes in lower skilled jobs, not necessarily because they have an aptitude for this work, but often because they are socialised to perceive this route leads to a better career (Forsyth & Furlong 2004). However, if a progressive and developed economy for a technological age is what Britain is aiming for, then all levels of employment will need skills. The Leitch Review of 2006 considered what Britain's long-term skill needs were. This was rather damning, as though the skill base has grown over the past decade, it is still weak if considered against international standards. The idea is promoted that even to stand still Britain will have to 'run'.

While the concept of increasing individual skills is admirable, it is observed there are also changes made to the security of employment due to globalisation. Forms of 'precarious' employments are now commonplace in European labour market trends. This creates a marked insecurity within employment, due to differentiated labour markets and increasing competition for employment. Selective mechanisms are defined in both the structure of employment and the employment mobility. The concept of a job for life no longer exists (Eurofound 2007).

However, it must be accepted that for all these drawbacks, for a knowledge economy to exist there have to be knowledge workers. If there is no economic growth then the UK will fall behind other developed countries. Policies to achieve this must form an ongoing process as 'new areas of economic activity give rise to new knowledge requirements' (Brown et al 2001:237). There is the suggestion that both the individual and the economy will benefit here.

> *"There is a need for employers to have the right skills to support the success of their businesses, and individuals to have the right skills they need to be both employable and personally fulfilled."*

(Forsyth & Furlong 2003:69)

Have the policies to widen participation worked though? In answer to this it is noted that overall participation has dramatically increased in higher education over the past 30 years. However this has not helped increase participation within social classes four and five (DfES 2003). This seems to be showing that inequalities due to class still exist, the lower the class strata the less educated the individual will be. It appears the focus is on widening participation, that education works, but not a focus on whether there are jobs with long-term prospects for the very students they are pushing to enter higher education.

**2.7 Funding issues in widening participation.**

Interrelated to widening participation are funding issues. Academics in the higher education sector have had pay increases held back, if compared to comparable employment in the private sector. The unit of resources per student has been cut so there have to be more students to keep income stable, causing universities to be efficiency gains driven. The staff ratio was 1:8 in 1960, but is now 1: 20. There are now 400+ students in lectures, and new large venues to facilitate larger groups are being commissioned.

The grant system has been replaced with a loan/grants system. There is a variable tuition fee levied to students. Study skills for undergraduates are now much more important. Considering the private rates of return for the individual, while it is feasible to place some of the finance on the student there has to be a cap on this or students, particularly those from underrepresented groups, will not enter higher education. The rate of return has not been measured since loans came in, so it is not clear whether the graduate earning premium will be enough to cover the costs and justify entering higher education (Ashworth 1997, Bowers-Brown 2006). Higher education is promoted as a way to gain skills by 'learning is earning' so the overall consensus argues the individual should pay for higher education as they gain the benefit (Brown et al 2004). Cost is now a key factor in the decision to enter higher education, with a fear of debt also identified for those students in low income family groups, so introducing top-up fees while endeavouring to widen participation would seem to be contradictory (Bowers-Brown 2006).

If lower income students are going to accumulate most debt, but have the highest aversion to debt, it is logical to presume these will be the students who will undertake the highest levels

of TTPE throughout their degrees, so will be most likely to have any effects of this on their university experience, whether this be to studies or participation in university activities.

Efficiency equates to programme driven teaching, where students are 'spoon fed', taught to pass exams. This was a change to student led, with less support for students. However, GCSE and A-level passes are increasing each year with this style of teaching, yet higher education institutes, alongside employers, complain about the levels of basic education students have. Can this be that preparing students for a knowledge economy, upscaling, is not enough, that employers are looking for knowledge in the course and subject alongside soft skills, such as collaboration, communication and people skills? There are ideological divides at a political level that are pervasive. Brown (2003) feels there are changing relationships seen between employment and education. It must also be asked will innovation and individual thinking be lost by changing the style of teaching within universities.

Alongside the changing teaching style due to the increase of students within the UK higher education system, the type of course and university attended varies by socio-economic group, with 'elite' institutions seen to exist. The Dearing Report (1997) recommended funding allocation have priority to institutions with a strategy to promote widening participation.

> *'Significant differences in levels of application and participation by socio-economic group continue to exist between different types of higher education institution. The post-1992 universities attract over 60 per cent more applicants from lower socio-economic groups than the pre-1992 universities, although applicants from socio-economic group V remain at an extremely low level for both types of institution.'*

(Robertson & Hillman 1997 as cited in Bowers-Brown 2006:70)

Credentials obtained from education have become increasingly important to gain rewards in the labour market, and Brown et al (2001) deems this to be fair, as the education system utilised to accredit the knowledge base learned is fair. Thus to gain reward on the individual's ability due to selection on this criteria is valid. This leads to a consensus that there is wasted talent within the underrepresented groups, and indeed, much research is critical of what is seen to be inequalities in the UK educational system. Widening participation will try to draw on this but will it work? Consider the choices made in entering higher education, the right

course, right university, and the level of degree classification achieved. These are linked to inequalities in the primary source of education and attitudes within families related to class.

How a company will perform in today's economy often focuses on 'human' resources, with the equation of the right people with the right knowledge in the right job necessary for success. This can be seen to be directly influenced by Durkheim's view that employment and education are linked, with meritocracy rewarded (Brown 2003).

Socialisation within the family unit factors highly in decision-making on whether to enter higher education. For many, particularly in low income families, the expectation is that paid employment follows on from compulsory education. Historically it is the middle and upper classes that attend University. Add this to recognised links to the aversion of debt in the lower classes, a need for additional income into the family unit and a general lack of information on higher educational options and what are the chances for children from social classes four and five to participation in higher education (Bowers-Brown 2006, Callender et al 2003).

> *"Many respondents came from family backgrounds in which both taking on debt to invest in one's future and participation in higher education were alien concepts. In such families, historically, children had left school to get a job and contribute family income. Indeed some interviewees felt aware of some pressure from their families and friends to do likewise."*

(Forsyth & Furlong 2003:43)

The returns from obtaining a degree are high, but at some point, as the amount of degree holders increase will this remain the case? There is an ideology that increased skills lead to high income employment and life opportunities, but is this guaranteed? And what level of skills are necessary for graduate employment, as with widening participation high numbers of individuals will hold degrees, so there will be an inflation in the qualifications required for such employment. It has to be asked can expanding higher education via policies to promote widening participation significantly increased life opportunities by enhanced employment (Brown & Hesketh 2004).

There is also the question of whether the type of student will have an impact, as when the numbers of graduates increase, a certain percentage will take on non-graduate employment,

identified as 'displaced' workers. Employers are now seen to have a degree as an entry requirement when earlier none was needed. This is an inflation of credentials for employment (Ashworth 1997). What is of concern is that these displaced workers are identified as being the marginal students, the average student still appears to find graduate employment and this is where the premium is earned, but these students are those that would have entered higher education anyway. There has to be a belief that education is creating growth in society (Brown 2003). There are also concerns around student dropout rates, that are seen to be rising in higher education, and the highest percentage here are from the marginal groups, which actually puts these students in a worse position than if they had not continued in education, as they have incurred debt but have no degree.

> *'If the individual is in the marginal group they must firmly believe in there being associated growth from the participation'*

(Ashworth 1997:176)

The question today is whether the Labour market can be related to education. Graduate work is now much more competitive to achieve, partly due to the high rise in the number of degree holders and partly due to many more women now competing for the highest level employment. A position is now not for life, so this competition exists throughout the whole of an individual's employment years, creating the 'risk' culture of global capitalism (Beck as cited in Brown & Hesketh 2004).

A paradox does exist in the knowledge economy, whereby wage inequality has a relationship with the amount of individuals wishing to obtain a degree. This has caused a widening division in middle-class employment. Yet supposedly a knowledge economy will bring about more opportunity, equality and social justice and cultural diversity (Brown & Hesketh 2004). The middle classes depend on academic achievement to obtain the type of employment they wish to enter, as they have a particular lifestyle to fund, so this has brought about more discerning choice around courses, 'status' universities and students striving to obtain the highest degree classification that they are capable of achieving. Therefore, with such increased numbers of students now engaging in TTPE, there is a need to build a bank of knowledge on the implications this has for full-time students. Historically degrees equated to status in the labour market, but the inflation of degree holders since the expansion of higher education has lead to what some consider being a devaluing of degrees. It is also often the

case that postgraduate qualifications are necessary for the high end of the labour market (Brown & Hesketh 2004 TLRP 2008).

Brown (2003) also makes the point that this newer system of mass higher education has closed the knowledge gap, causing inequalities to now exist within career pathways, where graduates often find they are in lower status employment than others with the same level of knowledge. The term 'education stagflation' has now been used when credentials are rife but employment opportunities are not, so graduates are underemployed, with a knock-on effect down the ladder of employment.  Employability policies are flawed as they do not consider positional conflict, because the main factor that dictates policy are employers' perceptions of what skills they need. There has been little conceptual or empirical analysis in this area.

There is an identification of a duality of employability, where not just the professional and social skills of the individual is considered but also comparisons made between workers on offer, the competition. There is also a personal capital importance that incorporates the theory that a knowledge-based economy will create an increased skills, increased income economy (Brown & Hesketh 2004). Ashworth (1997) is critical of this stance, as neither whether the standard of graduates has been maintained nor the importance of the status of institutions has been considered.

The subject area is suggested to be of increasing importance, due to there being greater competition from emerging economies. Research now suggests that up to 40% of graduates are not using graduate employment. This would render the government's constant reference to the extra wages a graduate will earn over a lifetime over a non-graduate counterpart void for many individuals. This is used for justification for transferring the cost of higher education more onto the individual, but is this now just a redundant rhetoric? The trend that there will be increased graduate employment within a knowledge economy was based on predictions of a growth economy, and as we are now in a time of recession this could mean disaster for graduate employment (Brown & Hesketh 2004, TLRP 2008).

**2.8 Meritocracy.**

How a company will perform in today's economy often focuses on human resources, with the equation of the right people with the right knowledge in the right job necessary for success. This could be seen to be directly influenced by Durkheim's view that employment and education are linked, with meritocracy rewarded. However the ideology of meritocracy was based on the concept of limitations on numbers of the population having the necessary paper qualifications and skills. Durkheim saw education is having a duality of functions, to reinforce social solidarity and rules and the selection to occupation arising from individual achievement, though a critique of this might be that a 'more of the same' is unlikely to promote meritocracy, but maintain the status quo (WOU 2013). Thus credentials, paper qualifications, provide a measure of that individual's performance and knowledge. These are now utilised by employers to allocate employment, creating the hierarchy of salary structure and status (Brown 2003).

> *'There is an absolute dimension, in which quality is added by receptive students, good teachers, good facilities and so on: but there is also a relative dimension, in which quality consists of the differential over the educational level attained by others'*

(Hirsch 1977 as cited in Brown 2003:143)

American sociologists through the 1960s and 1970s promoted a theory of meritocracy within employment. Due to the eminence of these sociologists, such as Daniel Bell, the concept was embraced and accepted by academics alongside policymakers and politicians. This theory is concerned with the relationship of an individual's class origin, educational achievement and hence eventual class destination, which was considered would change over time according to the needs of a modern society (Goldthorpe 2003).

Human resources must be utilised across the spectrum of social class, so widening participation within education should, in theory, release human potential via increased educational opportunities. Individual achievement will gain qualifications to strengthen social selection, associated with class destination, an educational based meritocracy creating social mobility. However the reality shows, from national survey data from a range of countries, that this is not the case. Class differentials are still apparent within educational attainment – children of upper class parents show higher ability. High or low academic

ability have their own distinct pathway of opportunity, however the class 'card' is seen within medium ability individuals – the higher the class origin of the individual the more likely they will continue on within education – showing differences in the 'take up' of education.  This can be a considerable waste of talent (McNamee & Miller 2003, Goldthorpe 2003)

> *"Children of working class origins are more 'risk averse' than children from more advantaged backgrounds but this might be merely rational given differences in security and stability of parental income and income prospects"*

(Goldthorpe 2003:235)

However, the question must be raised about societal inequalities that exist. These do not allow a level playing field of opportunity to all groups in society. A middle-class lifestyle is the aim for those living in Western societies and females are entering the workplace in increasing numbers, competing for employment at all levels. Alongside massification within higher education, this equates to intense competition for 'elite' graduate employment. Benefits from the welfare state are now decreasing in real terms, from economic forces at play, such as decreased taxation from lowered income tax, and increasing numbers of individuals eligible for old-age pensions (Brown et al 2001). The middle classes are now finding this competition is causing them to reassess the education their children are achieving. There is a requirement for higher 'A' level results to be able to enter an 'elitist' university, on the selective courses necessary for CVs.

> *'Employers cannot be relied upon always to act as unswerving agents of an education based meritocracy, and today, perhaps less so than before'*

(Goldthorpe 2003:237)

Employers have different values than the sociologists and politicians on what is important and necessary for the job.  However in the UK it is also accepted that children from the lower classes will only have education to achieve social mobility, rather than the socio-cultural backing children from the upper classes also have.  This factor impacts on social mobility for the middle classes, as there is rarely a downward turn, due to socialisation skills allowing entry into certain service sector employment with the a level of status and remuneration, and opportunities to rise in the management structure (Goldthorpe 2003).

## 2.9 Students as consumers within a consumer society

There are two aspects when considering students as consumers. Initially, students are becoming consumers of education in the current higher education structure. Universities are now reliant on the numbers of students they attract to fund the institution, so increasingly higher education as an investment for the future is how universities are selling themselves. The NUS warns 'universities could not complain about the erosion of academic values and growing consumerism while pursuing a model that makes these trends inevitable' (Streeting as cited in Attwood 2007, NUS 2006). Universities have responded the student satisfaction and achievement is very important to them, but that this is ongoing, not just following the introduction of tuition fees.

The second aspect is around students as young people living within a consumer society. Instant gratification is the norm and status and identity are linked to consumer items. The students of the 1970s had a grant if they were lucky, parental help and did not worry if they lived off beans on toast, bought cut price clothes and drank cheap beer (Alexander 2007). The social and economic environment in which students now live encourages conspicuous consumption. By the era of the change from grants to loans, materialism has increased to the point of creating a desire to keep to a lifestyle students have had and want for the future, a lifestyle that they would have had if they had entered the world of work albeit on a low salary (SIES 2003-2008). This dictates purchase of designer close, branded goods and so on, status and identity associated with consumer items (Reid 2013). Their degree is also associated with future increased materialism, as graduate employment is allied with affluence.

## 2.10 Conclusion

The evolution of globalisation has transformed Western societies into societies that put emphasis on marketisation, commercialisation and commodification. Moving from manufacture to service industries created a perceived need for a knowledge economy, and thus a need for an educated workforce. There is rhetoric of education, education, education. This was the thinking that underpinned the expansion of educational provision in the UK, creating a very clear aim by government to increase input into higher education.

Revised funding strategies endeavoured to cope with the dramatic increase of student participation. Aspirations to embrace equality and diversity by widening participation across all strata of British society show a contradiction in terms however, as these funding strategies leave students in massive amount of debt by completion of their degree. This is particularly true for non-traditional groups, who have the highest aversion to debt, though logically these students should be least affected due to means tested grants to help with subsistence and lower the debt of the student loan.

There are positive aspects to this phenomenon. There is freedom from the traditional career structure, as changing jobs frequently is no longer considered a disadvantage within certain sectors for employment, and individuals can now 'job hop' if they have the right skills.

The underlying idea was that a global economy would be 'good' for the workforce, as jobs would not be so scarce, redefining employability across most economies. What is not factored into this equation are the power differentials between social groups. What can be seen is that though 'knowledge sector' work is increasing, not all 'knowledge workers' are finding 'knowledge jobs' (Brown & Hesketh 2004). Many graduates tell of attending interviews for call centre employment, with associated low levels of wages and work conditions, to be faced with numerous other applicants for the job with high level degrees from status universities.

Thus it may be considered that while students in the UK are increasing choosing to take on paid employment alongside their studies because of widening participation and changing funding policies, it should also be enquired could they manage to fund their studies on the student loan system in place, with deferred tuition payments. Should this prove to be the case, has living within a consumer society contributed to this increase in students 'earning while learning', and if so, to what extent?

Research in this area does show that the spending patterns of students reflect those of similar age groups employed in low income employment. However it has to be noted that for these low income groups this is an ongoing life style, while for students, it can be argued, this is a temporary situation while they accrue qualifications. These are aimed as a stepping stone to improved life opportunities, to gain graduate employment with an associated high income.

26

Thus do students 'need' the consumer items they purchase, that lead to the choices they make regarding demands on their time of paid employment that might be to the detriment of their studies, do they perceive there may be a risk to their levels of achievement?

The following chapter reviews the literature on empirical findings relating to students who undertake paid employment.

# Chapter Three

## Literature Review: Section 2: Empirical findings relating to students who undertake paid employment

### 3.1 Introduction

A wide variety of studies pose questions asking whether students who engage in paid employment are subject to a detrimental impact on their academic studies and student experience. Recent studies, such as those by Hunt et al (2004), Curtis & Shani (2002), TUC (2006), Callender (2008), indicate the importance of analysing whether this is so, in light of the rising numbers of students now participating in paid employment, particularly TTPE. This has been due, in part, to the development of a mass system of higher education in the UK, from the pre-existing 'elite' system, and the resulting modification to student finance. This has placed increased responsibility on the individual to fund a university degree. There are concerns over missed lectures and assignment deadlines, with associated perceptions that grades are lower than the students' potential from prior achievements would suggest. The student experience has diminished, in relation to participation in university societies and activities, leading to a reduction in the accrued cultural capital allied to attendance at university. Research findings of the TUC (2000) also suggest increased levels of stress and tiredness amongst students engaged in TTPE.

Callender (2008) considers this to be a largely ignored topic, and what research that has been carried out in the area is limited, with few considering the impact to academic studies. Studies consider how to attract students, particularly non-traditional students, into higher education, to widen participation, but then ignore the experiences of these students after they begin the course. This equates to the studies being all about getting the individual into higher education but none on looking after these students when they are there. Hunt et al (2004) also defines there is extensive literature on the conversion of higher education funding over recent years from a grant to a student loan system, but, again, little on the impact of what this has meant for the individual student. Many studies identify evidence of a steady rise in the incidence of students undertaking term time paid employment associated with the transformation in university funding over the past decade, which adds up to a significant

increase. Thus there is agreement research is required on the context in which the rise in students undertaking TTPE has taken place, and what are the implications of this.

This chapter looks at the history of student employment, and how this has evolved to the present day. The implications of current student funding to individual students are explored, examining policies and the relationship this has to the sharp rise in student TTPE. The characteristics of student paid employment, who works, why and where, is studied to consider the equality within the student body incorporating expectations on parental contributions and attitudes towards debt. All impacts from paid employment, whether positive or negative, will be investigated.


**3.2 History of student paid employment and links to consumer society:**


Hakim (1998) considers the relationship between the employment market and social change from looking at a wide range of research studies from the UK and USA. This encompasses the changes in student involvement with paid employment throughout time, the history of student paid employment.

Hakim found a certain percentage of students has always undertaken employment alongside their studies. This has a longer history in the USA, but there are similarities in the patterns of employment between the UK and the USA. Before the 1990s, the number of students in paid employment while studying was low, with the employment usually throughout the school holidays. However, the later studies were beginning to show these figures on the rise, especially for those students choosing employment within term time and not just in the holidays. The Family Expenditure Survey (FES) data from 1968 to 1991 show an increase from 40% to 59% of all students in secondary, tertiary and higher education working 6 to 10 hours a week. The biggest rise was throughout the 1980s, though the figures were still relatively low in comparison to the figures for today. The NUS (2008) defines that over the past decade students taking on paid employment, whether in college or university, has increased by 50%. This means 70 to 80% of students currently engage in paid employment.

Hakim suggests the timing of these increases indicate that higher education funding amendments of the 1990s would not totally explain this phenomenon, though would be a major catalyst. Studies of the late 1980s and early 1990s, such as Roberts et al (1987) and Sly (1993) as cited by Hakim (1998), state students in paid employment were from the higher

socio-economic groups at this time. While this would reflect the social composition of the student population at this point, Dustman et al (1996) as cited in Hakim (1998) also puts forward the theory that paid employment was utilised by middle-class parents to both instil money management to their children and restrict consumption, particularly in leisure spending. These students were also more successful in achievement levels and obtaining graduate employment. Hakim suggests the 'most able and motivated' students undertook paid employment, with the work experience and social skills gained reflected on their curriculum vitae, important for future careers. A follow on point that Hakim (1998) makes is that at this period in time, careers could be established from in service training. Students from lower class backgrounds, participating in paid employment while in high school but not continuing on to higher education, were having successful livelihoods.

Studies, such as Hutson & Cheung (1992) and Micklewright et al (1994), defined a void between secondary schooling and tertiary education, where young people required some form of paid employment for psychological well-being, needing to prove a degree of independence away from the family. The students had full control over their wages, enabling them to establish a strong sense of identity from this degree of autonomy in their lives. However, a consumption pattern was promoted, which continued throughout higher education. This was a development ongoing from Hakim's theory of a restriction on consumption. A link was appearing endorsing the concept of a relationship between students' paid employment and living in a capitalist society, relating identity with consumer items, which is discussed later in this chapter.

This link is reinforced in more recent UK research. Curtis & Shani (2002) examined prior work experience within the student body, discovering a high level of students had employment in the sixth form. This had created a desired standard of living for the students. Hunt et al (2004) also found this in his study at Northumbria University. Curtis and Shani (2002:31) promoted this had generated a 'routinisation of work', where studies and employment became the norm, interacting for students to cope more efficiently, though still experiencing the greater levels of stress associated with the effort of juggling studies, employment and leisure time. Much of the research into student paid employment highlight stress within time management, particularly at exam times and with meeting assignment deadlines.

**3.3 Higher educational funding modification implications:**

The late 1990s brought about massive change in the funding structure of higher education in the UK, initiating the significant social phenomenon of high numbers of students undertaking TTPE to be able to afford to attend university.

**3.3.1 Elite versus mass systems of Higher Education:**

The research data Hakim (1998) explored indicated that students who undertook paid employment had higher achievement levels than their non working counterparts, but at this time the higher education system was elitist. Hakim defines the elitist system as where 10% of the same age cohorts enter higher education. At this time the student population consisted of wealthier students, with high levels of government subsidies, thus the number of students in paid employment was low.

New combinations of paid employment and study were becoming apparent in this era, as a mass system of higher education began to evolve from policies to widen participation through all strata of society. Hakim defines this system as where 30% plus of the same age cohort enters higher education. Funding became more difficult due to sheer volume of numbers. Student loans replaced grants and the onus for funding the degree was placed more on the individual. The number of students in paid employment, especially TTPE, increased dramatically throughout these years. Hakim, alongside studies such as Callender & Wilkinson (2003), Metcalf (2003), Ford et al (1995) attribute this, in part, to financial necessity, as the value of subsistence grants became eroded due to the increasing number of students and the policies in force to finance this increase.

**3.3.2 Structure of degree course:**

Hakim (1998) assessed the higher education systems in place, considering the structure of the degree. The UK has a different system than many other developed nations. Most mass higher education systems have degrees that are completed in 5 to 9 years full time. The UK has a 3 to 4 years full time system in place. This equates to greater intensity of study, increasing the threat that TTPE will have detrimental consequences for the student.

Curtis (2006) considers to study in the UK is very expensive, the third most expensive country in the world. The Education Policy Organisation report found the UK has a high cost of living alongside a low GDP per capita, with the loan system to pay for higher education making this much less affordable than in other countries. The actual cost for the higher education is moderate, with high accessibility for all socio-economic groups, compared to other countries. Thus the accumulated high costs in the UK do not discourage participation in higher education, though Curtis defines the UK has the highest proportion of students in TTPE, which is an important distinction regarding the uptake of paid employment within a student population.

Ford et al (1995:187) considers that 'the conception of higher education as a full time activity has been reflected historically in the length of courses and the mechanisms for support through grants' but that this has now changed. This model of higher education assumes that any employment undertaken by full time undergraduates is incidental and confined to vacation work. This model no longer applies.

### 3.3.3 Students as employees:

Hakim (1998) examined the 1995 NUS survey, which reported students viewed the choice on whether to undertake TTPE deeply influenced by the new level of the affordability of university, following the funding changes from student grants to loans. Students considered themselves cheap labour, as they were casual, part time employees. This was discussed widely as a public policy issue of the 1990s. In the UK, right up until the 1990s, students mainly fell into the category of a young single person with no children, living with their parents. Hakim states that at this stage there were no differences in the characteristics of students engaged in paid employment and those who were not. The type of employment undertaken was largely in retail and hospitality. Thus the students were in the 'marginal workforce', which unfortunately is low paid and has the lowest employment protection laws in place.

Curtis & Lucas (2001) consider that currently there is a new demand for workers who can 'multitask, make decisions and take responsibility'. Employers are identified as finding this in the student workforce, who also meet the criteria of being 'cheap and flexible labour'. The

study assessed that though students are vocal regarding the disadvantages of the employment, they can also feel trapped and vulnerable with regard to being unable to challenge employers about the pay and conditions. This is because they are so reliant on the employment to finance their degree. By the same token, Curtis & Lucas identified employers used students, viewing them as easily controlled, accepting of low pay, but also having traits of being intelligent, articulate and conscientious. The key issues for students, looking forward to when they will be seeking graduate employment, are the academic standing of university and the courses that are available within them, student paid employment is just the means for them to complete the course, so these students will often take whatever employment is available (Smith 2007). Curtis & Lucas (2001) viewed students realise that in many ways they are being taken advantage of by the employers, but consider they have no choice as they work through necessity.

### 3.3.4 Parental contributions

The transformation of student funding arising from the widening participation policies of the 1990s includes a high level of government expectation that parents will contribute to their child's higher education.

The importance of parental contributions has led to articles ranging from almost tongue in cheek, put over as how students should approach obtaining money from parents, but with an underlying focus on what parents will get in return for the money and the conditions put on the money (Swain 2007), through to how parents can reduce student debt for their children by a offering financial advice, inclusive of regular saving before university, budgeting their money, creating a weekly cash flow as opposed to monthly so that students do not get into a habit of using credit cards and so on (MacErlean 2007).

Davies & Elias (2003) found, in their study, that students reported no receipt of parental contributions as the most common reason for dropping out of University. This was very much related to debt, which was the second most common reason reported.

Smith (2007) evaluated the Unite report, which finds students now have a very high reliance on parental contributions or TTPE to fund their degree. Unite indicates an 8% rise in student

debt in the past year, with 75% of students now reporting they have accrued university debt. In 2007 the average parental contribution amounted to £4000. Unite, as cited in Smith (2007**:1**) states:

> *"With debt continuing to rise, the report clearly indicates that one, less onerous, source of temporary revenue available for some students are financial contributions from their parents. The report shows that parental contributions continue to be an extremely important source of income for students as over 93% of them rely on their parents for some financial support."*

The Halifax building society completed a survey looking at parental contributions to university funding. Parents did not want their children to build up huge levels of debt so were prepared to take on the financial responsibility for university funding by working overtime, taking on second jobs, sacrificing holidays and socialising and in extreme cases taking out personal loans or remortgaging their homes (Fairinvestment 2006).

### 3.3.5 Debt

Attitudes towards debt play a major part in the decision-making of students, from whether to go to university initially, through to the choices made on the amount of hours undertaken in paid employment. Callender & Jackson (2005) considered whether students are deterred from entering higher education through an aversion to debt, given the funding changes since the 90s now leave students with huge levels of debt on completion of their degree course. They conclude that for students from the lower social classes, debt factors strongly as a deterrent, overriding these students' aspirations for future life opportunities, agreed in the studies of Christie & Munro (2003), Woodrow (1999), which identified financial considerations a huge barrier for young people from lower class family backgrounds. Cheri et al (2005) found anxiety regarding debt to exist throughout the whole of the degree course, though students were seen to become more tolerant of the debt as their course progressed, resigned that this was part and parcel of attendance at higher education. The Student Experience Report (2005) state 30% of students report having serious worries and anxiety about the debt accumulated at university. Metcalf (2005) defines an increase of 5% of graduates expressing regret they entered higher education since the introduction of tuition fees, which is directly related to the debt they now have.

Cooke et al (2004) considered there to be different attitudes to debt within students, whether this debt be from student loans, overdrafts or help from parents. Some students accept and cope with debt as part of life while others never accept or handle even the thought of debt. This was not age related, all age groups saw problems in the repayment of debt. The affects of being in debt were dependent on the course, workload and personality type. Social class also had an impact, as those students from low income families did not feel they could ask family to help. CHERI et al (2005) define coping strategies helped students to come to terms with borrowing, as there was little choice when there was a reduced income coming in, students had to adjust to curtailing lifestyles.

Cooke et al (2004) identified mental health issues for many students, related to attitudes to debt and differentials between student groups in the coping mechanisms used to manage debt. Some students felt tired continually, not just related to paid employment and study workload but also from the anxiety they felt about the debt they were accumulating through their degree.

As capitalism has progressed, debt has become much more accepted with most people having some form of debt. Cheri et al (2005) define debt has become a 'norm' within student culture, with students becoming more realistic about levels of debt, as the uptake by 90% of students of a student loan shows. However, Smith (2007) found the Unite report identified students from lower income family backgrounds either had a lack of knowledge regarding, or did not understand, how the student loan system worked, so often used high interest bank loans and credit card loans to fund their studies.

Paid employment is a major coping strategy for students in the lower social classes, used as a way to reduce student debt. This will factor in the decision-making of these students on how many hours to undertake in TTPE, even though these students recognise there are negative impacts to both studies and their student experience if these hours are too long.

**3.4 Characteristics of student paid employment:**

This section examines which students choose to participate in paid employment, the motivations behind the decision-making and choices being made, and the incidence of paid employment, in particular TTPE.

**3.4.1 Equality – which students are in paid employment?**

Cooke et al (2004) & Christie et al (2001) define students within the UK choose paid employment to make ends meet. This is feasible in the long summer holidays, but in term times or the Easter and Christmas holidays, has implications to academic studies and the social aspect of student life. That there are increasing numbers of students in TTPE reliant on these wages to afford university is concluded in studies such as Calendar & Kemp (2000) and Finch et al (2006) as cited in Callender (2008). In 1998/1999 wages made up 14% of students' total income, by 2004/2005 this was 22%, effectively showing how dependent students now are on these wages.

Students do have choices within the agency in paid employment, with Brady (2005) mooting this is best in summer holidays. Brady found that 85% of students do this, but that an increasing number of students also now work in TTPE, more than 50%, which can impact on achieving a work-life balance.

Hunt et al (2004) cites TTPE as an example of how the individual is now paying a larger share of higher education costs. Non-traditional students, already disadvantaged by an aversion to debt and low parental contributions, are defined in this study is having to make a greater contribution. This creates a very different university experience for this student group. The non traditional students in paid employment will often emerge with large debts, a curriculum vitae full of bar work and a poorer degree result, whilst wealthier peers work for long term career benefits, have lower debts, wider ranges of experience in their CV and higher degree results.

There is a supposition that student loan debt will rise with the introduction of variable fees, forcing certain student groups to participate more in TTPE, and for longer hours. Some

students, and Hunt et al (2004) indicate this to be a significant number, do not take out student loans or minimise these to as little as possible by undertaking TTPE, with the majority of these students from the lower income groups.  Studies by Barke et al (2000) and Payne & Callender (1997) show evidence that for some students the effect of debt has more importance than any perceived negative aspects of paid employment. They also point out that the diversity in the non traditional student body brings a cultural/religious aspect to attitudes towards debt. Students and their relationship with debt is discussed more widely later in this chapter.

Humphrey (2006) identifies a growing inequality within the typology of employed students. Ford et al (1995) raises the question of equity between both individual students and individual institutions regarding TTPE. This could contribute to differences in levels of attainment and thus different opportunities in the labour market. Hunt et al (2004) reflect that there is the potential for equity issues between those who feel compelled to work long hours in term time and those who either do not work or work few hours, which will create a barrier to the government's policies to widen participation across all sectors of the UK population. He recommends restoring a grant system for 'equity and efficiency advantages' (Hunt et al 2004:16). This coincides with the Rees Report (2005) in Wales, instrumental in bringing back a maintenance grant for those students from low income families.  It may be argued this is a form of replacement for parental contributions, so if then the student continues to work long hours, this is directly related to the fear of debt more than dire necessity.

Hunt et al (2004) concludes structural inequalities have been created in higher education. There are implications to university league tables, as these may appear distorted for those institutions which have a high number of students from the lower socio economic backgrounds. Thus to have a higher percentages of students in paid employment for long hours causes a defined 'differential in employment propensities'

Purcell et al (2005) define inequalities still persist in the labour market, arguing that the higher education experience should not just be around widening participation so any member of the population can continue in education, but also ensuring that every student has the opportunity to embrace the whole spectrum of what it means to attend university. Otherwise, students who are already disadvantaged might ask why bother to get a degree if the benefits

are eroded by the inflation of credentials. Social and cultural capital accrued would play an increasingly important role in obtaining graduate employment, obtained by participation in university activities, the province of the upper classes.

**3.4.2 Motivations for Paid Employment:**

Callender (2008) defined the motivations and decision-making related to TTPE were predisposed by a wide range of sociological factors. There is suggested to be a significant absolute versus relative poverty issue, as 92% of students who stated they needed money for basic living essentials undertook TTPE compared to 43% who stated they had no financial difficulties. Callender does point out these judgments are based on what should be considered to be a reasonable standard of living, thus asking what does an individual need. Callender found more than 50% of those students in TTPE had families who could not help with funding, coinciding with the 2002-2003 SIES data indicating students in TTPE receive less parental contributions than students not in employment. Humphrey (2006) considered the major determinant of which students undertook paid employment was class, and this was connected with an associated lack of parental contributions. 28% of students in Callender's (2008) study also worked in part to have less monies owed at the end of their degree. Hunt et al (2004:8) says:

> *'participation in the labour market is therefore a function of the scale of living expenses (lifestyle) and the availability of funds from different sources'*

The data of the Hunt et al study highlighted students from higher income family backgrounds had lower percentages of engagement and shorter hours in TTPE.

Callender (2008) also defined there was a relationship between prior qualifications and the course now being undertaken with TTPE participation, and also a link to financial circumstances, as levels of debt and financial commitments also influenced the decision-making regarding TTPE.

Curtis & Shani (2002) feel students who undertake paid employment need to be redefined as part time students and part time workers. The TUC (2000) survey found that 72% of students are in some form of paid employment and the reasons they give for this are largely financial,

to supplement the student loan and level of parental contributions they receive. The Hardship survey by the NUS, in 1999, identified a gap between living costs and the total package of student support, so defined that students were not spending their wages on luxuries. Thus they felt that students needed to have paid employment in many cases, that there was no real level of choice involved. Living at home had an important function for students from low socio economic backgrounds to fund their studies (Hunt et al 2004). The data coincided with other studies that students living at home had a higher incidence of TTPE. This did not affect the level of impact on academic achievement or the amount of hours these students worked. Hunt et al points out that this should be a matter of concern, due to rising drop-out rates and falling student retention, that the anxiety and stress often seen in the student population is a consequence of term time employment. Carney et al (2005) state integration within university life can be difficult for students who live at home, and these students are often more in employment – 65% of students living at home have paid employment in comparison to 38% of those who live away. Retention rates are higher in those students who are integrated into the university. When students live at home, costs are reduced so less hours in TTPE are necessary, though correspondingly, less time might be needed on housework etc so more time is freed for TTPE. Therefore the choices made here will lie with the individual student (Hunt et al 2004).

Tuition fees and the new student loan system have caused increasing numbers of students to consider working in paid employment as an option to achieve their degrees. Alongside this increase in employment, the probability of dropping out is higher (Greenaway, D. & Haynes, M. (2004) as cited in Johnes, G. & Johnes, J. 2004). Shaw (1984) in Archer et al (2000) saw the main reason for leaving university early is to earn money. This is reinforced by the later studies of Neill et al (2004) and Brady (2005). The NUS (1999) sees that the expansion in the student population has caused high numbers of students to face hardship. This is related to increased drop-out rates, where financial problems are cited as the main cause. This should be of concern when one considers the waste of resources associated with high drop-out rates (Curtis & Williams 2002).

The increase of students in term time employment is considered by Hunt et al (2004) to be an unexpected phenomenon, but one that is causing the output from higher education to become reduced. Thus if future earnings of graduate employment are reduced by these lowered levels

of academic achievement, the short term gains of the students from paid employment will not be sufficient to counteract this. Hunt et al (2004) equates this to there being a decreased social rate return for the investment that has been made in the HE, which is not economically efficient. Loss of attainment questions the efficiency of higher education.

Students, it is argued, are now increasingly seeking paid employment, and while certain studies indicate there are potential benefits from this, others more strongly suggest these benefits are outweighed by the detrimental effects of TTPE. It is also identified that students from low income backgrounds have the highest financial pressure, and so undertake paid employment for long hours during term time, which is identified as having the highest impact to studies. This affects both the academic and social side of the student experience, considered to contribute to the 'drop out' rates identified for marginal groups.

### 3.4.3 The incidence of term time employment:

The rise in TTPE is connected to the transformation of student funding in the 1990s. This was noted by numerous studies such as Ford et al (1995), Metcalf (2003), Smith & Taylor (1999). The Student Income and Expenditure surveys (SIES) can be examined as a time series data base, showing the biggest rise in TTPE followed the 1998 Teaching in Higher Education Act, where tuition fees were introduced and grants abolished. Before the act, 47% of students had TTPE. This rose to 58% within a few years of the reform (Callender &Wilkinson 2003).

Data from the research of Hunt et al (2004) saw a rise from 37.6% to 48.7% of student participation in paid employment throughout the two years of the study, 1999 to 2001. The work concurs with most other studies regarding the nature of student paid employment that the majority of employment available is in retail and hospitality. Hunt et al found 66% of the students reported they worked to 'achieve a desired standard of living', which could relate to necessities or luxuries, again demonstrating that these students are living in a consumer society. Hunt et al (2004) also defined that within students who undertook paid employment there was a disproportionate amount from the lower socio-economic groups, while Callender (2008), scraptuitionfees (2003) also noted the poorest students were most adversely affected, but most dependent on the income.

Metcalf (2003) and Callender (2008) found the incidence of TTPE varied between higher education institutions, related to the diversity within the composition of the student body and the local labour market. The intensity of academic requirements between universities varied also. In the UK there are now seen to be many more mature students, with different motivations to re-enter education. They seek to enhance existing qualifications for promotion or a change of direction in career. Some are single parents wanting to gain qualifications for increased life opportunities for themselves and their children. Callender's study perceived these students often undertake paid employment for over 20 hours a week.

## 3.5 Policy Context:

Callender (2008) considers that though the numbers of students in TTPE has increased significantly since the higher education funding changes of the 1990s, the government and policy makers have rarely commented on this.

Humphrey (2006) examines this aspect from the viewpoint of widening participation, concerned regarding the influence social class has to the incidence of TTPE. He considered the principle of equal opportunities brought in by the Robbins Report of 1963, which promoted the concept that if a student had the right qualifications then he/she could go to university. This has not been borne out, the numbers of students from working-class families have decreased over the past decades, despite increasing numbers in the total number of students.

The Dearing Report of 1997 (Dearing 1997) did not foresee student TTPE as an issue for the recommendations it made on how higher education should develop within Britain over the next 20 years. The Cubie Report (Cubie 1999, MacDonald 1999), looking at Scottish student finance, does incorporate some mention of student paid employment by advocating that universities should set up part time employment schemes and advise students on work/life balance. This recommended that when incorporating paid employment hours within a full time university course, there should be a limit of 10 hours a week. The Rees Report (2005), which looked at Welsh student funding, mentions that paid employment can curtail university activities, opportunities to undertake volunteer work, and affect studies adversely. Therefore

there should be increased student support for students from low income group to minimise the amount that engage in TTPE. The review does note the benefits of relevant work experience to a future career.

Callender (2008) found research studies utilised within policy making identified TTPE as a potential problem regarding academic achievement. In the report 'Higher Education: Student Retention of 2000/2002', it was recommended that universities advise students not to have more than 12 hours per week in paid employment and, to achieve this, student finance should be improved. However, in the government's response to this report, it was stated that guidelines should be for the higher education institutions and the individual to choose. Though the government went on to express the view that excessive working in term time should be discouraged they would not recommend a set number of hours due to the differences between the institutions and courses.

This implies government and policymakers have not analysed what impact TTPE can have for students in any great detail (Hunt et al 2004, Callender 2008). Margaret Hodge, the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Higher Education in 2002, stated:

> *'Let me just say something else which is probably a bit controversial. I'm not too concerned about students doing some part time work when they are studying………What we've got to ensure is that there's a proper balance in some way so that the work doesn't impinge on their study'*

Hodge (2002) as cited in Hunt (2004:3)

Callender (2008) considers the minister associated the work/life balance for students to be closely linked with lifestyle choices; hence the motivations to work and how students use their income were more about socialising than the subsistence necessary to stay in higher education. Callender felt that though Hodge emphasised it was the number of hours worked that was important, she considered the student support system plus paid employment would provide a good standard of living for a student. Ford et al (1995) found that in Canada and the USA, where there is a long history of paid employment for students, it is identified that it is the relationship between the amount of hours in employment versus the amount of hours necessary for studies that is important. When assessing the impact of the said employment, the balance is the issue. Carney et al (2005) suggests that within higher education there is now an aim to enhance the student life to influence student retention rates. The work/life

balance is important, but this has to be accepted by universities, government and policymakers, in addition to students. Within the Hunt et al (2004) study, the context is such that the individual student aims to find the optimum balance for both quality of life in the university experience alongside a balance of time for studies, when incorporating TTPE. This relates to more hours spent in studying equating to a higher achievement level.

Callender (2008) examined the Select Committee in the Post-16 Student Support Report of 2002, which reiterated the previous recommendations of a maximum of 12 hours of paid employment per week for students. The report considered that for many students these wages paid for basic living necessities not luxuries. Callender feels there is the idea underpinning both the Select Committee and Margaret Hodges' assertions that TTPE is acceptable, which suggests a degree course is not a full time activity. It is the relationship of study time with the number of employed hours that is important. However, as Callender points out, there is no agreement within government on what constitutes an excessive amount of hours in TTPE. An assumption is made that there is a threshold regarding hours in employment, and provided these are not breached then any negative effects connected to participation in paid employment will not occur. However, policy makers appear to assume that such a threshold has been calculated, and formed policies influenced by this.

Humphrey (2006) and Callender (2008) both examine the 2003 White Paper 'Future of Higher Education'. This merely stated that choices students make around their lifestyle made the government feel it was reasonable for students to undertake TTPE alongside their studies. This paper also identified the huge increase in numbers of students participating in higher education, comparing that in 1962 6% of young people under 21 were in university, while by 2006 this had risen to 43%. The paper recognised there still existed a social class gap, with the top three social classes three times more likely to go to university then the lower three classes.

Humphrey (2006) and Callender (2008) go on to examine the 2004 Higher Education Act. This was to restore means tested maintenance grants, defer loan payments, cancel up front tuition fees and bring in variable tuition fees with deferred payments, from 2006, in order to enable higher education to become more affordable across all strata of the UK population. Callender found student employment was again not within any debate by the government and

policy makers. She saw the only mention of paid employment undertaken by students was in the guidance notes for assessing student need for those in hardship. Here the notes stated that:

> 'students could supplement income via part time work, holiday work, overdrafts, savings and increased parental contributions'

DFES (2005, paragraph 3.55) as cited in Callender (2008:361).

This assessment uses an 'assumed income' figure for these sources of income to avoid having to make a link between the income derived from students' paid employment and the student support system. Callender (2008) thus surmises this to mean that within the UK students are not assumed to have paid employment, that any wage from paid employment is not essential to student support. This is very different to other countries where the student support systems do include wages as an accepted source of income.

Callender (2008) finds that TTPE is now important to students to both help towards the costs of higher education and lower the levels of debt acquired from taking a degree. Student loans she feels are not enough to cover the costs of higher education today. Student support arrangements are often dependent on parental contribution. This contributes to a class impact regarding student financing, as it would indicate that students from lower socio-economic groups will need to work in higher numbers than those from wealthier families. Within Wales Quinn (2004) defined that attracting then supporting working class students so they do not 'drop out' is a concern for universities, though this is now helped by the re-introduction of a maintenance grant, which is means tested (Rees Report 2005). Means tested grant restored in Wales also led to this being introduced in England (Watt 2002). Callender (2008) also criticises the student loan system, as means testing only accounts for a small portion of the loan, therefore students whose parents can contribute a greater amount can still get a sizable loan.

**3.6 The impact of paid employment on academic studies and the student experience:**

There are two impacts to be considered here, the impact to the academic achievement and the impact on the student experience. Impacts could be beneficial or detrimental for students.

**3.6.1 Beneficial aspects:**

Beneficial aspects gained from undertaking paid employment while in full time study are discussed in both UK and USA research studies. Callender (2008) cites the US studies of Horne & Burkehold (1998), King (2002), Pascorella and Terenzini (2005), which consider that student paid employment, with hours under fifteen per week, can be beneficial to students in the completion of their degree, levels of attainment and the progress they make. However, Callender suggests this is related to the flexibility within the American degree system.

In the UK, with regards to paid employment while in full time study, recent research does identify beneficial aspects. Initially these benefits were discussed by students as being linked to the paid employment helping with decisions on the type of employment they may wish to enter (Hakim 1998) and increasing specific employability skills which could be of use to their curriculum vitae for their career structure following obtaining their degree (Curtis &Shani 2002, Lucas & Lammont 1998, Winn & Stevenson 1997, Brookes 2006). However when Curtis & Shani (2002) and Wynn & Stevenson (1997) then examined the type of paid employment the students were undertaking, the point was made that in fact, in most cases, this was very much unrelated to anticipated future employment.

Callender (2008) also found that students did see benefits to working, such as an enhancement of the transferable skills which would be of use in graduate employment. Curtis & Shani (2002), Lucas & Lammont (1998) and Neill et al (2004) also identified this, while Curtis & Shani (2002) also enquired of employers their opinions regarding student paid employment. Employers responded they were impressed by the communication and teamwork skills of students who had undertaken part-time paid employment, which would make a good addition to a CV. Written communication skills were, however, not seen to be enhanced. Related to this, Curtis & Williams (2002) defined employers often valued 'real work' over work experience.

Curtis & Shani (2002) describe students identify increased confidence and improved time allocation skills from undertaking paid employment, while Curtis & Lucas (2001) state the

benefits were seen to be via work experience and the responsibilities attached to the employment.

Hodgson & Spours (2000) and Curtis & Lucas (2001) identified TTPE could be an additional facet for socialising within student life.  Often the paid employment, especially those jobs within hospitality, were identified as additional opportunities to socialise within the student faction.

Hunt et al (2004), when evaluating the benefits of TTPE, makes the point that these benefits may not be as high as they are promoted to be, due to the nature of typical student employment being low skilled and unrelated to future careers.  Other studies, such as Brown (2003), state employers are now considering the 'soft' skills gained from paid employment when recruiting for graduate employment, due to the inflation of degrees seen in the mass system of higher education.  However  Hunt et al (2004) identify that despite these 'soft skills' being transferable to graduate employment, they are not enough to attract the students from well off backgrounds into paid employment.  Hunt et al also conclude that if the paid employment is counterproductive by lowering the level of academic achievement, then these soft skills will be alongside a lower level of degree, so not worth as much in real terms in the labour market.

### 3.6.2 Detrimental impacts:

There are negative perceptions regarding term time employment, with concerns expressed about danger to educational achievement.  Callender (2008) considers research evidence from the UK and USA, on TTPE in relation to student attainment. Initially she considered the scope of the research studies, inclusive of limitations regarding the findings they made and generalisations determined from the data. Overall, there are no large scale studies over a variety of institutions. The USA studies incorporate paid employment as part of the higher education experience, but do not differentiate between part time or full-time students, or identify the timeframe of paid employment within the academic year. Many of the UK studies are small scale and usually undertaken in one institution only.

Callender (2008) regards this to be a major limitation of these studies, as it is necessary to compare universities to consider if this is nationally representative. There is also no control regarding students' baseline of prior academic attainment for comparison. Hours in employment are frequently not taken into account. Callender believes studies must always consider other factors that may contribute to the end result, as it might not be paid employment that is affecting these results. Callender's (2008) work considers the impact to academic achievement, but controls for prior academic attainment, the relationship to the hours of work and a nationally representative sample.

The National Child Development study data in the UK, as cited in Hakim (1998) showed that teens undertaking paid employment while in secondary school had lower marks than those who were not in employment. In this study the grades were quantified to explore achievement levels.

Barke et al (2000) and Hunt et al (2004) both studied the impact of TTPE on students in the same university.  Barke et al calculated a mean percentage grade of 1.7% difference between working and non working students. Hunt et al found that non working students obtained significantly higher marks than their peers in paid employment, but only in certain subject groups. The conclusion made by Hunt et al was that this could affect the degree classification results. Humphrey (2006) also indicates a significant difference in the end of year marks between those students who were employed those who were not. Though Humphrey stresses that he was not able to calculate whether this would make a difference to the final classification of the degree from the data in his study, he does conclude there is a detrimental impact. This was substantial difference on the average mark obtained, which could mean the lowering of the degree classification. Purcell et al (2005) had a study based on a nationally representative sample, with controls made regarding 'A' level scores for prior performance predictors. She also considered a range of other factors that might contribute to the results, though omitted the amount of hours in paid employment worked by the students. A conclusion was made that differences were apparent between employed students, and those who were not employed. This estimated a student in employment would be a third less likely to obtain a 'good' degree. Naylor et al (2000) agreed with these findings in their research. There were significantly lower end of year marks for those students who were in paid

employment, with a calculation made that 37.7% could have achieved a higher grade in their degree.

Lindsey& Paton-Salzberg's (1994) study indicated students that had paid employment failed three times as many modules as those who did not, in addition to obtaining significantly lower marks and poorer degree classifications:

> '*24.8% of students holding permanent jobs during term time would be expected*
> *to achieve a degree that was one class higher if they had not worked*'

(Lindsey et al 1994: 12)

Van Dyke, Little & Callender (2005), alongside other UK studies such as Curtis & Shani (2002) Smith & Taylor (1999), Curtis & Williams (2002), Metcalf (2003), Moreau & Leathwood (2006) and the NUS (2008) indicate students self report that they miss lectures, miss seminars or are unable to complete the studies required of them for these, have less time to study for, read around and work on assignments and in addition have increased levels of stress and tiredness, all accredited to the fact they undertook paid employment. This paints a picture where attainment would be affected very negatively. The NUS (2000) survey found 26% of students missed lectures and 16% missed assignment deadlines, which they specifically blamed on undertaking paid employment.  Callender & Kemp (2000) identify 78% of students in TTPE stated they did not have the amount of time that they wanted for their studies, with 61% stating they got very tired and 47% feeling 'constantly overloaded'.

The works of Smith & Taylor (1999), Curtis & Shani (2002), Curtis & Williams (2002), Metcalf (2003 and Moreau & Leathwood (2006) also show the more hours worked, the more the likelihood of these negative effects. Callender (2008) also identifies a relationship between the amount of hours in paid employment and an increased incidence of students who drop out. When Callender examined studies from the USA, these showed that the more hours a student worked, the more likely they were to either change their degree study from full time to part time or, in many cases, fail to complete their degree. Callender, however, states that in her findings, it was the paid employment in itself that is the factor impacting on academic achievement more so than the amount of hours in paid employment, which was also found in

Humphrey (2006) and Barke et al (2000). This would appear to contradict the findings of many studies that define a relationship between the amount of hours worked with the impact to both academic studies and the student experience. Carney (2005) identified an impact on mental health alongside 59% of the students in the study saying there was an impact on academic achievement, but it was also stated that those students who felt this worked long hours in PE.

In Callender's (2008) data, looking at both marks and degree results, TTPE had a relationship with a lower degree classification, with the more hours worked, the more likelihood of getting a poorer degree. This was irrespective of the higher education institutions. This study did consider prior attainment and the amount of hours in paid employment. Hunt et al (2004) also found the impact was greater when factored with a high amount of hours in paid employment. They also identified a gender impact, where men were affected more than women. Thus Hunt concludes that the consideration TTPE could impact negatively to academic achievement is justified from the evidence of his surveys. The TUC (2000) define the average hours worked are 15 per week, but 30% are over 20 hours. The point is made that these are much longer hours than those worked by students in the sixth form, where the paid employment is usually a Saturday job of eight hours or less. Their survey found that paid employment under 10 hours showed no fail grades for assignments, which is again linked to the idea that increased hours have the most adverse effect on academic achievement. The survey data defined this as not just via lectures missed, but also in the grades being achieved. Students reported tiredness, stress and a lack of concentration when in paid employment for long hours. This was also described by Curtis & Shani (2002) in relation to students who worked in the Christmas vacation.

Ford et al (1995) calculate that in excess of 10% of student income is now from term time employment. This trend could be the influenced by more students in employment, more hours of employment per student and changes in funding streams as sources of income. This research suggests a relationship between higher hours worked, shift work and pressures to work over the hours by employers, all of which contributes to an impact on studies. If TTPE is not to be problematic for some students, then that employment needs to be monitored and perhaps regulated to keep within the parameters of where any impact from paid employment to studies is minimised.

Curtis & Shani (2002) identified TTPE involving unsocial hours and shiftwork causes a high detrimental effect to studies. It was not just the hours at the place of employment that was taken from studies, but also the recovery time, causing missed lectures, tiredness, lack of concentration within lectures and tutorials, and missed assignment deadlines. This was also seen by the TUC survey of 2000, where students self-reported an effect on academic studies from unsocial hours and inflexibility, found in much of the paid employment. Employers were said to be inflexible around time off at exam and assignment times.  Taylor (1998), Smith & Taylor (1999) found that employers put pressure on students to increase their hours when other workers were ill or on holidays or at busy periods, as the employers considered the needs of their organisation and were not interested in the academic needs of the student. Curtis & Williams (2002) defined there are pressures from employers to increase hours to a point where study is seen to be affected.

Curtis & Shani (2002) discuss adverse effects being reported by the minority of students, though many students stated they had not considered the effects deeply, which could be connected to the concept of the routinisation of work.  These effects were noticed when there was the greatest pressure, such as at times of personal crises, assignment deadline dates and exams. One consideration highlighted in this study was that part time students were given allowances by lecturers, but not the full time students, regarding paid employment.  This was pointed out as a recommendation for the future, as Kember (1999) as cited by Curtis & Shani (2002) considered support was of immense value within coping mechanisms.

When exploring students' perceptions around the effects of paid employment, Ford et al (1995) found more than 25% felt there was an adverse impact on standards of academia. Winn & Stevenson (1997) considered students felt that term time work should be fitted around study but, in reality, this was not the case and therefore there was an adverse impact on their studies. Taylor (1998) found that around 60% of his sample of students perceived paid employment would be detrimental to studies. The NUS (1999) found 59% of students in higher education believe their studies are affected detrimentally by the necessity of working, and would not undertake term time employment by choice.  Watts & Pickering (2000) again found – though this was a very small study – students reported a perceived negative impact to studies if paid employment had to be undertaken. Metcalf (2001) saw 78% of the students in

her study reporting a negative impact. Hunt et al (2004) data had a slightly different slant, as in this study students in paid employment perceived that over 14 hours in work would cause an impact on their achievement.

Students in the TUC survey (2000) reported a difference in the experience of being a student between those students who undertook paid employment and those students who did not, particularly for those students who were in paid employment for long hours. TTPE was identified to affect social relationships and the involvement in university life, especially with university societies and sports clubs. This meant there was lower social and cultural capital accrued. This was noted not to be from poor time management but from a direct lack of time for all the commitments. Independent study time was impinged by the demands of the paid employment. Humphrey (2006) and Hunt et al (2004) saw that TTPE reduces social contact and takes away time to relax, to join university societies. The NUS (1999) considers TTPE to have a knock on effect to the experience of being a student, both within academia and social aspects. These students were seen not to join university societies or undertake voluntary work due to their paid employment commitments.

Overall, perhaps it should be asked how much leisure time a student should have. This balance is important, as working in TTPE appears to create problems. 10 to 15 hours per week is seen to be the limit, above this is deemed to have a detrimental effect on both the academic performance and the student experience (Neill et al 2004, Curtis & Shani 2002).

**3.7 Conclusion:**

Student employment has a long history; however the characteristics of the paid employment and motivations to engage in it are totally different pre-1990 to post 1990. Though the catalyst was changes in the funding of higher education, the development of capitalism contributed to the phenomenon by promoting a desire for consumer items through all strata of Western societies.

What has been of concern is not paid employment the students per sec, but the rapid increase of students undertaking TTPE, which has implications to time management when academic requirements are highest. Paid employment throughout the long summer vacation is ideal,

with no apparent repercussions to student achievement levels or their participation in university life.

Government and policymakers have used research that advises TTPE be curtailed to a level where any negative impacts will be minimal, between 10 and 12 hours per week. But what is government doing to ensure this? Passing the buck, in effect, to universities and individual students appears to be their answer, as they will not specify a number of hours for universities and students to adhere to.

Within higher education attendance, then is still a massive social class gap, where the lower social classes are significantly underrepresented. Again it should be asked whether one barrier to increasing participation through social class is a relationship to perceptions held by these students on the necessity of undertaking paid employment while at university.

The next chapter looks at how this research project was designed, planned and carried out.

# Chapter Four:

## Methods of Enquiry

### 4.1 Introduction

Educational research can be problematic; patterns and themes are identified by statistical data, thus political arithmetic was initially used widely. However, the 'why's' were not being answered, hence a positive slant was introduced to explore causal effect relationships (Heath 2000, Mason 2006).

The main focus for this research was the impact the recent significant increase in student engagement within paid employment has had for students, both on their academic studies and the quality of their experience of student life. As previously stated, this is of increasing importance when government policy is aimed at increasing the education of the workforce, to gain increasing numbers of knowledge workers to sustain the changes over past decades in the typology of employment within the labour market.   While it is acknowledged that there are beneficial impacts for students from employment, it is TTPE that is of particular interest. It is here the literature identifies there to be negative impacts that can cause students to underachieve and even dropout of higher education. Because of the implications of these negative impacts, characteristics of student groups are analysed, alongside patterns within paid employment, of use to evolve strategies to minimise any detrimental effects to studies.

There are topical and generic concerns around the funding of higher education, particularly in the current economic climate, as discussed in the introduction chapter of this thesis. I chose this research topic because of a personal interest, due to my being a teacher of an access to nursing course at a tertiary college in a deprived area. This gave me first-hand experience of the perceptions of students regarding how they would fund a higher education degree. These students felt TTPE was essential, but had anxieties on how they would cope with working and studying full-time for three years, resulting in over 70% deciding not to apply to complete the nursing degree.

The study was to focus on higher education institutes in Wales. It collected data from two universities, to represent the diversity of institutions in the higher education sector. One was an older university, a member of the Russell. The other was a 'new' post 1992 university. One of these universities was situated in a city, the other within a Welsh valley, with a very different student population, more from working class backgrounds and more part time students. This enabled variables such as the social composition of the student body, locality and labour market to be considered in relation to each other. Different departments within the universities, but incorporating parallel degrees of study between the universities, were considered. This explored whether the entrance requirements within courses impacted on the incidence and influence of term time work. All respondents were students in HE Institutes operating top up fees and new student support systems.

For this project, transparent methods with clear sampling strategies displayed, alongside statistical data shown in a simple and clear way aimed for a robust evidence base, to obtain validity. Conclusion discussions included alternative reasoning that might exist, to suggest further explanation (Gorard & Taylor 2004). The sampling technique aimed to be representative of the student population by the choice of different universities and different schools within these universities. Comparison to research findings within the literature on student paid employment, throughout the data analysis and conclusions, provided evidence of external validity (Bryman 2001).

The methodological dimensions of this project will be discussed in this chapter. The use of a mix of methods, to encompass both quantitative and qualitative approaches, forms the first section. The second section will focus on the decision-making on the methods for data collection. The researcher's input within this study will be considered within the third section, and how the data was analysed is discussed in the final section. A reflection on the role of researcher will run throughout the whole chapter.

The field work for the questionnaires, initial interviews and diaries was undertaken during the spring and summer of 2009, with the follow up interviews undertaken in the summer of 2010.

**4.2 A Mix of Methods Approach:**

Mason (2006) and Gorard & Taylor (2004) suggest that to understand a multidimensional social world as complex, encompassing changing contexts within it, data must be collected using multiple methods. I wanted to collect numerical data to establish the scale and patterns within the forms of paid employment students were undertaking, in addition to understanding why the students engaged in paid employment. I felt that to use a quantitative method tool for objective data collection alongside a qualitative method tool for a more subjective element would allow me to ask more questions around my research topic, providing a more complete picture. This would enhance the capacity for generalisation, being of significant use in explaining the social phenomenon occurring concerning the research topic, and help to close the qualitative/quantitative divide that many researchers consider exists.

> *'The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials,*
> *perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a*
> *strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any enquiry'*

Flick (1998:230)

There are challenges in reconciling the data and knowledge generated from the mix of methodologies, so the decision was made to link the methods rather than integrate them, which did influence the assessment of methods to use for this project. However, as the data would be collected from three sources regarding the same phenomenon, triangulation could be used to validate the data.

A mix of methods can create danger of generating surplus data. To minimise problems, Miles et al (1994) recommends a focus on the analysis requisite in the data collection design. Punch (2005:44) defines 'a question well asked is a question half answered' as an empirical criterion for research questions. I felt that to collect both quantitative and qualitative data would allow me to initially examine the patterns of which student groups undertake TTPE, the form this employment took and how the students perceived this would affect academic studies and student life. I also wanted to explore the relationships and interactions of variables, to draw out strands and patterns that would influence any potential impacts from the paid employment for students (Henn et al 2006, Punch 2005).

## 4.2.1 A Quantitative Approach:

The quantitative approach promotes sociological enquiry to be scientific, associated with positivist epistemology to build up a bank of theoretical knowledge and answer questions on 'Where is the knowledge from?' 'Is it reliable?' Due to the high increase of students taking on paid employment over recent years, the research on this phenomenon is relatively recent and sparse; therefore the epistemological position will consider what explanations are necessary for the purpose of the research (Seale 1998). Within this study I was interested in trying to examine the scale of how students perceive paid employment in the current higher education landscape. I also wanted to consider whether there were common sociological factors, to differentiate whether there are groups of students with similar characteristics within the student body, who perceive paid employment impacts in comparable ways, dictating the employment undertaken. I therefore needed to have a relatively large sample for part of the overall study, for numeric data, generated on the sociological variables of age, gender, social class and ethnicity. The aim was to compare different groups, alike in some areas but different in others, to develop general explanations on 'earning while learning' (Clough et al 2002). While educational research cannot mimic natural research for cause/effect identification, correlations between variables that create theories to explain human behaviour can be located, which will identify causal/effect relationships (Giddens 1974 & Bullock et al 1999).

I was interested in looking at the scale, the incidence of PE, to consider was this through the student body as a whole. Therefore I chose to look at two universities with a very different student composition, a traditional redbrick university and a 'new' post 92 University, and two differing schools within these universities, bioscience and social science. I needed to have a relatively large sample for part of the study, to be able to cross tabulate and analyse the questionnaires to consider whether there were factors that were common to large groups. This needed to be a' numbers' exercise', in order for these comparisons and analyses, so a social survey was decided upon to collect the data. This would generate quantifiable numeric data for analysis, though the interpretive results would be reduced to the variables chosen for the survey, so would not answer any how and why questions (Bryman 2001).

### 4.2.2 A Qualitative Approach:

The qualitative approach would give an interpretive and naturalistic epistemology. The advantage of using qualitative methods is that they generate rich, detailed data that leave the participants' perspectives intact and provide a context. By exploring dynamics and shifting contexts within the social experiences of the students, the how and why questions could be answered. By placing the actions of the students into context, I hoped to gain understanding on social processes in relation to specific contexts, which would help explain the significance of the actions. A disadvantage is that data collection and analysis may be labour intensive and time-consuming. (Mason 2006).

There was a constructionist element to this study, as the motivations and reasoning that the students gave for engagement in paid employment while at university was investigated. The project was carried out at the time when the funding regime included the introduction of student loans to replace the grant system. A qualitative interview would create the case study research decided upon for this project, providing a depth of knowledge.

> *'Epistemology of the qualitative interview tends to be more constructionist than positivist. Interview participants are more likely to be viewed as meaning makers, not passive conduits for retrieving information from an existing vessel of answers.'*

(Gubrium & Holstein 2001:83)

My aim was to try to understand the reasoning and decision-making within the students' lives from these interviews. The students would be responding from very diverse perspectives, inclusive of sociological variables and roles within society. The norms and values the individual student held would be related to the socialisation experienced from the social group to which they belong. Everyday knowledge on reality is a form of objective reality, socially constructed (Denzin et al 2000). The scope of this study to utilise findings for recommendations to policymakers, universities and the students themselves, meant the data had to be assessed to ensure the social world was being reflected. The phenomenon of increasing engagement in paid employment, and in particular TTPE, indicates a need to support students to minimise any negative impacts.

I also wanted to have a cross-section, almost a sociological picture, of who was in higher education, what was their background, and how were they funding their studies. How important was paid employment within this plan, and did they perceive there to be implications from having to undertake paid employment while in full-time study. When the decision was made to engage within paid employment, what strategies did they employ to manage this employment, to negate, where possible, any impact they perceived may occur. To gain detailed data on how the students felt in their everyday life, how they fitted all their activities within each day I decided to also ask a cross-section of the students to keep a diary.

**4.3 Data Collection:**

My interest in examining student funding, and how students manage this funding, began as part of my teacher training course, where I completed a small scale study with students on an access to nursing course. A major finding was the number of students engaged in paid employment while on the course, and their expectation that this would be essential if they were successful in entering higher education. This formed the desire to undertake a large-scale study within the higher education sector, to explore whether paid employment impacted negatively to students in full-time study.

Anthropologists state 'asking questions', 'hanging out' and 'reading the papers' create the research frameworks to make sense of the social world. Therefore, when this study was planned and designed, the rationale was formed from reviewing the literature around 'earning and learning' and examining the interactions of the theory and context of the social world with this rationale. This helped the decision-making for the method selection (Miller et al 1997 & Mason 2002).

**4.3.1 Research design:**

The strategic research plan has to include a consideration of the link from the rationale and research question through to data collection methods. Research questions are dissected to investigate what data will answer 'why' in addition to 'what'. As discussed earlier, by using a mix of methods, known as triangulation, I hoped to gain more in-depth understanding on the impact of paid employment for students in full-time study. Social world problems are

complex and varied, so triangulation would be of worth to validate the data. This would also allow any changing circumstances that might occur through the time period of this project to be incorporated into both the data collection and analysis (Flick 1998).

The start was to translate my interest into a structured research design. The size of the project needed to be manageable, due to time and financial restraints. The literature around the topic was extensive, giving rise to themes and patterns that could be used with my rationale to decide which areas to include. This created a strong conceptual framework that clarified the overall research question, as this was where my study had originated from, and this question was to shape my study. The framework allowed me to break down this overall research question into smaller questions to develop my ideas and focus on specific data collection questions that could be used within data collection tools (Mason 2002). My aim was to increase the knowledge on funding issues within higher education and extend debate on how students would rationalise methods available to finance their studies.

> *'Design deals primarily with aim, purposes, intentions and plans within the practical constraints of location, time, money and availability of staff'*

(Hakim in Henn et al 2006)

My data source was people, namely students, as they had the knowledge for my study. Foreshadowed ideas within this study, identified from the literature as a theoretical base of knowledge, will consider:

- Motivations that influenced the decision to work, was this related to fear of debt, a necessity to pay bills, or more related to 'luxuries'?

- Perceptions and attitudes of the students around time management for academic studies, inclusive of attendance at lectures and seminars and meeting deadlines, participation in university activities and socialising. How would the students 'manage' their time when TTPE was introduced into the equation?

- Decision-making of students on shift patterns, how much employment was feasible for them to undertake and at which point in the academic year. Do these factors create differences in the patterns regarding paid employment between different student groups?

- Relationships between paid employment and acquiring transferable 'soft' skills. Awareness of students regarding work skills, whether formal, related to career development or informal, related to team work, confidence building, communication improvement. Or was there no awareness, the work was purely a means to an end.

The breakdown of my research question suggested I would need a mix of methods, to focus not just on what was happening but also why this was happening, both having equal importance to answering my overall research question. This study had an aim to increase knowledge and extend debate on funding issues within higher education.

### 4.3.2 Ethical Considerations:

When considering the ethical responsibilities for this project, I was very aware that the analysis of the data and conclusions made from this study could be used, alongside other research, to make recommendations regarding student employment issues for use by policymakers and universities. Thus the first responsibility here was that 'quality is paramount'. Methods had to be chosen that would be the most appropriate to answer my research question. A survey was decided upon, followed by semi-structured interviews from a cross-section of those students who answered the questionnaire, with diaries also kept by a number of the students who had volunteered for the interviews. The goals were set out clearly to try and reduce any bias (Gorard & Taylor 2004).

There are ethical issues around the reporting of research findings, which range from plagiarism through to the accuracy in recording the data. Initially the questionnaires would be coded and data obtained from them inputted into a database, stored on a computer protected by a password. The hardcopy questionnaires were kept in a locked filing cabinet. The back page of the questionnaires, filled in only by those students volunteering to take part in the interviews, were coded and removed from the body of the questionnaire and kept separately from the other questionnaires.

The interviews and the diaries were audio taped, and then transcribed onto computer, again password protected. When transcribed pseudonyms were given to each interviewee and the university name was also coded to protect anonymity. The tapes were erased at the end of

the research, as were the transcribed interviews from the computer. This study would be available from universities, with a further aim to be published in an academic journal.

There are also ethical considerations for the protection of trust and the interests of the respondents. Data protection legislation must be adhered to. The researcher's personal aim connected to the study was also thought of. The main subjects of concern were confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent, as there were no 'sensitive' issues to be addressed (Flick 2002).

Approval for the project was sought from the Ethics Committee at both universities, which was granted. The information sheets for the application for ethical approval are included in Appendix A.

The research area and the aim of the research were explained in a cover sheet included in the questionnaire, which also assured anonymity and confidentiality. This information constituted the student giving informed consent, if they then decided to complete the questionnaire. Also by doing this, the students would be giving permission for the data to be used, and the information did include how the data would be utilised and stored. It was made very clear that the respondents were not obliged to participate and could withdraw from the study at any time. As the questionnaires were given out at lectures within the universities, I also explained the research and its' aims verbally (BERA 2004).

Before each interview I contacted each respondent to ensure they still wished to participate. The project was explained again verbally to each respondent before the interview and any queries were discussed, ensuring the participants had adequate information for informed consent. It was also made very clear here that the respondents need only answer questions they were comfortable with, to avoid invasion of privacy (BERA 2004).

The students who were happy to keep an audio diary for me were given instruction sheets, which again explained the project and how the data would be used and stored and then erased at the end of the study. Again, these students were assured they could withdraw from the study at any time.

### 4.3.3 Sample Method:

This study was to be longitudinal over two years, to consider whether second year students changed their paid employment patterns in their final year. Two universities with very different student populations were studied, with students from the school of social sciences and the biosciences school, to consider if the course structure for study differentiated any patterns within the students engagement in paid employment. The population for this study consisted of students in the second year of their degree in HE Institutes in the UK operating top up fees and new student support systems. These students had experienced various forms of paid employment prior to and during their time in higher education. The sample comprised of a mix of young students, who were mainly of white British origin, under 25, a high percentage of females and varying social classes, though the numbers in social classes 4 & 5 were low. The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification Analytic Classes was used for classification of social class through occupation. This is shown in Appendix B.

The initial tool used was a survey, handed out and collected back in the lecture, shown in Appendix C. The follow-up interviews would be from students picked randomly from those who had answered the questionnaire and who were willing to be interviewed, as contact details could be filled in on the final sheet of the questionnaire. Again the sampling method was purposive here, as seven students from each school were chosen, five who worked in TTPE, one who did not have paid employment, and one who worked only in holidays. The students who were interviewed were also asked if they would keep a diary, for more detailed qualitative data. Four were chosen, two from the bioscience school and two from the social science school. Generalisations could only apply to the student body due to this sampling method, but this corresponded with the aim of the research.

A complication to the interview process was that, despite contacting the students to remind them of their appointment to take part in the interview, eight students did not arrive. They did not then answer their telephones, so a further eight students from the same schools, so as to maintain the balance of the sample, were contacted and these were interviewed.

Four students, two from the bioscience school and two from the social sciences, all of whom had participated in the interview process, agreed to take part in the diary data collection.

Follow-up interviews were scheduled for the students during their third year. However, due to an extension of the researcher's timeframe, only 10 students were available to be interviewed.

Table of interviewees:

| Student Pseudonym | university/school | age | gender | social class | TTPE status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| Robert | Chirk Bioscience | 21 | Male | 2 | No PE |
| Ian | Chirk Bioscience | 19 | Male | 1 | PE summer holidays only |
| Emma | Chirk Bioscience | 19 | Female | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Kath | Chirk Bioscience | 24 | Female | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Leanne | Chirk Bioscience | 21 | Female | 1 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Katie | Chirk Bioscience | 20 | Female | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Sophie | Chirk Bioscience | 19 | Female | 3 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| | | | | | |
| Richard | Glanaman Bioscience | 20 | Male | 2 | No PE |
| Janet | Glanaman Bioscience | 25 | Female | 3 | PE summer holidays only |
| Anthony | Glanaman Bioscience | 42 | Male | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Elaine | Glanaman Bioscience | 21 | Female | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Daniel | Glanaman Bioscience | 20 | Male | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Amanda | Glanaman Bioscience | 22 | Female | 3 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Ben | Glanaman Bioscience | 20 | Male | 1 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| | | | | | |
| Andrew | Chirk SOCSI | 19 | Male | 1 | No PE |
| Elizabeth | Chirk SOCSI | 20 | Female | 1 | PE summer holidays only |
| Sarah | Chirk SOCSI | 21 | Female | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| James | Chirk SOCSI | 19 | Male | 1 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Laura | Chirk SOCSI | 20 | Female | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Hannah | Chirk SOCSI | 19 | Female | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Denise | Chirk SOCSI | 20 | Female | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| | | | | | |
| Lily | Glanaman SOCSI | 19 | Female | 2 | No PE |
| Susan | Glanaman SOCSI | 19 | Female | 2 | PE summer holidays only |
| Carole | Glanaman SOCSI | 20 | Female | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Nichole | Glanaman SOCSI | 20 | Female | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Chloe | Glanaman SOCSI | 20 | Female | 2 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Anne | Glanaman SOCSI | 22 | Female | 3 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |
| Marcia | Glanaman SOCSI | 28 | Female | 3 | TTPE and PE in all holidays |

The ethnicity of all the interviewees was white British and they were in their second year of study for their initial interview and had just finished their degrees when the follow up interview was completed.

**4.3.4 Access strategy:**

The sample was very specific population; hence the access strategy was limited, having to be via 'gatekeepers' within both universities, who had been told of my project. These were initially the heads of each school, who introduced me to the lecturers of core modules. As universities are centres for research, the staff had empathy with my project, cooperating with me to find a suitable lecture in students' timetable where there were likely to be 100 students plus, to whom the questionnaire could be given. Given the subject of the study, the heads of schools were very interested in my research and expressed they would like to see the finished thesis. I was allowed 15 minutes at the end of the lecture, to explain my research and then hand out and collect back in my questionnaires. A major concern was to ensure a high response rate, and I had almost 100% from this method regarding questionnaires, and 64 contact details for students willing to participate in the interviews. There were a minimum of 10 students in each school, which was more than the seven I needed, therefore the access for the qualitative data was also achieved at this point.

Access will always depend on the willingness of the respondents to participate, varying on the individuals and the setting (Flick 2002). Gatekeepers can act as sponsors as well as being the researchers' access to respondents, so have a very special role here (Bryman 2001). There may have been different methods to gain access to my sample, for example via the University Registry, however the constraints of time dictated this method to be the fastest to reach the students suitable for this research. Using this same sampling method, the study could be replicated. There was a limitation noted here in that students who were employed for the longest hours had not given contact details, as presumably they felt they were too busy to be able to allow time within their schedule for an interview.

The interviews took place in two settings, in an office at one university or in cafes at various sites throughout both universities, dependent on the choice of the respondent. While the office was quieter, the students appeared nervous, perhaps related to my role as researcher.

That I was a lot older than the students, combined with their knowledge that I was engaged in a PhD project, did appear to initially create a barrier. This was counteracted by an informal chat regarding the course they were engaged in, and their ambitions for the future, before starting the interview. When I judged they were more relaxed in my company I began. In the cafe interviews, perhaps because they felt in a more neutral setting, the students were evidently relaxed and ready to be interviewed in a much shorter time. The cafes were noisier, however care was taken that the interviews were timed when the cafes were likely to be least occupied. The interviews took between 20 and 45 minutes, and the students appeared to enjoy them.

### 4.3.5 Methods Utilised:

*Question design*

The construction of questions within the data collection methods is an important process for both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. There is an ontological stance that requires the data to form knowledge that can be evidenced. However conceptual definitions of variables could be subject to individual differences on connotation, so question structure required definition of meaning. Punch (2005) gives a classification that structurally sound data collection questions must be:

- clear to understand
- specific regarding concept
- answerable regarding data requirements
- interconnected within themes relevant to the study

Cough & Nutbrown (2002) promote two 'quirky' methods for testing questions. The first is a 'Goldilocks' test; a metaphor where the questions have to be 'just right', suitable for a particular researcher, in a particular setting, at a particular time. The second involves the 'Russian doll' principle; the overriding research question should be able to be broken down into smaller questions, but also be able to be built up to create the bigger picture again. These methods were of use to focus the questions for my data collection methods.

Initially, within the questionnaires, general questions on socio demographic factors created almost a picture of the respondent's background. This created a series of sociological factors that could be explored for characteristics to group students together, to identify relationships that could be compared and contrasted. For example, was there a relationship between the groups who were third or second generation attendees in higher education and the level and frequency of parental contributions? It is feasible to suggest that those students who have monies from their families would require less paid employment.

The second group of questions were to explore the characteristics of student paid employment, focusing very strongly on the location of the paid employment in the academic year and the patterns within the employment, regarding shifts and the amount of hours worked. The third group of questions were very factual regarding how the students spent their time related to university activities and studies. And finally the fourth group of questions were designed to glean information on student perception of debt and the value of their degree, in addition to assessing the type of student debt the students in this study had.

The questions relating to the qualitative interviews were constructed to form a topic guide, so were very loosely based around themes identified from the literature, open ended to allow the students to express themselves more freely, but focused so all the respondents gave their opinions on the same subject matter. This is shown in Appendix D.

*Survey*

Social surveys are a common method to collect quantitative data, as it allows a large number from a defined population to be studied. The data will be quantifiable and numeric, suitable for statistical analysis. The survey would obtain a wide range of responses for generalisability. However, the interpretive results generated from the data will be recorded as variables in the survey, so will identify what is happening, but not why this is happening (Bryman 2001). It has to be remembered that the question structure is extremely important, there are rules that will apply and there will always be errors. Piloting is the key to try to reduce these errors.

Initially I considered the purpose of the research in the decision-making on what I wanted to include in the questionnaire. This involved thought on what kind of data I wanted to generate, the types of variables needed and whether I needed scales or ranking orders to consider the

importance of sociological factors. The majority of the questions throughout my survey were of the closed, or categorical, kind. Variables were given for the students to choose, though in a few questions the student was asked to calculate the amount of hours either in paid employment, study, or university activity participation, inclusive of voluntary work. There were open questions used, for example, regarding social class, which is discussed in the following paragraph (Czaja & Blair 1996). The motivations behind the decision-making on the question structure evolved from time restrictions for my sample, the aim being the questionnaire could be answered in between 10 and 15 minutes.

For the first section I wanted socio demographic data on age, gender, ethnicity, and social class. Further questions enquired about the students' generation within the family of attendance in university, whether on a full time or part time course and whether the course is specific for a career or general in nature. In this section there was a question regarding parental occupation. This was aimed to assess the students' social class, by using the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification Analytic Classes table. This question asked for the title of parental occupation, both paternal and maternal, but also included a space to enlarge on a description of their role, to try to get a more in-depth knowledge regarding occupation, which was very helpful for assessing social class by this method. In hindsight, parental income approximation would also been helpful, particularly in the analysis around parental contribution, however would the students have had adequate knowledge regarding this? This could also be potentially sensitive for the students to answer.

The second section aimed at generating data around the history of the individual student's paid employment to date, the type of current TTPE, inclusive of the shifts and flexibility within the employment, the hours undertaken in TTPE, and whether the students perceived they had gained skills from paid employment. This section continued with questions on how the students used their wages, the affordability of higher education and whether paid employment had been a factor in the decision-making on which university to apply to. The section finished by questions aimed at measuring any impact to academic studies, and opinions on whether TTPE had negative impacts to academic studies and the student experience.

The third section asked the students about their time management, factoring in questions regarding participation in university societies and sports teams, any time spent in voluntary work, and study time. The students were asked to calculate how many hours they spent on each group activity per week. A problem was highlighted here, as the hours the students spent in study was put in this section, but a significant number of students did not put a figure for this, and as study is an integral part of student life I had to accept that these students had missed this question. I would also be more explicit in what constitutes study time if I were to repeat this questionnaire, as the range of times given indicated some students classed study time as private study time, at home or in the library, while others included lectures, tutorials and lab work at university within their estimation of this study time.

The final section aimed to generate data on how these students were funding their university degree, and included aspects of debt. Most of the questions here were scale closed, as this was to gain insight to the students' perceptions on how they were funding their degrees and the relationship between the debt they were accruing versus the value of the end qualification. The scale proliferation was never more than five (Czaja & Blair 1996).

### *Interview*

My second data collection method, to generate qualitative data, was a semi-structured interview. This is argued to be a relatively openly designed interview to secure topically relevant subjective perspectives. This would probe more deeply into the 'what is happening', 'why this is happening', and 'what effect is this having' within students' lives, focusing on and around the topic of student paid employment while in full-time study. Data for the interview would be collected from the answers the student gave within conversation. In-depth interviews are normally part of a mix of data collection methods, a triangulation of methods, as these add to the bank of knowledge and can be used to check theories (Gubrium & Holstein 2001).

The qualitative, or classical, interview has an epistemological position within the specific theory of knowledge that considers the source of the knowledge and level of reliability. This allows data to be assessed which, from the social science angle, is an evaluation of the data regarding its reflection of the social world, to consider any bias (Seale 1998). A critique of classical interviews will always be that what people say they do and what they actually do are

rarely the same. In reality, this appears to be more applicable to the very structured interviews. Therefore, in my opinion, to elicit in depth data from the students regarding their lives, the semi-structured interview following a topic guide to focus the interview, was still the best choice. Within these interviews there was an allowance made where responses could go off on a tangent, if there was a value for the study in this. I was aware that respondents may have different agendas regarding the outcome of the study, so could use language as a form of social action that could be manipulated. This could influence responses and thus the analysis (Seale 1998).

James Spradley considers qualitative interviews are a way to "hear the meaning of what the respondent is saying", to gain thick descriptions of individual social worlds, allowing cultural patterns and themes for that individual to be analysed (Gubrium & Holstein 2001:86). Geetz adopted 'thick descriptions' from the work of Gilbert Ryle on how a simple wink can have a range of meanings within different contexts. He applied this to contextual explanations of human behaviour, so there was meaning to an outsider looking on. Without a context the explanation is but a thin description of what has happened, a snapshot in time (Olson 1991). To examine how the student experience and potential achievement was affected by student employment, thick descriptions were necessary, to investigate what 'earning while learning' meant to students.

My aim for the interview was to be one-to-one interaction, to reflect the form of talking that takes place between friends, but also being aware that the talking is designed to generate data for the purpose of the study. This conversation would be personal to the respondent, as they are describing their own experiences and giving information on their personal "lived experience, values and decisions, occupational ideology and cultural perspectives" (Gubrium & Holstein 2001:104).

To focus the interview. I created a topic guide to loosely follow one area to another for maximum responses. I wanted the respondent's views and opinions, so structured the words in the questions to draw these out, with 'you' as the most important word in that question. Hopf (1978), as cited in Flick (1998), points out that such a guide can restrict openness, so must be very loose to allow the respondent free expression. An interruption at the wrong moment can redirect where the interview is going. The respondents must be allowed to tell

their own stories in the context of their own experiences, so the questions needed to be open-ended, which I also structured to flow through the topic areas, deciding which order to ask the questions from listening to the responses, to draw these out and delve deeper where necessary. Ruben (1995:103) cited in Gubrium & Holstein (2001:90) states:

> *'At a basic level, people like to talk about themselves: they enjoy the sociability of a long discussion and are pleased that somebody is interested in them... you come along and say, yes, what you know is valuable, it should not be lost, teach me, and through me, teach others.'*

Listening to what is being said is vital, both to decide where the questions are to flow and when to probe when an interesting point is made, in a way that does not appear too obtrusive (Bryman 2001). At the start of the interview, I omitted the word interview, preferring to indicate 'it is your thoughts around earning and learning that I am interested in'. I made it very clear it was their input that would create the knowledge I needed for this study, using prompts to maintain the flow and focus the responses. Bryman (2001) advocates these be non verbal or via questions that restate what the respondent has said, but in the researchers own words, rather than putting the researchers interpretation on what has been answered. This, I felt, was important not to 'put words into the respondents' mouths'.

As the number of interviews I completed increased, I was very aware that my technique improved and my confidence grew, particularly in drawing out the responses from the students. However, I was also very lucky that the students I interviewed were happy to share their views and opinions with me, no-one was monosyllabic though a few were verbose, needing to be reined in to maintain the focus. This I found the hardest, in reality, as the students were making observations that, while not directly related to my topic area, were so interesting that the temptation was to extend the overall remit of the study, though this was not feasible. This did suggest areas for future research.

This was a longitudinal study over two years, so a follow-up semi-structured interview was planned for the middle of the third year with the same students. However, due to an extended timeframe, I was unable to undertake these interviews until after graduation, when telephone follow up interviews were completed. Many of the students had returned to their homes and changed telephone numbers, thus ten follow-up interviews were obtained.

*Diaries*

There is not much information on the use of diaries as a research method. Certainly overall, any literature on the use of diaries does not compare to that of other social research methodologies. Within my research project, the use of diaries as a method for data collection was complex, not designed to be just a log of time management, but more a recording of student's reflections on feelings they had regarding activities within their lifestyle and the interrelationships between these activities.

> *'diaries tell the truth, the partial truth, and a lot more besides the truth… in them you seek – and often find – an atmosphere, a sense of mood of the moment, which could not be acquired in any other way'*

(Pimlott, 20002:2, cited in Alaszewski 2006:24)

Diary studies can be grouped into two meanings – 'log of activities' and 'narrative reporting of past events' (Alaszewski 2006). The diary used was free format, allowing the respondent to record their activities in their own words but with structured guidelines on the type of data I wished to collect. An advantage of free format is within recoding and analysis of the data, but this can be unrealistic in very large projects, due to being very labour intensive. For this reason only a cross section of my respondents were asked to complete the diary. Corti (1993), cited in Bryman (2001), suggests that diaries do require explicit instructions on what is required, with a model of a completed page, and a checklist of 'items, events or behaviour' that ensures the data required is recorded. Therefore I compiled a detailed instruction leaflet, for both the daily and the weekly diary which was given to all the respondents.

The social survey within my research collected facts to increase understanding on student's perceptions on how paid employment can impact on academic studies and student life. As this is perceived in much of the literature to be linked with time management issues, diaries were used to supplement the survey data, to facilitate a general overview of what was occurring within the student body. The semi structured qualitative interviews gained insight on the decision making, so how the diaries were used within this project reflected the general use of diaries in social science research. They tend not to be the main data collection source, but more a supplementary method alongside more established forms (Alaszewski 2006).

71

These two methods – the qualitative interview and the diary - do link but will also answer different parts of the research question (Bryman 2001, Oppenheim 1992).

For this project, there were two types of data collection via the use of diaries. The first was on a daily basis, for more detailed recall and more detailed reflection on emotions felt about the time allocation for particular aspects of their day i.e. paid employment, academic studies and attendance at lectures etc. and daily living, i.e. housework, personal hygiene and socialising (see mind map in chapter 6.4.2 ). This was over a week. This daily recording provided a fine tuned picture of what the student was doing.  There was also the added advantage that the student was not inhibited by my presence, as the researcher.

Corti (1993) as cited in Bryman (2001) considers that the time period for keeping the diary should be long enough to capture behaviour and events but not so long that it becomes a burden to the individual recording it. This was important to consider for the second diary. This was kept on a weekly basis for a month, for a weekly recording of time management retrospectively. This could miss the true emotion of the time for example,  an incident or demand on time made the individual very angry but this was trivialised by the end of the week -  'that was not as bad as I thought it was at the time'.  Thus there can be benefits of using a diary lost here. However, this second diary was used to consider the long term changes of work life balance, as it covered what was happening over the time frame, such as lectures and tutorials, exams or holidays. This formed a recording of the changes made through this time and why they were made, the decision-making, choices and the motivations behind these.

Prompts to remind the student about recording the data were used, chosen by the student. The data was stored on the audio device or sent to me via a secure university email address. There was no pilot here due to the time frame. Cost was considered as I provided digital audio recorders for my respondents, but felt to be justified for the input to the research.

Diaries can be of immense value when 'sequencing different types of behaviour' is of value to a study. The data is valid and reliable, though diarists may have a 'process of attrition', when they become fed up of recording the data. I provided the diarists in my study with

Dictaphones, which were simple to use and the recorded data easy to download. In feedback regarding the diary interview, all the students had enjoyed the process of keeping a diary in this way and indeed, throughout the data collection period none had missed e-mailing me. As the project was examining the effects of TTPE to students, in relation to academic study, attendance at tutorials, lectures, participation in university activities and socialising, this 'sequencing' was very important, for example, had the hours in paid employment caused a period of recovery to be necessary where lectures and tutorials were missed?

*Piloting:*

The access strategy for the study created difficulties for a pilot trial of the research method, to consider the feasibility of the design. However, having a daughter in her second year at university proved invaluable, as a group of 8 of her cohorts agreed to complete my survey, and gave feedback on the practicality of the questions within the questionnaire, how easy were they to understand, could they be completed within the timescale and so on. There were no significant problems, so I was happy to commence with the full study. I completed one semi-structured interview also, and was pleased with the flow and quality of responses to this. Again I was then happy to carry on to the full study.

*Recording the data:*

I recorded the data via an audiotape, with an important advantage being I was able to concentrate more on the responses, to use prompts and probing techniques. I found that as the majority of students were young, brought up in an age of increasing technology, they had no objection to being taped and appeared very comfortable with this. Gabrium & Holstein (2001) make the point that when a tape is present there may be an effect whereby the respondent's conversation is altered due to a change of context. Atkinson & Silverman (1997) identify an interview society, which has a post modern, social context involving a new form for personal narrative, highlighting individuals who may be disappointed when there is no video camera to record their part in the interview in addition to any conversation.

However, technology is often fallible. In my study there were two occasions when the tape failed to record. I had prepared to a degree, having new batteries with me in addition to notepads and pens and a copy of the interview schedule. I had also read the instructions and had trial runs at home to ensure I was familiar with the equipment. Despite this, I could not

rectify why the Dictaphone would not work, so I made notes of keywords and phrases and transcribed the interviews as soon as was possible. All the data recording of the interviews were transcribed within two days of the interview and kept on a password protected computer.

**4.4 Researcher Input:**

When considering the researcher as an instrument in the research process, it has to be ceded that no matter how hard the researcher tries to be neutral, invisible, this is impossible. Their opinions and experiences of life impact on what questions are asked and what responses are selected and used in the study (Gubrium & Holstein 2001). Reflectivity on the part of the researcher indicates they have an awareness of their role in the research process, which is involved in the construction of knowledge, due to both the impact they make on the participants within the research and the way they write up the research (Bryman 2001).

I had to be very careful of researcher bias as, within my own background of teaching at a further education college in a deprived area, I had the experience of seeing students forego their opportunity to go to university because they perceived that paid employment would be essential. These students did not feel they would be able to cope with both full-time studies and paid employment.

In addition to this, I have had two children attend university, and because of ill-health forcing retirement, our household income was such that parental contributions had to be limited. Our oldest son engaged in paid employment in retail and chose to work a Friday evening until two in the morning, and then all Saturday night. He perceived that because these hours were paid at a higher rate he would have fewer hours in paid employment. However, he became so tired his work suffered. I was so concerned that I budgeted and managed on a lower income so that I could contribute more, insisting he gave up the Saturday night shift. He went on to achieve a 2 .1 degree classification, which I am sure would not have happened had he continued his engagement in paid employment in that shift pattern.

Our daughter experienced similar problems when undertaking TTPE alongside her studies, so again I negotiated she reduce her hours and I found the means to increase the level of parental

contribution. She obtained a first class honours degree, and again I believe this was as a direct result of reducing her TTPE to 5 hours a week, allowing her to fulfil her full potential. These experiences within my life could obviously contribute to a researcher bias, so I had to be very aware that this could be a conflict to my research. My opinions were backed by research evidence within the literature review for this study, so there was also a danger of influencing responses because of this.

The perspectives gained from the life experiences and opinions of both researcher and respondent can impact on the research. This will extend to how the research is written, what is left out, what is put in. Bryman (2001) identifies relationships will be built up between respondents and interviewers within the qualitative interview, to allow for free expression of opinions, but there will also be roles and power relationships that can dictate bias. Flick (2002) argues that power and knowledge agendas can influence the interview to a degree that the answers will fit what the respondent deems is what the researcher wants. There is a status associated with being a PhD student, and this associated with my age, as I am far older than the respondents, and being a teacher practitioner alerted me to the possibility a hierarchy of power could influence responses within the interviews. The younger students might answer what they thought they should, what they perceived to be the correct response, rather than what they truly experienced or believed. Flick (2002) perceives that while these responses might not be objective, reflecting attitudes and beliefs, this still forms a bank of knowledge. There is a structure to what these students believe they should think, which has been influenced by the socialisation and experiences within culture.

I was aware of more rapport with some respondents, which could cause bias towards their responses, especially if they coincided with my personal views. Flick (2002) suggests that with no rapport between researcher and interviewee, monosyllabic, uninterested responses might be obtained.  Having had previous experience as an interviewer, I was aware how difficult the whole process can be if you lose the interest of the respondent, have no rapport, and also how the data is influenced so it becomes basic, colourless.

Hence I was very careful to establish empathy about having been an undergraduate not that long ago, despite my age, talked about their course, how they were doing, their ambitions. I had the impression there was genuine interest in my research, and that they found the

interview an enjoyable experience, having the freedom to express their opinions and feeling these opinions were valued. Following the interview, many students stayed to chat over a coffee, asking me how I hoped to use the finished thesis, about post graduate courses, teaching, nursing, etc. Perhaps here my age helped, as I represented a 'mother' figure. All the students also agreed to take part in the follow up interview in their third year, which in itself was a positive feedback.

**4.5 Analysis of the data:**

Oancea (2005) makes the point that collected data can initiate original ideas regarding analytic findings, and conversely analysis of the data can initiate issues, adding dimensions to the research question. Openness of the data can be achieved from intertwining the sample and methodology of the data collection and analysis. Within this research, the data collection methods were very different in the data they generated, so needed different forms of analysis. The data was compared and contrasted to form links to answer the research questions on what was happening, in addition to the research questions on why this was happening.

Numeric data analysis was needed for the responses of the questionnaires, to seek patterns within the different sociological factors identified by the variables used in the survey. Access was the initial database I created to record the questionnaire data. This should possibly have been inputted to SPSS, but as I had personal tuition available for the use of **A**ccess, and to troubleshoot any problems that arose, I decided to utilise this help. Initially constructing the database was surprising, as it had to include every possible answer that the respondent could put on the questionnaire and this meant a very wide database. Inputting the data was laborious and time-consuming, requiring extreme accuracy, but was also enjoyable, and very rewarding in terms of the analysis that could be structured from the variables within the database. Whilst it may be argued that this could have been inputted by paying someone, as I am not experienced with analysing quantitative data, I wanted to complete the inputting of data to get a feel from my data, to look at what was coming through as common themes from the responses. This was a very useful, as I made notes regarding ideas, thoughts that evolved, to explore these in the analysis process. A university code for both university and school was added to allow for analysis. Within the database, queries were generated for cross tabulation between the variables. The data was copied into Excel, and tables, bar charts etc produced.

The interview transcriptions were carried out as soon as possible following the interview, from audiotape to computer. Again this was very laborious but worthwhile for the qualitative data these interviews generated. By transcribing these interviews myself I gained in depth knowledge that I associated with the respondent, of immense value while writing up my thesis in illustrating and concurring with patterns being identified in the numeric data. This also gave me insight into the motivations and choices these students were making, initiating themes for the data analysis. The analysis of responses does give rise to doubt that the meaning has been correctly interpreted. Seale (1998) highlights lay rationalities can be very different from academic rationality, so the wording should not always be taken at face value, though taken seriously.

I devised a simplistic but organised systematic dataset for the qualitative data on my computer, protected by password. Each interview was coded at the end of each sentence, to locate the interview at all times, even when data was reconstructed. All data was made anonymous, both names and locations. Initially, the data regarding the questions within the topic guide were grouped together and collated. The questions were then themed, with the responses. This allowed further coding, allowing the data to be broken down. There was a danger throughout this process of going off at a tangent, as the data was so rich. Miles et al (1994) suggests data be decontextualised initially, to allow for recontextualisation to identify patterns, relationships, interactions. The data undergoes transformation to discover new meanings within it. Becker (1986) as cited in Miles et al (1994) finds when we write, we constantly make such choices as which idea to take up when; what words to use, in what order, to express it, what examples to give to make our meaning clearer. This follows a lengthy process of absorbing and developing ideas, similarly preceded by a process of absorbing impressions and sorting them out. Each choice shapes the results.

Themed data was read continually, examining for groupings and common features. Throughout this process I got to 'know' the data. The data was highlighted and separated using different fonts and colours to compare results and search for new ideas. Within parental contributions, a new theme emerged around informal contracts and negotiations between parent and child connected to financial help and the amount of hours undertaken in TTPE.

When we write, we constantly make such choices as which idea to take up when; what words to use, in what order, to express it, what examples to give to make our meaning clearer. Of course, writing actually follows an even lengthier process of absorbing and developing ideas, similarly preceded by a process of absorbing impressions and sorting them out. Each choice shapes the results.

Conclusions resulted from the analysis which was explored for all causal explanations. The integrity of the conclusion is linked to validity. Related variables within both quantitative and qualitative data examine the perceptions of students regarding the whole area of 'earning and learning', the extent this varies between both individual students and groups within student body. The conclusions endeavoured to account for this variance (Punch 2005).

**4.6 Conclusion:**

For this research a positivist standpoint for replication and generalisation at social level was needed in the data collection methods, alongside a social construction perspective on the decision-making and motivations of students within the context of the current higher education funding system. Quantitative data collection methods would generate numeric data able to be statistically analysed for causal effect relationships. Qualitative data collection methods would generate 'thick' data, to explore the complexity in social science research.

The justifications for my decision-making and choices over 'what I did' and 'why I did it' have been discussed in this chapter. Describing my methodology and data collection methods allows for replication of this study. Generalisation in the numeric data would reflect the extent and scope of paid employment in the student body, and any impacts this has regarding academic study and student life, creating a snapshot of why students are engaging in paid employment alongside full-time study. Generalisation within the qualitative data is more difficult, as the data will be context specific.

Reflections on the role of the researcher, taking into account my experiences and opinions that could influence the responses of the students, provided insight on the challenges faced regarding neutrality to negate bias.

There were limitations within the research, mainly regarding access to those students working the longest hours in TTPE, who are most at risk from any negative impact from their paid employment. There was also a disproportionate representation of females to males, and of ethnic minority groups within the sample. Due to the increasing importance of parental contributions towards the funding of higher education, an approximation of household income would have been useful. Social class, according to occupation, was also quite difficult due to the overlap of occupations and status in the current labour market.

The following four chapters analyse the data generated by this research.

# Chapter Five:

## Data Analysis Section 1: Participation in TTPE

**5.1 Introduction:**

The phenomenon of increasing engagement in paid employment, and in particular term time paid employment, within the student body is seen to have a relationship with the changes to student funding from the late 1990s. The Student Income and Expenditure Surveys (SIES) form a time series database and illustrate this clearly, as the biggest rise in TTPE followed the introduction of the 1998 Teaching in Higher Education Act. This Act introduced tuition fees but abolished the existing system of grants, effectively introducing the burden of large debts for students following completion of a degree course. The SIES indicate in 1998/1999 wages made up 14% of students' total income, by 2004/2005 this was 22%, effectively illustrating the dependence students now have on wages to fund them through higher education.

The incidence of TTPE will vary between higher education institutes and between differentiated groups within the student body. This chapter aims to explore which students choose to undertake paid employment and, equally important, which students do not. The literature, and indeed the data collected from individual students within this study, indicates TTPE creates the more negative impacts identified as a direct result of undertaking paid employment, yet this is the sector of paid employment that is being undertaken by students in ever increasing numbers.

Potential impacts on students from paid employment also have causal factors that will increase these, for example the amount of hours worked, the shift pattern expected by the employer, and the flexibility within the paid employment. It is also imperative, therefore, to examine the decision-making processes students are using within the choices on both the engagement in and the patterns of the paid employment, alongside questioning how the students manage their studies and the experience of being a student.

The influences that appear to act as motivators in the decision-making for students in this area are also examined. These include any prior experiences of paid employment, parental and/or family influence, and prior attendance within higher education by family members, as this appears to promote a more realistic picture on the cost of higher education. Peer influence will also contribute, regarding whether fellow students manage TTPE alongside

their studies and social life. Wages will be the main motivator here. Therefore the funding streams students use are mentioned, as it has to be accepted that students of today will have very different sources of income from students who entered higher education even 20 years ago, when a grant system was in place and state benefits could be claimed for holiday periods. The twenty-first century student has a much higher reliance on a state system of student loans, albeit these are low interest, with deferred repayments, which causes a high level of debt for the student on graduation, though there are still grants and bursaries available for students from low income family backgrounds.

The typologies of students are examined, to ascertain if there are anomalies that cause high numbers in specific student groups to take on TTPE, asking if there is equality if certain students have to engage in TTPE while others do not. The chapter will finish by forming conclusions on the analysis from the data.

In this study the universities have pseudonyms of Chirk University, the urban, traditional red brick university and Glanaman University, a more rural 'new' post 1992 university. The schools are Bioscience and SOCSI, social science.

## 5.2 Who works and who does not work?

Initially, the proportion of HE students undertaking paid employment while in full time study was calculated. The statistical data was also broken down to demonstrate TTPE and paid employment undertaken in the Easter and Christmas holidays, because of deadlines that follow these particular holidays. The literature regarding student employment indicates the timeframe in the academic year is significant when examining any impacts from that employment.

Those students opting not to take on paid employment is equally as important. It needs to be asked are there common group characteristics or is it purely the individual personality of the student that **m**akes this decision, what are the reasons behind this choice? Different ways of segregating groups within the student population can highlight diversity in the decision making regarding paid employment and resulting strategies being used to manage this paid employment.

From the statistical data, the proportion of HE students undertaking paid employment while in full time study and the time frame in relation to the academic year showed:

**5.1 Table showing the incidence of PE within the timeframe of the academic year:**

| PE summer holidays | TTPE 1st year | PE Christmas, Easter | Current TTPE | Total | % |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| No | No | No | No | 85 | 22 |
| Yes | No | No | No | 11 | 3 |
| No | No | No | Yes | 17 | 4 |
| Yes | No | Yes | No | 65 | 17 |
| Yes | No | Yes | Yes | 25 | 7 |
| No | Yes | No | No | 7 | 2 |
| No | Yes | No | Yes | 8 | 2 |
| Yes | Yes | Yes | No | 21 | 6 |
| Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | 140 | 37 |

Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

This relates to:

- Those who have never worked                                      85

- Those who worked term time in the first year but not currently   7

- Those who work only in the summer holidays                       11

- Those who work in all the holidays but not term time             86

- Those who work in Current term time only                         25

- Those who work in term time and in the holidays                  165

As it is TTPE or paid employment in Christmas and/or Easter holidays that are perceived to have a detrimental impacts for students in full time study, the analysis was governed by this criteria.

**5.2.1 Why do students not participate in TTPE?**

Though there may be group characteristics that will influence which students choose not to engage in TTPE, and these are discussed later in this chapter, there will also be reasons that are individual and personal to each student that affects decision-making. Identifying these may assist in making recommendations regarding paid employment for future students.

The data shows 27% of students chose not to participate in TTPE, either not employed, only working in the summer holidays or having given up TTPE. Perceptions regarding negative impacts for studies, due to implications on time management, featured strongly.

> *'If I had to tear off to work on top of that (work set for the course) I would probably just not have enough time, it would end up that I missed out on studying and things and then it would probably affect my grades in a negative way'*

> *'From my point of view there is a definite impact ….. I'm not going to put my exams at risk. I do work in summer if I can find a job...'*

Robert and Ian, both bioscience students.

Robert also commented he was advised by friends who had finished the course he was enrolled upon not to take on TTPE, because this had caused struggles with academic studies, indicating difficulties in time management were ongoing for students engaged in TTPE, this was not a new problem:

> *'I was told that if you can avoid working do so and most of the students on my course who have any ideas of working while on the course and in regular employment like bar work or similar well they are struggling with the course and they are often behind with the coursework and stuff because of the working'*

The statistical data of this research appeared to corroborate this, showing 36% of students who were in TTPE reported they had missed a lecture or deadline, compared to 3% of those students who were not employed. This showed a significant increase in the incidence of missed academic studies, especially as the question regarding the missed lectures and deadlines did specify 'missed as a result of PE' in this study.

Richard, from bioscience, felt you only have one 'shot' at your degree classification:

> *'I am lucky not to have to work and that if I did it could affect my university work because I was thinking that you only get to go to university ……well for the most part…..once in your life so I'd rather maybe like have beans on toast rather than go down the takeaway..Well what's most important to me is getting the best degree I can'*

Richard also felt if he had less money he would still choose not to work, but would budget more. This was associated with socialisation through his life that 'consumer items are not essential to lifestyle'. His mother had taught him to budget, that brand names were not a necessity. Budgeting was mentioned in all the interviews of those students who did not have

paid employment, alongside how, in most cases, parents had consciously taught the student to budget prior to attending university. This, perhaps, gave these students more choice in the decision making on whether to have paid employment while in higher education, as they perceived they could manage on a limited income for the length of their studies. The follow up interviews in the third year showed that these students had continued to manage to fund their studies without taking on TTPE and had achieved a 2.1 or First degree classification. While it may be that this would have been the classification even if these students had taken on TTPE, it would appear they were not prepared to take that risk; their potential long term graduate employment future was, for them, too important.

Academic studies were also affected by the sheer lack of time students reported when they engaged in TTPE. When juggling employment with full-time study, time management was crucial for these students. They reported a lack of preparation for tutorials, a lack of time to complete the readings set for the tutorials, no time to research in depth for assignments, and limited time for revision. Thus it was not just missing lectures and deadlines, but the overall total impact that was detrimental to their studies. For example, Carole, a SOCSI student, worked a minimum of 12 to 15 hours a week but was often asked to do overtime. She perceives engagement in TTPE has impacted negatively on her marks overall:

> *'No (not missed lectures)...it is only Saturday and Sunday I have to work, so that doesn't really bother me but it's just like with the handing the assignments in I have been there like oh my god I have got to try and do it now because like I have left it to the last minute, I can't do it at the weekend and stuff so then I'll stress and do an all-nighter Sunday to Monday and stuff ... I had about 7 assignments that I had to hand in in the last month it was just a lot of work to do in that time... I think it has affected my marks slightly, yes, I don't know though that could be me just trying to find an excuse but I don't know like my friends they have more time to do the reading and stuff .... psychology is a lot about reading all these articles and stuff and they have a lot of time to do that like during the day ... when you finish a day at work you don't want to go and read articles...'*

Voluntary work was also mentioned in the context of having TTPE alongside studies, again related to time management. Voluntary work was considered to have value, in that it could be added to a CV as work experience in the career field they wished to enter, but it could be a choice between TTPE and voluntary work, if finances became limited. Sarah, a SOCSI student commented:

> *'Well I'm doing voluntary work at the moment…..it takes a few hours of my week but I counter that with the fact it is good to have some experience in the field you want to go in….. Hopefully there will be some work in that area for me afterwards because I believe a lot of people go off do a degree then never ever work in that area again which I think is such a waste'*

The statistical data regarding which students choose to volunteer while at university showed 22% of those students not in paid employment were involved in volunteer work, a similar percentage to the 19% participation of those students who had employment in the holidays. This percentage dropped to 14% in students who undertook TTPE. These students stated in the interviews that their TTPE was for money, while their volunteer work was for experience to be included in their CV, indicating clearly the decision-making in this instance. Sarah added that a continuation of voluntary work would limit time available for TTPE, if this became necessary to finish her degree. This illustrated a realistic view of time management, that there has to be a hierarchy in priorities, with funding the degree at the pinnacle.

Elizabeth, a SOCSI student who only undertook paid employment in the summer holidays, perceived she would not manage her studies if she had to have TTPE:

> *'I work all through the holidays (summer) and save as much as I can…. My parents don't take any money so I am able to save quite a lot……..so far this has been enough so I don't have to work when I'm in uni I don't think I could really I have too much to do if I want to get high marks……'*

Lily, again a SOCSI student, felt she had failed a module in her first year because of too much TTPE, which she was now determined she would not undertake again throughout the rest of her studies:

> *'I failed one module last year, only just but I had to resit it, and then I could only get 40% so it brought my overall mark down…..I think I worked too much and they (her employers) wouldn't let me have any time off to revise…… anyway I decided I would have to give it up but I will look for a job in the holidays (summer) and try to save so I definitely won't have to work when I'm in uni….. I still have quite a lot of savings left so I'm alright for this year.'*

This coincides with the literature around this area, which found employment in the long summer break was the best time frame in the academic year for students to work, and that 85% of students did this. However, more than 50% now work in term time to finance their studies (SIES 2006).

The time required for academic study was a major issue, no student commented on a lack of time for the social side of being a student, this did not seem to factor into the decision-making regarding engagement in paid employment.  It may be that the higher numbers of students engaging in TTPE has altered the social life structure within the expectations of being a student, with employment now being an accepted part of student life in the 21st century. A percentage of the students interviewed identified a fringe benefit to their TTPE, which was a creation of opportunities to socialise, as their employment was in hospitality in the city centre.

The other main reason for not having TTPE was totally unrelated to any perceived negative impacts. This involved the local labour markets, where availability of work was an issue. One student had not been able to find TTPE, while another commented that because of the recession more people are looking for employment, so it is difficult to obtain part time work if you are a student. Employers wanted permanent staff. This situation was also keeping wages low, due to supply and demand.  This could lead to a different type of stress that would detrimentally impact onto students, anxiety that they would be unable to fund their HE studies to completion.

**5.2.2 Why <u>do</u> students participate in TTPE and/ or Christmas and Easter holidays?**

Though the literature indicates TTPE to have the most detrimental impacts for students, paid employment in the holidays at Christmas and Easter could also affect grades for students, due to assignment deadlines and examination periods directly following these holiday periods. Thus 73% of students in this study had some form of PE that could cause them to underachieve.

The overall motivator was the wages earned. Only 30 of 190 students engaged in TTPE had employment with a connection to the career pathway they wished to enter. The literature in this area does pinpoint the increasing importance of wages within higher education funding, whether this is due to the funding changes within higher education, students as consumers in a capitalist society or an aversion to debt. Wages are discussed later in this chapter, however, perhaps another angle to the question here may be to ask why students are taking on TTPE when the evidence appears to demonstrate they realise there are possible negative impacts to this.

The qualitative data showed students expressing almost a rationalisation as to why they would and could cope with TTPE while studying. Curtis & Shani (2002:31) define there is now a 'routinisation' towards TTPE within the student body.   Hannah, from SOCSI, describes this:

> '*I think most students work today really …..it's become a way of life for most students and provided you don't have to work too much it's ok, sometimes though I think employers do expect students to cover other employees too much they forget they need to put university first otherwise what is the point?...*'

The general opinion appears that most students take on paid employment nowadays; it has become a 'norm' within student life. Many students have experienced TTPE in the form of a 'Saturday' job throughout the sixth form, and still obtained decent grades at A-level. Perhaps this increased acceptance that TTPE will be necessary to fund a degree lowers any associated stress and resentment. Certainly any stigma attached to having to have a 'job' while in university does not appear to exist nowadays. Comments from male and female students from both universities and schools demonstrated that this appears to be a universal opinion:

> '*I like going out with my friends so I needed the money to do that and my parents would not fund me if they thought I was spending the money on going out, and everyone seems to do it (work) so I thought I would be able to do it alongside studying…. Really if you talk to people about working when they are in uni, the only topic they comment on is that they need the money. They don't really seem to find it a problem.*'

> '*I'm just the type of person who likes going out sort of a bit and stuff like that and like I'm earning the money and I'm used to it because I've always been earning money……I have worked since I am 16*'

> '*Well I think its usual now to have students working when they are in university and if they don't do too much it is ok but I feel sorry for the ones who have to work a lot because they can't have time for either a social life or their studies.*'

Nicole, from SOCSI observed that university culture in the UK is changing through time:

> '*the culture of university has changed from my grandparents or my parents……work is pretty much part of being a student, I think most of my friends I know are working you know, they've been in university but they are working alongside it um those who aren't working are finding it difficult to maintain the high social life as well as pay for books and everything else that is expected…..*'

This points out how the experience of higher education has altered over the generations, that students are no longer prepared to be the stereotypical penniless students, who buy second hand clothes and live off beans on toast. It is interesting that, though these students define TTPE as normal for students today, they do qualify that, though this is acceptable and routine, too many hours may be detrimental for studying and the student life. Chloe, a SOCSI student aiming to become a primary school teacher, defines that, within her own self-identity, she is a 'worker' rather than a student, introducing the concept of students as employees in addition to learners, that today paid employment alongside studying has become a way of life, often viewed as a necessary stepping stone for the employment they desire.

> *'I like to think of myself as more of a worker, I don't really class myself as a student, I prefer to think of myself as working to be honest…… my main job is a deputy play leader for an after school club, looking after children but I also do waitressing for a catering company on and off, and babysitting and I've had quite a few other jobs as well, like I've worked as a shop assistant for quite a few years in my local shop, and I worked as a waitress, and I worked as a teaching assistant in a school at home….. I have always worked'*

Chloe was from a social class 3 family background, which could also include a socialisation into a 'working class' ethos towards self identity as an employee.

**5.3 Patterns within the groups of students who work:**

There will be clusters of students within the student body as a whole whom will have traits in common. Characteristics that differentiate the groups here are identified.

**5.3.1 Social Class:**

The principle of equal opportunities brought in by the Robbins Report of 1963 promoted the concept that if a student had the right qualifications then he/she could go to university. However, it is noted from the literature that the students who undertake TTPE most, and for the longest hours, are from the poorest families. The numbers of students from working class families has also declined, despite an increase in the overall numbers of students. The statistics for the social class of students in this study showed a 10% participation of students from social classes four and five. As one of the universities within this project was sited in a rural, working class area in the Welsh valleys, a higher percentage of students from the lower social classes were anticipated, particularly in light of recent policies to widen participation.

This implied a relationship between low participation of working-class students and perceptions that paid employment alongside study would be inevitable. The data in this study indicated that the social class of the student had a direct bearing on engagement in TTPE, and the amount of hours per week of employment.

**5.2 Table to show the typology of PE within social class:**

| Social Class | Typology of paid employment (shown as %) | | | | N= |
| | No PE | PE summer hols only | PE all hols only | Current TTPE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 22 | 4 | 32 | 42 | 78 |
| 2 | 26 | 5 | 23 | 46 | 145 |
| 3 | 20 | 1 | 17 | 61 | 98 |
| 4&5 | 14 | 0 | 20 | 66 | 35 |

Total base number N=356, all students surveyed who were allocated to a social class from parental occupation, all in their second year at university.

The incidence of TTPE showed a relationship to social class. The pattern here determined that higher social classes undertook paid employment more frequently in the holidays, while the lower social classes undertook TTPE in higher numbers. The lower the social class the higher the percentage of student engagement in TTPE, though the figures were similar for social classes 3, 4 & 5. Those in the lower social classes also had a higher incidence of working in both term time and in the holidays, which demonstrated a linear pattern. This had a relationship with the negative impacts identified to be directly resulting from paid employment. The detrimental effects attributed to paid employment were reported in the highest percentages by students in TTPE, especially those working long hours.

Employment pattern codes used in the bar chart:

SH – summer holidays

CEH – Christmas and Easter holidays

1TTPE –TTPE in the first-year

CTTPE – current TTPE

**5.3 Bar chart to show Social class and the patterns of PE:**
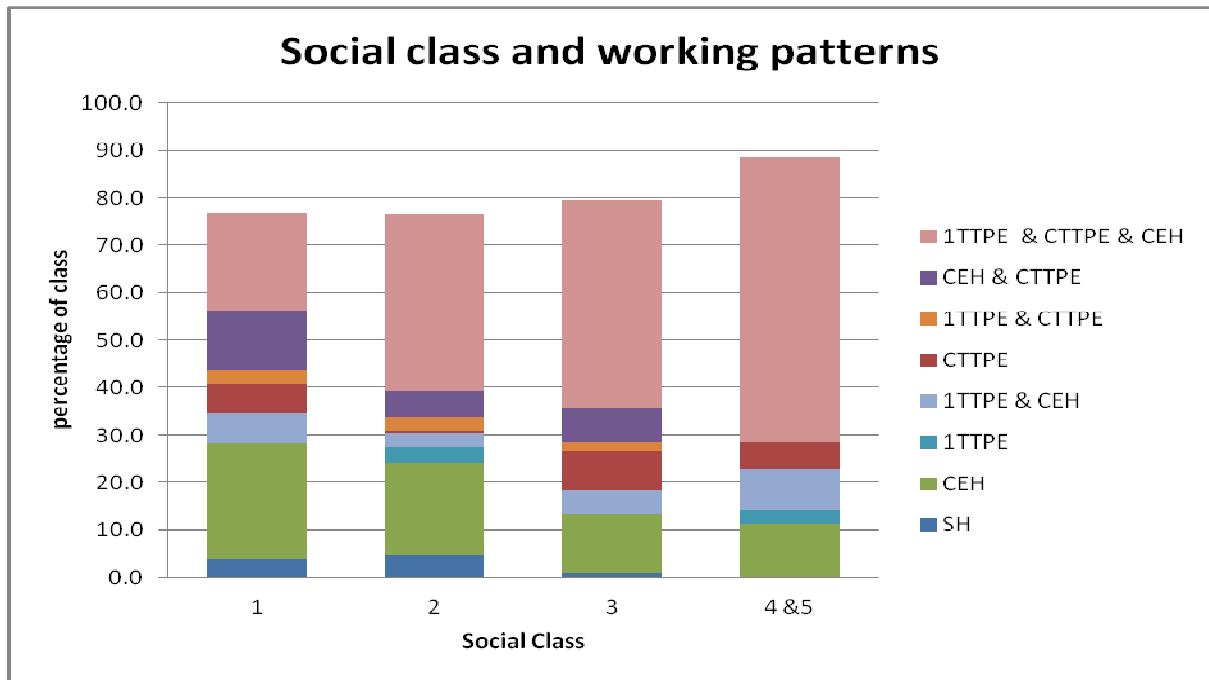


The height of the bars in the above chart indicate the percentage of students who had undertaken any PE thus far at university (and, by implication, the percentage who had not done so). The base number for the total of these second year students is N=356; that is, the total of students surveyed who were allocated to a social class from parental occupation.

This pattern can be seen very clearly in the bar chart above, depicting social class and the variety of working patterns identified in the student body.

Students in this study strongly felt any detrimental impacts had a relationship with the amount of hours worked in TTPE – the more hours worked the more likelihood there was of a negative impact for the student, either to the quality of their academic studies or the time they were able to participate in university activities. As social class has been seen to have a relationship with the incidence of engagement in TTPE, did this pattern also show in the number of hours undertaken in TTPE? Do the students from low-income families not only undertake TTPE in the highest numbers, but also work the longest hours?

The literature suggests 10 hours a week in TTPE to be the maximum before a negative impact is seen on academic performance. Therefore the hours in TTPE were analysed by no hours, where no TTPE was undertaken, below 10 hours per week, where there is a minimal risk of

negative impacts, 11 to 20 hours per week, where there can be a risk of negative impacts, and over 21 hours per week, where there is a high risk of negative impacts from employment.

**5.4 Table to show social** class in relation to the number of hours in TTPE

| Social Class | Hours on average (shown as %) | | | | N= |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | No TTPE | <10 hours | 11-20 hours | >21 hours | |
| 1 | 58 | 18 | 21 | 4 | 78 |
| 2 | 54 | 23 | 21 | 1 | 145 |
| 3 | 40 | 22 | 33 | 5 | 98 |
| 4&5 | 34 | 11 | 40 | 14 | 35 |

Total base number N=356, all students surveyed who were allocated to a social class from parental occupation, all in their second year at university.

Taking this 10 hours as a benchmark, social classes 1 and 2 show a pattern of the majority – 75% - of students choosing not to engage in TTPE or to limit their hours in  TTPE to below 10, minimising any detrimental effect to their academic studies while also allowing time to enjoy the experience of the student. Those students from social classes 3 still have a high percentage - 62% - of students in the minimal risk category groups. It is those students in social classes 4 and 5 who undertake long hours in TTPE, risking not fulfilling their potential in their academic studies, and also missing out on their student experience. For those students who do not work, the percentage falls as the social class decreases.

The bar chart below shows more clearly the relationship between social class and the amount of hours in TTPE, with the grouped hours between 11 and 20 divided to create this clearer picture.

**5.5 Bar chart showing the social class relationship to hours in TTPE with trend lines:**

**Social class relationship to hours in TTPE**
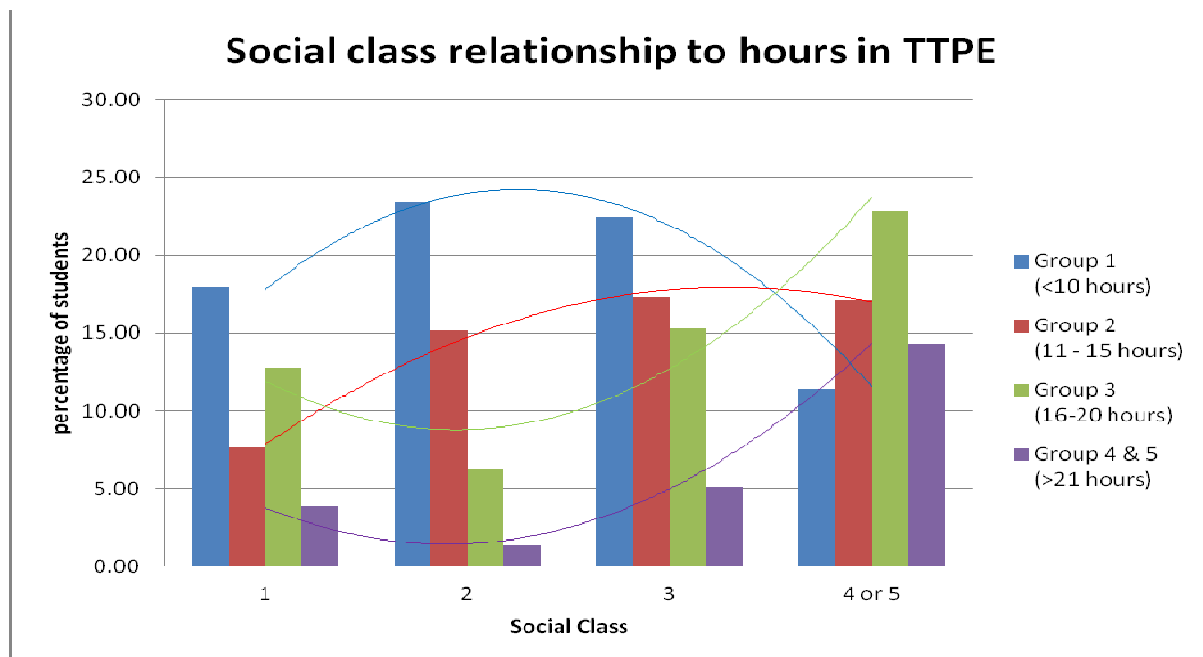
For the bar chart on the previous page, the total base number N=356, all students surveyed who were allocated to a social class from parental occupation, all in their second year at university.

Polynomial trend lines were applied to the above bar chart. The curvatures were negative for both group 1 and group 2 of hours worked from social class 1 through to social classes 4 or 5. This suggests most social class one and social class two students will have TTPE for very short hours, but the number of students engaged for the same hours as the social class decreases will become smaller. If the number of social classes were extended these curves would decrease and phase-out as the numbers of students became less and less.

The curvatures were positive for both group 3 and groups 4 & 5 regarding hours worked, from social class 1 through to social classes 4 or 5. This shows that those students from low income family groups will have a tendency to work longer hours in TTPE in greater numbers than those students from the higher social classes. If the number of social classes were extended these curves would extend exponentially, as the numbers of students would increase continually.

This indicates a very strong relationship between the amount of hours undertaken in TTPE and social class. Those in the lower social classes also have a higher incidence of working both term time and in the holidays, from 33% in social class 1 to 60% in social classes 4 & 5.

92

Interestingly, throughout the whole of the range of hours engaged in term time employment, the amount of reported hours in study each week was very similar, between 19.2 hours to 21.2 hours. Where there was a difference reported, it was in the amount of time spent on student life, and in voluntary work participation. A hierarchy of prioritisation existed whereby paid employment and academic studies took precedence over socialisation and participation in university societies, sports clubs and voluntary work.

As the composition of the student body is so different between the two universities and the demands of the courses vary, there could be patterns here regarding the amount of hours the students are undertaking in TTPE, and the social class composition of the students.

5.6 Table showing relationship between the hours undertaken in TTPE, social class and university and bioscience school:

| | University and School: | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BG hours PE per week (as %) | | | | | CB hours PE per week (as %) | | | | |
| S/C | 0 | <10 | 11 to 20 | >21 | N= | 0 | <10 | 11 to 20 | >21 | N= |
| 1 | 47 | 27 | 27 | 0 | 15 | 61 | 21 | 14 | 4 | 28 |
| 2 | 52 | 26 | 23 | 0 | 31 | 73 | 5 | 22 | 0 | 37 |
| 3 | 32 | 24 | 40 | 4 | 25 | 63 | 13 | 19 | 6 | 16 |
| 4&5 | 0 | 33 | 44 | 22 | 9 | 63 | 0 | 25 | 13 | 8 |

The base number N=80 for Glanaman Bioscience, N=89 for Chirk Bioscience, both relating to students surveyed who were allocated to a social class from parental occupation, in their second year at university.

There were different patterns regarding participation and the amount of TTPE undertaken between universities and schools.

5.7 Table showing relationship between the hours undertaken in TTPE, social class and university and social science school:

| | University and School: | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | GS hours PE per week (as %) | | | | | SC hours PE per week (as %) | | | | |
| S/C | 0 | <10 | 11 to 20 | >21 | N= | 0 | <10 | 11 to 20 | >21 | N= |
| 1 | 71 | 14 | 14 | 0 | 7 | 57 | 11 | 25 | 7 | 28 |
| 2 | 27 | 15 | 14 | 1 | 41 | 67 | 25 | 6 | 3 | 36 |
| 3 | 16 | 27 | 37 | 2 | 38 | 26 | 42 | 21 | 11 | 19 |
| 4&5 | 31 | 8 | 46 | 15 | 13 | 60 | 0 | 40 | 0 | 5 |

The base number N=99 for Glanaman SOCSI, N=88 for Chirk SOCSI, both relating to students surveyed who were allocated to a social class from parental occupation, in their second year at university.

The numbers of students who choose not to engage in TTPE were much higher at Chirk University than at Glanaman University. This was across both schools and all social classes. This reflects the variation in the composition of the student body and the local labour market. However the course type at Chirk University seemed to have an input into engagement in PE, as the bioscience school had the largest percentage of students who did not have TTPE, yet the social class composition of the school was very similar to that of SOCSI.

For those students in social class 1, the pattern for no paid employment was totally opposite for the bioscience schools, as at Glanaman University the bioscience students had the lowest percentage of students not employed yet Chirk University had the highest.

There was a pattern across the universities regarding social class, with students at Glanaman showing that, in general, the lower the social class the lower the percentage of students not in paid employment. At Chirk, the percentages of students not in paid employment were similar across the social classes, except for social class 3 SOCSI, perhaps indicative that there is a new class of students emerging from families just above the level of means tested incomes for grants.

Across all schools and universities, the students from low income families were employed for the longest hours, both in the 11 to 20 hours per week group and the 21 hours or more per week group. This again concurs with the literature, and the data for this study that is discussed over the next few chapters, that the lower social class student groups are employed for the longest hours.

**5.8 Bar chart to show University and School differences for those students employed for less than 10 hours a week:**
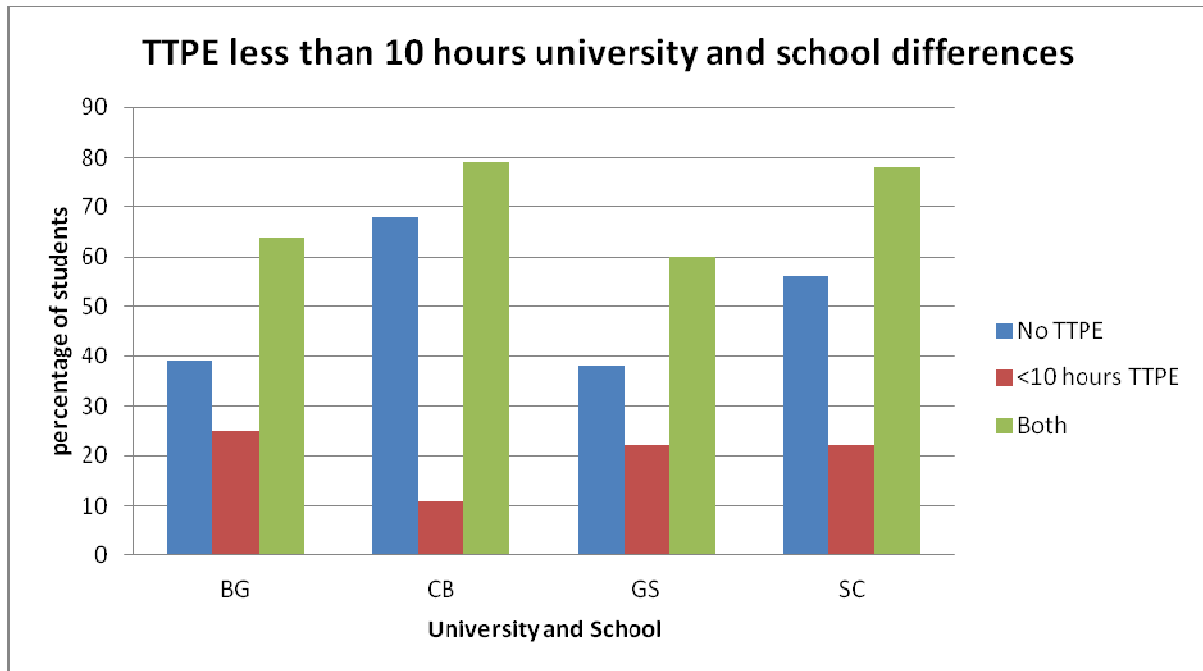


Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

There is a university difference when considering the percentages of students who either do not have paid employment, or engage less than 10 hours a week in TTPE, noted in the literature to have a minimal effect for the students. This is what would be expected given the social class composition of the universities.

**5.3.2 Gender:**

The ratio of the genders at both universities was almost 4:1 female to male. The overall pattern regarding gender participation in TTPE was very similar. However, differences within the gender pattern were revealed when the university and school picture was examined.

**5.9 Table to show gender pattern in TTPE in the different schools/universities:**

|  | University code and gender | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | BG % | | CB % | | GS % | | SC % | |
| PE type: | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| No PE | 20 | 10 | 35 | 42 | 53 | 29 | 29 | 24 |
| PE Holidays | 16 | 28 | 27 | 28 | 6 | 6 | 24 | 30 |
| Current TTPE | 64 | 62 | 38 | 30 | 41 | 66 | 48 | 46 |
| N= | 25 | 58 | 37 | 57 | 17 | 90 | 21 | 74 |

Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

95

At Chirk University there was a similar picture of percentages of male students between schools who were not employed, however there were double the female students at the bioscience school not employed in comparison to SOCSI. This may be from a slightly gendered subject perception that the demands of a bioscience course may be more difficult for females to manage. This was not seen in the percentages of female students at Glanaman bioscience school, where the only gender difference was a higher percent of female students were employed in holidays, perhaps being more proactive in seeking employment for the holidays.

Students in SOCSI at Glanaman were either employed in term time, or not employed, with almost double the amounts of male students not undertaking paid employment in comparison to female students. At 53%, this is the highest percentage of students not working through all the schools in this study, yet on further examination there was no social class, ethnicity or age demographics that would explain this. In comparison, the Bioscience school at Glanaman has the highest percentage for both male and female student participation in TTPE, opposite to the pattern at Chirk University.

Students of both genders undertake TTPE in higher percentages at Glanaman University, but this would be related to social class, as discussed in the previous section.


**5.3.3 Ethnicity:**

Patterns within the typology of paid employment were similar across all ethnic groups. However the numbers of students in ethnic minority groups was very low in this study.

**5.3.4 Age:**

Age is another factor that could be considered. However, there were very few mature students in this study, 36 of the sample of 379, with very different motivations influencing decision making. The mature students had mortgages to pay and families to support in the majority of cases. While the percentage of young students in TTPE was higher, 52% compared to 33% of mature students, the percentages of students for both groups undertaking employment hours above 15 hours was equal – 16%. This suggests that mature students

choose not to undertake TTPE where possible, but that when they do the amount of hours undertaken is similar to those of the student population as a whole.

**5.4 Decision making within the student body:**

The decision-making for students regarding higher education is both complex and ongoing, beginning with the initial choice of whether to enter higher education at all. This is influenced by the life stage of the student, incorporating family dynamics and socialisation, centred on perceptions of the importance of education. The future career choice dictates the decision-making on university and course. Students finance their degrees by incorporating all funding streams available. How the total funding is put together will dictate the decision-making of the student around whether to undertake paid employment, how many hours, and the type of work.

Different income profiles will relate to different groups within the student body, and will take into account the affordability of higher education for the individual student. Prior paid employment experience will also impact here, whether positive or inclusive of repercussions alerting the student there are implications to TTPE. Student agency in the labour market dictates the paid employment available, so can create its own pattern for students, though the student will always have the final choice.

**5.4.1 Life stage:**

The first decision made by 'would be' students is whether to go to university. While measures are in place to widen participation in higher education throughout the whole spectrum of society, it has to be accepted the majority of students are still young people. In this study 342 (91%) of the sample were 25 or under. This life stage, late adolescence incorporating the transition to adulthood will influence the decisions for these students.

Within western societies, the years from 18 onwards involve making choices that form the foundation for future life opportunities. Today, for many young people, this is directly correlated with obtaining higher levels of education, increasing the age at which independence from the family is achieved. Patton & Viner (2007) view the changes in the

transition of adolescent to adulthood as becoming extended, more complex and pluralised, because of the increased time span for this period due, in part, to choices made to stay in education longer. Arnett (2000) proposes the concept of 'emerging adulthood' for this transitional period, identifying this as distinct from other life stages. Both agree today's education patterns, resulting from huge change in the social contexts of the labour market, has had an effect on this life stage. When asked, the students interviewed in this study gave two main reasons they had decided to come to higher education. The first is that university was a natural progression from school, expected by both parents and teachers in many cases. Comments were made regarding:

> *'It seemed like a natural progression thing to do after my A levels so I wanted to go on into university' 'It's always been kind of like when you have finished school you have got to go up to university' 'It was never a conscious decision…… I mean my parents and I never sat around a table and said well I think you should go to university, it was just assumed I was. It was like you go to school then you go to college then you go to university.' 'Just really a progression from the sixth form, school to university.'*

The second reason was centred on life opportunities for the future, with students stating:

> *'To be honest they drill it into you at school don't they? They sort of say oh well if you go to university you will get a better job.' 'I want to be a primary school teacher so it's to get the qualification' 'Well it was just taken for granted really…… I don't really know what I want to do as a career but for any decent job you need a degree don't you?' 'I always wanted to go to university really, I guess I associated university with specialist jobs' 'Just to further my education I think, and for the better job prospects and to further your experiences in the field you want to go in, for like more experience in the career you want to go in for.'*

Within the 28 interviews of this study, 26 students gave one of these two reasons as to why they had chosen to stay on in education. To continue in education for the first 21 years of life, as a natural progression, must be related to an idea that the next 'natural progression' is graduate employment. Thus these two reasons are related to the concept of higher education being associated with future life opportunities.

Influencing this assumption of increased life opportunities will be familial attendance at university of prior generations. Historical data highlights only the upper social classes attended university, it is over recent decades that efforts to widen participation have

encouraged students from the lower social class family backgrounds to aspire to enter higher education.

The generation of the student regarding attendance at university showed a linear relationship with social class. Where the student was either the third or second generation to enter higher education, the higher social classes showed the highest percentages. Within the qualitative data, those students reporting an expectation of family and teachers that university was the natural progression were the second and third generation to attend university. The students giving interviews who perceived their degree would open doors to a future career were mainly those who were first-generation to attend University. This concurred with the quantitative data analysis.

The hours within TTPE were analysed to consider if there was a pattern regarding the generation of attendance at university. This showed the percentages of students who had no engagement with TTPE decreased as the generation attendance decreased. The highest percentages of students employed for long hours showed for those students who were the first in their family to go into higher education, or the first generation at university. Two reasons may explain these findings. The first is that family socialisation regarding the academic study demands and the importance of cultural capital gained at university varies according to prior knowledge of university education. Second is that incomes are greater in the higher social classes, which will possibly mean more support for the students, allowing greater choice in both participation in TTPE, and the amount of hours deemed necessary.

**5.10 Table to show relationship between generation to attend university, social class and amount of participation in TTPE:**

| | Generation attending university (shown as %) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Social Class** | Third | Second | First | First in family | **N=** |
| **1** | **29** | **47** | **14** | **9** | **78** |
| 2 | 11 | 54 | 18 | 17 | 145 |
| 3 | 4 | 27 | 31 | 39 | 98 |
| 4&5 | 3 | 14 | 31 | 51 | 35 |
| **TTPE** | | | | | |
| none | 57 | 56 | 40 | 41 | |
| <10 hours | 25 | 19 | 31 | 14 | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 to 20 hours | 16 | 21 | 27 | 40 | |
| >21 hours | 2 | 3 | 1 | 8 | |
| N= | 44 | 146 | 78 | 88 | |

Total base number N=356, all students surveyed who were allocated to a social class from parental occupation, all in their second year at university.

In an era of an increasingly demanding labour market, the majority of these students have the view that to enter a career with potential for advancement and a high level of salary and status, a degree is essential. Therefore the decision to go on to university is not a choice but a necessity. Indeed, the statistical data showed 162 students reporting they had to have a degree to enter their career choice.

There are paradoxes within individualisation at this life stage, where education becomes significant to success within employment, widening choices, but also includes possibilities for failure. Brannen & Nilsen (2005) explore choice and autonomy for young people in western societies of the twenty first century. They identify a loss of responsibility and autonomy alongside increased dependence on parental support, especially financial. This is certainly applicable for students in the UK, if one considers the high expectations of the UK government on parental contribution to fund higher education. Many students dislike the fact they are still dependent financially on their parents, so often will only ask for help when they are desperate, a strong motivator to take on TTPE, to try not to have to ask for financial support or increase the support they are receiving:

> 'They (my parents) help pay for my accommodation, but I don't really like to ask for more.'

> 'I use what I earn and then get some money off my mum and my dad if I absolutely need it.'

Comments such as these were made by 12 students in this study. Thus the decision making on engagement in TTPE for these students was influenced by the type of future they aspired to, by the adult they envisaged becoming, alongside how much financial support they could realistically expect to supplement state funding.

Financial arrangements with parents were shown in the quantitative data to have a linear relationship with social class regarding regularity. The highest percentage of students in receipt of regular parental contributions was from social class one family backgrounds. The

100

highest percentage of students who did not receive parental contributions was from social classes 4&5. These families have very restricted income levels, so the government does not expect them to contribute to higher education funding, putting in place a means tested grant to replace parental contributions for the students.

Students expressed their feelings on parental support in the interviews. Some of the students talked about how they felt honour-bound to pay back the monies their parents contributed as soon as they were in a position to do so, as they felt that as adults they should be self-supportive. Others talked of how they use parental contributions so they do not have to take on TTPE, but again articulated the intention of paying this money back.

**5.11 Table to show type of PC and relationship to social class:**

| | Type of Parental Contribution (shown as %) | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Social Class | Regular | When needed | None | N= |
| 1 | 51 | 28 | 21 | 78 |
| 2 | 43 | 32 | 26 | 145 |
| 3 | 21 | 44 | 35 | 98 |
| 4&5 | 0 | 34 | 66 | 35 |

Total base number N=356, all students surveyed who were allocated to a social class from parental occupation, all in their second year at university.

A proportion of students did not feel this way; they felt as higher education was a continuation of their studies that it was acceptable for their parents to contribute, while James, a young SOCSI student admitted he worked to socialise and hid this from his parents, so they did not stop or reduce their contribution, as he used parental contributions for his day-to-day living.

> *'I like going out with my friends so I needed the money to do that and my parents would not fund me if they thought I was spending the money on going out.... if they knew about my overdraft they would stop helping....  They know I go out a lot and that I'm careless with money because I have loads of takeaways n stuff...'*

**5.4.2 Affordability of Higher Education:**

The second stage of decision making will be how they will fund university. One of the major influences here will be the students' perceptions around the affordability of university. In this

study 57% of students responded they could afford university without having to undertake paid employment.

This is linked to perceptions regarding debt, which is discussed in chapter eight. There is currently almost an acceptance in the student body that debt will be inevitable, due to the funding changes within higher education. Therefore, if students believe university cannot be afforded without debt, TTPE will be a method to keep the debt to a minimum. Dependent on their attitude towards debt, whether they accept or have anxiety regarding debt, this will impact on both the decision-making on engagement in TTPE and the amount they will undertake.

There is a strong link to social class here, the higher the social class the higher the incidence of students able to afford higher education without paid employment, the data in this study showing having a linear pattern through the social classes. Only students who had been engaged in PE at some point while at university were asked about the affordability of university, as it was assumed that if they had never had PE then they could afford university, it may be some students cannot find a job but, even though these students are seeking employment, they have thus far managed to afford to stay at university.

The availability of paid employment in the area of the university did not show as significant in the decisions made on which university to attend for the respondents in this study. What appeared to be more significant was the choice on residency, 28% of students who felt they could not afford university without TTPE lived in the parental home, in comparison to only 16% of those students who felt university was affordable.

Again there was a link to social class, as students attending Glanaman University were seen to live at home in much higher percentages, with 58% of these students belonging to social classes 3, 4 and 5. This reflected the social class composition of the two universities. There will be implications regarding choice of university for the students, due to time and travel cost restraints. This will have a knock-on effect to a restriction on choices on the courses available. The qualitative data was not able to explore how the students felt here, as none of the respondents were living in the parental home.  Literature in this area defines there would

be an impact to the student experience, a restriction in participation in activities external to university, socialising, peer interaction discussing concepts and ideologies related to the course, the activities that accrue the social and cultural capital thought to be as important for a student as the academic study at university.

There is a strong link with the affordability of higher education and parental contributions, as of those students who deem they could not afford university without TTPE, 46% include parental contributions within their funding streams, compared to 70% of those students who deem they can afford university without undertaking TTPE.

A key finding in this study was that many students in receipt of the Welsh Assembly Learning Grant still perceived university to be unaffordable. The grants and bursaries schemes did not appear to have a marked effect on the student's opinions, as 59% of students eligible for this funding reported TTPE was essential to afford university. Theoretically, these students should feel they can afford university without TTPE, as the government policies aim to compensate for the lack of parental contributions. It is a reality that these grants are limited, whereas parental contributions may be unlimited. Parental contributions will be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

**5.12 Table to show perceptions on affordability in relation to types of PC:**

| afford university | Regular PC | PC when needed | No PC | N= |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No | 15 | 39 | 46 | 159 |
| Yes | 51 | 32 | 17 | 135 |

The base number N=294, all students who have had PE while at university, now in their second year.

It follows on that there will be a relationship between the perceptions on the affordability of university in the present day, and the type of parental contribution a student will receive. Those students who felt they could not afford university without TTPE were in the highest percentage where there was no parental contribution. A high percentage of those students who received parental contributions when necessary, rather than on a regular basis, also felt university to be unaffordable without PE.

From the qualitative data, students expressed that when parental contributions were given when necessary, they perceived their parents as not having enough money to support them, so they only asked for help when they were in dire need, for a one-off expense which they

simply could not afford, so there was no alternative solution. 85% of students who felt university to be unaffordable without some form of paid employment either had no parental contributions or parental contributions when necessary. It can be argued that grants have not differentiated overall patterns whereby students from higher social classes have most choice regarding engagement in paid employment, directly resulting from an increased access to funding.

### 5.4.3 Prior employment experience:

Decision-making may be influenced by the students' experience of paid employment while in study prior to entering university. This will either promote the feasibility of studying alongside some form of paid employment, as the student has experience of this and still achieved success in examinations, or highlighted any negative effects regarding time management and any impact on achievement levels.

In the literature, there is an indicator that employment hours in the sixth form can be very different to employment hours while in university, due to sixth form employment often being 'Saturday' only jobs or babysitting, newspaper rounds etc. However, while there may be differences in the working patterns between the sixth form and university, these students will have learnt from the experience of working. They will have knowledge of a work pattern that suits them, and experienced the benefits of paid employment to a CV when applying to university- a positive impact of transferable skills.

The interview data saw comments made that when paid employment in the sixth form or at college was successful, it became almost a blueprint for university:

> *'I worked from the last year of my GCSE's right through the 6th form and my A levels, I worked for W.H. Smith every Saturday, and I did quite a lot of voluntary work right through as well, going on tours and things like that, and I still had decent grades.....'*

> *'I've had a job since I was umm 14, a regular job so I think I've always worked because I like the money and things… I never thought it affected me really (grades at GCSE and A level)*

Emma and Laura, from bioscience and SOCSI, both expressed very positive experiences of TTPE. Both mention grades, indicating awareness there could be a potential negative impact to these from TTPE.

One student had obtained full-time employment throughout the holidays before attending university, with this continuing as TTPE. A relationship had been formed with the employer, advocating flexibility around academic studies would be a feature of the employment, promoting the student to perceive she would definitely be able to cope with TTPE alongside studies. Two SOCSI students stated they had 'never not worked from early age', feeling TTPE was part of educational life, so would be missed if they gave it up.

The statistical data identified 75% of students who had paid employment in the sixth form carried this on into university. A social class relationship showed here, as the percentages of students who had TTPE while they were at sixth form and then continued to engage in paid employment while at university rises as the social class decreases.

The data therefore indicates a link between sixth form TTPE and the decision making regarding TTPE at university. Employment in the sixth form can create a desire to maintain a certain lifestyle while at university; it may be from necessity to afford to stay on in education, but the data shows working in the sixth form does not deter many students from continuing in TTPE at university. Those students who had employment in the sixth form carry on undertaking paid employment at university in high numbers, both in term time and in the holidays. This concludes these students perceive paid employment does not have significant impacts on studies and socialisation, that there is a routinisation to employment making this achievable and of immense value to fund their continuation in education.

It may be there is a relationship with the hours in TTPE the students undertook while in the sixth form and the hours students decide they are capable of undertaking while at university. These hours were grouped and considered in categories for those students who did not have TTPE, those who were employed for less than 10 hours a week, those who were employed between 11 and 20 hours a week and those who were employed for over 21 hours a week in TTPE.

**5.13 Table to show relationship between the hours worked in sixth form/college and those worked while in university:**

| Hours in TTPE at university (shown as %) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| hours in PE in 6th form | No PE | <10 hours | 11 to 20 hours | >21 hours | N= |
| No PE | 74 | 13 | 13 | 1 | 144 |
| <10 | 39 | 33 | 25 | 3 | 105 |
| 11 To 20 | 32 | 17 | 45 | 7 | 114 |
| >21 | 38 | 19 | 13 | 31 | 16 |

Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

In the above table it can be seen that students continued to undertake paid employment in the same pattern from the sixth form to university in the highest percentages. It can also be seen that the percentages of students increasing their hours are lower than the percentages of students decreasing their hours between the sixth form and university.

This confirmed the majority of students were very aware of the time commitments they required for their university studies and participation in university life, so acted accordingly. Moving to halls or shared houses from home would have an impact in the amount of time they needed for daily living, some students may also have anticipated this.

Though a high percentage of students who undertook long hours in paid employment throughout their sixth form carried on these long hours into their university life, the total number of students employed for these long hours were low. Social class had an input here, as it has already been determined that students from low income family backgrounds are seen to work the longest hours in PE.

When any patterns within the take up of paid employment were considered between universities and schools, a very similar pattern to that in the table above was seen.

**5.4.4 Prioritisation within the relationship between engagement in TTPE and requirements of academic study.**

Following the transition from sixth form into higher education, students will have a hierarchy of prioritisation within time management connected to the time demands of the course they have chosen.

**5.14 Bar chart to show the reported average total of hours spent in study per week:**
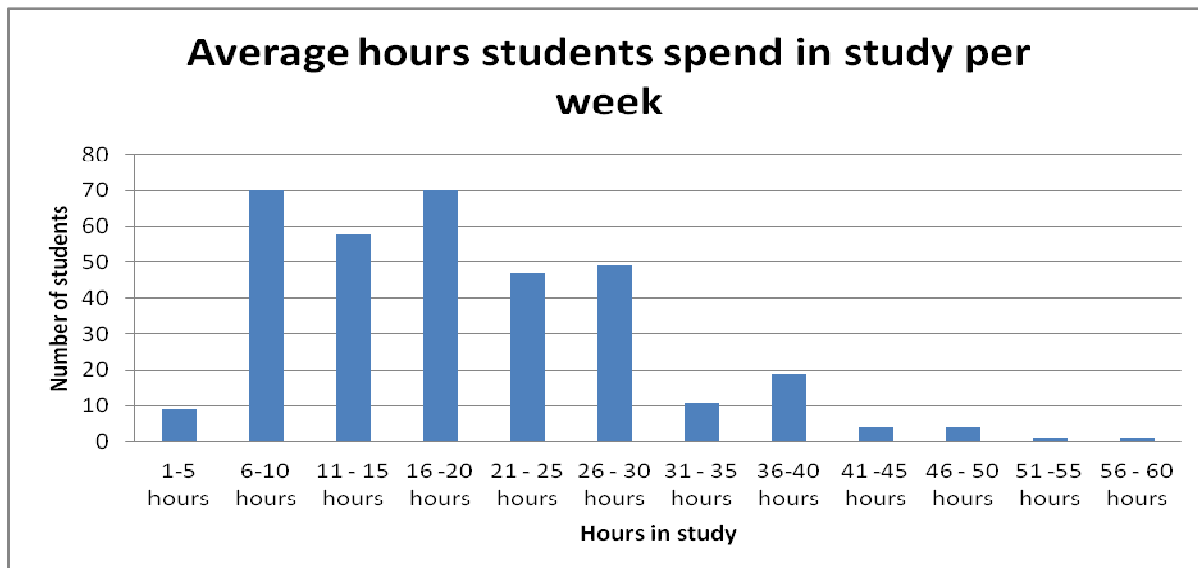


Average hours students spend in study per week

The base number N=343, the students surveyed who answered this question. These students are in their second year.

There will be a relationship between the amount of hours in TTPE the student will decide they can manage and the amount of hours they will decide they need to spend on academic study. However, is the correct balance feasible when the amount of hours in TTPE is high?

The study hours were examined to consider if there was a relationship with the amount of hours undertaken in TTPE.

**5.15 Averages, medians, modes and ST Dev of the hours in study per week related to those in paid employment per week:**

| Hours in TTPE | Hours on study (not grouped) | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Total students | mean | median | Mode | ST dev |
| none | 169 | 21.1 | 20 | 20 | 10.5 |
| <10 hours | 72 | 19.2 | 17 | 10 | 10.4 |
| 11 to 15 hours | 42 | 20.9 | 20 | 30 | 11.1 |
| 16 to 20 hours | 43 | 19.2 | 20 | 25 | 11.4 |
| >21 | 17 | 20.8 | 23 | 30 | 8.3 |

The base number N=343, the students surveyed who answered this question. These students are in their second year.

This highlights that those students who have TTPE for the longest hours also report the highest median and highest average of hours in study per week. Next are those students who do not have TTPE, while the students in TTPE for <10 hours per week report the lowest amount of time spent in studies. This suggests those students who are in the longest TTPE have priorities that their studies and the TTPE to fund these studies are highest, while the student experience has the lowest priority. The students who are in TTPE for the least hours are identified as the younger students, very interested in the social side of being a student, feeling this is a very important part of the overall university experience, so this is given equal status to academic studies. There was a similar pattern to this running through for both social class and gender. The different universities and schools within them were then examined. The table can be seen on the next page.

The quantitative data highlighted both school differences and university differences in the amount of hours in study reported. In both universities the Bioscience school students spend more time in study. Percentages of students in the bioscience schools were almost double in reporting 21 hours and above spent in their academic studies.

There were marked differences in the highest and lowest percentages for the highest categories of grouped hours in study between schools. This may be in part explained by the time required for laboratory work in the science school, but there may also be a difference in perceptions on the time requirement for study to pass the course at a desired classification.

**5.16 Table showing university/school differences in student amount of hours in study and TTPE:**

| | Reported grouped hours in studies (%) | | | | Reported grouped hours in TTPE (%) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Uni Code | <10 | 11 to 20 | 21 to 30 | >31 | <10 | 11 to 20 | 21 to 30 | >31 | N= |
| BG | 26 | 29 | 30 | 16 | 64 | 33 | 4 | 0 | 77 |
| CB | 11 | 31 | 33 | 24 | 79 | 18 | 3 | 0 | 87 |
| GS | 35 | 43 | 20 | 2 | 60 | 36 | 5 | 0 | 98 |
| SC | 19 | 46 | 30 | 6 | 78 | 16 | 5 | 1 | 81 |

The base number N=343, the students surveyed who answered this question. These students are in their second year.

The are also differences between universities in the percentage of students who report over 21 hours in study, with students reporting almost a third more hours in study at Chirk University.

**5.18 Bar Chart to show University and School differences in hours of study and TTPE:**
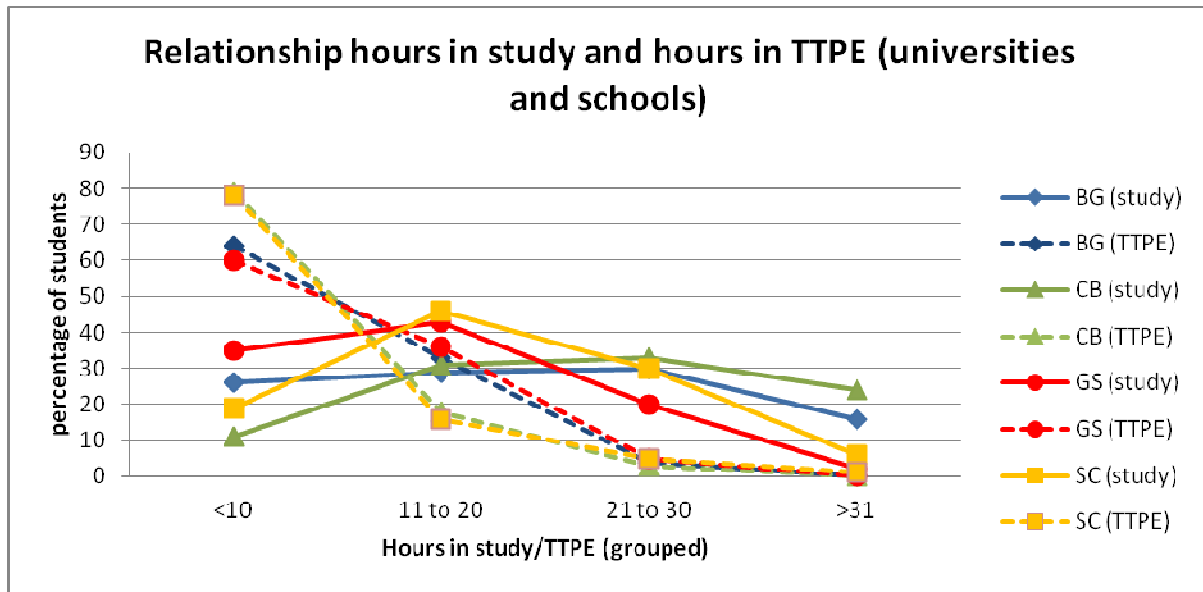


The base number N=343, the students surveyed who answered this question. These students are in their second year.

Patterns between the schools of engagement in TTPE were very similar. The social class composition between the schools at the universities is similar, so this would reflect the pattern of employment through the social classes. The students at Chirk University had less engagement in TTPE overall, but the gap narrowed when the percentage of students working less than 10 hours a week, where there is a minimum impact, was considered. This suggests the school influences the amount of study time, from the demands of the course, while the university influences the amount of TTPE undertaken, from the social class composition of the students.

### 5.4.5 Individual Motivations

There will always be individual student motivations that will influence the decision-making regarding engagement in TTPE. Several students talked of socialisation within the family unit, concerning a work ethic that dictated the student should have TTPE, but only to the extent where it gave the student a degree of independence, experience for a CV, and a taste of the real world. Parents did not want the student to be reliant on the wages, as Anne, from SOCSI explains:

> *'they prefer me to have a bit of work so that I am like independent and that sort of thing because they encouraged me to go and get a job for that reason really but they don't want me to have to work for rent and stuff.'*

Mature students have very different motivations from young students. For example, in this study one mature student, Anthony, in bioscience, stated that going to University was something he had always regretted not doing, so following redundancy he decided to use his savings to fund himself through university. He did have paid employment of 7 hours a week with longer hours in the holidays to supplement his savings. His career outlook for the future was very defined, as he wanted to use his degree to gain employment with improved prospects. Another mature student, Marcia, from SOCSI, was a single parent with prior employment paying the minimum wage; she was entitled to benefits and grants to help fund her university course and was very focused that the degree would open doors for a career to improve life opportunities for her and her daughter.

Graduate employment motivations are often involved in the decision-making for entry into higher education. Younger students talked about a career structure that necessitated obtaining a degree, TTPE would help fund the higher education and if this was not related to their chosen career, voluntary work could fill this gap for vital work experience. Laura and Sarah, both SOCSI students elaborated:

> *'I want to be a primary school teacher so it's to get the qualification..... I am working in a shop but I do voluntary work in a nursery'*

> *I want to be an educational psychologist so that means a degree.... I might have to do a second degree.... If I have to work, I will, I already help in a youth club for teens with disabilities'*

Students also expressed a desire to stay on in education for the academia and learning, hoping to gain postgraduate qualifications.

> *I have always enjoyed learning about new things...... I would love to do a Masters after my degree..... Perhaps I would get a job in a college or university then, research or teaching.... I don't like having to have TTPE but can't stay in uni otherwise...'*

Sophie, Bioscience student

Paid employment was viewed as a means to an end, a method necessary to bring in extra income.

**5.4.6 Agency in the labour market.**

Decision-making will also be influenced by the current economic climate effect on the labour market. Student agency regarding the type and amount of employment undertaken is affected by the supply and demand within the market, but there is always a hierarchy in the decision-making.

All students engage in paid employment because they need income. Ideally, the student will locate employment in a field where there is a relationship with the career they wish to enter, work experience which has a wage. Students do not have complete agency, creating tension between the agency and the labour market, as the labour market will dictate what jobs are available. The statistical data in this study showed 73% of the students were in retail and hospitality, which was not specific work experience, though the nature of the employment created experience in the wider sense, transferable skills useful for a CV.

The labour market will dictate according to its own needs, not the needs of employees. Thus for students in this research there was little control over the type of job available, the current labour market dictated in favour of the employer. Where the students had improved agency was how they worked within the market situation. This was via a consideration of the characteristics of the TTPE, the shift pattern, the degree of flexibility. This was where they could exercise agency. Of course, it may be argued that where the student has the greatest agency is actually in the decision-making on whether to take on paid employment in the first instance.

The current economic climate dictates that wages remain low, with companies often able to find employees who will work any hours and are available for a permanent positions. Responses in the qualitative interviews indicated students perceived they had little or no agency, as they were desperate for the wages to fund their degree. Any employment on offer was accepted, and the students allowed themselves to be 'blackmailed' into working the hours required by the company rather than the hours that created a work life balance to include the time necessary for academic studies and student life.

> *'I have mentioned that I'm a student and I'm not looking for anything permanent or full time and I actually got replies that they are not really looking for anyone like that because there are so many people looking for any hours. They are willing to work anytime so they would prefer having someone like that.'*

Kath, a 24 year old bioscience student.

> *'If you have asked 'oh can I have this time off' there is no way you will have study leave, they won't give you study leave. .. they will either be like you have to book it off as holidays or resign, because your job, well they think your job should be the first important thing. ..you can't finish early you have got to start at 9 and finish at 5 cos normally I start at 1.15 and finish at 7 so when I asked can I finish at 5 they were no you've got to start at 9 if you want to finish early ... you always have to do something to compensate'*

Carole, a young SOCSI student, stated she felt her employers were rigid in their views on loyalty to the company yet were not reciprocal in any flexibility around hours for study or to complete assignments. She had been trying to find alternative employment but none was available. She was determined to leave this employment by February of her last year, to concentrate on her dissertation and final assignments, so will exercise her agency at that time by giving up her paid employment for the last five months of her course.

> *'If I am still there I am giving up in the February cos I know they will make me work Easter full time......... I am saving up and I will have my last student loan in the May but be moving back June so like that's rent I don't have to pay.....'*

Circumstances will change for students throughout their degree, and so their patterns of PE will change. They will choose what balance there will be between economic necessity and the demands of their studies.

## 5.5 Flexibility and shift work relationships to engagement in TTPE:

The flexibility that employers allow students around assignment and examination periods will contribute to the decision making regarding student participation in TTPE. The more hours in TTPE, the more flexibility will be needed, but does this happen? Overall, the data reported only 16% of these students felt their employers allowed no flexibility within working hours. However, the incidence of inflexibility within the paid employment increased as the hours undertaken increased, when arguably the most flexibility is needed.

**5.18 Table showing flexibility within TTPE in relation to the number of hours worked and effect on academic studies:**

| Flexibility | Hours in TTPE (%) | | | Affect on academic studies (%) | | N= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | <10 | 11 to 20 | >21 | missed lectures | missed deadlines | |
| High level | 47 | 23 | 35 | 17 | 5 | 63 |
| Some | 41 | 60 | 41 | 35 | 13 | 96 |
| None | 12 | 18 | 24 | 33 | 30 | 30 |
| N= | 75 | 97 | 17 | | | |

Base number N= 189, the total of the students surveyed that engage in current TTPE, in their second year of university.

Employers may find it difficult to find cover for the students who work longer hours, but this will lead to added stress for the students regarding time management at periods when revision, reading and research are needed for assignments and examinations. If the student cannot have any time off at these periods there would be a strong likelihood that marks could be lower. A main problem highlighted by four students who were interviewed in this study was that, in theory, when they applied for the employment, at the interview they were assured there would be flexibility around examination periods, but the reality was different. Carole, from SOCSI explained:

> *'If you have asked oh can I have this time off there is no way you will have study leave, they won't give you study leave. ….but when I started they were like oh it won't be a problem, just ask……… I don't know if I would have started if I had known but then all the jobs had gone cos everyone had been looking for one….'*

Once in paid employment students seemed afraid to leave in case there were difficulties finding another job, plus it was time consuming to look for different employment. The students also expressed concern they would be assured again of no problems regarding flexibility around examination periods and deadlines, only to find differently at a later date. A case of better the devil they knew. Three of the respondents stated they would just take sick time as a way to have time off, when they needed it for their studies. They did not feel guilty about this as they were not paid and also felt they had been misled on this issue.

However, two students highlighted relationships can develop between the employer and the student, creating a reciprocal arrangement around flexibility that is beneficial for both the student and employer:

*'they are quite flexible…I think it is also that because I have been working there for like 4 years so I know the managers and I think I know a lot about the management and other jobs and that so I think that's why they were like so good about it (flexibility) because I can then do another job another time and cover......'*

The shift pattern for the TTPE was also explored to consider if this had an effect for the students due to the 'recovery' time necessary, if late or night shifts were worked. However, in this study, night employment was rare and no patterns relating to social class, gender, university or schools or the amount of hours engaged in TTPE were identified to be associated with problems around time management issues caused by shift work patterns. This could be related to a university week often meaning students are only in four lectures on two or three days. This blurs the lines between the week and the weekend, so unless the weekend is used for university activities there is no differentiation as such.

**5.6 Remuneration from TTPE – how are wages used?**

Wages supplement other forms of funding students receive. Calendar (2008) found student employment to be neglected in debate by government and policymakers. The only mention of student paid employment was in guidance notes regarding assessment for hardship funding, where it was stated:

> *'Students could supplement income via part time work, holiday work, overdrafts, savings and increased parental contributions'*
>
> DFES (2005, paragraph 3.55) as cited in Callender (2008).

Interestingly, an 'assumed income' figure is used for the above sources of income, allowing avoidance of linking employment income with student support systems. Callender surmises this to mean that wages from employment are not considered by the UK government as essential to student funding. Other countries, such as Canada and the USA, include wages as an accepted source of income for students.

Students take on TTPE to increase the income they otherwise receive from all funding sources. Occasionally paid employment is a form of work experience that will also be of use in future careers, but this is rare, in this study 84% of the students in TTPE were not

employed within the field they wished to enter, with another 4% of the students, who had located paid employment that was also work experience, having to supplement the income from this employment as there were so few hours available.

How did the students spend their wages? Was there a consumer aspect, or did all the wages cover necessities? Hunt et al (2004) found 66% worked to 'achieve a desired standard of living' which could relate to necessities or luxuries, again illustrating that these students are living in a consumer society.

There is also the absolute versus relative poverty aspect to be considered. This differentiates which students need to work to live, and which want to maintain a 'desired lifestyle'. However, is this influenced by the perceived negative impact to studies and the overall student experience that students feel are directly related to TTPE?

It was decided to leave out transport in this analysis due to not separating car and travelling, as one could be considered a necessity and one a luxury. There could also be two thoughts here – if the time management is important then a car could be necessary to get to work, university and home, given perhaps limited public transport. But then does it become a vicious circle in that the student might be working extra hours to pay for the car?

The majority of the students in this study defined wages were used to contribute towards the overall whole cost of being at university, whether this be for luxuries, as they felt socialising was their main luxury and, as such, an important part of university life, or the necessary living expenses and university costs. This is illustrated in the Venn diagram.

**5.20 Venn diagram to show how wages are spent:**
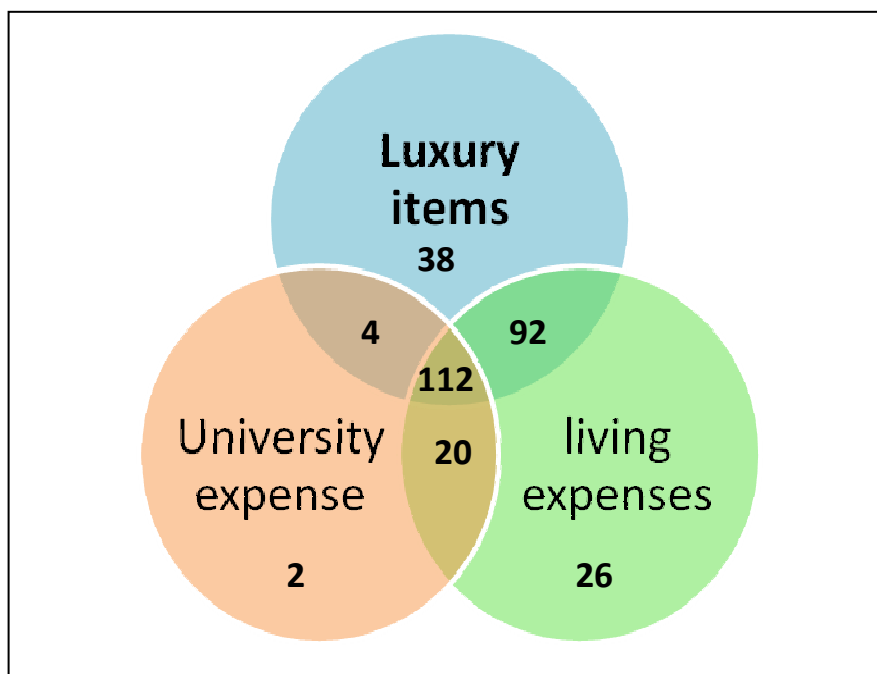
The base number N=294, all students surveyed who have had PE while at university, now in their second year.

Grouped order:

Luxury items = social life or clothes

Living expenses = rent or living costs

University expense = tuition fees or academic necessity

**5.6.1 Wages for luxuries:**

The percentages of students who used wages to fund luxury expenditure, such as socialising and consumer items, were similar through all the social classes. Overall this amounted to 21% of the students in TTPE. From the qualitative data students commented they wanted to be like their peers, that this was a socialisation of today, that most students had TTPE alongside their studies, and this was how students in other countries funded their studies. Some students stated there was also socialisation from their family that you should work 'because you had left school now'. James, a young SOCSI student, had TTPE to purely fund the social aspect of student life:

> *'I wanted the experience of being a student and that means I accepted there was a need to take my studies seriously but I also wanted the fun side of being a student….. I like going out with my friends so I needed the money to do that and my parents would not fund me if they thought I was spending the money on going out……..this is all part of being a student so I am prepared to work to be able to live like I want.'*

For James the student experience was an essential part of being a student but needed to be funded. Elaine, a young bioscience student also undertook TTPE purely for disposable income to spend on consumer items, takeaways, partying:

> *'It's just for like going out and shopping and that sort of thing…I don't have to like spend it for rent n living and stuff…….my parents pay my rent and then I use my loan to like live off and that, you know food shopping and bills and that sort of thing. I manage ok…….I think I would find it a lot harder if I had to work in order to live while I was in university.'*

Holidays were another luxury item that students were prepared to have TTPE for, while other students defined their wages were for 'guilt free treats'. However, all these students had

TTPE of less than 15 hours a week, and the choice of giving up TTPE if it began to have a negative impact on their studies. It is this freedom within the choices being made that allowed students to earn wages they could spend on socialising and consumer items.  There was a difference in the genders here, with 33% of females spending wages on luxuries only compared to 23% of males. The statistical data showed students who spent their wages on luxuries only does not vary greatly between the social classes.

**5.20 Table to show relationship between hours undertaken in term time paid employment and use of wages:**

| Hours in TTPE per week (shown as %) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wages Use | <10 | 11 to 20 | >21 |
| Luxuries | 31 | 21 | 6 |
| Both | 48 | 61 | 82 |
| Necessities | 21 | 18 | 12 |
| N= | 71 | 94 | 17 |

The base number N=182, the total of students, minus 7, who were in current TTPE in their second year at university.  The 7 students not included in this table all stated they used their wages only for running their car.

Interestingly the percentages for the wages used solely for luxuries or necessities decreased as the hours in employment increased, yet this pattern was reversed when wages were used for both luxuries and necessities. Again is this indicative that the consumer aspect of student spending contributes to how many hours in TTPE a student will deem necessary in order to afford university?

**5.6.2 Wages for luxuries and necessities:**

The majority of students, 52%, spent wages on both luxuries and necessities. A pattern began to emerge through the social classes, where the percentages of students using wages for both luxuries and necessities increased as the social class decreased. The choice to reassess their position regarding whether they could finish TTPE, or adjust the amount of hours, would be more difficult here, if these students perceived the wages to be essential. However the element of wages spent on luxury items would allow a margin within the wages earned that could make it possible to reduce hours or shift patterns, if necessary.

However, this does bring into question the absolute versus relative poverty aspect.  Will these students want to continue to spend on the consumer items they have the disposable income

for? This may be influenced by the labour market dictating what TTPE is available, creating its own pattern.  It may be that though these students theoretically have a choice to reduce hours or change their shifts, their employment will not allow this.

**5.6.3 Wages for necessities only:**

The data showed 27% of students in TTPE defined they spent all their wages on funding their studies, for rent, living expenses and necessary academic items. Perhaps what students view as necessities vary between individuals, but importantly, for these students the wages are being spent on what they deem as essential for them. This will be how they view their TTPE income, so if they then have to make decisions on cutting this down because they perceive there to be a detrimental impact on their studies or student life, this will be extremely difficult, as how will they afford the essentials? The highest percentage of these students is in the lowest social classes, four and five. Sophie, a young bioscience student, was adamant her wages were spent on necessities:

> *'Mainly food, I mean I don't really go out at the end of the day, I just really do like my food (laughs) so yeah and there are things like going home and whatever because it goes on train tickets and stuff. So how much of your wages go on what you would call essentials?  Ummmmm most of it'*

This does not allow the student to consider whether she has an option to reduce her income by reducing her TTPE, though she might be able to budget more. Hannah, a young SOCSI student, talks about how she had to take on TTPE in her second year because she really felt she could not manage without the wage income to fund her studies:

> *'(I had to take on TTPE for)Sheer finance really, I mean in my first year I just about survived, but through the summer I was so broke I thought I really don't want to be like this any more so I decided it was time to look for more work and look for work anywhere, in areas I hadn't worked before like bar work……..Well I work Saturday night so I can't spend it (her wages) then, so I go to Tesco on Sunday and I usually spend it there on food. I think really I spend it on necessities rather than anything else, yes I definitely think that I don't really waste any money.'*

Again this illustrates that whatever impact TTPE might have, Hannah did not consider she had many options to choose from, if she was to stay at university.

There was a difference between the social classes when reporting whether wages were spent on necessities, as it is students from the lower social classes who report spending wages on necessities only in the highest percentage. Students in social class 1 have the highest

118

percentage of reporting spending wages on both necessities and luxuries. This tied in the type of parental contributions the students received, so would appear to be linked to the overall income of the student.

**5.22 Table to show social class and Parental contribution relationship to wage use:**

| Wages Use | Social Class (%) | | | | Type of parental contribution (%) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4&5 | Regular | When needed | None |
| Luxuries | 26 | 32 | 26 | 24 | 38 | 25 | 15 |
| Both | 63 | 53 | 57 | 55 | 57 | 60 | 60 |
| Necessities | 12 | 15 | 17 | 21 | 6 | 15 | 25 |
| N= | 56 | 110 | 72 | 29 | 90 | 100 | 89 |

Base number N=279, the second year students surveyed who had engaged in PE while at university.

Again, illustrating students as consumers, the percentages of students reporting spending wages on luxuries only were similar across all social classes. Patterns were similar within both schools and universities for the use of wages.

There was a theme running through the responses from the interviews where students felt they had to take on paid employment to supplement the financial support from government, as this was just not enough. When there was no parental support, yet a minimum student loan awarded based on the parental income, as two of the students indicated, there was no choice but to have TTPE to stay in higher education. A further two students commented on the way the means testing for the student loan is completed when the family unit is not nuclear, which created a shortfall in state financial help. Family contributions to support students in higher education are discussed in depth in chapter 9.

**5.7 Conclusion**

It is now generally acknowledged that TTPE has become a feature of the current higher education landscape. This phenomenon has increased rapidly alongside the funding changes in higher education, and this chapter has identified patterns within the student body in who works, and equally important, who does not.

It is very important to understand the choices students are making around the whole area of paid employment while they are full-time students, as a lot of time and effort is needed for studies to achieve a high degree classification. When examining the decision-making of

students, motivations will be the strongest factor. Initially, self interest is the motivation, and here that goal is to gain the qualifications they need to enter the career they desire. The aspirations of many of these students were related to graduate employment and associated life opportunities.

The agency that students have within paid employment, in the current economic climate, showed the labour market will dictate availability, and for certain groups of students, desperate for wages to help fund their degree, this highly influenced the decision-making on whether to accept what jobs were on offer. This was identified by the fact that 73% of these students worked in the retail and hospitality sector, despite indicating a preference for paid employment within the sector they wished to enter.

Certain students, those with a specific career objective, resolved their tension in agency within the current labour market by accepting employment to earn an income in whatever sector there was employment available, but then supplementing this with voluntary work within the field they wished to enter. Of course, students all have the final agency as they can choose not to have paid employment at all. However, this is not considered by many students who perceived they could not fund their course without the income from paid employment.

A high percentage of students in this study, those engaged in different forms of paid employment and those who had no paid employment, perceived that there could be negative impacts to their studies, and hence their degree classification, directly related to paid employment, and in particular long hours in paid employment in term time.  This influenced the priorities these students placed on paid employment, studies and their student life, and how they managed these.

What is of importance here is that the circumstances for the students can change. The decision-making on whether to have employment or not may change, especially if the instrumental value the students have placed on paid employment to fund their studies change, perhaps reduced by perceptions of negative impacts to their studies. Change is a two-way direction and while some students were very clear in their opinions that they would reduce their hours in paid employment if necessary, others were also realistic that there could be a time when they would need paid employment to continue to the end of their degree course.

The chapter also discussed flexibility and the level of autonomy over the amount of paid employment within different student groups, and while many students have PE and find no detrimental impact with this, these are the students who work low hours, with the confidence that they can choose to give this up if necessary.

The chapter also demonstrated how students spent their wages also affected their participation in TTPE, indicating a relationship with the level of autonomy the student has. When wages were for necessities, the students did not have the same freedom of choice those students who used wages purely on luxuries had.

However, there was a hierarchy in how the students spent their money, and this was what they deemed necessary to their lives, not necessarily what everyone else perceived as essential, but what they, as individuals, felt was essential The literature defines different classes will have different items as essential, but when these students formed their priorities on what was necessary to fund both university and their desired lifestyle, the issue of agency arose, due to the level of income the student had estimated they would need.

The following chapter will consider how the students 'manage' the choices they have made regarding participation in paid employment, and in particular term time paid employment. This will include the personal strategies the individual student and their family will use and how students will manage public strategies.

# Chapter Six:

## Data Analysis Section 2: Strategies used to manage TTPE

### 6.1 Introduction:

Due to the evolving of student finance over the years, especially the loan system first mooted in the last decade of the 20th century, it has come as no surprise that paid employment has become a vital source of revenue to certain cohorts of students. Smith &Taylor as cited in CHERI et al (2005:16) identify that:

> *'The student worker is a new phenomenon, a product of political decisions of the 1990s which transferred the costs of financing higher education from the state to students and their families.'*

Alongside this important social phenomenon, it is obvious that students will have individual coping mechanisms. It is, perhaps, with these coping strategies in place that students are able to participate in paid employment in much higher numbers.

However, are students aware not only of the positive impacts but also the potentially negative impacts of TTPE? Are parents, government, financial institutions alert to the consequences of these as negative connotations? Certainly, the government has gone some way to drawing up financial strategies for students, though these were designed to promote widening participation rather than to tackle any negative impacts related to TTPE.

Circumstances throughout the lifespan of the degree require fluidity within the coping strategies, in order to minimise any negativity. Differentials while segregating the student groups pinpoint the individual's adopted coping mechanisms for managing paid employment, also highlighting the reason for taking on paid employment in the first instance.

This chapter will analyse individual strategies used by students and their families, how students relate to and manage the financial assistance on offer by both public and financial institutions. The effectiveness of the strategies to both individual students and student groups are assessed.

**6.2. Types of strategies**

Students' perceptions highlighted both beneficial and negative impacts to the whole spectrum of university life related to TTPE. These were linked to patterns within the paid employment, encompassing hours of participation through to the degree of flexibility and type of employment. Time management was foremost in student identification of detrimental impacts, affecting a range of activities students deemed fundamental to both studies and involvement in university life. Students had put into place a hierarchy to the demands on their time, with involvement in university activities the bottom of the list, fitted in only when opportunities arose. Thus the main strategies are related to time management and finances, used to enable minimum participation in paid employment.

Students observed government expectations on parental contributions to funding have become increasingly important. A relatively unexplored concept of informal contracts/negotiations between parents and students was emerging, centred on restrictions to hours of engagement in TTPE. This suggests parents identified a relationship between TTPE participation and a possible detrimental effect to studies, so used their contributions as a strategy.

All the strategies identified in this study were interlinked by a common goal, to enable young people who had the ability to enter higher education fund their studies and fulfil their potential.

**6.3 Financial strategies:**

As previously highlighted, in the current higher education system the onus is more on the individual student to fund their degree. Students calculated how much income they required, to assess the funding streams they would need. The calculation was a personal perception on what they deemed essential for day-to-day living and university life.

**6.3.1 Student management of funds available from public sources:**

In the current economic climate, the newly involved mass system of higher education has caused public funding via government to be transformed dramatically. The key issue here is for students to have knowledge of what is available, how to apply and which financial help has to be paid back and when. Decision-making regarding alternative financial strategies can then begin.

*Student Loans*

The current student loan system supplies separate funding for tuition fees and subsistence, the latter being means tested. These are both low interest loans with deferred repayment, so are beneficial for students in comparison to other types of finance.

MORI (2005) and CHERI et al (2005) define that as student loans have become more essential to finance degrees, they appear to be much more widely accepted. Certainly in this study the majority of the students utilised these loans, 90%, with 5% stating they would use them if they needed to and the remaining 5% being ineligible to apply for them due to residency criteria.

Superficially, the student loan system appears both feasible and practical, and certainly, in the quantitative data the high uptake of the loan indicates students view these loans favourably, and have knowledge on how they are organised. However, the qualitative interview data pinpointed 40% of these students felt the application criteria could be unfair. This criterion is based on a stereotypical nuclear family, yet in UK society today this family structure is not necessarily in place. The assumption that parents will automatically support their children through higher education is no longer valid in many cases. Details of income essential to the means tested part of the subsistence loan were considered obtrusive when parents were no longer a couple, with tension around the amount each parent was expected to contribute. It can also be the case that parents have the income, but are either not willing, or not able to provide financial contributions. A limited student loan in these instances has disastrous consequences for the student. Sophie, a young bioscience student explained:

> *'Well I do feel very annoyed that the government has expectations that parents can and will contribute because my parents really want to contribute but they can't. They are on a low income so are very limited with what they can contribute and often state they feel guilty over this and that doesn't seem really fair.... When my stepdad does get work, he earns good money but even then, when he is in work, I do not get parental contributions because it needs all his wages to keep the home going especially when he hasn't got a job but because he earns good money, I am always afraid this could affect my funding due to the means testing needed for the whole of the student loans and the grants etc..... And my dad never gives me anything, I don't even know if he knows I am in university......'*

Sophie's family background consisted of a stepfather raising two children, not his own, with no financial assistance from the biological father. He also had children from his first marriage that he paid maintenance for. Recent redundancy issues had reduced the family income to a point where parental contributions were stopped, yet this student had the minimum level of student loan. Sophie had TTPE, but was struggling to keep up with her academic studies so had applied for a hardship loan. Interestingly, the university had expectations she should earn £400 a month from TTPE. On her wage structure, this would be 18 to 20 hours a week, considered in the literature as excessive. The hardship funds allocated to universities is discussed later in this chapter. Katie, a young bioscience student was also penalised because of her family structure:

> *'not very much (relating to amount of student loan) because the way the student loans company did it, they did it on my dad and his girlfriend's earnings because they live together, but obviously she isn't going to give me any money and my dada doesn't earn all that much whereas she does, so that sort of screwed me over (laughs) if he can afford to give me anything he does..... He gives me what he can but it's not really very much and I'm not old enough to be classed as a mature student so I'm sort of in-between, fall in the gap.....I think that when they ask about the student loan to the parents they should also ask how much the parents are willing to give rather than just assume they will give that amount.'*

Katie found she had to engage in long hours in TTPE to make ends meet and often felt very stressed and overloaded. Denise also belonged to a non-nuclear family:

> *'The loan is not the full one but it's a bit complicated.....I get some money off my mum and my dad. But they are in competition with each other and sort of say if I give x amount, the other should and the other will say well I've given her this, I've given her that, and because of this it tends to drop quite a bit and with my brother still technically in full time education......I don't know what the rules quite are but my mum has demanded more money from him and so he has given*

*less to me because of that and so it gets a bit complicated and tends to change throughout the year .....'*

Here there were arguments over the division of parental contributions, making Denise feel rather 'piggy in the middle' as she described it. She was allocated the minimum level of student loan because of the assessment of family income, yet alternated between affording university and having no finances to live. Her solution was participation in TTPE in excess of 20 hours a week, but her marks began to suffer, and she found she had no time for socialising with her peers.

Assessments for student loans fall down as they do not consider the level of disposable income alongside family income. This is often higher in lower income families than in the lower section of middle-class families, where there are large mortgages to pay off.

Course costs can also vary, while different areas within the UK are more expensive than others, students made comment that these factors are ignored by assessment for student loans, other than the London weighting. In the real world, these types of considerations would mean too many complex forms and be too costly to implement.

*Welsh Assembly Learning Grant*

This grant aspired to widen participation across all strata of Welsh society, to compensate for an inability by low income families to provide parental contributions towards the funding of higher education. These are means tested, given on a sliding scale to encourage fairness and do not have to be paid back.

Within this research, all social classes 4&5 students, and 50% of social class 3 students were in receipt of this grant. It is surprising therefore, that these are the students with the highest percentage of participation in TTPE, working the longest hours. The reasons for this may be multifaceted, involving differentiated consumption patterns between classes, but has the government miscalculated the level of parental contributions to students? Or is it purely the concept of a security blanket that parental contributions provide, given that grants have an upper limit whereas parents always seem to find money from somewhere, giving the illusion these monies are limitless.

*Bursaries*

There are a multitude of courses within universities that attract bursaries. The Welsh National Bursary scheme was available for students in this study either paying the maximum fees or from low income family backgrounds, but as this was assessed and automatically paid when students applied for student loans, it was difficult to define if the students had knowledge of this bursary.

At Glanaman University, Chloe, a young SOCSI student, had a very resourceful mother, who had researched all bursaries available.

> *'My mother was really good.... When I knew I got into uni she started looking at what money I could get.... She saw this one and if you got good grades at A-level, and then you got good grades in your first year you had an extra thousand pound for the second year..... So I got good grades at A-level and we filled in the forms and I got it at the end of last year....... my friends wanted to try and get it but because they didn't apply when they were at school it was too late.....'*

A bursary to reward hard work should be promoted in schools and colleges, especially if these are ring fenced into a specific timeframe. Students in this study showed a marked lack of knowledge about bursaries in general, suggesting these are a much underused source of valuable income. For strategies to be effective, knowledge about the strategy, in this case bursaries, including the availability and application process, have to be promoted, otherwise what is the point of their existence?

*Hardship fund*

The government supplies universities with monies that are ring fenced, to create hardship funds, issued at the university's discretion. Students in severe hardship should have access to these funds, but judging by the low uptake of these funds at both universities in this study, and the data provided by students who had applied to the fund, the process to obtain this money is both complex and difficult. Though participation at both universities was overwhelmingly by students from the higher social classes, I still expected a much higher level of uptake, considering the post 92 university was situated in a low socio-economic area. Internal barriers exist within the application process. Sophie, from bioscience, had applied for monies from the hardship fund but found the assessment made by the student loans company

dictated whether the initial application could be made. Presumably if the full student loan was not awarded, then the household income was above the level required to apply for the hardship fund, however financial situations within families are fluid, changing over time,. She commented:

> '*when they ask about the student loan to the parents they should also ask how much the parents are willing to give rather than just assume they will give that amount.....l I actually asked for the financial contingency fund but they wouldn't give it to me because they assume that the LEA assessment is enough so they couldn't do anything to help me.....but I wasn't getting help from my dad*'

Sophie perceived no option other than to increase her hours in paid employment, regardless of consequences, as she received the minimum student loan and very little PC. Her course demanded a number of hours per week in the lab on top of theory. This suggested when students are desperate, paid employment will be top of the list in prioritisation in time management. Amanda, from bioscience, also needed to apply for a hardship fund:

> *I had applied for money from the financial contingency fund which my personal tutor had told me about.... I had to pay full tuition fees on a minimum loan so cash was short and thus I was eligible for it. I definitely felt working would affect my studies and my level of achievement, especially as if extra shifts were required I was afraid to say no in case I lost my job ......My parents were unable to contribute at this time due to other commitments, that was difficult though I had to prove that my parents were unable to contribute.....*

Illness within the family unit had caused parental contributions to cease. Eventually Amanda did receive hardship fund monies, but found the procedure very intrusive. The difficulties in the application process for hardship fund must be a major factor in why these funds are underused, but why is this so? These funds should be a means for students to reduce the hours in TTPE. The criteria are very dependent on the circumstances at the time of the application for the student loan, but as a separate funding strand for students, application for hardship funding should be an independent entity. The aim of a strategy to provide help the students in hardship should be that help will be there when it is needed, when situations change.

*Financial institutions*

Financial institutions offer free overdrafts and low interest credit cards to students. The negative implication to this is an increase in debt, which has to be paid back. This is cheap

money for students, with incentives, but it has to be asked is this a strategy for the student or the bank? 51% of the students in this study used the free student overdraft, repayable interest-free until one year after graduation. 15% took on credit cards, repayable with high interest after the initial interest-free period.

Patterns within the student population regarding the type of borrowing chosen are discussed later in this chapter.

**6.3.2 Student management of personal funding:**

Students employ a variety of personal funding strategies, using a flow between earning money and saving money, which takes into account how wages are used, budgeting, savings, and family contributions.

*Savings*

Savings contributed to overall funding, helping minimise any deficit that would necessitate TTPE. Gap years have long been used by students to both travel and save for university. In this study, data indicated 49 students to have taken gap years, stated by 21 of these to have the aim to acquire savings for higher education.

Other forms of savings, such as wages from paid employment through sixth form, were used. There was a social class input, which would be expected, with 62% of students in social class one using savings. While the level of savings used was not specified, the use of savings is significant, as this existed through all social classes, even where money may have been tight so saving difficult.

A dichotomy can exist in the final year, where students need the money most but academic demands are highest, yet savings have often run out.

The data in this study also identified the use of a variety, and in some cases very ingenious, streams of finance in funding sources. These included renting out rooms in owned houses, interest on capital, poker winnings, lottery winnings, inheritance, redundancy, pensions and government benefits.

*Family contributions*

The main parental strategy is to provide a financial contribution, either on a regular basis, such as paying rent, or an irregular basis where monies are given when needed. A key fundamental change in current higher education funding is an increasing expectation by government on parents to provide financial contribution. While one has to accept that with widening participation there has to be a shift from public to personal funding, to penalise students whose parents will not or cannot contribute seems unfair. Existing policies class students as dependent until the age of 25, or asks for three years proof of independent living. It can be argued this is far too old to be dependent on parents' incomes to determine the level of student loan funding allocated. Would 24 year olds expect their parents to help fund a degree course?

Bursaries and grants are available for students from low-income families, to compensate for parents being unable to provide financial help. There is a class input in both the type and level of PC. The government has a sliding scale within financial help for students, grounded in the belief that if the family unit has the resources to contribute then they should. However, with current divorce rates extremely high, with the nuclear family no longer the norm (Bingham 2009), what happens to those students with parents who should contribute but do not? Contributions may be dependent on levels of disposable income, which may be low if there are two homes to run.

But how essential is parental contribution for students, does this vary between student groups? A key finding in this study showed class differences regarding the importance placed on parental contributions. Students in social class one had very little access to grants and bursaries so were more reliant on parental contribution to attend university. As social class lowered, the numbers of students in receipt of parental contribution decreased and this was reflected in their opinions. The customary timing of PC also impacted here, the more regular the contribution the more importance placed on it.

Age was also a factor, as the mature students funded themselves, so answered objectively rather than subjectively. This related to different concepts of university life, for the mature students social life was not important, so not accountable within funding. Gender had no impact on opinions here.

Students who were not white British deemed parental contributions as much more essential, 55% as opposed to 26%, but overseas students are very reliant on family support to fund their studies, not being eligible for public help due to residency rules, so this is not surprising.

Illustrating the increasing importance of parental contributions are the results of a poll by the Halifax Building Society (Saving for Children 2007). This found 50% of students rely on parents to support them throughout higher education. A report compiled by the Guardian Unlimited in October 2007, from this poll, identified 10% of parents considered remortgage to provide this financial support, while 33% took up the option to work longer hours in their own employment or take on a second job.

Other literature, including that of Christie & Munroe (2003), found 35% of student income is from parents, totalling a minimum of £200 a month. Saving schemes are being promoted to cover parental contribution costs, and parents appear prepared to make sacrifices to fund higher education.

**6.1 Students in receipt of no PC (%) according to social class and university/school:**

| uni code | Social class in receipt of no PC (shown as %) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | S/C 1 (N=) | % no PC | S/C 2(N=) | % no PC | S/C 3 (N=) | % no PC | S/C 4&5 (N=) | % no PC |
| BG | 15 | **13** | 31 | **23** | 25 | **32** | 9 | **67** |
| CB | 28 | **29** | 37 | **24** | 16 | **31** | 8 | **75** |
| GS | 7 | **29** | 41 | **32** | 38 | **26** | 13 | **62** |
| SC | 28 | **14** | 36 | **22** | 19 | **58** | 5 | **60** |

Total base number N=356, all students surveyed who were allocated to a social class from parental occupation, all in their second year at university.

The patterns between both schools and universities were different. The bioscience school at Glanaman University and SOCSI at Chirk University had similar pictures of the percentages of students receiving no parental contributions increasing as the social class decreased. Chirk University bioscience school showed a similar pattern to SOCSI at Glanaman University, where the percentages of students receiving no PC were similar through social classes 1, 2 and 3, but then rose sharply for those students in social classes 4&5. However, at both universities and schools, very few students in social classes 4&5 received financial help from their families.

Students defined parental contributions as specifically cash, commenting their parents paid their rents, or pay for one-off items such as a laptop, but is this too simplistic? Within the interviews students remarked after a visit home they would bring back food for the week, petrol was put in the car, they were insured for their parent's car etc. Students lived at home rent free but still considered they did not receive parental contributions, indicating there are units of parental contribution which are not in the form of cash, but which are also not recognised by students.

> *'My parents can't really help me........ I go home when I can but it's in Brighton so the petrol costs a lot, my dad usually fills up for me before I come home though (laughs)....'*

> *'I don't run a car because you can't really park near the university anyway so it would be waste.... Plus when I go home I can use my father's car cos I'm on the insurance.... No, my parents can't help but my grandmother pays my fees, which is good.....'*

Students also indicated that when they went home for the summer holidays they did not pay rent or utilities. Even though half rent had to be paid on accommodation for university for this period, surely having this free 'board and lodge' would contribute to finances.

As mentioned earlier, family structure within the UK has changed radically over the past few decades. In the qualitative interviews, over three quarters of the students were from families where parents had separated. This caused an impact to parental contributions, and therefore choices within participation in TTPE. Marital breakup is not always harmonious, one student found that regardless of levels of income her parents were only willing to contribute if the other one did so, if one was temporarily unable or unwilling to contribute, all contributions stopped.

The interviews highlighted various family types, particularly restructured families, following divorce. This caused parental contributions to be either limited or non-existent, with students expressing resentment regarding both how applications for student loans were assessed and grant allocation. They considered that though students who received grants were from low income family backgrounds, these students' financial situation was no different to their own, yet not only did they not receive a grant but they also had the minimal student loan. Grants

were viewed as guaranteed parental contributions in effect, so there were no conditions imposed, no worrying, the money was just there and available. Leanne from bioscience, felt strongly about this:

> *'My mum and dad both have new families, I don't get any money off them unless I'm desperate and then I have to show them what I'm spending my money on..... It doesn't seem fair somehow, I get the lowest loan but the girls I live with get all the student loan and a grant on top so they always seem to have money.......'*

**6.2 Table showing relationship between PC and hours in TTPE per week:**

| PC Type | Hours in TTPE (shown as %) | | | | N= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | none | <10 | 11 to 20 | >21 | |
| regular | 63 | 21 | 14 | 2 | 127 |
| when needed | 45 | 22 | 31 | 2 | 128 |
| none | 43 | 16 | 31 | 10 | 124 |

Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

The quantitative data indicates a link between the amount of hours in TTPE and the type of parental contribution. When parental contributions were regular the percentage of students who did not participate in paid employment was highest. When there were no parental contributions the percentage of students engaged in long hours of paid employment was highest. The pattern in the student group who received parental contributions when needed was similar to the pattern of students who did not receive parental contributions, except in the percentage of participation of 21 hours or more in TTPE. From comments made within the interviews, when students received parental contributions only when necessary, they perceived their family could not afford to help them financially, so did literally only ask for help when they were desperate. Thus their financial situation was more similar to those students with no parental contributions than those students who regularly received financial help from their parents.

Government grants aimed to replace PC for lower social class students. To explore whether the receipt of a grant altered participation rates in paid employment for the students in this study, receipt of grants were factored into the relationship between parental contributions and amount of participation in TTPE.

**6.3 Table showing relationship between PC, Grants and hours in TTPE per week:**

| PC Type and Grant receipt | Hours in TTPE (shown as %) | | | | N= |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| | none | <10 | 11 to 20 | >21 | |
| No PC No Grant | 33 | 18 | 46 | 3 | 39 |
| No PC  Grant | 47 | 15 | 25 | 13 | 85 |
| PC No Grant | 58 | 18 | 23 | 2 | 159 |
| PC  Grant | 47 | 28 | 23 | 2 | 96 |

Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

The patterns within the student groups did not alter significantly. There was a higher percentage of students not employed in the student group who did not receive PC but were eligible for a grant, but within this same group there was also the highest percentage of students employed for the longest hours. Overall, the picture was still that those students who did not receive parental contributions participated in TTPE for the longest hours.

*Negotiations/Contracts:*

The concept of contracts within student life is increasing as the changes in the funding system progress. Commitment to a formal contract with the government binds students into high amounts of debt with nothing 'tangible' as a result. Students are therefore taking on a contract for a loan that is an investment for their future. Grants and bursaries are formal contracts, with specific conditions that have to be met, or else the monies have to be paid back. Financial institutions also demand formal contracts with set terms and conditions.

However, what about the more informal contracts, social contracts that are increasingly seen to exist for the students of today?  Much of human interaction is shaped around tacit understanding, forming agreement but legally unenforceable. Social contracts can be defined as informal agreement made by people with a common purpose, though dependent that both parties will abide by their word (Visualwriter 2013).

This study identified social contracts between students and parents connected to the parental contributions government increasingly expects from the family unit. Though one could argue there will always be a power relationship between parent and child regarding education, the expectations regarding parental contributions have initiated the desire whereby the parent, though wanting to give their child a good education, also expects a return on 'investment' in that child.

This is where the concept of 'contracts' or 'negotiations' around the funding comes in. The parents have the power to 'police' these contracts by stopping contributions at any given time, so may place conditions that have to be met. This might be restricting the amount of hours in employment or requiring a desired level of degree (seen in marks throughout the year). The level of PC received will decide the balance of power between the parent/child in the social contracts. These are not written, but implied or tacit, with negotiations taking place in a very flexible way.

*'They actually give me a regular amount each week so I don't work over 4 hours a week in my job. If I need help some months they will also help me out because they don't want me working too much in my Saturday job, they would prefer me to work 4 hours and have money off them than work more and compromise my studies. They are very good like that but I do try and live off my income.....They would stop the money because they were very specific it was so I didn't work anymore than I was, and they will give me more if necessary but I don't think they would continue if they thought they were funding me going out drinking every night.'*

These were very definite terms for Hannah, a young SOCSI student, as her parents were determined she achieve her full potential but perceived long hours in TTPE could interfere with studies. Parental contribution here was for a very specific use, though conditions are not stated but based on trust, from knowledge of their daughter.

**6.4 Statistical data of students in interviews related to PC:**

|  | no TTPE | No PC | PC use specified | PC no contract | PC contract |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| number of students | 4 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 8 |

Base number N=28, relating to all students in the initial interviews, in their second year.

In this study 16 students received some form of parental contribution alongside engagement in TTPE. Of these, 11 had some form of contract with their parents, 69%. These were almost all connected with perceptions that TTPE could be detrimental to achievement levels, connected to the importance placed on education within the family sphere. Due to the competition seen in getting graduate jobs it is now important to get a 'good result' with a 'good course' from a 'good university'. Middle class parents are recognising this, becoming active players in their child's education, using their financial support as a negotiation tool, to

ensure the maximum possibility of a high degree classification. It is not uncommon for graduates who have spent three years obtaining a degree, to find themselves manning the phones in call centres, while also struggling to get on the first rung of a graduate career ladder.

James, from SOCSI, was not able to let his parents know how much he owed, as they would stop helping him, based on the premise that he was socialising too much:

> *'They help pay for my accommodation... if they knew about my overdraft they would stop helping. They know I go out a lot and that I'm careless with money because I have loads of takeaways n stuff. So if I did ask for more they would put conditions on it as well.'*

Sarah, another SOCSI student, had a very specific contract with her father, with defined objectives to reach a desired outcome.

> *'In my first year I worked a lot more hours and I was so tired...... I missed lots of tutorials and I didn't do enough work really though my grades weren't that bad.... My father was worried so he said he would help with money more if I cut down my hours because he thought I would get a lower degree than I was able to get if I got too tired.... But it was for living not to go out and not to still work long shifts so I've done that and now I just work one shift which is fine.'*

Sarah did appreciate she was lucky as not all families are able to do this. She commented:

> *'Really if you want to do the best you can and get the best degree you are capable of getting you need to be realistic about how much you work on top. I'm lucky my dad is able to help so I did have a choice otherwise I suppose I would have had to make a choice of a lot of debt or a lot of time in work.'*

The question exists does parental contribution therefore give students' choices on whether to take on paid employment or not? If parental contributions exist so that the student can manage financially, even if they have to budget strictly, the wages will be extra for them or the paid employment may be of use for their CV, so the choice within the type of employment and how many hours to participate is there.

> *'My grandma at the moment pays for my tuition fees that's £3000 a year ... my dad pays for my accommodation and a bit extra.....I have to work to get decent marks because if I went out all the time and my marks went down I don't think*

*either my dad or my grandma would be very happy because they both think education is very important and that's why they are paying for me to come to university ....I think they would reduce it so I wouldn't have the money to go out so much I don't know perhaps they would stop but I would never do that because I want to have a high grade really.'*

The negotiations here are between grandmother, parent and student. The student feels she has agency within paid employment because her level of parental contribution is high. However, in this instance, there was participation in paid employment for its value to her CV.

There can be a lack of willingness to contribute, and here parental power in this area can have negative connotations:

*'With my brother still technically in full time education, my dad still has to give to him... I don't know what the rules quite are but my mum has demanded more money from him and so he has had to give less to me because of that and so it gets a bit complicated but what is annoying is they don't tell me what they are doing but because they earn good wages my loan is never the full one ......my parents always say that if they are giving me money it is not to go out with... There is one other thing and that is a definite condition my dad has, he has said he will only help if I help myself, and if I don't work he won't help....'*

This is a very specific contract, affecting Denise, a SOCSI student, in two ways. She has to engage in paid employment because she does not get a full student loan, and because the contributions made by her father have conditions on them. As her parents are divorced and argue about how much to give her, she was in a difficult position regarding her financial management, never certain of her level of income. This caused her high levels of stress.

From the interviews it was also identified that some parents offered choice on the level of contribution they were prepared to make, but again with a very specific aim. Nicole, from SOCSI, had parents who were happy to increase the monies they gave her if she reduced the amount of borrowing on her student loan, though she declined this offer:

*'If I agreed not to borrow so much student loan they would give me more money than they do now but I don't like taking their money so I have as little as I can manage on.'*

There is not much in the literature about informal 'contracts' and negotiations between students and parents. Research, since the numbers of students 'earning while learning' have increased, identifies informal contracts between universities and students. These contracts

give guidelines and information on the potential disadvantageous impact of TTPE, related to the amount of paid employment taken on (University of Huddersfield 2007, Durham University 2007). All the students in this research were not aware of any guidelines set down by their university regarding hours in paid employment, though interestingly one student was told she had actually signed a contract, restricting these hours to 10.

> *'It ended up more hours than if I had been working full time, so that really took it out of me, but it was something I needed to do, so it wasn't a question of can I do this it was I have to do this, but now my personal tutor has said to me that I have to stop that I am breaking my contract.....there's a contract I must have signed at some point that I would only work 10 hours....'*

This was at the more traditional red brick university. Yet at this same university, when a student applied for hardship funds it was indicated it was possible for her to work 18 hours a week. This implies there is confusion in this area.

*Budgeting*

Another strategy that was highlighted from the data connected to finance was that these students also tried to reduce outgoings by budgeting. Robert, a bioscience student, explains:

> *'well my parents have never had much money and I've never really needed money to like…well you know some kids are obsessed with like buying the latest phone or the latest whatever but I've never been that interested I'm happy with a football so I've never really needed a job to like fund any particular habits that I have....... I'd rather maybe like have beans on toast rather than go down the takeaway...well what's most important to me is getting the best degree I can and having fun.... if my parents couldn't help I don't think I'd have to work, I think I'd have to budget more……….'*

Anne, from SOCSI, had been warned by her parents that their contributions would be limited, but her mother had taught her to budget, stressing that to save money was as good as earning money:

> *'My parents don't earn a lot so when I talked about coming to uni they told me I could go but they couldn't help me I would have to take out a student loan.... My mum started teaching me how to cook that didn't cost a lot and where to shop, you know in pound shops and stuff, for cleaning things and toiletries..... I don't worry where I buy my clothes and not really into designer things so I find I can manage just working on a Saturday......'*

Socialising and consumer spending are expensive, and students will engage in TTPE for long hours if they deem these essential. But really why is this? On assessment of income, no full-time student had to work excessively, budgeting would work, it was the decision-making and choices made that appeared to influence the amount of paid employment.

Indirectly, another form of student strategy linked to budgeting. This was where the student chose to live at home while at university. The literature identifies a link between social class and living at home, as students from lower income backgrounds often believe they cannot afford to move out of their parents' homes and have paid employment they can continue. Some make a contribution to household finances that they consider essential. Culture has an effect, as working class students often view university as a middle class domain, experiencing feelings of isolation that are counteracted by living amongst family and peer groups.

This finding of the literature was reinforced by the data in this study. The lower the social class of the student, the higher the percentage who chose to live at home. 70% of students at Glanaman University received the Welsh Assembly Government tuition fee grant, compared to 38% at Chirk University. The grant was eligible for home students only, and the finding was linked to the incidence of students living at home. This reflected students who were worried about the cost of higher education were making this choice to reduce living expenses. However, this restricted the option on which university to attend **and** the courses available, which has a strong effect on the equality of choice.

Conversely, both the literature and the data in this study identify those students who lived at home will working the longest hours in paid employment. While it may be these students do not have to spend time on housework, and are seen to participate less in university activities, the question must still be raised as to why these students are engaging in such long hours of TTPE, as there is still income from the student loan and grants, but a much reduced level of outgoings.

**6.4 Time management strategies**

Management of time influenced individual student strategies. This included juggling between TTPE, the activities of student life together with socialising, and academic studies, inclusive of revision, assignments, research, and attendance at lectures and tutorials. Literature has identified higher educational pedagogy in the UK is underpinned that students will have independent study in addition to lectures and tutorials, bestowing extreme importance on time management (Humphrey 2006). Students also needed time for the necessities of daily living, such as house work and personal hygiene, plus travel time to and from university and their TTPE.

**6.4.1 Hierarchy of when the student will choose to undertake PE within the academic year:**

Comments from the students were unanimous that when paid employment was crucial, the summer holidays only would be ideal option:

> *'Not Christmas because of exams... Easter, I am working and so I'll be going home, otherwise I would have stayed here and revised for my exams... There might be an impact, but I owe so much money....'*

> *'It would be great to just work through the summer holidays and be able to save enough for the year but I never manage to save enough....'*

> *'I work full-time through the summer holidays then I have enough not to work through the year...'*

However, due to the current economic climate, this was not always feasible, as Elizabeth from SOCSI was finding:

> *'When I get home in the summer or Christmas you find that they want someone who's going to stay there not just someone who is going to stay for a couple of weeks and then leave it's been really hard to find a job for then'*

Opinions regarding TTPE were divided into two camps. A number of students enjoyed this employment, such as when there had been a routinisation of employment following from sixth form work, when the numbers of hours in the employment were low and

flexible, as then TTPE gave opportunities to gain skills for a CV, to socialise, and occasionally act as work experience, in addition to earning wages. These students did have a high level of choice in TTPE, as they were not dependent on the wages, so could choose to give the employment up if they felt stressed or anxious.

Other students reported negatively on TTPE, especially those in long hours in the employment with little or no flexibility around exams and deadlines. Students commented that, especially around Christmas, the employer would expect extra help as it was a busy period, which meant less time for academic studies, detrimental to the exams and assessments that were coming up in January. The time management for these students to fit everything in was very restricted.

**6.4.2 Hierarchy of prioritisation within time management:**

Considering all the different activities that had to be fitted into each day, these students all employed time management strategies. Within these strategies students created a hierarchy of prioritisation, according to importance allocated to each faction that needed to be completed, with the aim to achieve a work-life balance.

When TTPE was considered essential, this was top of the list in priorities, as the students perceived they could not afford to stay at university without this income. They were so dependent on the wages that the employer was able to dictate the flexibility within the employment, often to the detriment of the time needed for university work. These students took any employment on offer, rather than choosing employment that could benefit their CV or be viewed as a form of work experience for their future career. The second priority for these students was academic study, as there was the thought that this was why they were at university. They were sacrificing a lot, so were motivated to achieve the highest degree classification possible, which required the student to be on top of studies, completing quality assignments and revising to obtain high examination results.

The mind map for time management on the next page gives some indication of all a student has to fit in.

**6.5 Time management mind map, showing activities students have to prioritise:**
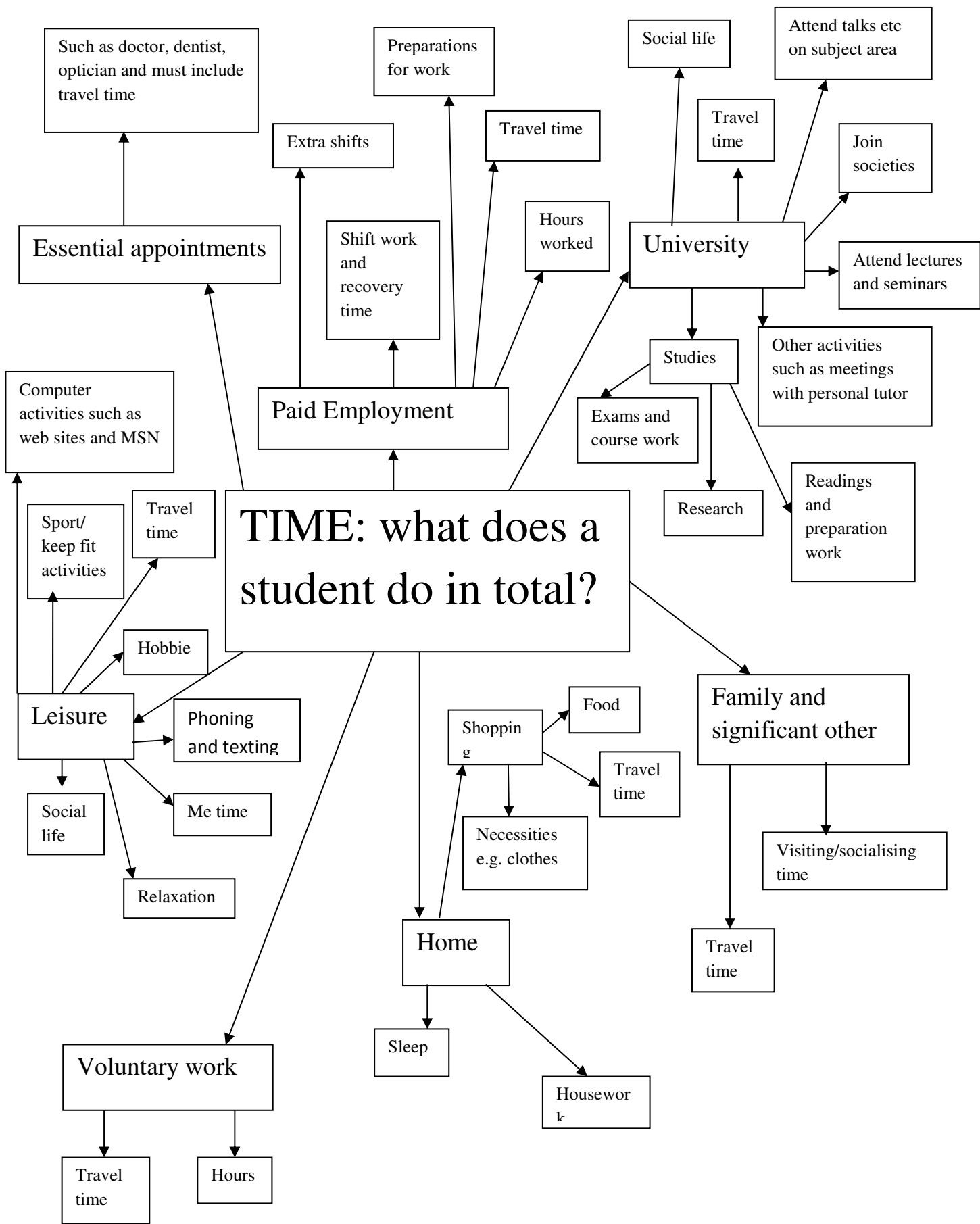
Finally these students allocated any time over to socialising and the experience of student life, but this was a poor third and if there was no time left over there was no social life. Yet there has to be an argument that the student experience is part of being a student at university, which the literature also states gains social and cultural advantages for the student. This should be interlinked with the more recognisable, more measured academic achievement. Sophie, who worked around 24 hours a week on average in paid employment reported:

> '*I had less time overall and it's not just like exams but the reading and stuff …….you never seem to catch up really.*'

While Daniel, a bioscience student, who worked 20 hours a week on average, also found time an issue:

> '*It takes your time from your week so you don't get much revision because of that ... there's not that much of a down side really just that it takes your time and that can stress you, especially when you got block assignments.... '*

When TTPE was undertaken for extra income, pocket money almost, the students had choices within the paid employment so the hierarchy changed. Here comments indicated the priority was academic studies, with TTPE fitting in around these studies. These students were able to negotiate the flexibility within the employment. TTPE was given second priority, as the wages were used to socialise and for student life activities.

Laura, a young SOCSI student, though admitting she needed TTPE, had set a limit on the amount of hours in employment to negate any potential impact to her studies. Though she worked 18 hours a week on average, she was not prepared to accept her employer's inflexibility regarding exam and assignment periods:

> '*I've handed in my notice there now as well mostly because of the job. They wanted me to work too much and I couldn't, or should I say wouldn't......*'

Anne, again from SOCSI, had been working 16 hours a week, but was pressurised to increase her hours over the Christmas period. As Anne was not dependent on her wages to fund University, not only did she refuse but she also made the decision to reduce her hours to 10 a week. The perception of choice had made all the difference.

*'I was finding this year difficult especially in my end of semester work it was quite difficult to work overtime over the Christmas holidays so I had to cut my hours back to be able to work and get all of the assignments done so they (her parents) encouraged me in that sense to put the education first and pull back on the work because I don't particularly need the job it's just something I do for the extra money'*

Student life was given the lowest priority, however time was allocated for socialising and university activities rather than these being fitted in if there was any time left.

Students with no TTPE, whether from no participation in paid employment or paid employment in the summer holidays only, gave highest priority to academic studies but still had enough time to participate in and enjoy the experience of the student. Robert, a young bioscience student, felt he did not have the time to undertake TTPE alongside his studies, preferring to budget and manage on the income he received by the student loan and parental contributions.

*'Um never had a job in my life actually .... I feel I'm busy enough as it is, it's a busy time of the year at the moment because I have a lot of deadlines and stuff… everyone on my course is just like going mental with all the deadlines they got so, yeah, I think it would probably detract from the learning aspect definitely.... If I had to work in the term time in the week I would miss out on studies because like my timetable is already cram packed full of writing up lecture notes, doing assignments, finishing things so yeah if I had to tear off to work on top of that I would probably just not have enough time, it would end up that I missed out on studying and things and then it would probably affect my grades in a negative way'*

This does highlight an equality issue, whereby students from low-income family backgrounds, with very limited options regarding TTPE, may not have the choice of whether or not to participate in TTPE.

### 6.4.3 Work/life balance

There are social and cultural influences that are individual to each student, and these shape the perceptions the student will have on what to expect from student life. Regarding time management the responses were all very similar, the organization of time is identified by students to be extremely important, and often an issue that causes stress. Academic studies, including revision, reading and research, domestic responsibilities, travelling, TTPE all had to be fitted in to the students' timetable, and this was before the student took time out to

socialise and participate in university activities. The amount of hours in TTPE seemed to have the highest impact.

There has to be a work life balance for quality in life, and if reduced by long hours of participation in TTPE, there will be an associated effect on the dropout rates seen at university. These rates are highest in marginal groups, with these students in the unenviable position of having incurred debt with no degree to show for it. Hannah, from SOCSI, has participated in long hours of PE, and now realises she needs to try and rebalance her life, though at present she cannot identify where the balance is falling down.

> *'I would love to do more now and get back into voluntary work because I liked that a lot, but realistically, I can't balance things more than I am. It's like a juggling act now.....I'm obviously not balancing my life as well as I could be but it's hard to step back and think well what could I be doing that would make it better. ..... , I think I could do a lot better than I have done (marks) throughout my time at university. .....A lot is work, especially around exam time I have eased off a lot but its lifestyle in general you might think it sounds like a partying lifestyle but it's not, I don't party, I don't drink, I don't run a car but I still can't seem to manage my finances.'*

In contrast, Laura, who wishes to become a teacher, has TTPE working in a school for children with disabilities. She has limited her hours to one day a week, as the work is demanding, so more hours would impact on her work-life balance. The remuneration for this TTPE is almost double what she would earn in the retail sector, so she does consider herself lucky that she has managed to get well paid employment that is also a form of work experience:

> *'I think I've just got the balance.... sometimes when I've pushed over that and I've really felt drained and exhausted, especially with the fact working with the disabled children can be exhausting, sometimes I think it could do (lower marks)'*

Time management skills help students who are juggling between TTPE and academic studies. There could be a place for utilising web-based learning to help students who have clashes between paid employment and lectures. Strategies identified by students identified 'saving time' strategies in place, whereby students used each other in a two-way negotiation to keep it fair. These included:

1. Social groups within peers at university covered lectures in turn, so notes could be written up or lectures recorded. Students also revised together, allocating each individual student a topic to create revision notes for, so these could be given to each other. General support reduced stress, which is also identified the literature. Peer social groups arranged activities around TTPE to maximise the numbers who could participate.

2. House share chore charts. Students who lived in shared houses had pacts to share house work around TTPE. This led to less house work for individual students around assignment and revision time.

3. Social groups within the workplace. Students found they seldom worked alongside peer groups from university, so built social networks of peers within the workplace, to be able to swap shifts for mutual benefit, allowing for time off when they needed it.

The aim here for all the students was to maximise their use of time, to save time so everything could be fitted in. Even students who prided themselves on their time management found there was potential conflict that had to be resolved at certain times, usually when there were deadlines and revision i.e. when the academic workload was highest.

Students had become agents in the decision-making processes, with changes in circumstances, whether this is in their financial situation, academic requirements, module demands or employment demands, of utmost importance. The qualitative data suggested two main ways students modified their lives to encompass change:

- Adapt and reorganise time management priorities. Carole, in her diary, explained:

*'I was planning to do loads work, like make sure I did all the coursework that needed to be handed in… That kind of didn't really go according to plan. I did half of my report that I needed to do and half of my folder but I've got loads more to do and I need to start revising as well… I have been spending a lot of time in work because, especially because it has been half term they always like you to do overtime, so put me to do extra time and stuff like that… Then at the weekend I got really mad because I went into work and I have done over time like literally every weekend I have done extra work and I have done at least an extra day in the week to in work and then they asked me to do overtime this week and I said 'oh no I can't' and they said 'why' and I said 'I need to do my work I need to revise and stuff 'and they told me I need to sort my priorities right and that really annoyed me because at the end of the day I do want to get something out of my life rather than work in a shop… I thought they should, well I don't know, care about the fact they want staff to do well in the exams… But I said no*

*and I'm going to have to put my head down and hopefully finish off my folder… And I am going to keep saying no til I have finished my work, that is going to be the most important now...'*

- Change lifestyle by altering the TTPE, as Nicole decided to after a bad start to university she now perceives as unnecessary:

*'I was working throughout the exam period of last year, at Easter time. I was working every day ... that probably affected my revision because I didn't have a lot of time to revise and because I was home I didn't have access to the library and stuff ...Well I have always wanted to try and get a first. I know that's hard but I would love that. Then in my first year I didn't do very well I only just scraped through so I had to have a real think about why I wasn't doing very well and it was because I was working too much and partying too much, so I was tired all the time and not doing the amount of work in university you need to do so this year I have cut my hours down in work – I know the money was nice but I want a good degree – and now I only go out 2 nights a week....I am averaging 68% after the first lot of exams and assignments this year that's a big jump because it was 53% in my first year – I think that's a high 2.1 so I just have to get up that little bit more and I might get a first. The thing is looking back I think I was working to pay for my nights out which is silly really but all the girls I lived with were going so I felt like I had to too. And I find now I enjoy my nights out more as well because like last year sometimes I would be falling asleep when we were out.'*

## 6.5 Conclusion

This chapter looked at what strategies are used by the students in this study. The overriding impression is that there are a wide variety of strategies used around student finance, all trying to reduce the need to spend long hours in term time paid employment. What is more important is whether these strategies work. Alongside this, students employ strategies around their time management, allocating priorities within their days to fit everything in. However, is this succeeding in creating a work life balance?

Public funding has tried to create strategies for students, to enable them to fund higher education despite the change from student grant to student loan. But are these working? The grants still in place for students from low family backgrounds have limited success. This study considered second year students, and at both universities there were very few students from the lowest social classes. Why this was so was not part of this research, but it may be that the non-traditional students are those who have dropped out in the first year. Certainly it appears that these are the students who are working the longest hours in TTPE, vulnerable to any negative connotations associated with this employment.

The financial situation can change over time for students, their circumstances may change, but this factor is not considered within public funding.

With the introduction of bursaries and grants to help those students from low income families, will there now be difference in the hours worked in those students who receive grants and those who do not? It may be that there will be a tiered system:

1. Working classes in receipt of bursary/grants that are means tested, to try to widen participation, for those students in low income families (replacing parental contributions due to low income).
2. Middle-class students just above means testing threshold, but whose families do not have the income to help so have to put limitations on the amount of parental contributions-or will parents borrow? Or take on a second mortgage or second job?
3. Upper classes still able to contribute.

This could create a new 'class' within the university student family strata.

The student loan system is used by most of the students in this study. However, an interesting point here is to ask what the difference between the partial loan and the full loan is, how many hours in paid employment would this mean if the student was deemed to be part of a family able to help finance higher education, but for some reason the family are not able or not willing to help. Does this equate to a removal of choice for a certain group of students?

Use of hardship funds within universities is very low, as the students in this study either did not know the fund existed or if they tried to access it, found the application procedure and rulings around the allocation of the fund both complex and difficult. Within the universities, 26 % of the students were in social class 3, and 9% of students were in social classes 4 or 5. These figures would suggest there should be in much higher uptake of these funds, especially as these are the students who are working the longest hours in paid employment.

The strategy of using parental contributions as a funding stream can also have drawbacks. Perhaps the main problem here is that the government expects parents to contribute, and

while most are quite happy to do this for their child's education, there are parents who will not or cannot contribute, creating great difficulties for the students, and really, how does the government enforce this issue? There can also be difficulties regarding the amount of parental contributions connected with the changing structures within families and the economies of the labour market.

Related to this ideology are those parents who will put themselves into debt or take on an extra job to afford to contribute, as they perceive that a good education is the best investment they can give a child. To contribute towards this they are prepared to make sacrifices. When students are dependent on parents contributing throughout university, this is for a period of three years and will be for every child, perhaps for two children at the same time. This can have serious consequences to the parental income for many years on, if remortgage or loans have to be considered. This does give rise to concerns about the demands being placed on these parent's levels of disposable income, which could affect other family members and the quality of life for these families. Grants are provided for those students from low income families, to replace the parental contributions but what about those students who are from higher income families, but where other demands on the income mean parents cannot always help the student?

Other comments also reflect that students often think it's unfair that parents have to make contributions to their education, and many feel obligated that they will have to pay this back as well as the student loan. However, when parents are able to contribute on a regular basis, this does constitute a strategy that can enable the student a high level of choice in the decision-making around engagement in paid employment, particularly term time paid employment.

Time management strategies will always have importance to students in full-time study. In this project, in relation to those students who are engaged in term time paid employment, the level of income the individual students perceived to be necessary to fund their studies dictated the hierarchy of prioritisation on their time. The experience of university life for the student always appeared as bottom of the list. But is the expectation of a social life as part of the student experience subjective to social factors that are individual to each student? For example, those students who live at home often report feelings of isolation within the student

body, and certainly the highest numbers of students who live at home while completing their degree can be grouped by their social class. It may also be that students living at home may associate more with peers at home, who have not gone on to further education but are employed, so have more disposable income. This may influence the student to work longer hours in paid employment to have the money to go out with these peers, but also interact with strategies on time management, as by living at home they will not have to spend the same time on house work etc.

The next chapter will explore any impact for students that have a relationship with engagement in paid employment. These impacts are those that affect students even when they apply the strategies that have been discussed throughout this chapter.

# Chapter Seven:

## Data Analysis Section 3: The Impacts of Paid Employment on Academic Studies and the Student Experience.

### 7.1 Introduction:

Though students have strategies they utilise to manage participation within paid employment whilst studying, the literature identifies there to be implications to academic studies and the experience of being a student directly related to this. The qualitative and quantitative data collected in this study also indicate this to be the case.

Positive impacts are identified from engagement in paid employment, however, it is the negative impacts that are of concern. Negative impacts centre on achievement of lower marks within both assignments and examinations than the individual student has the potential to achieve, alongside a reduction in the social and cultural capital acquisition from the overall university experience. Double the number of students in current TTPE identify potential impacts in comparison to those students who are not, which has to point towards these perceptions being based on the reality these students are experiencing.

There are physical, psychological and social consequences of undertaking paid employment. Within the literature, students identify physical symptoms such as tiredness, being prone to infection, constantly rushing around, and substituting junk food for healthy food, affecting nutrition. The psychological consequences students acknowledge are anxiety and depression, through juggling time for studying and completing assignments with TTPE, never having time for themselves. The social consequences the respondents note is an effect on their work life balance, a lack of time to socialise with their peers, and an inability to fit in activities they wish to undertake.

This chapter considers whether the students in this study identify any impact to their studies, from individual personal experiences of engagement in paid employment. The students' perceptions regarding potential impacts related to this relatively recent phenomenon of an

increased uptake of TTPE are also explored, subjective responses in comparison to objective responses, as these can differ.

The data identified both positive and negative impacts for the students. Benefits included gaining transferable skills, which employers are requesting for the current labour market, and specific skills for a future career choice. Detrimental effects highlighted issues within time management, physical and psychological symptoms unfavourable for the student, and underachievement in assessments and examinations, a measurable impact with implications to degree classification.

When exploring the effect that engagement in PE has for students, it must be accepted that here will always be an impact on life balance when an additional activity is incorporated into daily living, regardless of the choices and motivations regarding this activity. The literature review in chapter three discusses how recent research asks whether negative impacts from TTPE are detrimental to all students, or are there particular groups who are affected more than others, are there any characteristics in the PE that enhance any impacts. One of the key questions here was whether patterns could be categorised within student groups, to identify those most vulnerable to negative impacts, were there patterns within the typology of TTPE, such as levels of flexibility, the timeframe and the hours required within the employment, which compounded any impact.

Time management is most difficult for students during the academic term, because of study requirements and participation in university activities connected to studies, such as debating societies or extra lectures open to all students. The analysis of how students manage their time is becoming progressively more important, due to the rapid rise in participation with TTPE. Callender (2008) considers that this is a largely ignored topic, with few studies considering any impact to academic studies specific to this phenomenon.

General concerns centre on the reporting of missed lectures, failure to meet assignment deadlines and perceptions students are not achieving their full potential. Student participation in university societies and activities is lower in those students engaged in TTPE, alongside less involvement in voluntary work, useful on a CV when applying for graduate employment.

## 7.2 Measuring Impacts

Institutions of Higher Education identify TTPE as a causal factor affecting attendance, deadlines being missed and students generally underachieving. Within the literature numerous studies highlight these missed deadlines and underachieving students. For example, the latest SIES study (IES & NatCen 2008, DIUS 2008) found students identify tiredness, rushed assignment work, missed classes and a failure to meet deadlines connected to participation in TTPE. Hunt et al (2004) identified students who were not employed while at university obtained significantly higher marks than their peers who were, though this was confined to certain subject groups.

## 7.3 Measuring impacts to academic studies:

The literature measures any impact to academic studies by considering whether lectures and/or deadlines have been missed. This method of assessment was used in the data analysis for this study, with the question specifically asking to report missed lectures and deadlines that were directly related to TTPE.

## 7.1 Table to show relationship between TTPE, missing lectures and/or deadlines and hours in study:

| Hours worked | Lectures missed (total) | Deadlines missed (total) | Both missed (total) | none missed (total) | % missed | Hours in study | N= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| None | 3 | 1 | 0 | 91 | 3 | 21 | 95 |
| <10 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 56 | 22 | 19.2 | 72 |
| 11 to 20 | 20 | 5 | 8 | 52 | 39 | 20 | 85 |
| >21 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 59 | 20.3 | 17 |

Base number N=269, comprising of those students surveyed who have had experience of TTPE while at university, even if they have stopped. These are all second year students.

Here, students not currently in TTPE, though with previous experience of TTPE, have a much higher percentage of neither missing lectures nor deadlines. There are marked differences in the percentages of students reporting missed lectures and deadlines as the number of hours in TTPE increases.

The number of hours spent on study per week is similar for all students, perhaps surprising considering the difference in reported missed lectures and deadlines. It may be that there is a clash of time between lectures and shifts in TTPE that contributes here, or a perception to save travel time by studying at home. Or is it these students take longer to complete assignments, due to missing the lectures that form the theory for university study. Certainly it should be questioned as to why 95 students have chosen not to continue in TTPE through their second year, is this related to time management?

A worrying average of 28% of students who are in TTPE missed deadlines, again attributed as a direct result of their employment. This can have serious consequences to a degree classification, as without mitigating circumstances there is a 40% cap on an assignment resubmission or examination re-sits.

The importance students place on meeting a deadline was reported in the interviews, illustrated by comments regarding giving up sleep to ensure deadlines were met, taking sick leave to ensure time to complete assignments, and in one case the TTPE was given up totally because of a conflict over time to revise for examinations. Carole, a young SOCSI student explains:

> *'No, I've never missed a deadline, I've been very pushed to do it, had to pull a couple of sickies in work to be able to do it….. and I am very good at building good relationships with people at work and this means I can swap shifts. I have had to do this though I don't like to do it but then I will do it for them too…… I don't go to bed until it's done, whether that means I'm up till 5 and then getting back up at 7 or not. It has to be done.'*

But would these assignments be showcasing these students' potential if they are rushed and written when the student is exhausted? The potential for students' grades to be lower than the student is capable of achieving is very real here. Carole also describes her university supervisor as being concerned over the amount of hours she was undertaking in paid employment, and the effect this was having on her studies:

> *'My personal tutor has said to me that I have to stop (working as many hours in TTPE) that I am breaking my contract…..there's a contract I must have signed at some point that I would only work 10 hours'*

This did raise an interesting point, as though the students being interviewed were asked a specific question regarding whether they knew of any set amount of hours their university advised as maximum regarding paid employment, all reported no. Also, as discussed in the previous chapter, when a student at this same university applied to the hardship fund, she was advised that she could earn a specified amount from paid employment, which related to 18 hours a week if calculated from the amount per hour earned within student employment. Lily, from SOCSI, discussed the negative impact she perceived from having too many hours in TTPE in her first year at university:

> *'Well I have always wanted to try and get a first... Then in my first year I didn't do very well I only just scraped through ....so this year I have cut my hours down in work – I know the money was nice but I want a good degree....Now I am averaging 68% after the first lot of exams and assignments this year that's a big jump because it was 53% in my first year .......I missed lots of lectures though more tutorials..... I think I was only late handing in one assignment though and that was because I was ill.'*

Within the interviews, 8 of the 28 students indicated they perceived there would be an effect on their grades if they engaged in TTPE for too many hours. They also reported there could be an effect on the overall studying necessary for university studies, from meeting deadlines for assignments through to examination revision. These effects were specified as being related to the amount of hours within the employment when these were completed in term time, as they stated they would increase their hours to as many as they could get in the summer holidays. They would accept more hours in the Christmas and Easter breaks but only if they were up to date with their studies.

From the interview data, of the 20 students in TTPE, 7 missed lectures, all of whom reported this **was** caused by the employment, either directly because of a clash in times, or indirectly because of catching up with deadlines or because they were too tired. One comment identified that she 'missed lectures because you 'can', when you are tired you end up not going'. The motivation to go to lectures and tutorials was not strong enough to combat the tiredness.

Van Dyke, Little & Callender (2005), alongside other UK studies such as Curtis & Shani (2002) Smith & Taylor (1999), Curtis & Williams (2002), Metcalf (2003), Moreau &

Leathwood (2006) and the NUS (2008) all found students self reporting missing lectures and seminars, that they didn't have the time to complete the reading around the tutorials or complete tasks given for them, that they felt stressed and tired and overwhelmed, and this was accredited to the fact they undertook TTPE. This paints a picture where attainment would be affected very negatively.

### 7.3.1 Social class measured impact:

When the relationship between social class, TTPE and the incidence of missed lectures and deadlines was explored, different patterns were seen for students who missed lectures and students who missed deadlines.

### 7.2 Table to show relationship of social class, TTPE and missing lectures, deadlines:

| | Social class and relationship with hours in TTPE and students reporting missed lectures and deadlines | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | <10 hours | | | 11 to 20 hours | | | >21 hours | | |
| Social Class | % missed lectures | % missed deadlines | N= | % missed lectures | % missed deadlines | N= | % missed lectures | % missed deadlines | N= |
| 1 | 21 | 14 | 15 | 31 | 19 | 17 | 67 | 33 | 3 |
| 2 | 12 | 9 | 35 | 39 | 13 | 32 | 50 | 0 | 2 |
| 3 | 14 | 5 | 24 | 28 | 9 | 33 | 60 | 40 | 5 |
| 4&5 | 50 | 0 | 4 | 57 | 29 | 14 | 60 | 20 | 5 |

The base number N=189, relating to second year students surveyed who are in current TTPE.

Students employed for the lowest amount of hours reported missing deadlines through a linear pattern, the highest percentage in social class one, with no deadlines missed in the lowest social classes. The pattern for missed lectures showed the highest percentage here was in the lower social class. This data confirmed the comments from the interviews, where the general consensus was that deadlines were essential while lectures and tutorials do not have the same perceived repercussions if missed.

As hours in TTPE increased, a pattern of students from the lower social classes now reporting missing deadlines in higher percentages emerged. However, the number of students here was very low.

Throughout all the social classes, the percentages of reporting missed lectures rose as the number of hours in TTPE increased, indicating a relationship between levels of negative impacts and the time spent in employment.

### 7.3.2 Gender and Ethnicity measured impact:

The percentage of students reporting missed lectures was very similar between the genders, and again these percentages increased in a linear pattern as the hours undertaken in TTPE increased.

### 7.3 Table to show relationship of gender, TTPE and missing lectures, deadlines:

| | Hours in TTPE and students reporting missed lectures and deadlines | | | | | | | | |
| | <10 hours | | | 11 to 20 hours | | | >21 hours | | |
| Gender | % missed lectures | % missed deadlines | N= | % missed lectures | % missed deadlines | N= | % missed lectures | % missed deadlines | N= |
| Female | 16 | 8 | 62 | 34 | 11 | 71 | 60 | 20 | 10 |
| Male | 15 | 15 | 13 | 42 | 27 | 26 | 57 | 28 | 7 |

The base number N=189, relating to second year students surveyed who are in current TTPE.

However, the male students reported missing deadlines directly related to TTPE in higher percentages than the female students. This was through all the groups of hours undertaken in TTPE. Again the pattern showed as the number of hours in employment rose, the percentage of missed deadlines increased. This implies the male students had the highest negative impact from TTPE, perhaps not as efficient at managing their time as the female students. More worryingly, the negative impact was in the area that would potentially affect achievement levels the greatest.

Within the ethnic groups it was mainly the white British students in TTPE who report missing lectures and/or deadlines. However, as there were so few ethnic minority groups within this study the data could not be conclusive.

**7.3.3 School and university measured impact:**

Analysis of the quantitative data of the student groups within different schools identified again that the factor creating differentiations in the levels of students reporting missing lectures and deadlines was the amount of hours in paid employment. Surprisingly, the bioscience schools had the highest percentage of students reporting missing lectures and deadlines. However, for both schools, the percentages rose as the hours in TTPE increased.

**7.4 Table to show relationship of school and university, hours in TTPE and missing lectures, deadlines:**

| | Hours in TTPE and students reporting missed lectures and deadlines | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | <10 hours | | | 11 to 20 hours | | | >21 hours | | |
| School | % missed lectures | % missed deadlines | N= | % missed lectures | % missed deadlines | N= | % missed lectures | % missed deadlines | N= |
| Bioscience | 23 | 17 | 31 | 39 | 14 | 44 | 67 | 33 | 6 |
| SOCSI | 11 | 5 | 44 | 34 | 17 | 53 | 55 | 18 | 11 |
| University | | | | | | | | | |
| Chirk | 19 | 13 | 31 | 41 | 16 | 32 | 67 | 44 | 9 |
| Glanaman | 14 | 7 | 44 | 34 | 15 | 65 | 50 | 0 | 8 |

The base number N=189, relating to second year students surveyed who are in current TTPE.

The analysis on the patterns between universities also showed a direct linear pattern of an increase in reporting missed lectures as the hours in TTPE increased, in both universities. This linear pattern was also identified in the reporting of missed deadlines at Chirk University. However, at Glanaman University, no students employed for over 21 hours a week reported missing a deadline, again concurring with qualitative data that students often define deadlines as essential.

The students at Chirk University, the traditional redbrick university, were seen to have high percentages of both missing lectures and failing to meet deadlines, higher than those at Glanaman University, a new university. While the number of students working long hours in paid employment is much lower at Chirk University, a third less than at Glanaman, the fact that these students are experiencing extremely negative impacts to their academic studies must be of concern.

158

**7.4 Beneficial impacts:**

Students identify benefits from paid employment, such as transferable 'soft' skills, useful allied to the academic skills obtained from their degree course. Curtis & Williams (2002) perceived employers to be impressed by the communication and teamwork skills of students who had undertaken part-time paid employment. Brown (2003) states that because of the inflation of degree holders, employers now look for 'soft' skills when recruiting for graduates. Curtis & Shani (2002) found students felt paid employment increased confidence and improved time management. Students also observe that employment in the hospitality sector can give opportunities for socialising.

A very apt quote perhaps summarising the 'pros and cons' for students around TTPE was made by Sophie, a young bioscience student:

> *'The good parts are money, put on your CV, experience, structure to your time, a routine, but I think the type of work would matter as well. The down side are that it can distract you from your studies, can be stressful and can mean you miss out on socialising aspects.'*

The major positive impacts as reported in this study are discussed below.

**7.4.1 Skill Gain:**

The quantitative data in this study identified that 89% of students perceived they had gained skills from their engagement in paid employment. The skills were mainly in the form of general transferable skills, though 9% had been able to gain specific skills that could be of use for a future career.

Within the interviews, all the students participating in TTPE identified they had gained skills they could carry on into graduate employment, and expressed these skills as very positive to their lives. Elaine, from bioscience, relates the skills she feels she has gained personally from her TTPE:

> *'Before this job I hadn't had any experience of serving people and no experience of working within a team. I feel the job has helped me with my confidence and*

*people skills, I have made friends and feel the experience was needed in preparation for full time work after university even though it will not be in the same field'*

However, Hunt et al (2004), when evaluating the benefits of paid employment to students, makes the point that these benefits may not be as high as they are promoted to be, due to the nature of typical student employment being low skilled and unrelated to future careers. A relevant comment on how the benefits gained from transferable skills can be limited, not a continuous process was made by Emma, from bioscience:

*'I've been to a few career meetings and they say although working gives you some skills you need to work in your field if you really want to bump up your CV…. I don't really want to work in retail so I'm not really gaining anything more from working in Argos now, obviously when I first started I learnt people skills and dealing with customers but I think I've maximised that now I just feel like I'm going through the motions now'*

## 7.4.2 Financial benefits:

The use of wages has been discussed in chapter 5, but is the major motivator for TTPE. Two students felt TTPE would allow anyone to go to university, because it brings affordability into the equation. They also perceived wages could provide funding for university fieldwork, in an era where the world is a much smaller place to travel:

*'This year I'm going to Africa in the summer with the university so basically all of my work money is going towards funding that…… it's a structure that the university does so yeah its part of my degree so I do have to go ……..I wouldn't be able to go if I didn't have any work'*

An interesting view was expressed regarding an additional financial benefit, 'Discounts helps get both necessities and luxury items cheaply', pointing out it is not just wages that help with the finances.

One student mentioned the psychological aspect of the security that wages coming in every week gave, with reduced anxiety regarding accumulated debt. Most students used wages to help finance the socialising aspect of university. Thus the benefit gained from earning a wage was not just literally money in the bank to pay bills, but also created a financial cushion and opportunities to enjoy student life.

**7.4.3 Experience for future employment:**

In the current economic climate, the students were realistic regarding the competition for graduate employment. They perceived there is often a 'what comes first – the chicken or the egg' element within the job market, where employers desire experience in their applicants, but where do you get this experience prior to your first employment? The answer students made comment on was that paid employment while at university would represent a form of work experience, even if not in the field of their career choice. The students felt it was apparent that employers wanted experience from paid employment. Nichole explained:

> *'I think employers like you to have worked as well but because I worked when I was in college that should be ok for me. It would be great if I could get a job in teaching or something like that so I would have pay and work experience but that is very hard to do.'*

Laura, a SOCSI student with an aim to become a teacher, was one of the few students who had obtained paid employment that was related to her future career choice:

> *'I work for a play scheme in Bridgend….. doing work with disabled children and that also gives me employment in the summer, gives me like a block of summer work …. you work then like full time every day on this play scheme, so that's been a tremendous help to my employment…. to have that on your C.V…..'*

Six students stressed that paid employment provides experience and skills that could be added to their CV, in addition to providing references that could be used when seeking graduate employment. Other comments included paid employment brought the individual an experience of reality, brought them into the real world, that 'work' can be enjoyable and create opportunities for the future. One student also felt the experiences she gained from employment had given her more confidence to 'go out there' and apply for graduate employment in the future.

**7.4.4 Character building:**

Students are perceived engagement in paid employment had built positively on aspects of their characters. An example is given by Sophie:

*'I just feel more outgoing and open, and I have more confidence because I'm talking to people that I have no idea who they are………. And in uni I'm asking more questions and I never used to like email any of the lecturers if I was stuck, now I do ……..I am asking more questions and trying to get to know everything a bit better, it is, it's definitely having an influence on certain aspects.'*

Seven students perceived they had gained respect by holding down employment, acquiring a sense of responsibility from the expectations put onto them within their employment. Three students felt they had gained maturity from maintaining employment. An important factor for all the students in TTPE was the independence in earning their own money gave them. This was related to an innate desire that parental contributions be kept to a minimum.

### 7.4.5 Time management:

Winn & Stevenson (1997) defined students felt that TTPE should be fitted around their academic studies but, in reality, this was not the case, causing an adverse impact to studies. However, eight students highlighted that employment had taught them valuable lessons regarding time management, to prioritise what were the important tasks and to form a routine in their lives, which had a knock-on effect of releasing time for studying.

### 7.4.6 Student Experience Enhancement:

Students stated there to be a general impact to their experience at university directly related to engagement in TTPE. One highlighted the danger of over-socialising when away from home for the first time, expressing employment restricted his free evening time, so minimised this danger. Other opinions reported employment provided a break from university, in addition to providing a medium through which socialisation opportunities were found.

The qualitative data regarding perceived benefits from TTPE indicated students describe a wide range of positive impacts in addition to an awareness of possible detrimental effects. All the students interviewed talk of the necessity of a balance, so the positive impacts are not negated. This is related to the student's individual feelings on the choices they have within the decision-making around engagement in paid employment.

**7.5 Measuring any impact on the student experience:**

That TTPE impacts on students' experience of university life has been recognised by much research, such as CHERI et al (2005), Humphrey (2006), Redmond (2006) and Curtis & Williams (2002). These studies indicate an effect on the uptake of social and cultural capital, in addition to a detrimental effect on the mental health of students, which knocks on to their physical health. Students report an overload from the mix of demands on their time. Focus groups of students state juggling studies with TTPE causes stress. Data found 80% of students in TTPE complained of a lack of time for socialising and relaxation, with disturbed sleep patterns. While these factors may be non-contributory to academic enquiry, they could possibly promote a practical, instrumental approach within learning that could affect levels of achievement. Those students not engaged in paid employment reported involvement in university societies and sport teams, felt less stress, slept well and socialised with fellow students.

It is generally agreed there has to be work life balance, and for students this is balance between academic studies and expectations of student life. Owing to the recent sharp increase of student participation in TTPE, the importance of this balance is amplified, to ensure the experience of being a student and associated accumulation of both social and cultural capital is not lost. The time management strategies put in place by students, discussed in the previous chapter, placed the student experience at the bottom of the list in the hierarchy of prioritisation, below academic studies and commitment to TTPE. This caused a very unbalanced experience of being at university, enhancing the negative impacts attributed to long hours in TTPE.

In the literature this balance is measured by the student engagement with and participation in university societies, sport and voluntary work. In this study, initially these activities will be discussed separately because there are differentiated motivations behind participation in societies and sport to that of volunteering.

The TUC (2000, 2006), NUS (2000) surveys and research by Humphrey (2006) find TTPE has an effect on social relationships and involvement in university life, decreasing the social and cultural capital accrued. This was not due to poor time management, but from a direct

lack of time for all the commitments. Students in TTPE also defined feelings of isolation from their peers, with fears regarding CV's, if unable to contribute to voluntary work connected to their chosen career pathway.

### 7.5.1 Overview of measured impacts to the student experience:

The tables below show the percentages of students who participate in voluntary work, university societies and sporting activities.

### 7.5 Table showing participation in University societies, sport and voluntary work in relation to social class:

| | Student Participation in: | | | | |
| | Societies and sport | | Voluntary work | | |
| Social Class | % part. | Average hours | % part. | average hours | N= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 49 | 7.2 | 28 | 4 | 78 |
| 2 | 36 | 6.4 | 17 | 4.3 | 145 |
| 3 | 20 | 4.7 | 14 | 3.4 | 98 |
| 4&5 | 23 | 2.9 | 3 | 9 | 35 |

Total base number N=356, all students surveyed who were allocated to a social class from parental occupation, all in their second year at university.

When social class was examined, students in the higher social classes participated more in university societies and sports, with social class one students participating for the longest period of time. Percentage of participation was linear through to social classes four and five. As the literature states, and the data in this study concludes, the lower the social class the more hours undertaken in TTPE, so the pattern seen within the social class groups is what would be expected.

There was a similar pattern seen when considering participation in voluntary work. There is one anomaly, whereby the only student in social classes 4 & 5 participating in voluntary work spent nine hours a week volunteering. The quantitative data regarding this student showed a mature student with no TTPE. Studies were financed by a student loan, bursary, the WALG and savings. The motivation here appeared to be participation in volunteer work for her CV, as she reported that the degree was for a specific career choice.

Participation in university societies and sports throughout all social classes was higher and for longer periods of time per week than participation in voluntary work, except for the one student participation mentioned in the previous paragraph.

**7.6 Table showing participation in university societies, sport and voluntary work in relation to grouped hours in TTPE:**

| Hours in TTPE | Student Participation in: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Societies and sport | | Voluntary work | | |
| | % part. | Average hours | % part. | average hours | N= |
| none | 44 | 6.5 | 19 | 3.5 | 190 |
| <10 | 29 | 5.5 | 23 | 4.5 | 75 |
| 11 to 20 | 18 | 5.8 | 11 | 5 | 97 |
| >21 | 12 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 17 |

Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

The percentage of students participating in university societies, sport, and in voluntary work decreased as the hours undertaken in TTPE increased. However, while the average hours participation in university societies and sports was higher in students who were not in paid employment, this was not the case with voluntary work. Here the students in paid employment, though participating in less numbers, put in more hours to their voluntary work. Students who fitted TTPE with academic studies were very serious about acquiring skills to enhance their CV. The paid employment taught the 'soft' skills while the voluntary work taught specific skills for a career. The averaged time with participation within university societies and sports was still higher than that of voluntary work, through all levels of TTPE. This mirrored the pattern where social class was a factor, which was unsurprising given the strong link between social class and the hours undertaken in TTPE.

Volunteer work participation rate patterns may be partly explained by the commitment needed to turn up at set times for set periods of time. Participation in university societies and sporting activities can be much more relaxed. Time management is significant here, alongside the hierarchy of what activity is most important within the students' timeframe. The students undertaking long hours in paid employment had no time to spare for participation in university activities of volunteering. Two students, working over 20 hours a week in TTPE, expressed they would enjoy volunteering, plus the experience would be advantageous for

their CV, but they had no time to spare. One of these students, Carole, from SOCSI comments:

> *'That's the one thing I really want to do (volunteering), I know that's important for psychology but literally the only days I have off university is Tuesday and Friday and then I have my job as well so it's like ah I know I need to do voluntary work but at the same time I need the money as well so I can live so I can't really do the voluntary work. I am just hoping to do that in the summer because then I won't have to go to university so hopefully I can find something to do Monday to Friday like voluntary work but then also I do want to do more work in Primark so I have money for uni next year so it's like stressful'*

Gender patterns within participation of the university societies and voluntary work for very different. Males participate in sports and socialisation in much higher percentages and for longer periods of time. This is totally reversed when participation in voluntary work is considered.

## 7.7 Table showing gender participation in university societies, sport and volunteering

| | Gender participation in : | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | societies and sports | | Voluntary work | | |
| Gender | % | Average hours | % | Average hours | N= |
| Female | 30 | 5.4 | 20 | 4.2 | 279 |
| Male | 41 | 7.7 | 9 | 3.3 | 100 |

Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

Data regarding university and school participation in the university activities showed varying patterns between the universities regarding participation in societies and sports. Both schools at Chirk University participated in much higher percentages than the schools at Glanaman University. However, the SOCSI schools averaged the lowest and highest hours per week in these activities, while the bioscience schools had virtually identical participation times. The lower participation percentage is possibly explained by the higher percentages of students in TTPE at Glanaman.

## 7.8 Table showing university and school participation in university societies, sport and volunteering:

| | University and School participation in: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Societies and sports | | Voluntary work | | |
| uni/school | % | average hours | % | average hours | N= |
| BG | 27 | 6.3 | 10 | 3.6 | 83 |
| CB | 49 | 6.5 | 15 | 3 | 94 |
| GS | 16 | 7.5 | 17 | 5.5 | 107 |
| SC | 41 | 5.3 | 26 | 3.72 | 95 |

Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

Participation rates within voluntary work were higher in the SOCSI schools, with SOCSI at Glanaman University having equal percentages of participation in both societies and sports, and in voluntary work. This school also undertook the highest average hours in voluntary work, and from the qualitative data from student interviews at Glanaman, this corresponded with a high number of student comments that their degree was to enter specific career pathways, so volunteer work would be very useful for their CV.

SOCSI at Glanaman was the exception to the rule, as in the other three categories of schools and universities the percentage rate of participation and the average hours per week of participation were much higher for university societies and sports in comparison to voluntary work.

**7.5.2 Societies and sport participation at university:**

The motivations highlighted by the students in this study for joining university sports clubs and societies were for personal interest and enjoyment. Many got very involved and joined too many for the time they had free each week, so cut these down very quickly in the first year.  By the second year the students were only involved in those they enjoyed and found opportunities to socialise within. The interview data indicates a definite hierarchy within the time management with TTPE and studies outranking the student experience, but James, a SOCSI student, explained how the whole university experience was what he expected and sought:

> '*I wanted the experience of being a student and that means I accepted there was*
> *a need to take my studies seriously but I also wanted the fun side of being a*
> *student so I was serious enough about my studies to get through my first year*

*fairly easily but able to party enough alongside…. being a student is an opportunity for a time to have fun and get life experiences.'*

James actually went on to say he had found an unintentional benefit to TTPE in that it stops an excess of socialising. Kath, a young bioscience student who had undertaken over 20 hours a week in TTPE through her first year, was frustrated by not having been able to join in clubs and sports teams, explaining:

*'last year I think I worked too much cos when I got asked out I was always working and I ended up joining a few societies but I couldn't go to them, well there has to be a balance really, I got really frustrated sometimes cos it felt like all I did was work sleep uni work sleep uni ……..I got really jealous of the people I lived with cos they played netball as well and I am good at netball I would have joined……..'*

Kath mentioned a key point to managing TTPE alongside university life as a whole– there has to be a balance. That should be what students are educated about and strive for during their university years.

The quantitative data showed that double the students who were not currently in TTPE were active members in university societies and sports teams, in comparison to students who were in current TTPE. Time played a major role for these students.

### 7.5.3 Voluntary work participation at university:

While some students perceive voluntary work has value for the community, plus there is enjoyment from participation, for many volunteering has become a method to gain work experience for inclusion within their CV. Paid work experience within the area for a future career would be a goal for most students who feel an income is essential, but is this feasible? Certainly when the type of work undertaken was considered in chapter five, most student employment is found in the hospitality or retail sector, 72% in this study, 90% in the literature figures. Volunteering may prove invaluable to count as experience when seeking graduate employment. The students in this study were motivated to undertake volunteer work by this aspect of gaining work experience, choosing areas in which they were interested, enjoyed and could contribute to. This interest could also be translated into a

research project for the final year. Kath, a young bioscience student was using her wages to pay for a volunteering experience:

> *'To be honest I'm doing it (going to Camp America) because I want it on my CV. ....I think it's to show again that you can be comfortable to work in different situations, because it's a different continent and I've never been there before. I hope to show I'm quite a versatile person, reliable in a position of responsibility and team lead team work. … I think a lot of places do recognise Camp America, my friend wanted to get in the police and they said to her come back in a year after you have done Camp America and we will give you an opportunity…'*

Within the qualitative data, students talked of specific career aims following their degree. Some were successful in obtaining full-time paid employment in holidays within chosen career fields, but had TTPE where student employment was more readily available, within the location of the university. To continue gaining what they defined as work experience for their future, these students undertook voluntary work through the term that continued to link with their chosen career area, one student volunteered in local schools, helping with reading schemes, another volunteered in a youth club for disabled teenagers.

## 7.6 Student perceptions regarding impact of TTPE:

It was important to determine whether the student body recognised any impacts directly related to engagement in paid employment. Did the students foresee any impacts, have they experienced these impacts? Thus the perceptions of students were considered, and whether these varied between differentiated student groups. The tables regarding perceptions of students were completed by students who had experience of paid employment while at university, even if not in current TTPE.

### 7.6.1 Patterns in student perceptions on the impacts of TTPE:

Patterns that create differentiated student groups were examined within those students who responded they felt there to be a negative impacts directly related to TTPE. Patterns in the characteristics of the TTPE these students were undertaking were also explored.

**7.6.2 Influence of employment hours on perceptions of impacts caused by TTPE:**

The perceptions of those students who were no longer in current TTPE, or were employed for less than 10 hours, were divided regarding whether paid employment negatively impacts studies and student experiences. As the hours in TTPE increased, the percentage of students in agreement that there would be a detrimental effect from the employment also increased, implying these perceptions were based on the reality of their experiences of TTPE. This suggests that the students working longer hours are feeling more of an impact on their studies and student experience, so why are they working longer hours? It must be they feel they have limited choices, it is either engagement in TTPE or being unable to complete their degree course.

Most students perceived the effects of TTPE on both academic studies and student experience in the same terms; this was true whether their view of these effects was positive or negative. Very few respondents reported that they perceived an impact on either academic studies or student life, but no impact on the other. Where no opinion (neither agree nor disagree) was expressed (by 91 students in total), 33% had a joint 'no opinion' regarding both academic studies and the student experience. However, 45% of those students who felt there were negative impacts on academic studies expressed no opinion regarding any impact on the student experience; compared with 22% of students who felt there was a negative impact on the student experience, but had no opinion regarding the impact on academic studies. This again indicates that students place more importance on the potential impact of TTPE on academic studies than on student experience.

As their hours of TTPE increased, a higher proportion of students perceived TTPE to bring about negative impacts, again on both academic studies and the student experience. Those students who worked longer hours in TTPE were more likely to express the view that there were negative impacts related to TTPE (although there was also an increase in the percentage of students not expressing an opinion). However, these students who worked longer hours in TTPE were much more likely to report that TTPE produced negative impacts on their student life; more than 70% felt this. This suggests their personal experiences of longer hours of TTPE strengthened their perceptions that they had very limited time for participating in a full student life.

**7.9 Table showing perceptions on negative impacts of TTPE in relation to the amount of hours employed:**

| Perception on negative impact from TTPE | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Academic studies | | | Student Experience | | |
| Hours in TTPE | Agree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| none | 42 | 35 | 23 | 37 | 33 | 30 |
| <10 | 37 | 37 | 26 | 40 | 35 | 25 |
| 11 to 20 | 51 | 14 | 35 | 51 | 14 | 35 |
| >21 | 53 | 6 | 41 | 71 | 12 | 17 |

Base number N=294, comprising of those students surveyed who have had experience of TTPE while at university, even if they have stopped. These are all second year students.

The differences in perceptions possibly stem from objective general opinions versus subjective personal opinions. Students who were no longer in the situation of managing TTPE were expressing perceptions from hind sight. Students currently managing studies alongside TTPE were expressing perceptions based on the reality of their experiences. There can be stress and time management issues around TTPE, thus these students were revealing thoughts about direct personal awareness of negative impacts. This was expressed in the interviews. Robert, a young bioscience student, who had not had paid employment while at university, was very definite that TTPE has a detrimental effect to academic studies, stating:

*'Oh definitely it would impact.....well probably...I feel I'm busy enough as it is, it's a busy time of the year at the moment because I have a lot of deadlines and stuff… I think it would probably detract from the learning aspect definitely and I would definitely, well, if I had to work in the term time in the week I would miss out on studies because like my timetable is already cram packed full of writing up lecture notes, doing assignments, finishing things so yeah if I had to tear off to work on top of that I would probably just not have enough time, it would end up that I missed out on studying and things and then it would probably affect my grades in a negative way'*

However, this was a generalised estimation, based on the demands he has at university, how he did not feel he would have time for paid employment on top of the demands of his degree course. Other young students, all with current TTPE, talked of negative impacts they were personally experiencing:

> *'I think it has impacted slightly, yes ….though that could be me just trying to find an excuse but my friends they have more time to do the reading and stuff because …. psychology is a lot about reading all these articles and stuff and they have a lot of time to do that like during the day …. when you finish a day at work you don't want to go and read articles ….'*

Carole, a young SOCSI student, was describing a personal perception that the course required more time from her, whether this was for reading, researching, putting more effort into assignments.

Time management issues were identified as a major causal factor regarding perceptions of TTPE causing negative impacts for students. Carole related envying fellow students who did not have employment, as it was not just the time taken out by the hours in TTPE but the recovery time following it, where tiredness dictated actions, the disruption to revising or completing assignments. This would cause a great deal of stress for students, feeling they did not have enough time to complete assignments as they would wish, or to revise adequately, or even to just enjoy academic activities, researching, discussing ideas with fellow students. When a student becomes stressed but has to continue to engage in TTPE, agency has been removed.

Emma, from bioscience, who worked few hours in TTPE – 4 hours on a Saturday – had a mix of generalised and personal opinions, as she had a personal view of employment alongside studies, but was looking at any negative impacts that might **occur** if she had to work longer hours.

> *'I do feel that working too much will affect the quality of your work, which is not advised on a degree as essays and exams have to be done to a high standard if you want a high mark. So I do think some people work too much and stress themselves out when they don't have time to work (on their studies).  I also think that part of being a student is to go out n stuff, so if you have to work too much that could be affected as well and you might think this isn't what I thought university was going to be like and I suppose then you may think 'Is this worth it?'*

These findings concur with literature findings on students' perceptions regarding the impact of TTPE to studies and student life are. Ford et al (1995) identified more than 25% felt there was an adverse impact on standards of academia. Taylor (1998) found over 60% of his

172

sample agreed with this. Metcalf (2001) saw 78% of the students in her study reporting a negative impact. The NUS survey (2008) states 45% of students in TTPE perceived there to be a negative impact to their studies and 37% a negative impact to the experience of being a student.

The qualitative data found respondents commenting that negative impacts caused by employment were directly linked to the timeframe of when the employment took place. TTPE was during the academic term, when the demands of studies are highest. Over 60% of students stated that summer holiday full time paid employment would negate all detrimental impacts, as savings from this employment would help fund the next year of the course. The student could then manage without TTPE. Most of these students went on to say that in the current economic climate summer full-time employment, the only option that would give the wages necessary to save the amount needed, was very difficult to obtain. One comment noted:

> *'I find when I get home in the summer or Christmas you find that they want someone who's going to stay there not just someone who is going to stay for a couple of weeks and then leave it's been really hard to find a job .....'*

Three students also pointed out that there was a big psychological impact to university attendance. To have stress regarding finances, if paid employment in some form was not an option, could cause the student to leave university. As Sophie, from bioscience, commented:

> *'I'm really struggling with money and that is affecting my studies because now I'm always stressed about having no money.....I am starting to lose my drive now because of the money situation ....'*

Limits placed on the hours in TTPE could negate any detrimental impacts was a consensus of opinion expressed within the interview data. Anne, from SOCSI, explained the expectations she had placed on her time, in her role as a student:

> *'I think it's down to how many hours I did I mean if I only worked on the weekend it wouldn't be too bad but if I did loads of hours I couldn't do my degree because I'm a student so I need to do loads of reading and stuff if I want to get good marks.....'*

173

Several students, particularly those in the bioscience schools, felt that as the years progress within a degree course there is a need for extra time for reading, research, discussion groups and interaction with peers. This promotes a need to reduce hours in work, again pinpointing that the time taken up by TTPE is an issue for these students. By identifying these course requirements, some students were almost setting limits on how much they would allow TTPE to create a negative impact before reversing their decision making, whereby they **would not** chose to take on TTPE. Different courses require varying amounts of time for both internal and external study, laboratory time can be extensive. It is essential that students be realistic on the time their course requires of them, to be successful in obtaining a high degree classification. Janet, a 25-year-old bioscience student, told of her decision-making on time management throughout the degree course:

> *'Last year, when I was working full time every night, I had to manage my time…… but I find the second year harder than the first one and if I had a job I would have to cut the hours drastically because they actually expect us to do a lot of work at home, a lot of reading and I don't think I would be able to work as much as I was last year …. And next year will probably be more hours needed for reading and writing up ……'*

## 7.6.3 Influence of social class on perceptions of impacts caused by TTPE:

Social class is considered by the literature to be a major sociological factor creating inequalities within education. Throughout the data within this study, social class has a strong relationship with the number of hours undertaken in TTPE. It is also identified to factor very highly when considering the negative impacts of paid employment.

There is a clear social class gradient in perceptions of the effects of TTPE on academic studies; students who come from class backgrounds that are lower in the conventional hierarchy are more likely to perceive negative effects. (The proportion of students expressing no opinion is equally spread across students from different social class backgrounds.) However, perceptions of a negative effect of participation in TTPE on the quality of the student experience are more evenly distributed across the different social class backgrounds. Students from social class 3 record somewhat higher levels of perceptions of a negative effect. It may well be that this particular group of students are required to undertake relatively long hours of TTPE; but, at the same time, retain aspirations to lead a full student social life.

Of students from social classes 4 and 5, many of whom undertake relatively long hours, some 39% report 'no opinion' on the relationship between participation in TTPE and student experience. This again reflects the lower importance attached to this aspect of university life by these students and the priority that they attach to their academic studies.

**7.10 Table to show social class in relation to perceptions on the impact of TTPE:**

| Perception on negative impact from TTPE | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Academic studies | | | Student experience | | |
| | Agree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree |
| Social class | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| 1 | 44 | 31 | 25 | 47 | 25 | 28 |
| 2 | 47 | 39 | 14 | 47 | 38 | 15 |
| 3 | 51 | 26 | 23 | 58 | 25 | 17 |
| 4&5 | 61 | 26 | 13 | 45 | 16 | 39 |

Base number N=279, comprising of those students surveyed who have had experience of TTPE while at university, even if they have stopped, allocated to a social class from parental occupation. These are all second year students.

Students in the highest social classes had much lower margins of opinion between agreement and disagreement there would be negative impacts related to TTPE. This would again be partially explained by the amount of hours employed, as social classes one and two students have the highest percentages of nonparticipation and participation for less than 10 hours in TTPE, where negative impacts would not be experienced.

Social class one students were seen to have the highest percentage of split opinion, disagreement regarding negative impacts to academic studies, but agreement there was an impact to the student experience. These students had high percentage participation in university activities and sports, with the highest average hours participation per week, which would influence opinions regarding the importance of student life external to academic study.

**7.11 Bar chart illustrating strength of agreement between the social classes regarding any negative impact of TTPE to academic study:**
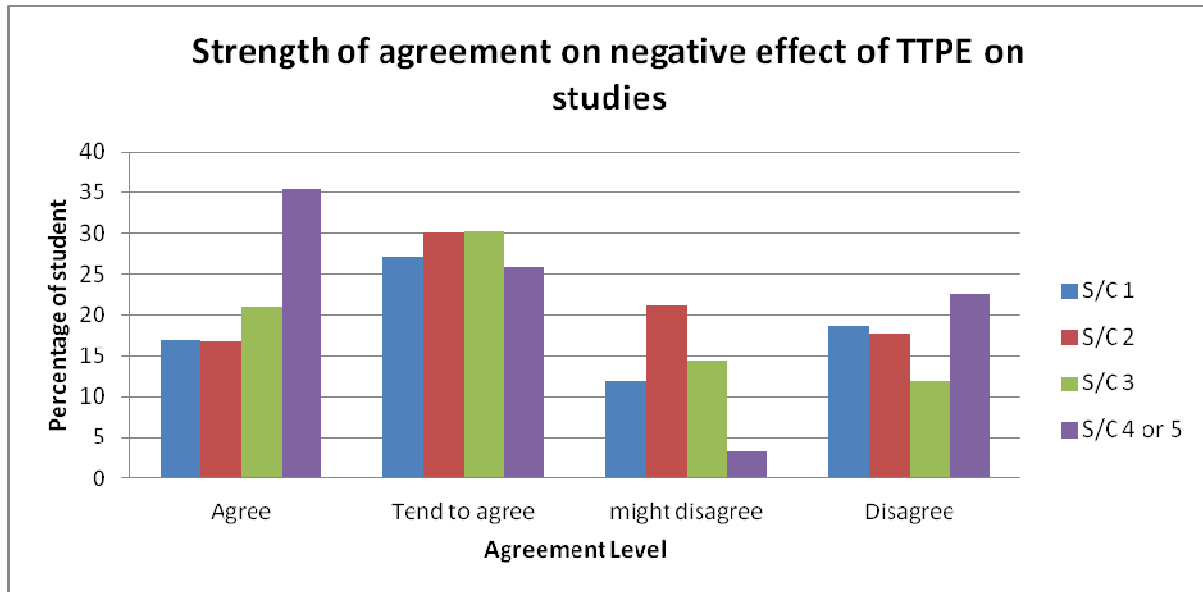


The strengths of opinion regarding any negative impact to studies from TTPE showed the students from social classes 4 and 5 did feel strongly that achievement levels could be affected by this type of paid employment. Students from social class 3 also agreed in high percentages there would be a negative impact, but less strongly. Students from social classes 1 and 2 were more divided in opinion, both on level and strength, though slightly higher percentages did agree the affect on studies could be negative from TTPE.

The strengths of opinion regarding any negative impact to the student experience from TTPE showed the students from social classes 4 and 5 to feel very strongly that their participation within university activities would be affected by their employment. Students from social classes 1 and 3 also agreed in high percentages there would be a negative impact, but much less strongly, tending to agree rather than strongly agreeing. Students from social class 2 were divided in opinion, both on the level of agreement and the strength of agreement.

**7.12 Bar chart illustrating strength of agreement between the social classes regarding any negative impact of TTPE to the student experience:**
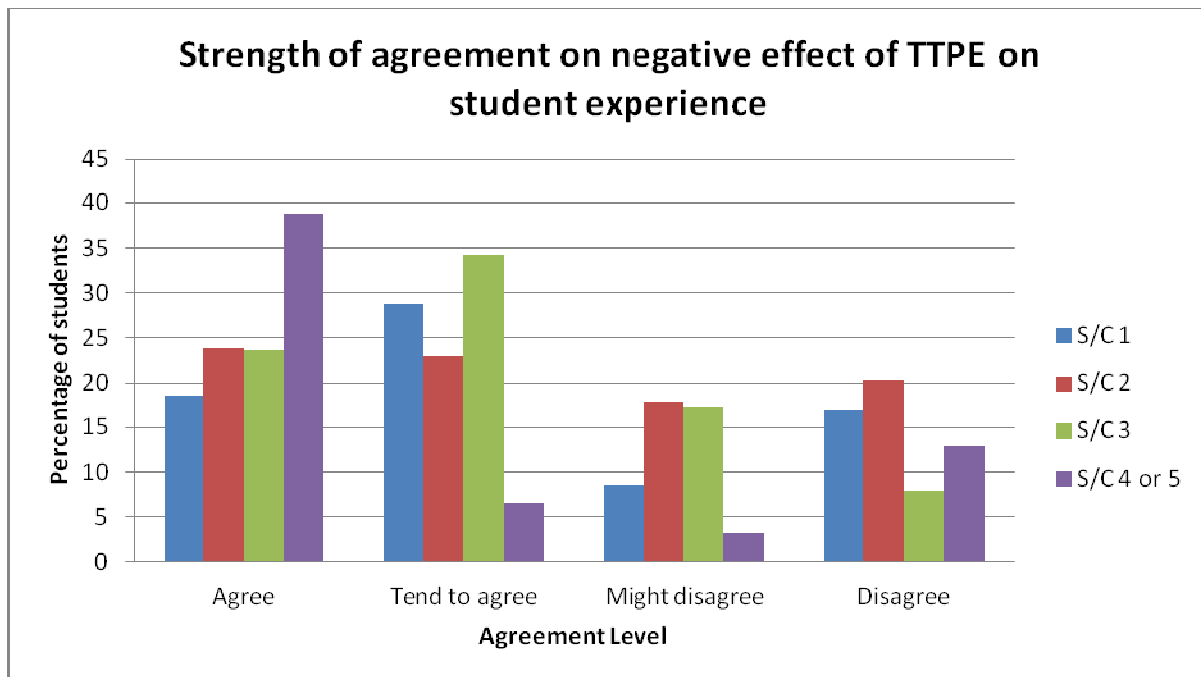


These findings were corroborated by the qualitative data in this study. Amanda, from bioscience, had a low income family background and felt she had little choice regarding to engagement in TTPE, if she wished to stay at university. She perceived the quality of her work was affected, achieving lower grades than she was capable of, so experienced high levels of stress regarding time management.

> *'I think the quality of my work is affected quite a bit really, I mean I still you know put in an effort and things and I still try and make it better but like if I just can't do it I can't… I worry about it and ideally I wouldn't want to work I think and then I would make more effort but I can't afford to not work so …'.*

Students in a similar situation are often caught up in a cycle of anxiety and stress. Here there is a 'double whammy' whereby students from the lower social classes are those most adverse to debt, which leads them to engage in the longest hours of TTPE to try to minimise the debt, but this leads to high levels of stress over time management, in addition to any stress they may feel over the levels of debt they are accumulating.

177

When social class was cross tabulated with averaged hours of TTPE, the number of students in each group, and especially the total of students in the groups for social classes 4&5, were very small so could not highlight any significant patterns. What was noted, particularly for students in social class 1, where many students do not need TTPE but undertake low hours to enjoy the experience and gain experience for a CV, was that as the number of hours increased in TTPE, the opinions on any detrimental effects from TTPE altered. It is understandable that the students working low hours will have a positive personal experience, therefore they would not agree that there is a negative impact directly related to paid employment.

**7.6.4 Influence of parental contributions on perceptions of impacts caused by TTPE:**

Throughout the data in this study, the funding streams students used to form strands that interact within student decision-making on whether to engage in TTPE will play a part in student perception on the effect of the TTPE. The amount and type of parental contributions a student receives has a major role within the funding streams for students.

**7.13 Table to show parental contributions in relation to perceptions on the impact of TTPE:**

| Perception on negative impact from TTPE | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Academic studies | | | Student Experience | | |
| | Agree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree |
| P/C | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Regular | 47 | 33 | 20 | 36 | 37 | 27 |
| When needed | 45 | 33 | 22 | 50 | 37 | 13 |
| None | 58 | 21 | 21 | 59 | 22 | 19 |

Base number N=279, comprising of those students surveyed who have had experience of TTPE while at university, even if they have stopped.  These are all second year students.

The level of student perception regarding possible impacts to academic studies was virtually identical when PC was regular or when needed. Students not in receipt of PC indicated a much higher agreement that negative impacts would occur from TTPE, and had stronger opinions regarding this. The pattern differed when the students were asked about the student experience. Students not in receipt of PC, or who received PC when needed were in

agreement regarding any negative impacts to university life in much higher percentages than those students who received PC regularly, and again the strength of feeling was higher.

Parental contributions, when received regularly, influence greatly the decision-making and choices students make regarding paid employment, forming a financial cushion for students if they have to reduce employment.

Within the interviews, Katie, a young bioscience student, explained how she had recognised a negative impact to her studies from undertaking long hours in TTPE, so choose to cut these down, managing by cutting back on her outgoings as much as possible and being helped more by her parents:

> *'I feel sorry for the ones who have to work a lot because they can't have time for either a social life or their studies. Its ok if you are able to choose to cut the hours down like I was because then you can choose if you think working is affecting university...... I was lucky my parents gave me more and I started to spend less.'*

### 7.6.5 Typography of paid employment patterns on student perceptions regarding the impact of TTPE:

Another factor, linked to the amount of hours worked, was the shift patterns of TTPE. The literature indicates that 'recovery' time, following unsocial hours, will have an effect on time management for students. Curtis & Shani (2002) found, as student TTPE was mainly in retail or hospitality, there was shift work with unsocial hours involved. Students identified an increased detrimental impact to studies they attributed was directly associated to this recovery time.

Within this research, the shift pattern for midnight to 6 am showed participation by very few students, 31 in total. The patterns of agreement and disagreement regarding any negative impact from TTPE follow the same lines as previous data, it was the number of hours engagement in TTPE that influenced students' perceptions.

Associated with shift patterns is the degree of flexibility within paid employment. The TUC survey of 2000 found students self-reported an effect on academic studies from the

inflexibility found in much of student TTPE, highlighting obtaining time off at exam and assignment periods as a particular problem.

**7.14 Table showing student perceptions of negative impacts in relation to the flexibility within TTPE:**

| Flexibility within TTPE | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perception negative impact to studies | None | Some | Very | Perception negative impact to student life | None | Some | Very |
| | *%* | *%* | *%* | | *%* | *%* | *%* |
| agree | 65 | 56 | 37 | agree | 71 | 64 | 37 |
| disagree | 26 | 25 | 43 | disagree | 19 | 16 | 48 |
| N= | 31 | 96 | 65 | N= | 31 | 96 | 65 |

Base number N=192, comprising of those students surveyed who have current TTPE. These are all second year students.

In this study, the data showed that where the students had little or no flexibility, perception was high in agreement there would be a negative impact associated with TTPE. Conversely, where students felt they had high levels of flexibility within their paid employment, the students disagreed regarding any negative impacts.

The more control the student has over time management within TTPE, the lower the perception there are negative impacts from TTPE. This applies to the amount of hours undertaken in paid employment and the flexibility within the employment. Both these allow control, as a low amount of hours in employment per week with a high degree of flexibility gives the student a high degree of agency, so when time off is needed for academic requirements, this can be arranged with the minimum of fuss. When long hours are undertaken in TTPE, alongside little or no flexibility, the student has very little agency over accessing extra time when academic needs are highest.

Data from the interviews gave insights on time management within a student's life. There was much commentary on how it could be a juggling act to fit everything in. Carole, from SOCSI, gave great detail on how her assignments were completed around her TTPE, as she had no flexibility around time off for assignments:

> *'say you got an essay that needs to be handed in on Monday – well my friends always leave the weekend to do it but I know I can't really do it on the weekend*

*because also my hours are really awkward to work because like on a Saturday I work 1.30 to 6.30 so you don't really have enough time in the morning to do any university work... then when you come back you are just like aww .........then on a Sunday, the same as well, sort of 1.30 then finish at 5.30, if it was a morning shift it would probably be better because you would have the afternoon to do it but it does kinda ruin my whole day, the Saturday and Sunday, so I would just like do my work before the weekend or at least try to do my work before the weekend so I would only have to read through it and that at the weekend'*

There can be a positive impact arising from inflexibility within TTPE, as Janet, from bioscience relates. As her TTPE was essential to fund higher education, in her view, knowing she could not have extra time for deadlines made her more organised, to have control over her studies:

*'I've found that I have to be incredibly organised so I just write everything down in a diary, it's like my external memory but I can't get about without my diary (laughs) I would just never remember things so and I'll specify if there's kind of a deadline coming up.... I'll be like I've got to start this this week so I finish it in time so I probably start things earlier when I'm working'*

Chloe, from SOCSI, again had no flexibility within her TTPE, and had found out the hard way that when there is limited control over extra time for revision there has to be a strategy in place to counteract this:

*'I've worked out that from this week there are five weeks so I have dedicated a week to each exam to try to organise it a bit so I know where I am because last time I didn't organise anything and it was rubbish, I had like U's and stuff, so I've decided its best just to organise things around everything I can't change just to fit it all in.'*

Interestingly this student makes the point that she feels you have to fit in things you cannot change first, then work around these, rather than prioritise exam revision, reading and so on according to the time needed, allocating a set amount of time instead. Will this be enough for the university work that is necessary to get high grades in a degree?

Of the students interviewed who undertook TTPE, 25% reported employers to be inflexible regarding time off for revision and to complete assignments. The demands of the business were paramount, there appeared to be no consideration of student needs. This might be expected, but the reality was the employer knew these individuals were students before they

employed them and, as such, would have periods where their studies would have to have priority over the paid employment. However, as Sarah illustrates, there is always a degree of agency in the labour market for students, as they can make the decision to 'quit':

*'I found myself, because I used to work all day on a Sunday, I found myself struggling as if I had something to be in on a Monday I had to stay up and do it, but like I said they (employer) wanted me to work a lot more and especially over Christmas whereas I wanted to be with my family at Christmas, and they (employer) knew I had to do work for my exams in January. But they expected me to work even more than I was already, so I just said I can't. So I just handed my notice in.'*

This option is not always feasible, and inflexibility within the paid employment structure inclusive of pressure to work extra hours at busy periods can cause anger and stress for students.

*'I used to work for a video store, who you would say were flexible but the manager at the moment really isn't flexible... I had 3 essays due in within a week and I asked for time off and he wouldn't give it to me so......I was really mad (laughs) at him actually, I mean I was stressed about the work but it was more towards him because I felt he could have been flexible on it because I mean in that sort of job where there are a lot of students they should be like flexible'*

When considering this from an employer's point of view, the flexibility within the employment may depend on how many students are employed, and for how many hours. University deadlines could mean all the students having the same timeframe where time off is needed, and dependent on the size of the company and the availability of other staff to cover for students, it may be that employers want to be flexible for students but this is not possible.

**7.6.6 Gender and student perceptions on any negative impact of TTPE:**

The trend of an increased number of students agreeing that, overall, there was a negative effect on both academic studies and the student experience continued when gender was considered. However, male students responded much more positively, having stronger opinions, whether agreeing or disagreeing. When the male students had opinions about the impact to their studies, they were very explicit that there either was or there wasn't an impact.

**7.6.7 University and School perceptions on the impact of TTPE:**

The study included students from two universities with very different student populations – a traditional red brick university in a city and a 'new' university, in a more rural setting. Students from two schools within the university were also included, to obtain data on the demands of different courses.

**7.15 Table to show university/school perceptions on impact to academic studies:**

| | Perceptions on negative impact to studies by TTPE by university/school | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BG | CB | GS | SC |
| Perception of students: | % | % | % | % |
| Tend to agree | 55 | 52 | 42 | 47 |
| Disagree | 24 | 30 | 37 | 36 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 21 | 18 | 21 | 17 |
| Av hours in study school | 21.5 | 25.4 | 15.5 | 19.9 |
| N= | 71 | 64 | 81 | 78 |

Base number N=294, comprising of those students surveyed who have had experience of TTPE while at university, even if they have stopped. These are all second year students.

The perceptions of the students did highlight a school difference. Many more bioscience students felt there to be detrimental impacts directly caused by TTPE than the social science students. When considering the average number of hours in study, the bioscience students reported a significantly higher amount. This suggests the study demands for the course influenced the perceptions of these students, implying time management issues to be involved.

**7.16 Table to show university/school perceptions on impacts to the student experience:**

| | Perceptions on negative impact to student experience by TTPE by university/school | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BG | CB | GS | SC |
| Perception of students: | % | % | % | % |
| Tend to agree | 51 | 56 | 44 | 49 |
| Disagree | 21 | 28 | 35 | 31 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 28 | 16 | 21 | 20 |
| Av hours in study school | 21.5 | 25.4 | 15.5 | 19.9 |
| N= | 71 | 64 | 81 | 78 |

Base number N=294, comprising of those students surveyed who have had experience of TTPE while at university, even if they have stopped. These are all second year students.

A similar pattern was seen in the perceptions of these students regarding negative impact to their student experience directly related to TTPE.

When the average hours in study per week were grouped for further analysis, a pattern emerged whereby students who studied the highest amount of hours perceived more strongly, and in higher percentages, that there would be detrimental impacts from engagement in TTPE. This was not related to either university or school, but applied purely to the number of hours in study per week. This indicates a relationship between the amount of hours in study and perceptions of potential negative impacts from TTPE. This, allied to the findings of a relationship between the hours in paid employment and perceptions of potential negative impacts from TTPE, strongly indicated time management issues were of concern to these students. Perceptions were higher there could be negative impacts to the student experience, reiterating earlier findings that participation in university activities have the lowest priority within students' time management. Students were minimising any detrimental impact to studies at the expense of socialising and participation in university life.

Concurring with the quantitative data analysis, time management was focus of many comments within the interviews. Amanda, from bioscience, expressed she sometimes just wanted a day off from everything:

> *'Um sometimes not always, I mean it's not so much that I am working too much it is more that if I'm not in work and I'm not in uni then I don't like doing things on my day off when I'm tired from working or I'm tired from uni so I think it does affect me because I want a day off, a day of doing nothing which I suppose isn't really helpful (laughs)'*

This comment implied a feeling of guilt that she indeed wanted the day to just 'chill', to recharge batteries. But, in life, there is supposed to be a balance, so if students who undertake TTPE do not feel entitled to have leisure time, to do with as they please, this in itself will cause stress for the students. In a similar situation, though perceiving time management in a slightly different way, Hannah, from SOCSI, felt she was always playing catch-up with her studies, which she directly related to engagement in TTPE:

> *'I think I had less time overall (when in TTPE) and it's not just like exams but the reading and stuff …….you never seem to catch up really.  You always seem to be trying to though…. And usually failing....'*

One student confided she choose modules around her work commitments rather than those she wanted to study – which could have an unfavourable effect on her marks. The hierarchy of prioritisation within time management was illustrated by a comment from a young SOCSI student, Sarah:

> *'In my first year I didn't do very well I only just scraped through so I had to have a real think about why I wasn't doing very well and it was because I was working too much and partying too much……. But I need the work so the partying is gone (laughs)'*

However, most students who were interviewed discuss having a balance where possible, having three aspects to their life balance, university studies, paid employment and leisure time, feeling these were all important. The priority given to each section was not always equal though, as has already been discussed earlier in this chapter.

Time management is important when fitting in studies, paid employment and remembering to have some time out for a social life. The NUS (2000) survey classified TTPE under 10 hours per week showed no fail grades for assignments, which is linked to the idea that it is long hours in term time paid employment that has the most adverse effect on academic achievement. The work of Neill et al (2004), Curtis & Shauni (2002) found fifteen hours per week as the limit, above this is deemed to have a detrimental effect on academic performance.  The data of this study reiterates the findings of the literature around perceptions of the impact of undertaking TTPE.

## 7.7 Conclusions:

There are many aspects to think about when evaluating what impacts engagement in TTPE will have for students in full-time higher education. All students perceived there are implications to academia and university life directly connected to engagement in TTPE. While there are positive impacts, it is the negative impacts that cause serious consequences, by eating into time that should be utilised for academic study to allow the student to achieve their potential, by reducing the social and cultural capital that accrues from joining in university life, the interaction between peers. That double the number of students in current

employment identified impacts of a detrimental nature must signify the perceptions were based on the reality of their personal experience of TTPE.

There are positive impacts from paid employment, employers consider students who have undertaken paid employment to have gained 'soft skills' alongside the academic skills from their degree, and students define benefits in all spheres of their lives, such as confidence building, endowing a sense of responsibility, creating routine in their lives, and teaching time management for a life balance.   There can be no dispute regarding these, but the question has to be asked as to whether these benefits outweigh the negatives? **Do** students actually consider these, weighing them up within their decision making on whether to engage in TTPE? Following on from this, how important are these impacts to decision making when external factors force students to consider whether to carry on in TTPE or stop, reduce the hours or change the type of employment? Or, perhaps, finally decide to drop out of university?

How did these students recognise this negative impact? They reported that they miss lectures, tutorials and deadlines.  From the interviews they comment that they try not to miss the deadlines because of the cap of 40% for resitting assignments or examinations, but this still happens to 14% of these students.  Yet of those students who are not in TTPE, none reported missing a deadline and only 3% reported missing lectures or tutorials. Students in TTPE seem to form a hierarchy of what can be omitted from their academic requirements, where tutorials are classed as least important, then lectures and finally deadlines.

TTPE is identified in the data of this study as the direct cause of negative impacts for students. Is this creating an inequality for those students who deem they have to undertake TTPE to be able to afford university? It is worrying that a high percentage of these students are from low income family backgrounds.

In addition to missing lectures and tutorials, students felt they cannot read enough for tutorials or spend enough time researching around the topic area. The aim of tutorials is to form an almost self directed learning experience guided by a tutor.  How can this aim be achieved when students are not attending, or when they do, are not able to contribute? The NUS (2000) survey found 26% of students missed lectures and 16% missed assignment deadlines which they specifically blamed on undertaking paid employment.

It is noted that these negative impacts are felt more by students in the lower social class groups and those students in long hours of paid employment. There is a relationship here linking these two factors, as the students from lower class backgrounds are identified to be those students who are also working the longest hours. The works of Smith & Taylor (1999), Curtis & Shani (2002), Curtis & Williams (2002), Metcalf (2003) and Moreau & Leathwood (2006) all show the more hours worked, the more the likelihood of these negative effects, and the data analysis for this study would certainly agree. In Callender's (2008) data, looking at both marks and degree results, it was found that term time working had a relationship with lower degree classification and the more hours worked the more likelihood of getting a lesser degree. There needs to be a balance between studies, participating in university life and the amount of paid employment.

The benefits identified by employers, and the students themselves, can be accumulated by paid employment in holiday time or through voluntary work or work experience. It is recognised that employers like the skills gained from the 'real world', but most students will have some form of this on their CV, gained from prior paid employment or unpaid work experience. This is widely advertised within universities and schools as being important for graduate employment.   It may be that employers prefer students to have transferable skills, but in reality, will they choose a low degree classification but acknowledged transferable skills over a first class honours degree but no recognised transferable skills? Hunt et al (2004) conclude this in their work, stating if the paid employment has been counter-productive in lowering the level of academic achievement, then these soft skills will be alongside a lower level of degree, so not worth as much in real terms in the labour market.

Social and cultural capital promotes confidence for students seeking graduate employment. Will those students who have not gained these within university have the skills and confidence necessary for graduate employment interviews, where selling yourself is essential? With the inflation of degree holders and the diminished numbers of graduate jobs available, the agency within the graduate labour market is more in the hands of employers. With the complex mix of students today, where the policies in place to widen participation now encourage those from lower social backgrounds to take degrees, there needs to be strategies in place to ensure equality within the labour market.   This does not appear to be the case at present, as middle and upper social class students are still maintaining their hold

on the graduate jobs, increasing life opportunities from the long term gains of obtaining a degree.

There is increasing importance placed on effective communication and collaboration with colleagues. Yahoo, as reported in an article in the Guardian (Arthur 2013:**1**), found staff working from home suffered from working 'remotely', stating "Some of the best decisions and insights come from hallway and cafeteria discussions, meeting new people, and impromptu team meetings," Study groups in addition to social groups have been mentioned in chapter 6, studying the strategies students use in their time management. Discussion and debate have an important part to play in university life, promoting the exchanging of ideas and aiding clarification of thought (Arthur 2013).

There is a link between the whole concept of a student experience, in which the exchange of ideas and discussion groups with peers are an important part, with improved grades and increased student satisfaction. Students feel included in and part of the student body, and indeed, students who live at home report a feeling of social isolation from their peers, and an increased perception they do not belong to the university.

The next chapter looks at how students view debt, and their opinions on whether the higher education experience and the degree they will gain is worth any debt they accrue.

# Chapter Eight:

## Data Analysis Section 4: Debt and Attitudes to Debt

**8.1 Introduction:**

A major factor that contributes to both the decision-making around student engagement with paid employment in general and, in particular, to term time paid employment is attitude towards debt. This will be a major influence on the quantity of hours these students will assume in employment. While spending patterns and consumption are strong persuaders here, the literature pinpoints debt and how students perceive the effect of this to their lives, both in the present and for the future, to have a very negative impact on their mental health. Thus, while debt in itself is not a specific impact, rather a contributory factor, the fact that levels of debt have dramatically increased for students, making debt a reality for most, has caused management of debt increasingly important within student life. The main issues here are stress and anxiety, which affect the mental health of many students, and the differentials between groups of students regarding debt management and coping strategies.

Literature suggests a variety of reasons why debt will affect some students and not others. There are defined class differences in attitudes to debt. Societal views, through the progression into capitalism, have altered regarding debt, creating a 'spend now pay later' culture. Debt has become a way of life, most people are in debt. CHERI et al (2005) identify students are becoming more realistic regarding debt. Debt has become accepted as a 'norm', with the uptake of student loans continuing to rise, though certain groups of students still worry about the levels of accrued debt.

This acceptance of debt as part of funding a degree has initiated fears regarding the breeding of a 'debt culture' into young people. CHERI et al (2005) found some students worry over debt, while others prefer to put it out of their minds and 'party'. Overall, 85% reported becoming resigned to debt, which amplified as they progressed through university, creating a tolerance to debt. However, this could be a little optimistic if current concerns over inflated credentials and a lack of 'graduate employment' for some groups of students are justified.

This chapter considers the students' perceptions on the consequence of debt, the type of debt students have, asking which students owe what and to whom, to analyse the effect this has on choice regarding paid employment. Are there characteristics that influence this facet of debt, and equally important, are there characteristics within the student groups that have no debt? Anxiety and stress can be detrimental to studies, having a relationship with worry about debt, so the analysis will also consider whether students perceive there to be a link between debt and damage to their mental health.

Linked to student debt are student perceptions on the affordability of higher education, which has been discussed in chapter five, but is mentioned here in relation to the reality of how expensive higher education has been. Finally, student assessment regarding the value of the degree in relation to the accumulated debt is assessed.

## 8.2 Attitudes to debt:

There are two aspects to the question of how students view debt - do they accept it as a 'norm', or does it cause anxiety and stress. Research into debt today shows that, as a society, we now owe more. For today's students, debt is an actuality so they have to ask themselves whether the degree will be worth it.

The literature around 'earning while learning' identifies diverse attitudes towards debt within different social class groups. Working-class students are thought to be socialised into a culture where debt is feared, while middle-class students have been socialised into a culture where debt is accepted as a means to an end. Middle-class students consider the advantages earned from the achievement of a high level degree in obtaining graduate employment to be worth higher education debt.

Hunt et al (2004) defines TTPE as an example of how the individual manages to fund higher education costs today. They suggest this contribution is greater for working-class students, who are already disadvantaged by both an aversion to debt and lower parental contributions. There is a supposition that student loan debt will rise with the introduction of variable fees and this will make certain groups of students continue to undertake long hours in TTPE. Variable fees are now in force and, despite being deferred payment, the amounts will be in

black-and-white on student loan statements, so will affect those students who fear debt. The data in this study was obtained before the recent huge increase at some universities in tuition fee costs, which has implications that any affect identified will now be greater than before.

The Welsh tuition fee grant was in place at the time of this study, which took £1940 directly off the fees for home students in Wales, so these fees were, in effect, artificially low. What will be the effect when this grant is stopped and the full reality of tuition fee debt is felt, how will the students from the lower social classes cope with this? Some students, and Hunt et al (2004) indicates this to be a significant number, do not take out loans or minimise the student loan to as little as possible by undertaking paid employment, and the majority of these students are from the lower income groups.

Studies by Barke et al (2000) and Payne and Callender (1997) show evidence that, for some students, the effect of debt has more importance than any of the perceived negative effects resulting from paid employment. They also point out that the diversity in the non-traditional student body brings in a cultural/religious aspect to attitudes towards debt.

When examining attitudes to debt in this research, students reported their emotions concerning the debt accrued from being in higher education. There were two facets, did the student worry about debt to the degree it was affecting their studies/student life and mental/physical health or did they accept debt as a natural state of affairs because of the benefits they perceived a degree would achieve. For this reason the answers were divided into two groups, anxious or accepting, which included those students with no debt.

A key finding in my study was that 17% (63) of students reported anxiety about money to the degree where it was affecting their studies. Characteristics of these students were explored for patterns.

**8.2.1 Social class relationship to incidence of anxiety regarding debt:**

When social class was examined, the overall trend showed a sharp increase in the percentage of students from the lowest socio economic groups reporting feelings of stress and anxiety, indicating that worrying about debt was affecting their studies. Students belonging to the

higher social classes had similar patterns regarding anxiety towards debt. This indicated students from the lower income backgrounds were vulnerable, helping to explain why these students undertook paid employment in the highest percentages, working the longest hours. These students considered it feasible that TTPE would help control the levels of debt being accrued. Thus the hours undertaken in TTPE were analysed in conjunction with different sociological factors, to consider whether trends identified were altered by the amount of engagement in the paid employment.

**8.1 Table to show relationship between social class, the number of hours undertaken in TTPE and anxiety about levels of debt:**

| Social class | Hours in TTPE | Anxious re debt | Hours in TTPE | Anxious re debt | Hours in TTPE | Anxious re debt | Hours in TTPE | Anxious re debt | N= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None (total in S/C) | % | <10 (total in S/C) | % | 11 to 20 (total in S/C) | % | >21 (total in S/C) | % | |
| 1 | 45 | 7 | 14 | 21 | 16 | 31 | 3 | 33 | 78 |
| 2 | 78 | 8 | 34 | 15 | 31 | 26 | 2 | 0 | 145 |
| 3 | 39 | 8 | 22 | 18 | 32 | 13 | 5 | 60 | 98 |
| 4&5 | 12 | 33 | 4 | 50 | 14 | 50 | 5 | 60 | 35 |

Base number N=379, comprising of those students surveyed allocated to a social class from parental occupation.  These are all second year students.

There was a relationship between the amount of hours engaged in TTPE and the reporting of anxiety about debt, the more hours in employment the higher the percentage of students worrying about debt to the point where there was an impact to studies and student life.  This was seen throughout all the social classes. Students who did not have TTPE were much more relaxed in their views regarding debt.

As with other findings reported in the last chapter, the two factors of social class and the amount of hours undertaken in paid employment interact to increase an impact. Here this is the anxiety regarding debt. The students worrying about money appear to feel they have no agency, no control over the decision on whether to have paid employment or not. While it may be that by a change of lifestyle there would be more choice for these students, they do not perceive this. They do not appear to be able to see past the level of debt, that there will always be a degree of choice.

**8.2 Bar chart showing relationship of social class, hours in TTPE with student anxiety regarding debt:**
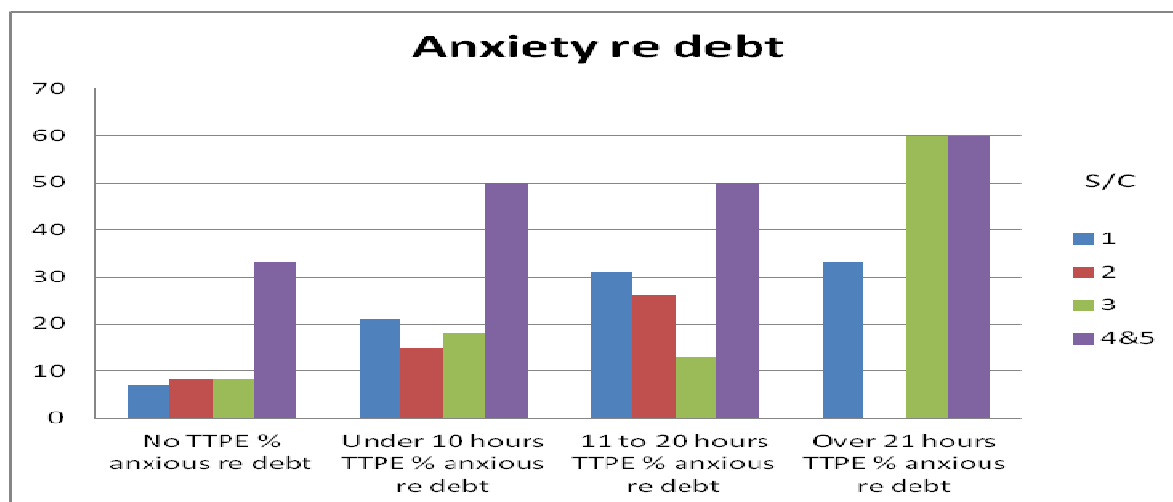


Base number N=379, comprising of those students surveyed allocated to a social class from parental occupation. These are all second year students.

When looking at the data on perceptions as to whether TTPE will have an adverse effect on academic studies, 85% of these same students perceive this to be true. This was a much higher percentage, over double, in comparison to those students who accepted debt, or were not in debt. This was echoed by these students' perceptions regarding any detrimental impact on their student experience, where 74% reported they agreed there was an impact, in comparison to 36% agreement for those students who accepted debt, again over double. A pattern was identified whereby the more hours the student worked, the more they reported they considered their student life was affected by the TTPE. This was across all social classes.

These findings were similar between universities and schools. This infers that students perceive a lack of funding, and therefore a need to undertake TTPE, can hinder academic studies and detract from the experience of being a university student, but that this knowledge does not counteract perceptions regarding debt.

**8.2.2 Gender:**

It was enquired whether gender patterns existed in perceptions regarding debt. Less male students reported being concerned about money, choosing the category that they did not worry about their debt. However, alongside this, more male students also reported feeling anxious about the debt incurred. This appears to indicate that the male students did not worry as much about debt as a whole, but when they did worry, this was severe enough to affect their studies. As with social class, this finding was very much related to the amount of hours these students undertook in paid employment, with the percentage of male students anxious about debt increasing as the hours in TTPE increased. The picture between universities and schools was similar.

**8.3 Table to show relationship between anxiety regarding debt, gender, and hours undertaken in TTPE:**

| Gender | Hours in TTPE | | Anxious re debt | Hours in TTPE | | Anxious re debt | Hours in TTPE | | Anxious re debt | Hours in TTPE | | Anxious re debt | N= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | | | <10 | | | 11 to 20 | | | >21 | | | |
| | total | % | % | total | % | % | total | % | % | total | % | % | |
| Female | 136 | 49 | 9 | 62 | 22 | 19 | 71 | 25 | 20 | 10 | 4 | 30 | 279 |
| Male | 54 | 54 | 11 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 26 | 26 | 38 | 7 | 7 | 57 | 100 |

Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

**8.2.3 Ethnicity:**

When ethnicity was considered, there did not appear to be differences within ethnic groups in levels of anxiety regarding debt. However, the percentages for those students who do not owe money is much higher in the 'Others' ethnic group than for the White British group, though this may be connected to eligibility for student loans, with a link to the importance of parental contributions as the students are funded from home. Cultural differences can contribute here, and the income within family groups, as overseas students often have to belong to high income family groups to be able to afford to come to UK for their higher education, because of the cost.

**8.2.4 Parental contributions and attitudes towards debt.**

Parental contributions and their use in helping to fund higher education have been discussed in the last chapter. However, as the type of PC was seen to affect decision-making regarding TTPE, the data was analysed to consider whether there was also an effect on students' perceptions of debt by the type of PC.

Those students who did not receive parental contributions reported anxiety regarding debt in much higher percentages. There was also a difference in the percentage of students reporting anxiety between those students who receive parental contributions on a regular basis and those who received them only when needed. This implies security about levels of income relieves anxiety around levels of debt to manageable levels.

**8.4 Table showing relationship parental contribution, hours the students undertake in TTPE and attitudes towards debt:**

| Type of PC | Hours in TTPE | Anxiety re debt | Hours in TTPE | Anxiety re debt | Hours in TTPE | Anxiety re debt | Hours in TTPE | Anxiety re debt |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | none - total | % | <10 - total | % | 11 to 20 - total | % | >21 - total | % |
| Regular | 80 | 3 | 27 | 7 | 18 | 17 | 2 | 0 |
| When needed | 57 | 12 | 28 | 18 | 40 | 10 | 3 | 33 |
| No PC | 53 | 17 | 20 | 35 | 39 | 41 | 12 | 50 |

Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

Alongside increased anxiety reported for those students not in receipt of PC, there were also higher levels of anxiety reported as hours in TTPE increased, suggesting students most insecure about how they will fund their higher education tried to increase their levels of income through TTPE, but still worried to the point of this affecting their studies/student life. Lily, from SOCSI, commented:

> *'When I first started university I never had even an overdraft but now I'm always*
> *in it and its gone up to £2000 I was always taught not to spend what I didn't have*
> *but now I am living on money I haven't got and I can't seem to get out of that*
> *cycle. I often worry about my levels of debt not so much about the student loan*
> *but about my overdraft.... The worry I feel does occasionally affect my studies*

*and in the first year I worried an awful lot but I seem now to be becoming used to*
*being in debt and so am not quite as anxious as I was.'*

From previous data, it is accepted that the amount and type of PC varies between the social classes. This variation is reflected within the reporting of anxiety and stress the students in this study felt regarding levels of debt. Students who did not receive PC, or had to ask for these contributions, reported experiencing the highest levels of anxiety over debt.

This demonstrated a direct relationship between anxieties about debt with PC, despite the government introducing measures to replace PC by grants for students in low income households. Overall, this data suggests the policies are not successful in creating equality of choice for all students regarding paid employment.

Age will also factor here, as mature students do not expect parental contributions and are classed as independent students by government, receiving grants on means testing of their personal income. However, mature students undertake TTPE in high percentages, for long hours and express anxiety regarding debt that is having a negative impact on their studies. It may be that parental contributions also form a 'safety net' for students, creating peace of mind with regards to how they will fund their studies. Psychologically, this would be of immense benefit.

In general, the quantitative data showed very similar patterns between both universities and schools regarding attitudes towards debt.

Scott et al (2001) and Davies et al (1995) found students' levels of debt tolerance appeared to increase throughout the years at university, associated with the fact it is usual for students to be from higher socio economic groups. These students appeared to perceive the low income while at university would be temporary, and the debt arising from this acceptable. However Cooke et al (2004) found, in their study looking at relationships between attitudes to debt and mental health, students appeared to worry more about debt as they progressed through their courses, particularly by the third year when debt was at its maximum. The students were now looking past the degree and beginning to consider how they would pay

this debt back. Interestingly it was the perception regarding the debt that caused anxiety rather than the level of debt.

In this research, the qualitative data highlighted student comments on a fear of debt, though this was related to debt outside the student loan, as all the students had knowledge of how the student loan system worked, and how it would be paid back. James, a young SOCSI student, reflected:

> *'Well, I don't really worry about my student loan because I am hoping for a good job at the end of my degree, if I don't get one that's when I will worry.... The overdraft tends to bug me a bit ... I will have to pay it back before I end this course or they will start to charge me interest.... I do worry about that the most cos its gone up to £1250 now and next year I don't want to have to work more I definitely feel that if I was working more I would not be coping well with my course because I like to spend valuable time doing research and assignments etc. And if I worked more I would be exhausted and wouldn't feel like working, it's hard enough as it is......'*

In the follow-up third year interviews, again anxiety was expressed regarding how much the students now owed, but despite commenting on their concern no student had increased their hours in TTPE, and seven out of the 10 student interviewed had either reduced their hours, or given up TTPE completely, until their examinations, dissertations and assignments were finished. Daniel, a young bioscience student, viewed his third year as the most important:

> *'I worked about...ummm... About 15 hours normally, but sometimes they needed you more and they did expect you to help them out, and the money was handy, but I didn't do that well... well I don't think I'd did as well as I could have, so I cut it down a bit last year and this year I haven't done much work at all....... I wanted a first but I think I'll be getting a 2.1 so I'm glad I didn't work cos I don't think I would have got that really....... I have spent loads of time in uni this year.....'*

Carole, a young SOCSI student, felt she could not afford to decrease her hours in TTPE, though she had refused when asked if she could work overtime:

*'My parents helped me a lot like but I still had bills to pay so I couldn't give up....... they don't care really, they're like you should have loyalty to the company but they don't care about us so now I say no, I never said no last year but this year I had my dissertation and stuff ...... I wish I could give up so I could do more reading.....'*

There is a dichotomy here, whereby students need most time for studies in their third year, but often other sources of finances have run out, so the students need to undertake TTPE more than ever.

**8.3 Affordability of University:**

Student perceptions regarding the affordability of university has been discussed in chapter five, but should be mentioned again as there was a relationship between how affordable university was considered to be, the reality of the cost of university, and the almost 'acceptance' by students that debt would be inevitable.  If there existed a belief that university could not be afforded unless debt was accrued, then students would consider TTPE to be the solution if they worried about debt. If this was the case, for an increasing number of students it may be that to give guidelines on acceptable levels of hours in paid employment will help to prevent any negative impact of TTPE. This would give double benefits of helping reduce anxiety around levels of debt, and also give these students 'soft skills' employers are now look for in addition to the paper qualifications of the degree.

The big question must be where do government grants fit in. A key finding in this study was that many students in receipt of the Welsh Assembly Learning Grant still perceive university to be unaffordable without undertaking TTPE.  From the tables in chapter five (5.12 & 5.13), 83% of students in receipt of some form of parental contribution considered university to be affordable in comparison to 54% of students with no parental contributions.  This is a wide gap, as grants are supposed to substitute for parental contributions, suggesting students who have state funding alone believe TTPE is inevitable to afford university.

The Welsh Assembly Government does take into account research evidence regarding attitudes to debt. Half the Welsh Assembly Learning Grant is paid off the student maintenance loan, to reduce the debt at the end of the degree for those students eligible for

the grant. However, this reduces the income the student receives from the grant, which might not make this equivalent to PC, which is identified by the literature to often pay the students' rent. While this might affect paid employment options, those students not in receipt of PC will have choices. This may be to work full-time in summer and save, in order to reduce TTPE, and of course they are eligible for the full student loan.

**8.4 Cost of University.**

Related to the affordability of university the data also examined the students' opinions on what the reality of the cost of attending university has been thus far. This was compared to their perceptions on what the cost would have been prior to entering higher education. 34% of students felt the cost was around what they had thought before coming to university, but 53% felt it was costing more. Comments included:

> *'I think the costs of university are extortionate ...When you look at it and add up all the amount of money on the fees and then the spending money and the rent, I don't know it's quite an expensive process....'*

> *'A lot more in my mind because obviously my tuition fees and that, but yes a lot more than I thought'*

> *'I thought before I came that with the loan and the grants I would manage but everything costs so much, even bus fare and that.... I have to work really, but then I spend about half my wages on working really, getting there and you have to buy food and stuff so I have to work quite a lot so yeah it's a lot more expensive than I thought....'*

Only 4% of students considered the cost of university life was less than they had anticipated. Generally it was a similar picture at both universities, though a lower percentage of students at the more rural 'new' university found the cost to be cheaper than they had perceived prior to attendance. The social class, gender and age of the students did not show any pattern of difference in these perceptions. From the interviews, those students who found University to be cheaper than they thought seemed to have had preconceptions that student life would be an excess of partying, and this would be expensive:

*'I've always thought that when people have said 'oh student life' you are always going to be out like partying, you are always going to get drunk, never going to have any money and I thought oh really, I'm going to be skint for ages, I'm going to start looking like a bum, I'm going be really skinny because I can't afford any food and I just thought it's going to be an absolute nightmare but it's actually not that bad.'*

*'The price of alcohol is the biggest thing that knocks the pocket, but you know I don't think living expenses are too much. I didn't have any ideas of it being less than it is now, but I think that if you are going to go out 4 or 5 times a week it's going to add up and you'd have to sacrifice something else, whereas if you balance it it's about right.'*

## 8.5 Perceptions of student debt as an investment for the future:

Historically, within the labour market degrees have had high status, being a passport into graduate employment. Today, considering the number of degree holders, this is not always the case, there has been 'devaluing' of a degree where employment is concerned. Often a postgraduate qualification is necessary to achieve a 'graduate job' (Brown 2003). Purcell et al (2005) do not agree, viewing the knowledge economy as large enough to absorb this new level of graduates. This corroborates government policy to place the major cost of higher education onto the individual, but if this proves not to be the case where will this leave students?

The data in this research showed students to be split equally on whether the degree would be worth the debt. Students from social class one backgrounds were most optimistic that their degree would be an investment for their future, while those students in social class three were most pessimistic, with 60% feeling the degree would not have the value they thought initially. Perhaps these students were being more realistic that graduate employment is not guaranteed in the current economic climate.

There was no correlation between gender, ethnicity, or age of student, or between universities and schools. Overall, half the students in this study thought the debt accrued from taking a degree would be an investment for the future.

The amount of engagement in TTPE was then factored into the analysis.

**8.5 Table to show relationship between perceptions of debt as an investment for the future and the number of hours undertaken in TTPE:**

| Perceptions on debt | Hours in TTPE (result as %) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | none | <10 | 11 to 20 | >21 |
| is an investment | 44 | 41 | 37 | 53 |
| may be an investment | 11 | 6 | 4 | N/A |
| may not be an investment | 34 | 45 | 41 | 41 |
| won't be an investment | 11 | 8 | 18 | 6 |
| N= | 176 | 71 | 91 | 17 |

Base number N=355, being students who have debt through entering higher education. 24 students surveyed reported no debt. These are all second year students.

Interestingly it is those students undertaking the middle range of hours in TTPE that were most pessimistic that their degree would not help their future career. Those students working the longest hours felt as strongly that their degree would secure them graduate employment as those students not engaged in TTPE. This provided strong motivation to engage in TTPE to fund their studies, the consideration of the long-term rather than the short-term. Through all of the table above, whether this student engaged in TTPE or not, the strength of feeling that the degree would definitely be an investment was higher than the strength of feeling it would not. It was as if even those students pessimistic regarding their degree did not want to be too pessimistic. There was the hint they wanted to be wrong.

**8.6 Type of Debt:**

Students are now offered a range of sources to borrow money. These sources can be divided into different categories of debt. Most students have some form of debt when one considers that over 90% of students in the UK have a student loan. The quantitative data indicated only 22 of the 379 students in the study had no debt.

Regarding the type of debt, bank loans and credit cards were grouped together as sources of borrowing that had high interest charged on the monies lent, with immediate repayment. Student loans and overdrafts formed another group, as the money borrowed from these sources were low interest with deferred payment until after completion of the degree.

**8.6 Statistical forms of student borrowing:**

| Bank loan | Credit cards | Student Loan | Overdrafts | No borrowing |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| 63 | 58 | 339 | 195 | 23 |

Base number N=379, relates to all students surveyed, all in their second year at university.

Students do differentiate between the different categories of debt. James, a young SOCSI student talks of being stressed over debt, but only certain types of debt:

> *'Yes, (I worry about debt) I check my emails regularly and my bank account and I'm often dismayed about it. However, when I think about university debt, that's like the student loan and stuff and I don't worry about that because it doesn't count really it's like you only have to pay when you earn £15000 and you can still get other loans and stuff so it's ok but sometimes I do worry about the bank overdraft and stuff and wonder if I should work more or something, I get really stressed about it..'*

The social class of the students identified differences in the type of borrowing between the student groups. While percentages of borrowing in the student loan and overdrafts sector was similar for all classes, as the social class lowered the percentage of borrowing via bank loans and credit cards increased. Students in social classes four and five reported double the borrowing on credit cards than students in the other social classes. While many credit cards offered to students tempt them to spend by offering 0% interest for between 6 to 18 months, it is very easy to get caught in a credit trap, where the student has no means to pay the debt off at the end of this period and this results in the student then having to pay very high interest charges.

## 8.7 Borrowing type via social class of student – strata of debt:

| | Bank Loan and/or Credit Card | | Student Loan and/or Overdraft | | None | | |
|--------------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|------|
| Social Class | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | N= |
| 1 | 18 | 23 | 73 | 94 | 6 | 8 | 78 |
| 2 | 34 | 23 | 132 | 91 | 8 | 6 | 145 |
| 3 | 25 | 26 | 90 | 92 | 6 | 6 | 98 |
| 4&5 | 19 | 59 | 34 | 97 | 1 | 3 | 35 |

Total base number N=356, all students surveyed who were allocated to a social class from parental occupation, all in their second year at university.

This raises the question why do students from low income backgrounds, who have the highest level of aversion to debt, put themselves more in debt to institutions that charge high interest, immediate payment and extortionate charges for non-payment. The data from the 19 students in social classes four and five who borrowed from the financial institutions were examined regarding how higher education was financed:

- All the student had student loans
- 1 student received a bursary
- 5 students received a grant
- 6 students received both a grant and bursary, with 1 student also receiving hardship funding
- 16 students had TTPE

This indicated 12 students received additional state funding alongside student loans. In addition:

- 8 students used savings
- 3 students used parental contributions, though 6 lived in the parental home.

Income was spent by two students on necessities only, one student on luxuries only, while the remaining students used their wages for both.

Thus these students, although most averse to debt, were allowing themselves to get further in debt by taking on bank loans and credit card debt, suggesting they felt they had no choice. What contradicts this suggestion is that 14 of the students spent their wages on luxuries, so was the desire for consumer items behind this decision-making? Smith (2007) reported that the Unite survey had pinpointed a lack of knowledge about student loans in students from less well off families, which could partially explain this happening, but few UK students today do not have student loans, so the knowledge of these must be filtering through.

There could be a range of alternative reasoning behind this borrowing. The findings could indicate acceptance of debt, equating a degree with graduate employment and high salaries. Age was a contributory factor here. Students who were over 25 had more high interest debt (i.e. credit cards and bank loans), 47% compared to 24%. This could be pre-existing debt. There was also a higher percentage of young students reporting no debt.

Security is identified as an issue for students from low income family backgrounds, more significant than the debt itself. Thus it is essential for these students to have monies available in lieu of family financial help. Peer pressure could also motivate decision making, a desire for the lifestyle of fellow students or friends with higher levels of disposable income. There are also different consumption patterns between social classes.

However, it may be ultimately be caused by poor budgeting. These students may not be used to receiving a large amount of income once every three months, so initially overspend with a resulting cash flow problem later in the timeframe of the academic term.

When the type of borrowing was considered by both the amount of hours engaged in TTPE and gender the picture was similar to that of the overall picture of student borrowing. This was also the case when ethnicity was examined, other than the slightly lower take up of student loans accounted for by a lack of eligibility by overseas students to meet residency criteria.

## 8.7 Conclusion:

Significant levels of debt have been accrued by students since the HE funding evolved into the present day grant and student loan system, incorporating the introduction of tuition fees. Students accepted these changes because of the perceived opportunities to achieve graduate employment from holding a degree. Many students view TTPE as the answer to both fund university and minimise levels of debt.

What is often not taken into account are potential detrimental impacts from engagement in TTPE. One such impact is anxiety regarding student debt, which was reported by the students in this study as affecting academic achievement and enjoyment of the student experience. This is particularly true for those students with no family financial support. Attitudes towards debt effect students' mental health, which could contribute to decreased retention rates for non-traditional student groups. University guidelines on how to engage in TTPE sensibly could help in this area.

Levels of funding were calculated for the students in this study, from the funding streams the student used. These were very approximate, but highlighted an anomaly whereby the students

from low income families, most averse to debt, were seen to borrow the most. Yet these students were in receipt of the Welsh Assembly Learning Grant, bursaries and the full student loan. These, when added together, formed a similar income to middle-class students. Why then, did the students from low-income family backgrounds work the longest hours in TTPE, even while acknowledging this caused detrimental impacts for their studies? Why were they also borrowing the high interest monies?

One common denominator here was the type of parental contribution– those students who received no parental contributions seemed to feel they needed much higher levels of income, to form a substituted family safety net. Government grants aimed to replace parental contributions were used, but these did not have the same reassuring effect of parental contributions.

The following chapter will review this thesis, form general conclusions and make recommendations that may help students in their decision-making regarding paid employment.

# Chapter Nine:

## Conclusion

### 9.1 Introduction

Throughout Western societies, students have engaged in paid employment alongside studies for many years. Within the UK, there are concerns around student retention and the dropout rate, and student indebtedness. There is disquiet as to whether there will be selective inequality, if some students have to work, while others do not.

The definition of full-time study in the UK means a completion of the degree in 3 to 4 years full-time. Most mass higher education systems are more flexible and allow the student to complete degree in 5 to 9 years as full-time students. This could be related to the numbers of overseas students that complete their higher education degrees in the UK. The cost is high for these international students so they require the shortest timescale possible. These students draw in a lot of revenue to UK higher education institutions, so it may be argued that this will influence any recommendations to extend the degree timeframe. It is also the case that part time degree students are not eligible for much of government funding, so there would be an associated cost for part-time students to be recategorised as full-time if more flexibility was introduced into the UK degree timeframe. However, the existing degree structure has implications to student engagement in term time paid employment, as the study demands in the UK are much greater, needing increased study time. This is possibly why term time paid employment can be a threat to student achievement levels in this country.

The principal research question for this thesis aimed to examine whether engagement in paid employment within the student body impacted on potential achievement levels and the experience of being a student. The overwhelming reply is yes, it does. The evidence points overwhelmingly that TTPE is not a problem per se, but the amount of TTPE, which has a link with social class. The impacts are a mix of good and bad, but that the data in this study indicate the negatives outweigh the positives. It is argued that widening participation is good for the country, as it creates knowledge workers to compete in the global marketplace. And while this might be true, the huge influx of students created a mass system of higher education in the UK from the existing elitist form. Financial implications from this rapid

increase of numbers entering higher education forced the government to pass a high proportion of the cost to the individual, thought to be fair as the individual would benefit from obtaining the degree. The question was how would the individual fund their studies?

The answer to this was the evolution of the relatively new phenomenon of increased participation by students in TTPE, useful to add another strand to students' funding streams. This enhanced student engagement with TTPE initiated concern that there could be impacts associated to this. Callender (2008) makes comment that while widening participation has attracted much research, what happens to these students once in higher education has been largely ignored. Thus I perceived there to be great value in this project, the findings would add to the knowledge bank on student employment, while the recommendations made could benefit a large section of the student body.

The data in this study implied that for many students there was no choice in whether to have paid employment or not, the choice was when in the academic year they choose to have paid employment and how many hours they would engage in this employment. These students were often those from the lower socio-economic backgrounds, those that had been targeted by widening participation policies. Ianelli (2007), analysing trends in the entry to higher education, sees lower socio-economic groups have lower cultural, social and economic resources available to them. Thus higher education has a degree of internal stratification, with elitism of university and course. This is reproduction of social class and gender inequalities for attainment of 'good' employment.

With so many students obtaining degrees, many academics view there has been a credentials' inflation. The middle classes wish to keep the status quo in graduate employment, so will access other resources to ensure they retain this employment through the generations. This involves social closure, seen in how employers now want social abilities alongside academic abilities inclusive of soft skills and accumulation of cultural capital. This links into the participation in university activities and voluntary work, to obtain what Brown (1995) labels 'value added CV's'. Therefore any potential impacts from TTPE are equally important when they affect the student experience in addition to academic studies.

**9.2 Methodology reviewed**

This research aimed to investigate what impact paid employment has to achievement levels and the student experience for students. To generate data for generalisation, I needed a mix of methods. To obtain the numeric data to form a database I could utilise for cross tabulation of variables to identify patterns and trends within 'what is happening', a survey was used as the data collecting tool. Never having devised a survey in my prior research, most difficult was identifying every variable within each closed question. Due to the timeframe for the students to respond to the questionnaire, most of the questions were closed, so this was rather daunting. The end result did generate very valuable data, though on analysis, if I repeated this research, I would ask one or two in-depth questions on types of grants being received, income, and perhaps placed the question regarding hours in study in a different part of the questionnaire. This question was deliberately positioned in the section questioning the time spent on university activities, to try and obtain accurate and honest data. However, some of the students who did not participate in university activities missed this question totally.

Having had experience of interviewing, I had confidence that this would be the most appropriate method to follow-up the questionnaires and consider the decision-making of these students around all aspects of engagement in paid employment, and whether they perceived any impacts associated with this. As the interviews were semi-structured, with a loosely applied topic guide, there was allowance for prompts alongside probing, where necessary, to gain rich data. The data I obtained from student diaries extended this data and as it was recorded, reflections of the emotions students felt at the time were often heard in their voices. No other method, I feel, would have shown how frustrated and tired these students were at times, directly related to their paid employment. It is also the researcher's job to make sense of how the individual accounts and reporting will be influenced by structural factors, what they consider the bigger picture is. A structural pattern here would be that it is okay to have paid employment while in study, this occurs all over the world, lots of students do it. The bigger picture is that degree structure will vary and in the UK, the degree course does not allow for time to engage in long hours of term time paid employment.

Reporting the sense and context of the data can be a two-way process, where there may be difficulties in presenting accounts by the students, but there will also be difficulty interpreting

the accounts by the researcher. I had prior knowledge and experience bias, and this can affect the decision-making on what to include from the student accounts.

There were some limitations, as with all research methods, and these have been examined in chapter 4. Accessing those students who work the highest number of hours in paid employment was the most major of these, as I was not able to do this, no student working regularly over 15 hours a week gave me their contact details. Presumably these students felt they just did not have the time to participate in my research as they were stretched by juggling their employment with their studies. However, there were times when the students I interviewed had been pressured by their employer into working long hours, and this experience did come through in the responses. Another limitation I was very aware of was the research affect. This has been discussed in detail in chapter 4, and I did find this very challenging, as I feel very strongly that TTPE can have very negative impacts for certain student groups, so it was difficult to remain neutral. The responses were often not what I expected, so from this I deduced my researcher skills were such that I had overcome this problem, that the student felt able to express themselves freely.

## 9.3 Participation in paid employment: Decision making and agency

The students in this study were involved in much decision-making, though agency could be fickle, changing with circumstances.

### 9.3.1 Decision-making process – is there equality?

Social class created differences within the percentages of students who did not engage in TTPE. The data suggested students from low-income families felt they had no choices in the decision-making on whether to have paid employment or not. In the literature and from the data in this study, these students are also those that undertake the longest hours in TTPE, so any negative impacts would cause detrimental effects for this group of students.

Before the 1990s, Hakim (1998) found the number of students engaged in paid employment while studying was low, with the employment generally throughout the summer holidays. Survey data from the FES showed the percentage of students still at school, tertiary college or university, working 6 to 10 hours a week had risen from 40% to 59% since the 1990s. As the funding changes were introduced in the late 1990s, this rise in engagement in paid employment must be due, in part, to these changes.

The whole point of being in higher education is to gain qualifications at the end of the degree, preferably at a high level, given the competition within graduate employment. Therefore if social class predisposes students' decision-making regarding undertaking paid employment, there is an equality issue for the students, over who works, and equally as important who doesn't.

**9.3.2 Hierarchy in decision making**

There were hierarchies in the decision-making of students regarding paid employment. This included when to have employment within the academic year, what day to work in the week, and how many hours to undertake employment. The students in my study found there was a blurring between week and weekend due to the timeframe of university lectures and tutorials, which does not follow the conventional nine until five pattern of the workplace. Often students found weekend work to be more available, as the weekends are busiest in retail work and hospitality. These students reported ensuring their studies were done in the week, to keep their weekends available for paid employment. This TTPE also created socialising opportunities, which was a by product, the overriding decision-maker was the availability of paid employment. Paid employment was preferred at times when the demands of academia would not be affected, which was practical but also indicated students realised there was danger to their studies from TTPE.

This research identified hierarchies within what the students perceived would affect their studies and how much income they perceived they needed to fund their studies. While socialising and participation in university activities were mentioned, this was by students who were in paid employment for very few hours a week, so had income from a variety of sources. These students were those who had choice within TTPE. For students with limited choices within TTPE, the student experience was fitted in only if there was time.

Ideally the students wanted to be in a field where there was a relationship with the career they wished to enter. These opportunities were very few and far between, and when they did occur the student was not able to just 'grab' the employment, but have to give this chance consideration as to where it would fit in the hierarchy of time management. Some students decided that if such an opportunity arose, this employment would be top of their hierarchy, even if it meant travelling long distances and rearranging schedules around paid employment.

*'I want to be a primary school teacher....the teaching assistant in the playgroup is very involved with children and will be good for my CV.... it would be at home in the school holidays and in the school holidays I work mainly from 8 through to 6... in term time when it is half term for the schools I work because I've only got 2 days in university so I have got 3 days in the school then, I mean there isn't a half term in university but I manage that I might miss about 2 lectures that's all.....I can't work in term time because it's at home which is a good 2 hours away...'*

Students also have a hierarchy on how they spend their money, what they deem necessary to their lives, not necessarily what everyone might say is essential but what they as individuals see as essential – and different classes view different items as essential. When the individual student forms priorities on what they need to do to fund their studies and desired lifestyle, at this point the issue of agency will emerge, dictating what their decision-making will be.

### 9.3.3 Agency within the labour market

In today's economic climate, much choice has been removed from the part time job market, reducing the students' agency in the labour market. One important factor that influences the whole chain of hierarchy is any change in circumstances, if priorities change then paid employment can change. When students feel they are under achieving, if funding streams alter, if the perceived need for paid employment alters, all these can influence the priority for the student and the choice within the paid employment pattern. Circumstances change continually, and thus the decision-making for the student may constantly change. All the decision-making is related to priorities around funding, time management and what is available within the labour market, inclusive of the level of agency involved within this relationship

The student has the final agency as he/she can choose ultimately not to work, but if paid employment is deemed essential, the current economic climate does erode this agency. What students require is part time work with a high degree of flexibility around examination and assignment deadline periods, but often a student has to take what is on offer, and is subject to pressure from employers to increase hours at busy periods. Some students choose to increase their agent actively, by sourcing paid employment relating to their career choice, fitting university around the employment to gain work experience for CV's or to enter postgraduate courses. These students comment that if they have to arrange their lives around paid employment, at least the employment is rewarding them with long-term benefits here.

Darmody & Smyth (2007) indicate paid employment patterns will vary according to student profiles regarding socio-demographic factors, availability of funding, and the costs in attending university. External factors that will impact here are the level and nature of alternative employment across the country and current economic growth. At the moment, the economic climate is such that within the services sector of the labour market there is growth, which does constitute the part-time flexible employment ideal for students. In the past employers in this sector have benefited from an easily recruited workforce consisting of intelligence and articulate young people. In addition, students have been numerically and functionally flexible, conscientious and easy to control (Curtis & Lucas 2001:38). Today, with the increased influx of students to higher education, even an increased availability of employment is negated by the numbers of students wanting TTPE. The laws of demand and supply will allow employers even more control over student employees.

Obtaining summer holiday paid employment for students is becoming increasingly more difficult. This has a knock-on effect to engagement in TTPE, as many students have an aim to work full-time throughout the summer, save, and then have the choice to either not work in the academic term or be able to undertake fairly low hours.

Flexibility within TTPE is important to students, they desire and choose where possible employment with the maximum degree of flexibility, as this allows the student to control time management at times when university requirements are highest. Flexibility creates a mechanism whereby the student can exercise agency within the paid employment outside of choice not to engage in paid employment. Students will always have a degree of agency.

### 9.3.4 Change- a major factor!

Circumstances will always change throughout life. The instrumental values the students perceive paid employment has to fund their studies can change, and when these values are challenged, changes within choices will have to occur. This can be the choice to reduce paid employment, if perceptions indicate that there is a negative impact to studies. It may be the choices within time management need to be reprioritised. Change has a two-way direction, students may need to increase their hours in paid employment if alternative funding disappears, which will increase the instrumental values.

In the follow-up interview data regarding the third year, the students perceived that to increase TTPE was not feasible as academic workload had increased. These students wanted to decrease the hours, but change within funding streams had occurred. Savings were diminished, and a high number of students found university to be much more expensive than they had catered for, so this impacted on the decision-making regarding choices within the TTPE. On one hand, there was change because being at university was more expensive, then contrarily many students wished to change their patterns of TTPE to reduce any impact on studies.

*'I worked so hard in the second year I needed to reduce the hours as I have more assignments and my dissertation to do in my third year and my marks weren't very good'.*

*'My marks were borderline for a first in my second year, and I really wanted a first, but the only way I would keep my marks high would be to do as few hours in work as I could in my third year'*

There was conflict here between the agency of the student over TTPE and economic necessity, brought about by changes in perceptions regarding time management for the final year. Both of the students quoted above were able to react to the changes they perceived to be necessary within time management, to reduce their hours in TTPE and increase their study time, and achieved high degree classifications. This is not always possible.

## 9.4 Funding issues

Due to the evolving student finance over the years since the late 1990s, especially the student loan system, it has come as no surprise that paid employment has become a vital source of revenue to certain cohorts of students and their families.

### 9.4.1 Funding streams

Different students will fund their degree from different sources. How this funding is 'put together' will influence a student's decision-making on whether to have paid employment or not. The government have gone some way to drawing up financial roadmaps for students, but the road is not smooth as it only serves to widen the route into higher education, rather than tackling any of the negative impact concerning paid employment for students. Are parents, government, financial institutions fully aware of the negative connotations associated with student engagement in paid employment?

Estimated levels of funding might not take into account parental contributions as a whole, the government has an expectation parents should contribute in cash, but what about parental contributions in kind, where students live at home for free, or boxes of food are given, laundry done etc? The government grant system is designed to replace parental contributions for students from low income family backgrounds, and does this work, are students starting from that level playing field so often talked about?

Certainly if a very rough estimate is calculated on all the funding streams students can pull in to finance their studies, if government estimates on levels of parental contributions are correct, there is very little difference in the amount students from different social classes receive each year. Yet students from low income family backgrounds are seen in the literature and within this research to be working the highest amount of hours and are most anxious about levels of debt. There is also the inconsistency that these students also borrow more than students from higher social classes, and from sources that charge the higher interest rates. So how are these students managing their financial affairs?

Could this be related to there being no safety net in case these students meet financial problems, while students from the higher income families can ask for help? Or does the importance of the degree classification differ between students from different social strata groups. There are class and gender differences in consumer spending patterns, and in attitudes towards debt, but is this the whole explanation?

### 9.4.2 Students as consumers.

Within the financing of a higher education degree today, students have new roles as consumers. They are now consumers within the educational process as they pay for tuition, so have an expectation regarding the debt they are accruing within their degree. This expectation assumes achievement of a degree will be a mechanism to open doors to future life opportunities, linking this to a responsibility by government and institutions of higher education that obstacles reducing the ability to fulfil their full potential should be minimised.

Students are also consumers within a capitalist society, where consumer items are equated with status in society. Literature considering students 'earning while learning' define material objects and activities equate to identity and status for many people. These are creating consumption patterns within Western societies, which include those of the student body.

Happiness has an association with material goods, everyone desiring to 'keeping up with the Joneses' (Norris 2004). Technology allows all to see what others have, instigating this desire for purchasing power.

Hunt et al (2004) suggests that for students this is associated with the desire to maintain a lifestyle equivalent to that of their peers. The data generated in this research defined a definite link between consumerism and the incidence of student engagement in paid employment, dictating how individual students spend any monies they receive, from all sources.

In this study, students who identified that they could afford their higher education without undertaking paid employment, and in particular TTPE, still highlighted they were prepared to take on employment for 'luxuries'. Within the data is expressed desire for instant gratification, which these students defined as freedom of choice to do what they wanted, when they wanted. While this might be no different from young people in general, the data here pinpointed high levels of perceptions that TTPE would cause detrimental affects to both academic studies and the student experience. As there is a specific time frame to finishing higher education these students are jeopardising the level of degree classification they may be capable of achieving.

CHERI et al (2005) states the line between borrowing for investment in future life opportunities, to obtain graduate employment, and borrowing to buy consumer items necessary for a current desired lifestyle has blurred. Yet this investment in the future is centred on the overriding motivation to attend university. It may be that in this age of technological communications the gap between aspirations versus expectations has narrowed, individuals now see what others have and want this for themselves, whatever the cost. These students' expectations are centred on instant gratification as opposed to investment in their long-term future. There appears a dichotomy to exist whereby individuals need paper qualifications to enhance life opportunities, but want or need finances to fund their desired lifestyle.

### 9.4.3 Term time paid employment

There is a conclusion made that 'term-time work will remain part of the higher education landscape' (CHERI et al 2005:120). There has been much discussion and debate regarding

the impact of the changes to student support and tuition fee charges for students. This has centred on the effect to participation rates, aspirations in young people to apply for and enter higher education. What this study highlights is the importance of what happens to these young people when they enter higher education. The research here is sparse, as identified by Calendar (2008), perhaps comparable with the 'Black box' analogy coined by researchers regarding compulsory education, there is knowledge prior to entry, there is knowledge following entry but little on what happens between.

Policy drives in this area suggested opportunities for students to participate in TTPE would develop skills to enhance employability at the end of their degree course. This was promoted as a positive step. However university staff were faced with the reality of students now having much less freedom within time management, and they feared this would undermine students' academic studies. Juggling academic studies and term-time work is likely to remain an area of contention between students and academic staff (CHERI et al 2005).

### 9.4.4 Parental contributions

Parental contributions are now an important part of how students will fund their studies. However the changing structure of the nuclear family is causing problems for students in this area. The means testing systems were seen by the students in this study to be overly rigid, taking for granted the nuclear family arrangement regarding provision for the children within the family. Complaints centred on the means testing calculating income regardless of whether there was a desire to contribute. This resulted in students being penalised for monies they were not receiving, and in reality would not receive throughout the whole of their degree course.

Would it be a possibility that parental contributions could be collected by tax codes, and students paid from government, due to the government perception parents want to, and will, contribute to their child's higher education? This would be enforcement of this government expectation. It can be argued that if the government is using this expectation to means test the level of student loans allocated, or whether there is eligibility for a grant or bursary, then the government also has a responsibility to ensure the student receives parental contributions. To save money and complications and simplify the student loan system, perhaps all students should have the same amount, as this would reflect the perceptions of how the nuclear family

would react regarding higher education, and negate the instances where parents can't, or won't, pay, and the increasing incidence of different compositions of families.

The type of parental contribution was shown in my study to have an effect for students. This suggests connection to issues of a 'safety net' for students within their finances. When regular contributions were received, students reported lower levels of stress and anxiety regarding debt and borrowed less monies from the financial institutions which charge higher interest rates. It appears these students felt more in control of their financial affairs. While an award of a grant may also constitute a regular payment, the data implies this does not have the same effect for the students as regular parental contributions, so it must be asked whether the students from low income family backgrounds have the same choices as their counterparts in receipt of regular parental contribution, regarding engagement in paid employment.

This study also highlighted the emergence of informal contracts or negotiations between parents and students, regarding both the level and regularity of parental contributions. This whole area illustrates the importance parents are placing on continuing education. From comments made by students in their interviews, parents express concern regarding the time that TTPE takes from students in relation to their studies. There appears to be a realisation that paid employment can give students a taste of the real world, placing some of the responsibility to fund their studies on to them, which parents perceive to be beneficial. Thus parents do not want paid employment to stop, they want a balance between the employment, studies and leisure. Employers use part time employment as a factor in decisions on who to employ when the candidates are equal, and this has been highlighted in the media. However, parents are very aware that the overall end product for the degree course should be a qualification that will allow entry into graduate employment. Curtis & Shani (2002) relate their work to the hours worked by students in the USA and Canada, as working 'through college' is accepted as part of college life. Both the literature and parental opinions indicate there has to be a balance, this is the important factor.

The competition within graduate employment has created recognition by parents, especially those from the middle classes, that students need a 'good result from a good course from a good university'. As previously discussed in this chapter, the middle classes wish to

reproduce their lifestyle for their children, so graduate employment following the degree course is a must.

### 9.4.5 Debt

The quantitative data within this study highlighted an anomaly whereby students from low income families, most averse to debt, had the highest levels of borrowing, including borrowing the high interest monies, from bank loans and credit cards. This was surprising as these students participated the longest hours in paid employment, received the full student loan and government grants and, on a rough estimate, had the same level of income as students from the higher social classes. These students also admitted they perceived a definite negative impact to their studies and involvement within university activities.

One contributory factor that stood out was the type and level of parental contributions. Students who received no parental contributions appeared to feel they required much higher levels of income, perhaps as a safety net? There are differences in the spending culture between classes also. There is a positional value of the higher education degree that may influence the level of debt for students in the higher social classes. They accept debt as a 'norm' for higher education, an investment for the future, so will allow higher levels of debt if the level of attainment in the degree is at risk.

There are concerns regarding retention figures and which student groups have the highest dropout rates. These are often the students from low-income family backgrounds and, while government grants may have helped within the accumulation of debt, for the students who do drop-out, there will still be a double blow, as they will have no credentials to gain graduate employment, yet they have incurred debt, so essentially they would have been better off entering the job market following the end of compulsory education, rather than aspiring to obtain the degree.

### 9.5 Strategies

Higher education is 'big business' in the current economic climate, increasingly universities have to sell themselves to draw in the numbers of students necessary to attract funding. On

the opposite side of the coin, with the competition in graduate employment, students now need to obtain high degree classifications. With tuition fees being pushed upwards, students have become consumers of education, so have expectations on the standards of academia and provision of a student experience from the university they will attend. Student satisfaction surveys are published annually, so it is in their own interest for universities to achieve a high level of success within the student body, both in degree classifications obtained and enjoyment of student life. Both these may be counteracted by negative impacts from TTPE, based on the research in this area. This places an onus on universities to employ strategies to try to minimise these effects, based on the premise that in the higher educational landscape of the present day term time paid employment is here to stay.

Government strategies are designed to help all students, but also to give extra help to those from low income families, so talent is not wasted. The student loan system and deferred fees seem to work up to a point, and how the system of loans work seems to be widely known and accepted as a good system to help finance higher education. My research has highlighted that in some areas it is a hit and miss system. Partly this is due to being a very rigidly applied system, which has not been adapted to the UK society of today. Perhaps a more streamlined system where every student is eligible for the same amount of loan would be fairer and more easily applied. Students would know this level of income and be able to budget accordingly.

Grants are more problematic in this way, as they have to be means tested, but perhaps again this should be attached to conditions that link in with the amount of TTPE felt appropriate for students to undertake. This could prove difficult to implement, though there may be ways to streamline this. Stages according to income could help prevent a new stratum of students where family income is just above means tested limits. It must be remembered that these government strategies are not designed to prevent students undertaking long hours in term time paid employment, perhaps they should be.

> *'I still think hopefully for me I might get it (WALG) but I want my step dad to get a job, in which case I won't get the extra money again but they still can't afford to give me money which the university thinks they will because of not working since they were made redundant...... it always affects us, we always seem to be just above where we would get money given to us.'*

There will always be an impact from paid employment. The hours worked have the most impact on the effect of strategies, although this was also linked to social class. The flexibility within the paid employment is also an important factor.

Juxtaposed alongside the government strategies, it is obvious that students will have individual coping mechanisms. It is with these coping strategies in place that students are able to juggle academic demands whilst participating in paid employment. When students have insight into the possible negative impact of TTPE, they will be able to take extra precautions to ensure negative impacts are kept manageable, having in place actions to offset any damage.

Changing circumstances throughout the lifespan of the degree means fluidity within the coping strategies for students, in order to minimise any negativity from paid employment. Differentials while segregating the student groups pinpoint the individual's adopted coping mechanisms at managing paid employment, and also highlight the reasons for taking on paid employment in the first instance.

### 9.5.1 Managing paid employment

How students manage their paid employment will depend when, in the academic year, paid employment takes place. Students who only work in the summer holidays manage extremely well, with no apparent impact to their studies or student experience. There did not seem to be a distinction in how these students managed their time from those students who had no paid employment. Students who only worked in the Christmas and Easter vacations were very rare, so the information here was sparse, as almost all students who were employed in these holiday periods also worked through the academic term. For students it is the TTPE that has to be 'managed'.

The data in this study pinpointed what students were most concerned about was how to fit everything in, so that deadlines were met regarding examination revision and assignments. There was a definite hierarchy determined here, with academic studies and TTPE vying for top priority. The socialising and participation in university activities was relegated to the bottom of the list. Within the interviews and diary data students gave quite detailed accounts of how they managed each week according to the demands of their studies and TTPE. This

involved assessment of how much time to allocate to each activity. The engagement in TTPE was absolute, they had set hours where they had to be in their paid employment and this could not be changed for the majority of the students. They then fitted in completion of assignments and revision around the times when they had to be at their place of employment. In their descriptions of their time management they did not seem to incorporate leisure time into the work life balance. This might have been because they perceived I wanted to know about employment versus their university studies, though I stressed I was also interested in their participation with voluntary work and university activities. The diary data presented a similar picture of time management, but again, knowing I was the researcher reading the diary data could have influenced the focus on what they reported.

There was a relationship between how the students manage their time and the amount of hours they undertook in TTPE. The literature defines under 10 hours a week to be manageable, though I would argue that the hours at the place of employment is not an accurate assessment of the time engaged in paid employment. Factors such as travel time and unpaid breaks are not included here, yet still erode into the time a student has to fit all daily activities into. A student employed for three four- hour shifts a week at a site a forty minute bus ride away, with a 15 min break built into the shift will actually have to manage 15 hours minimum, as this still does not take into account the time taken to walk from the bus to the place of employment and any time waiting for the public transport. A student employed for two six-hour shifts in a place of employment a five-minute walk away, again with a 15 min break built into the shift will only have to manage a 13 hour maximum, yet both the students would be classed as having 12 hours engagement in TTPE, both would receive the same wages. However, students themselves do not appear to factor these issues in their decision-making on how many hours it will be feasible that they can undertake in paid employment.

The relationship the student had with their paid employment was very personal and individual to them, as all had different types of employment, worked different shifts and hours, and had different motivations related to the choices in their decision making regarding paid employment. Certain students felt that paid employment disrupted their studies, creating conflict that caused studies to suffer, as in the balance of time management paid employment had the higher priority. Students did identify this conflict was two way, as if the conflict became too much the paid employment could be finished.

221

*'I've always worked since I was 14 with the paper round and that and then it was just I was working in Clarks Bridgend and I handed in my notice there when I was going to come to university... I went to the Clarks here in Cardiff and got a job so that's where I worked from June just after my exams until Christmas but I've handed in my notice there .... They wanted me to work too much and I couldn't, but I'm going back to Bridgend now in Easter because I don't like not working really.'*

## 9.5.2 Predicting vulnerable students

One aim of this study was to endeavour to identify characteristics that could help predict vulnerable student groups, who will feel they have no choice but to take on long hours in TTPE. The data in this study highlighted there may be a new class emerging in the strata of the student body, the students from family backgrounds where income is such they are not eligible for the government grants system, yet expectations regarding parental contributions are unrealistic.

Government expectations regarding both the ability and willingness of parents to contribute to the funding of higher education does not appear to have taken into account the changing structure and fluidity within the family unit of current UK society. This appears to be creating a band of students that have no access to grants, receive a reduced student loan yet experience a lack of parental contributions. These students have the socialisation of the middle class ideologies. These encompass that for increased life opportunities a degree is essential and that debt for education is a means to an end, and will be temporary. While this advocates a lowered anxiety and stress level in attitudes towards debt, the students will deem they have no choice but to undertake long hours in paid employment to fund their education. The students also have an underlying feeling of injustice, that they are being treated unfairly by the finance system in place at the moment.

## 9.6 Impacts

When examining any impact regarding students and paid employment, it must be accepted that here will always be an impact on life balance when an additional activity is incorporated into daily living, regardless of the choices and motivations regarding this activity. Despite the coping mechanisms in place, and strategies students use there will be affects, and the challenge is how to minimise these to a point where the impact is manageable, not detrimental.

Not all the challenges that arise from students' involvement in term-time work can be easily resolved. In this study, students working during term-time reported that they spent less time studying independently, reading and preparing assignments. It is likely that these practices hampered students' acquisition of critical thinking skills and written communication skills. In addition is the impact to students' mental health and well-being. My data indicated high percentages of students felt overloaded, constantly trying to catch up, had high levels of stress from juggling work and academic studies. Comments were made regarding a lack of time to relax, and sleeping patterns were also affected. Such a lifestyle is not conducive to intellectual inquiry - instead it may help foster a pragmatic and instrumental approach to study. Students who did not engage in term-time work had the opportunity to do other things with their time. They had more time for their academic studies.

### 9.6.1 Student experience

The number of students engaged in TTPE appears to have changed the social life structure within the expectations of the student experience. Paid employment has become a normal part of student life, removing stigma, a new routinisation within the role of being a student. The increased acceptance of TTPE within the student body has lowered stress and the resentment of having to work, though the data in this study shows this bears a relationship to the amount of hours undertaken. Students are creating strategies for support, such as peer group cooperation within revision and note taking, as discussed in chapter 6. The literature identifies support from fellow students is a very valid coping mechanism. There will be social and cultural influences, different for each individual student, that shape perceptions, with Metcalf (2005) suggesting many students perceive there to be a reduced quality in higher education directly related to engagement in paid employment.

The student experience should be all about improving knowledge, enjoyment of learning, make the most of the learning experience. For this there has to be inclusion within the student body, debate and discussion with peers, exchange of ideas, all these are as important as formal teaching.

### 9.7 Recommendations and policy implications

Stated aims to widen participation into higher education across all strata of the UK society has opened up the whole issue of student finance to be topical in the media, particularly

regarding the recent increases in tuition fees for students. This could aid dissemination for this study.

The conclusions made from analysis of the data generated in this research may help draw up practical guidelines for students regarding working practices alongside studies. These may help minimise any negative impacts from TTPE. The recent phenomenon of huge increases in the numbers of students engaging in term time paid employment must mean universities cannot ignore the implications of this, both on individual students engaged in employment and on the wider student body, which might experience the knock-on effects.

<u>University guidelines regarding the amount of hours for studies</u>

A study guide specific to the course being studied so as to be realistic on time required to attend lectures and tutorials, and incorporate any laboratory time necessary.

This could also include how many hours the University would recommend as a maximum for engagement in TTPE, to help students obtain the right balance between academic studies, paid employment, university involvement and leisure time. Information on how these recommendations have been calculated, for informed decision-making, should accompany this guide.

Guidance regarding how to manage academic studies alongside engagement in TTPE, within the context of time management skills, might be useful in association with these guidelines, to help to counteract the findings in this study that there is a possible decrease in achievement for those students who are employed in term time, related to the level of hours in paid employment. CHERI et al (2005) advocates this form of guidance from analysis of findings from the London South Bank University research on student attitudes to debt and impacts of TTPE.

Carney et al (2005) have identified disquiet regarding student retention rates, advocating that enhancement of the student life might help. However, work life balance is essential to this, so should be accepted by universities as a means to improve the experience of being a student.

<u>University guide to financial assistance available</u>

An information booklet informing students what financial assistance is available regarding funding their higher education course. This should include discretionary forms of financial assistance, and how to apply for this.

<u>Changes to university criteria regarding applications for hardship funds</u>

Applications for hardship funds should not be linked to the means testing applied to applications for student loans. All students should be eligible to make an application, and the means testing should be applied to the individual circumstances.

The form of the nuclear family in the UK society today is not always traditional or conventional. How the family is structured, with evidence of parental contributions, or lack thereof, should be taken into account within this process.

<u>Structured University timetables that take into account the necessity for TTPE</u>

TTPE is now a feature of the current higher education landscape. This study could be used to support the research in this area, perhaps making suggestions regarding when undergraduate lectures are held, persuading universities to have a more worker friendly stance. There is a strong argument to be made that achievement levels and student attendance at both lectures and tutorials would be higher if these were held on specific days of the week, allowing TTPE to be worked around these days. Support from the University in such a practical way could also result in higher retention of students.

Universities could also consider teaching strategies used by universities in other countries, for example the same lecture being given twice in the same week, one in the morning and one in the night. This gives useful commentary on how the degree structure could be helped if the time frame remains the same in the UK, resolving part of the negative impact of missing lectures and seminars.  This would mean more work for the lecturers, though no extra prep time as the lectures would be the same, so perhaps PhD students could be employed for seminars or marking, to free up time at the lowest cost to the university.

<u>Allowances by lecturers:</u>

Allowances are made for part-time students by academic staff, regarding their commitments to paid employment. This would be a recommendation for the future for full-time students,

constituting support for those students in paid employment, revealed by Kember (1999) in Curtis and Shani (2002) to be of immense value within coping mechanisms for students, around the demands on their time while at university.

<u>University contract regarding hours in study</u>

In an era where students enter into a multitude of contracts connected to university life, should there be a contract between the university and student regarding expectations on the level of time their studies will require. This would have to be realistic. Educational institutions do have some guidelines for students aimed to promote a realisation of the implications in engagement with TTPE. Certain universities will advise on the hours they feel a student should not exceed, while others have definite restrictions. For example Oxford University will only allow students to have four hours a week maximum TTPE. However, students will be tempted to exceed this advice when perceptions are high that more income is a necessity to live.

> *'it was more hours than if I had been working full time, so that really took it out of me but it was something I needed to do so it wasn't a question of can I do this it was I have to do this, but now my personal tutor has said to me that I have to stop, that I am breaking my contract…..there's a contract I must have signed at some point that I would only work 10 hours.....he was concerned about my grades.....'*

Denise SOCSI

This student considered the options were limited regarding employment, that her supervisor was not being realistic, even though she admitted she was falling behind in her grades....

> *'my personal tutor, well he's lovely but it's all very well for him to sit in his big office and say well you have to give up, you shouldn't be doing that, (TTPE) when we have to do it……well some of us do, I mean some don't and good for them but I have to.'*

If this student failed however, what was the point of attending higher education? A supervisor's role is to help students achieve their potential. In all the interviews, no students appeared to be aware of any restrictions on the hours they were allowed to undertake in TTPE. However, are these only mentioned when supervisors feel that students are exposing themselves to potential negative impacts of paid employment? There has to be a tacit agreement between students and universities that they will put effort into degrees, and for this

226

there is a need to put the necessary hours in for studying, reading, revising. It could be construed that students who work excessive hours in paid employment are then not able to put in these hours for study, so in effect this would be breaking this contract. This is implicit.

Life skills coaching

CHERI et al (2005) views money management associated with budgeting skills would be useful for universities to help students develop. Prevention can be better than cure, so to prevent students getting into financial difficulties, and having to take advantage of the easy access to credit that is pushed on students, would be of immense benefit. If the students could manage their money more efficiently in addition to budgeting, then they could possibly undertake lower hours in TTPE.

Alternative teaching and learning strategies

Technological advances within teaching and learning strategies may help students combine paid employment and full-time study more effectively. The use of Blackboard and web-based learning provide an alternative source of knowledge to the traditional lecture. Significantly, for students who work during term-time, access to this knowledge is not restricted to 'set' times of the day. The increased use of e-mail by staff and students may foster an alternative format to the face-to-face tutorial.

Regulations within student employment

Metcalf (2003) promotes the informal regulation of student employment to ensure a minimum level of pay. The TUC (2006) are involved in laying down minimum standards regarding conditions in the workplace and levels of remuneration for young people, inclusive of students.

Work experience at University to gain specific skills

It may be possible to fit voluntary work into some courses. This would both encourage students to reflect on what skills will be useful alongside the paper qualification of the degree, to be successful in obtaining graduate employment, and teach specific skills for their

chosen career area. An increase in work placements for different courses would also be beneficial, if this was feasible. This workplace would also be a means to earn money to fund the third year, as it has already been highlighted that this is the year students perceive they need maximum time for academic studies, due to dissertation research, reading and writing up alongside an increased workload, due to the modular content now being at its zenith in the expectations on the student.

<u>Staggered assignment deadlines</u>

Staggered assignment deadlines rather than block assignment deadlines would be of benefit to time management for students, and may help their employers become more flexible around time off for students.

## 9.8 Suggestions for future research

- This study showed that, when a rough approximation of income was assessed, there is not a high amount of difference in the levels of income between the different social classes of students. Socialisation patterns will have an effect here, but overall, if students are receiving approximately similar levels of income, why are students from the lower income family groups working most hours. Further research would be of value in providing more in-depth understanding of why this is happening.

- Implement information strategies on funding streams, advising on dangers of too many hours in TTPE, would these be a positive influence for students?

- There have been changes in the funding structure for degrees, implementing higher fees, causing increased debt. It is more important than ever to look at how this affects participate in higher education, will this revert back to the age of upper social class participation due to cost?

- 'If not University, then what?' What choices will young people have if higher education is no longer an option? This will perpetuate social inequalities if comparative work is not available. Research into what the future holds for young people who deem higher education to be out of their reach due to cost will have value for government and policymakers alike.

228

## 9.9 University TTPE Life-cycle

Finally I considered what the long-term effects of a life cycle could mean for universities if the potential negative impacts of TTPE are ignored,

As universities now have to sell themselves to students to attract funding, the reputation of the University is a large part of this. If the reputation suffers from higher dropout rates and a lowered average of degree classification, and the student satisfaction survey is low there will be a knock-on effect for the University, similar to the diagram below.

### 9.1 University TTPE Life-cycle
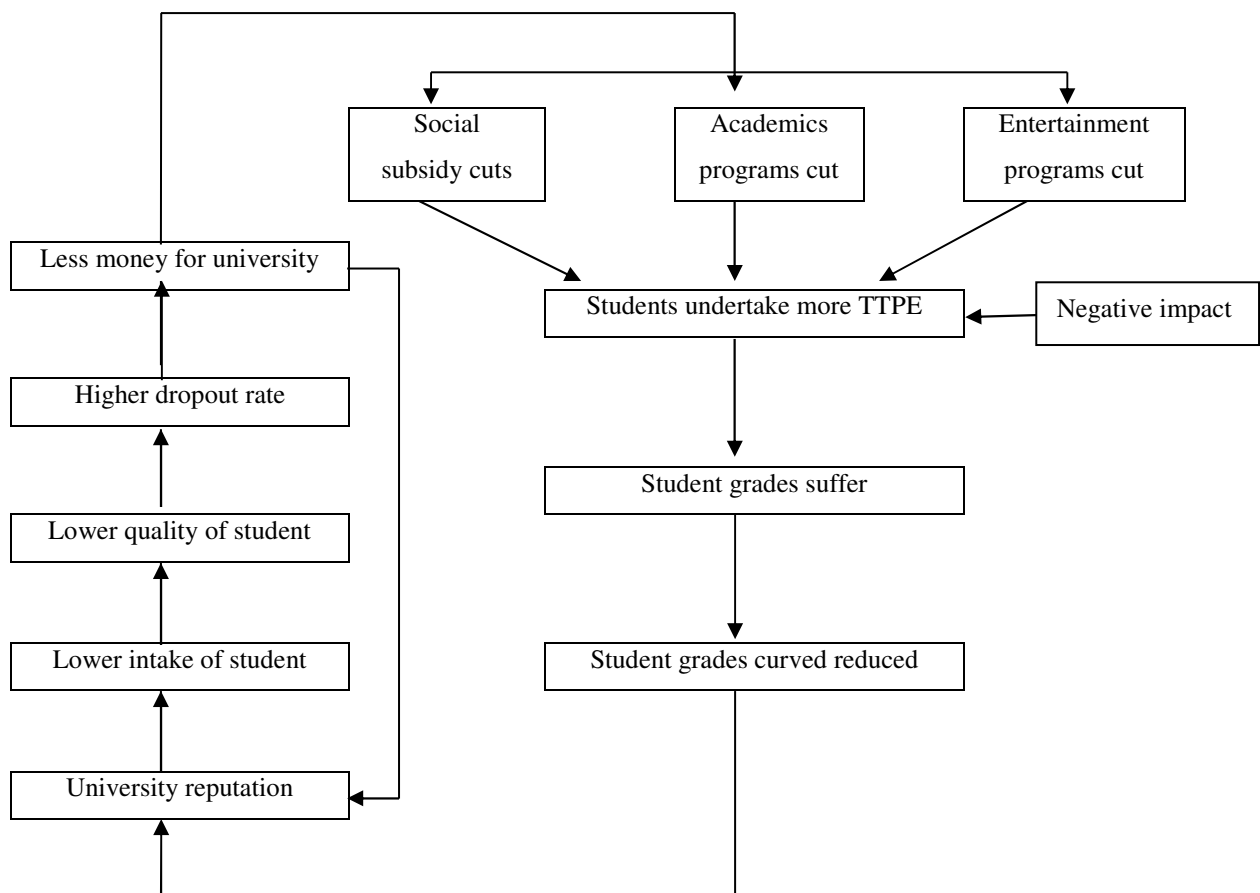


Examples of the cuts could be:

Social cutbacks:

- subsidised housing students
- subsidised bus service

Academics programs cut:

- less books bought from library

- less equipment bought i.e. software
- less journals subscribed to

Entertainment programs cut:

- student union less money
- less subsidised drinks
- increasing price of activities

This may seem rather dramatic, but in the current higher educational landscape, with tuition fee increases, speculation that interest rates on the student loan will be increased above the level of inflation, a lack of confidence by students that graduate employment will be available to them following their degree and finally the massive levels of debt students are leaving university with, universities really cannot afford to be seen to have failing students.

It may be these constitute a neat set of conclusions, with recommendations that are not all feasible to implement, but even a few could initiate some of the change necessary to protect the vulnerable groups of students aspiring to better their future.

# Bibliography:

Adnett, N. (2006) Student Finance and Widening Participation in the British Isles: Common Problems, Different Solutions Higher Education Quarterly 60, 4, pp296 – 311

Alaszewski, A. (2006). Using Diaries for Social Research. Thousand Oaks, London

Alexander, D. (2007) Student life in London in the 1970s
Retrieved from the World Wide Web September 2008
http://d-alexander.blogspot.co.uk/2007/12/student-life-in-london-in-1970s.html

Archer, L., Hutchings, M. (2000) Bettering Yourself? Discourses of risk, cost and benefit in ethnically diverse, young working class no participants' constructions of higher education British Journal of Sociology of Education 21, 4, pp555-574

Arnett, J. J. (2000) Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties American Psychologist 55, 469-480.

Arthur, C (2013) Yahoo chief bans working from home
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 2013
http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2013/feb/25/yahoo-chief-bans-working-home

Ashworth, J. (1997) A Waste of Time? (Private Rates of Return to Higher Education in the 1990s) Higher Education Quarterly 51,2, pp164-188

Atkinson, P. & Silverman,D. (1997). Kundera's Immortality: The interview society and the invention of the self. Qualitative Inquiry 3, pp304-325.

Attwood, R. (2007) Growing student consumerism is inevitable, says NUS
Retrieved from the World Wide Web September 2008
http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=209299&sectioncode=26

Australian Apec (2008) What is globalisation?
Retrieved from the World Wide Web September 2008
http://www.globalisationguide.org/01.html

Barke, M., Braidford, P., Houston, M., Hunt, A., Lincoln, I., Morphet, C., Stone, I. & Walker, A. (2000) Students in the labour market. Nature, extent and implications of term time employment among University of Northumbria undergraduates London: Department for Education and Employment.

BERA (2004) Ethical Guidelines
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 2004
http://www.bers.ac.uk/guidelines.html

Bingham, J, (2009) Nuclear family is broken
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 2013
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/mother-tongue/6686407/Nuclear-family-is-broken-warns-parents-group.html


BIS (2006) Student Income and Expenditure Survey 2004/05
Retrieved from the World Wide Web  November 2011
http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/RRP/u014256/index.shtml

Blair, A. (1998) New Britain in the Modern World
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 6th November 2005
http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page1148.asp

Bowers-Brown, T. (2006) Widening Participation in Higher Education amongst Students from Disadvantaged Socio-Economic Groups, Tertiary Education and Management, 12, pp59 – 74.

Brady, L. (2005) Learning and Earning
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 24th October 2005
http://www.guardian.co.uk/

Brannen, J. & Nilsen, A. (2005) Individualisation, choice and structure: a discussion of current trends in sociological analysis The Sociological Review 53, 3 pp412 - 428

Brooks, R. (2006) Learning and work in the lives of young adults. International Journal of Lifelong Education, 25, 3. pp271 -289.

Brown, P. (1995) Cultural capital and social exclusion: some observations on recent trends in education, employment, and the Labour market Work, Employment and Society 9,1, pp29-51

Brown, P. (2003) The Opportunity Trap: education and employment in a global economy European Educational Research Journal 2, 1, pp141-179

Brown, P., Green, A. & Lauder, H. (2001) High Skills, Globalisation, Competitiveness and Skill Formation Oxford: Oxford University Press

Brown, P. & Hesketh, A. (2004) The MisManagement of Talent: Employability and Jobs in the Knowledge Economy Oxford Oxford University Press

Bryman, A. (2001) Social Research Methods, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Bullock, A. & Trombley, S. (Eds) (1999) The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought London: Harper-Collins

Callender, C. (1997) <u>The National Committee of Enquiry into Higher Education:Higher Education in the Learning Society, report 2. Full and Part-time Students in Higher Education: their Experiences and Expectations</u> London: NCIHE

Callender, C. (2008) The Impact of Term Time Employment on higher Education Students' Academic Attainment and Achievement <u>Journal of Education Policy</u> 23, 4, pp359-377

Callender, C. & Jackson, J. (2005) Does the Fear of Debt deter Students from Higher Education? <u>Journal of social policy</u>, 34, 4, pp509-540

Callender, C., Kemp, M. (2000) Changing Student Finances
As cited in:
Christie, C., Munro, M. (2003) The Logic of Loans: students' perceptions of the costs and benefits of the student loan <u>British Journal of Sociology of Education</u> 24, 5, pp621- 636

Callender, C., Wilkinson, D. (2003) 2002/2003 Student Income and Expenditure Survey
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 30<sup>th</sup> March 2006
<u>http://www.dfes.gov.uk/trends/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.showIndicator&cid=2&iid=8</u>

Cardiff University (2006) Ethical Approval of Research
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 30<sup>th</sup> October 2006
<u>www.cardiff.ac.uk</u>

Carney, C., McNeish, S. & McColl, J. (2005) The Impact of part-time employment on students' Health and Academic Performance: a Scottish Perspective <u>Journal of Further and Higher Education</u> 29, 4, pp307-319

CHERI & London South Bank University (2005) Survey of higher education students' attitudes to debt and term-time working and their impact on attainment
Retrieved from the World Wide Web  October 2007
<u>http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/rdreports/2005/rd15_05/</u>

Christie, C., Munro, M. (2003) The Logic of Loans: students' perceptions of the costs and benefits of the student loan <u>British Journal of Sociology of Education</u> 24, 5, pp621- 636

Christie, C. Munro, M. & Rettig, H (2001) Making Ends Meet: Student Incomes and Debt <u>Studies in Higher Education</u> 26, 3, pp363-383

Clough, P. & Nutbrown, C. (2002) <u>A Student's Guide to Methodology</u> London: Sage Publications

Cooke, R., Barkham, M., Audin, K., Bradley, M. & Davy, J. (2004) Student Debt and its Relation to Student Mental Health <u>Journal of Further and Higher education</u>  28, 1, pp 53-66

Cortada, J. (1998) <u>The Rise of the Knowledge Worker </u>London: Routledge

Cubie (1999) Student Finance: Fairness for the future
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 30th March 2008
www.scottish.parliament.uk

Curtis, P. (2006) HE sector explains new funding system
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 30th March 2006
www.education.guardian.co.uk

Curtis, P. (2006) UK more expensive the US for students
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 30th March 2006
www.education.guardian.co.uk

Curtis, S. (2007) Students' perceptions of the effects of term-time paid employment
Education & Training 49, 5, pp380-390

Curtis, S. & Lucas, R. (2001) A Coincidence of Needs?: Employers and Full Time Students
Employee Relations 23, 1, pp38-54

Curtis, S. & Shani, N. (2002) The effect of taking paid employment during term-time on students' academic studies. Journal of Further and Higher Education, 26, 2

Curtis, S., Williams, J. (2002) The Reluctant Workforce: Undergraduates part time Employment Education + Training 44:1 p5-10

Czaja, R & Blair, J (1996) Designing Surveys Thousand Oaks California: Pine Forge Press

Davies, E. & Lea, S. E. A. (1995) Student Attitudes to Student Debt Journal of Economic Psychology 16, pp633-680

Davies R. & Elias P. (2003) Dropping Out: A Study of Early Leavers from Higher Education. Research Report 386 Department for Education and Skills

Darmody, M. and Smyth, E. (2007) Managing term-time employment and study in Ireland. Dublin: ESRI, pp. 1-25.

Dearing, R. (1997) The Dearing Report
Retrieved from the World Wide Web September 2007
http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/ncihe/

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (eds) (2000) Handbook of Qualitative Research London: Sage Publications

DfES (1998) The Learning Age: A Renaissance for a new Britain
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 26th March 2006
http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/greenpaper/index.htm

DfES (2003) 21st Century Skills, White Paper London: HMSO

DfES Press Release (2005) <u>Ministers Outline Future for Further Education Funding</u>
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 6<sup>th</sup> November 2005
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2005_0123

DIUS (2008) Student Income and Expenditure Survey 2007/08(English-domiciled Students)
Retrieved from the World Wide Web  November 2011
http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/migratedD/publications/D/DIUS_RR_09_05

Durham University (2007) Careers Advisory Service Student Employment Service
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 14<sup>th</sup> October 2007
http://www.dur.ac.uk

Edge (2008) The Second Globalisation Debate
Retrieved from the World Wide Web September 2008
http://www.edge.org/documents/archive/edge81.html

ESRC (2007) <u>Society Today: Phil Brown</u>
Retrieved from the World Wide Web October 2007

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/about/CI/CP/Our_Society_Today/Voices/brown.aspx?ComponentId=16080&SourcePageId=11458

Eurofound (2007) Fourth European Working Conditions Survey
Retrieved from the World Wide Web may 2010
http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef0698.htm

Fairinvestment (2006) Halifax loans say parents pay
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 2006
www.fairinvestment.co.uk/investment-news-halifax-loans-say-parents1708415.html

Flick, U. (1998) <u>An Introduction to qualitative Research</u>  London: Sage

Flick, U. (2002) <u>An Introduction to qualitative Research</u>  London: Sage

Ford, J., Bosworth, D., Wilson, R. (1995) Part Time Work and Full Time Higher Education <u>Studies in Higher Education</u> 20, 2, pp187-202

Forsyth, A. & Furlong, A. (2003) <u>Losing out? Socio-economic disadvantage and access to higher education</u> Bristol: Policy Press

Giddens, A. (1974) <u>Positivism and Sociology</u> London: Heinemann.

Giddens, A (1994) <u>Beyond Left and Right — the Future of Radical Politics.</u> Cambridge: Polity

Goldthorpe, J. (2003) The Myth of Educational Based Meritocracy <u>New Economy</u> 10, 4 pp 234-239

Gorard, S. & Taylor, C. (2004) Combining Methods in Educational and Social Research London: Open University Press

Greenaway, D. & Haynes, M. (2004) Funding Higher Education
As cited in
Johnes, G. & Johnes, J. (eds) (2004) <u>International Handbook on the Economics of Education</u> Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publications

Gubrium, J.F. & Holstein, J.A. (2001) <u>Handbook of Interview Research</u>  Thousand Oaks California: Sage Publications. Inc.

Hakim, C. (1998) <u>Social Change and Innovation in the Labour Market</u>  Open University Press: New York

Heath, A. (2000) The Political Arithmetic Tradition in the Sociology of Education <u>Oxford Review of Education</u>  26, 3&4, pp313-331

HEFCE (2002) <u>Learning To Succeed</u>
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 26<sup>th</sup> March 2006
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/ltos.htm

HEFCE (2005) <u>History</u>
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 26<sup>th</sup> March 2006
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/AboutUs/history.htm

HEFCE (2006) <u>Widening participation: A review</u>
Retrieved from the World Wide Web October 2007
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/

Held, David and McGrew, Anthony (2002) <u>Globalization/Anti-globalization,</u> Cambridge, UK: Polity Press

Henn, M., Weinstein, M. & Foard, N. (2006) <u>A Short Introduction to Social Research</u> London: Sage Publications

Hodgson, A. & Spours, K. (2000) Expanding Higher Education in the UK: From 'System Slowdown' to 'System Acceleration' <u>Higher Education Quarterly</u> 54, 4, pp295-322

Humphrey, R (2006) Pulling Structured Inequality into Higher Education: The Impact of Part time Working on English University Students <u>Higher Education Quarterly</u>  60, 3, pp270-286

Hunt, A., Lincoln, I. & Walker, A. (2004) Term-time employment and academic Achievement: Evidence from a large scale survey of undergraduates at Northumbria University  Journal of Further and Higher Education  28, 1, pp 3-18

Hutson, S. & Cheung, W. Y. (1992) Saturday Jobs: Sixth formers in the Labour Market and in the family
As cited in:
Marsh, C. & Arber, S. (eds) (1992) Families and Households: divisions and change
Basingstoke: Macmillan

Iannelli, C. (2007) Inequalities in entry to Higher Education: A comparison Over Time between Scotland and England and Wales Higher Education Quarterly 61, 3, pp306-333

IES & NatCen (2008) Student Income and Expenditure Survey 2007/08(Welsh-domiciled Students)
Retrieved from the World Wide Web  November 2011
http://wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/social/latestresearch

Johnes, G. & Johnes, J. (eds) (2004) International Handbook on the Economics of Education
Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publications

Leitch, Lord. (2006) The Leitch Review of Skills
Retrieved from the World Wide Web Jan 2008
http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-further-education/the-leitch-review-of-skills.htm

Lindsay, R.O. & Paton-Saltzberg, R. (1994) The effects of paid employment on the academic performance of full-time students in a British 'new' university" report Oxford: Oxford Brookes University
Retrieved from the World Wide Web Jan 2008
http://www.brookes.ac.uk

Lucas, R., Lamont, N. (1998) Combining work and study: and empirical study of full-time students in school, college and university Journal of Education and Work, 11, 1, pp.41-56.

Lucas, R. & Ralston, L. (1997) Youth, Gender and part-time Employment. A Preliminary Appraisal of Student Employment Employee Relations 19, 1, pp51-66

Lucas, R. & Ralston, L. (1997) Youth, Gender and part-time Employment. A Preliminary Appraisal of Student Employment Employee Relations 19, 1, pp51-66

MacDonald, K. (1999) Cubie Response: In Detail
Retrieved from the World Wide Web Jan 2009
www.news.bbc.co.uk

MacErlean, N. (2007) How parents can reduce student debt The Observer 30/09/2007

Mason, J. (2006) Mixing Methods in a Qualitatively Driven Way <u>Qualitative Research</u> 6, 1, pp9-25

Mason, J. (2002) <u>Qualitative Researching</u> (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) London: Sage

McNamee, S.J. & Miller, R.K. (2003) The Meritocracy Myth USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

Metcalf, H. (2001) Increasing inequality in higher education: the role of term-time working. <u>Oxford Review of Education</u>, 29, 3, pp315-329

Metcalf, H. (2003) Increasing Inequality in Higher education: the role of term time working <u>Oxford Review of Education</u> 29, 3, pp315-329

Metcalf, H. (2005) Paying for university: the impact of increasing costs on student employment, debt and satisfaction. <u>National Institute Economic Review</u>, 191, 1, pp106-117.

Micklewright, J., Rajah, N. & Smith, S. (1994) Labouring and learning: part time work and full time education <u>National Institute Economic Review</u> 148, 73-87

Miles, M. & Huberman, A. (1994) <u>Qualitative Data Analysis: an expanded sourcebook</u> Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications

Miller, G. & Dingwall, R. (1997) <u>Context & Method in Qualitative Research</u> London: Sage Publications Ltd

Moreau, M., Leathwood, C. (2006) Balancing paid work and studies: working (-class), students in higher education <u>Studies in Higher Education,</u> 31, 1, pp.23-42.

Mori survey of Britain's Students 2005 – Employment Issues
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 30<sup>th</sup> March 2006
<u>http://www.theworkbank.co.uk/MORI2005.pdf</u>

Naylor, R., Smith, J. & McKnight, A.A. (2000) Determinants of graduate pay
As cited in:
Hunt, A., Lincoln, I. & Walker, A. (2004) Term-time employment and academic Achievement: Evidence from a large scale survey of undergraduates at Northumbria University <u>Journal of Further and Higher Education</u> 28, 1, pp 3-18

National Statistics (2007) The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification
Accessed from the World Wide Web September 2007
<u>http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/ns_sec/</u>

Neill, N., Mulholland, G., Ross, V., Leckey, J. (2004) The Influence of Part Time Work on Student Placement <u>Journal of further and higher education</u> pp123-137

NIACE (2005) <u>Priorities for Success: LSC Funding 2006/7 and 2007/8</u>
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 6<sup>th</sup> November 2005
 http://www.niace.org.uk/

Norris, T. (2004) Hannah Arendt and Jean Baudrillard: Pedagogy in the Consumer Society
Retrieved from the World Wide Web   October 2007
http://www.infed.org/biblio/pedagogy_consumer_society.htm

NUS (1999) Student <u>Hardship Survey 1998/1999</u> London: NUS

NUS (2000) National Student Survey
Retrieved from the World Wide Web Jan 2008
http://www.nus.org.uk

NUS (2004) Homepage Links – <u>School children and students get work rights boost</u>
Retrieved from the World Wide Web   November 2005
http://www.nusonline.co.uk/


NUS (2008) National Student Survey
Retrieved from the World Wide Web Jan 2008
http://www.nus.org.uk/en/Student-Life/Course-Reps/National-Student-Survey---what-students-think/

Oancea, A. (2005) Criticisms of Educational Research: Key Topics and Levels of Analysis
<u>British Educational Research Journal</u> 31, 2, pp157-183

OECD (1996) <u>Employment and Growth in the Knowledge based Economy</u> OECD Publications: France

Olsen, G. (1991) Clifford Geertz on Ethnography and Social Construction
Retrieved from the World Wide Web   15<sup>th</sup> December 2006
http://jac.gsu.edu/jac/11.2/Articles/geertz.htm

Oppenheim, A. N. (1992) <u>Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement</u> London: Continuum

Patton, G., & Viner, R. (2007). Pubertal transitions in health. <u>The Lancet</u>, 369, pp1130–1139.

Payne, J. & Callender, C. (1997) <u>Student Loans: Who Borrows and Why?</u>  London: Policies Studies Institute

Punch, K. (2005) <u>Introduction to social research: quantitative and qualitative approaches (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)</u> London: Sage

Purcell, K., Elias, P., Davies, R. & Wilton, N. (2005) <u>The class of 1999: a study of the early labour market experiences of recent graduates</u> London: DfES

Quinn, J., Thomas, L., Slack, K., Casey, L., Thexton, W. & Noble, J. (2004) <u>From Life Crisis to Lifelong Learning</u> Joseph Rowntree Foundation: York

Rees, T. (2005) Fair and Flexible Funding: A Welsh Model to Promote quality and Access in Higher Education (The Rees Report)
Retrieved from the World Wide Web September 2006
http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk/pdfs/students/executive-summary-rees-review-e.pdf

Redmond, P. (2006) Outcasts on the inside: graduates, Employability and Widening Participation <u>Tertiary Education and Management</u>  12, pp119-135

Reid, J.H. (2013) Conspicuous Consumption
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 2013
http://lilt.ilstu.edu/jhreid/foi/conspicuous_consumption.htm

Robins Report (1963) <u>Higher Education</u> London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office

Saving For Children (2007) Half of students get parental financial help
Retrieved from the World Wide Web September 2007
http://www.savingforchildren.co.uk/Half-of-students-get-parental-financial-help--181_62_18253821.html

Scott, A.J., Lewis, A. & Lea, S.E.G. (2001) <u>Student Debt: the causes and consequences of undergraduate borrowing in the UK</u>  Bristol: Policy Press
Retrieved from the World Wide Web February 2007
http://books.google.co.uk/books

Scraptuitionfees (2003) More Students Taking up Longer Hours of Paid Work
Retrieved from the World Wide Web Jan 2007
www.scraptuitionfees.com

Seale, C. (ed) (1998) <u>Researching Society and Culture</u>  London: Sage publications

Smith. A. (2007) More Parents funding Children through University
Retrieved from the World Wide Web Feb 2013
http://www.theguardian.com/money/2007/jan/15/highereducation.studentfinance

Smith, N. & Taylor, P. (1999) Not for lipstick and lager: students and part time work <u>Scottish Affairs Journal</u> 28, pp147-163

Spicker, P. (2007) An Introduction to Social Policy
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 30th October 2007
http://www2.rgu.ac.uk/publicpolicy/introduction/needf.htm

Steger, M. (2003) <u>Globalisation: a very Short Introduction</u> Oxford: OUP

Stiglitz, J. (2002) <u>Globalization and its Discontents</u> London: Penguin Books

Student Income and Expenditure Surveys 2002-2003, 2004-2005
Retrieved from the World Wide Web Jan 2007
www.dcsf.gov.uk

Student Income and Expenditure Surveys 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008
Retrieved from the World Wide Web Oct 2008
www.natcen.ac.uk

Student Income and Expenditure Survey (2003) <u>More Students taking up longer hours of paid work</u>
Retrieved from the World Wide Web  November 2005
http://www.scraptuitionfees.com/pages/Why.phtml

Swain, H. (2007) The art of asking your parents for money
Retrieved from the World Wide Web September 2008
http://education.guardian.co.uk/students/finance/story/0,,2214016,00.html

Taylor, N. K.(1998) Survey of paid employment undertaken by full-time undergraduates at an established Scottish university  <u>Journal of Further and Higher Education</u>  22, 1, pp33-40

TLRP (2008) Widening Participation in Higher Education
Retrieved from the World Wide Web September 2008
http://www.tlrp.org/pub/documents/HEcomm.pdf

TUC (2006) All Work Low Pay
Retrieved from the World Wide Web September 2007
www.tuc.org.uk

TUC (2000) Students at Work
Retrieved from the World Wide Web September 2007
www.tuc.org.uk

UCAS (1999) Statistical Bulletin on Widening Participation,
Retrieved from the World Wide Web  March 2006
http://www.face.stir.ac.uk/Paper018Green.htm

UCAS (2002) <u>Statistics</u>
Retrieved from the World Wide Web  March 2006
http://www.ucas.com/figures/custom/index.html

UCAS (2006) <u>Statistics</u>
Retrieved from the World Wide Web  March 2006
http://www.ucas.com/figures/custom/index.html

University of Huddersfield (2007) Going to university
Retrieved from the World Wide Web  14th October 2007
http://www.hud.ac.uk/scl/documents/parents_and_carers_guide.pdf

Van Dyke, R. and Little, B. and Callender, C. (2005) Survey of higher education students' attitudes to debt and term-time working and their impact on attainment. Bristol: Higher Education Funding Council for England.
Retrieved from the World Wide Web Jan 2008
www.hefce.ac.uk

Visualwriter (2013) Social Contracts
Retrieved from the World Wide Web 2013
http://www.visualwriter.com/humancond/SocialContract.htm

Watts, C. (2002) The Effects of Term-time Employment on Academic Performance Education & Training 44, 2/3, pp67-75

Watts, C., Pickering, A. (2000) Pay as you learn: student employment and academic progress Education+Training 42, 3, pp.129-34.

Winn, S. & Stevenson, R. (1997) Student Loans: Are the Policy Objectives Being Achieved? Higher Education Quarterly  51, 2, pp144-163

Woodrow, M (1999) Student Finance: Accessing Opportunity
As cited in:
Christie, C., Munro, M. (2003) The Logic of Loans: students' perceptions of the costs and benefits of the student loan  British Journal of Sociology of Education 24, 5, pp621- 636

WOU (2013) Durkheim
Retrieved from the World Wide Web Feb 2013
www.wou.edu/~girodm/foundations/**Durkheim**.pdf

Application for ethical approval

This includes:

- Research Proposal:
- Research Questions:
- Research Design:
- Notes for submission:
- Specific Ethical Considerations:
- Front sheet for questionnaire:
- Back sheet for questionnaire:
- Interview information sheet:
- Audio diary information and instruction sheets (for the week diary):
- Audio diary information and instruction sheets (for the 4 week diary):

<u>Research Proposal:</u>

<u>Introduction</u>

This proposed study will examine the scope and character of term time employment undertaken by Higher Education (HE) students and explore whether this impacts on their experience of being a student and their time management within their studies, which may have an effect on their studies and achievement levels.  The reasons for the choice to undertake paid employment and how their studies are funded will also be explored.

<u>Background</u>

The evidence regarding participation in higher education in the United Kingdom indicates that there has been a marked increase over the past fifty years (Curtis 2002).  This increase has been particularly great since 1990. Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS 2002) data show a 23% increase in full time home acceptances to degree courses in the period 1994-2000. The participation rate is now 43% with the present Labour government proposing 50% by 2010.

The shift from 'elite' to a 'mass' system of higher education occurred within a political discourse of equality.   Increasingly, however, the burden for financing a degree is being shifted from the public to the personal level. The burden of paying fees and subsistence is progressively more being borne by individuals, hence the incentive to earn as you learn.

Researchers suggest the financial costs of higher education for the student as the greatest barrier to increasing working class participation (Christie & Munro 2003, Woodrow 1999). Schools and universities can devise strategies for widening participation that address some of the barriers relating to access to information and qualifications.   However, the barrier of cost is entirely dependent on government policy and there is overwhelming evidence that the 1998 changes to funding have had the most negative effects on students from lower income groups (Archer & Hutchings 2000, Metcalf 2003, Callender & Kemp 2000).

The result of these changes has been that there are increasing numbers of full time students in higher education having to supplement their income by undertaking part time work (Ford et al 1995, Callender & Wilkinson 2006).  Recent research identifies beneficial aspects within student employment, such as the acquisition of transferable skills (Neill et al 2004, Curtis

2002, MORI 2005). However, 59% of students in higher education believe their studies are affected detrimentally by the necessity of working, and would not undertake term time employment by choice (Neill et al 2004, Brady 2005). This dichotomy leads to enquiries around the topic of whether paid employment does impact on achievement and if so, to what extent.

References:

Archer, L., Hutchings, M. (2000) Bettering Yourself? Discourses of risk, cost and benefit in ethnically diverse, young working class no participants' constructions of higher education British Journal of Sociology of Education 21, 4, pp555-574

Brady, L. (2005) Learning and Earning

Retrieved from the World Wide Web 24th October 2005

http://www.guardian.co.uk/

Callender, C., Kemp, M. (2000) Changing Student Finances

As cited in:

Christie, C., Munro, M. (2003) The Logic of Loans: students' perceptions of the costs and benefits of the student loan British Journal of Sociology of Education 24, 5, pp621- 636

Callender, C., Wilkinson, D. (2006) 2002/2003 Student Income and Expenditure Survey

Retrieved from the World Wide Web 30th March 2006

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/trends/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.showIndicator&cid=2&iid=8

Christie, C., Munro, M. (2003) The Logic of Loans: students' perceptions of the costs and benefits of the student loan  British Journal of Sociology of Education 24, 5, pp621- 636


Curtis, S., Williams, J. (2002) The Reluctant Workforce: Undergraduates part time Employment Education + Training  44:1 p5-10

Retrieved from www.emeraldinsight.com


Ford, J., Bosworth, D., Wilson, R. (1995) Part Time Work and Full Time Higher Education Studies in Higher Education 20, 2, pp187-202


Metcalf, H. (2003) Increasing Inequality in Higher education: the role of term time working Oxford Review of Education 29, 3, pp315-329


Mori survey of Britain's Students 2005 – Employment Issues

Retrieved from the World Wide Web 30th March 2006

 http://www.theworkbank.co.uk/MORI2005.pdf


Neill, N., Mulholland, G., Ross, V., Leckey, J. (2004) The Influence of Part Time Work on Student Placement Journal of further and higher education pp123-137


UCAS (2002) Statistics

Retrieved from the World Wide Web March 2008

http://www.ucas.com/figures/custom/index.html

Woodrow, M (1999) Student Finance: Accessing Opportunity

As cited in:

Christie, C., Munro, M. (2003) The Logic of Loans: students' perceptions of the costs and benefits of the student loan  British Journal of Sociology of Education 24, 5, pp621- 636

Research Questions:

In light of this, the overall aim is 'to examine whether paid employment undertaken by students studying full time in higher education impacts on potential achievement and the experience of being a student'.

The study will be guided by the following specific research questions:

7. What proportion of students engage in term time employment?
8. What jobs do they do and what do they earn?  What are wages spent on? What hours do they work and what impact does this have on their university work?
9. What are the socio-economic determinants of student participation in term time employment?
10. How do they perceive and how important is the new fee / student support regime in determining participation in term time employment?
11. How is time managed by students by students who deem it necessary to engage in term time paid employment?

<u>Research Design:</u>

This study will focus on higher education institutes in Wales. It will collect data from two universities, which will represent a diversity of institutions in the higher education sector. These also encompass different student populations, enabling variables such as the social composition of the student body, locality and labour market to be considered in relation to each other. Different departments within the universities, but incorporating parallel degrees of study between the universities, will also be considered. This will explore whether the entrance requirements within courses and the study time requirements impact on the incidence and influence of term time work.

<u>Methods of enquiry and data analysis:</u>

The project will collect both quantitative and qualitative data via questionnaires, semi structured interviews and also incorporate student diaries to examine study and employment commitments, to consider the effect that work, study and family responsibilities have on leisure time quality and quantity. The sample will include 400 questionnaires complemented by 40 follow up interviews and 12 student diaries. These respondents will be drawn from the survey sample. All respondents will be students in HE Institutes operating top up fees and new student support systems. The sample will be students from a variety of different backgrounds, aged 19 to 23, initially in the second year of their studies and repeated in the third year of their studies, to create a longitudinal study.

Initially data regarding the amount of students working, the number of hours worked and other numeric data will be quantitative, and so the questionnaire will be used to collect this data. This will be administered during lectures and seminar groups within the universities. A front sheet explaining the research area and the aim of the research will be included in the questionnaire, for informed consent, and an assurance of anonymity and confidentiality made. By the respondents completing the questionnaire, permission for the data to be used has been granted, however information regarding the use and storage of data will also be included.

A back sheet will also be included with the questionnaire informing the respondent that they may be asked to take part in a further semi-structured interview. If they are agreeable to do this, their contact details and a section to be completed for written consent will be on this

sheet. It will also be made clear here that they are not obliged to participate at a later date and also that they can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason.

As this study will also look at opinions and perceptions, qualitative data will be needed. For this follow up audio recorded semi-structured interviews will be conducted. The interviews will be conducted in person or via the telephone. Online interviews may be used. The interviews will be audio taped, then transcribed, though the respondents will be given a choice as to whether they are audio taped.

It is intended that a proportion of the students who answer the questionnaires will be asked to keep an audio diary of their studies and work, thus within the interview the respondents will be asked regarding this (Bryman 2001, Oppenheim 1992).

Data Analysis:

The initial structure will be informed by the responses of the questionnaires and purpose to explain further patterns that emerge from the survey data. Analysis of qualitative data will be thematic and aims to provide 'thick descriptions' on the study, explanations of learning and earning (Geertz 1988). SPSS and Nvivo programmes will be used for analysis.

Literature exists on students' term time employment, student expenditure and students' attitudes to finance. This study aims to contribute further to our understanding of the student experience, at the point of an important transition in higher education funding regimes and student support systems. It is also intended that it will produce important commentary on debates on widening access.

Notes for submission:

Note 1:

Concerning the time to consider participation:

With the questionnaires there will not be a period of time to consider participation, however the opportunity to withdraw responses from the research at any point will be given. Any data collected that is later withdrawn will be destroyed.

With the interviews and diaries there will be a significant period of time for respondents to consider whether they would like to participate.

Note 2:

To comply with data protection and maintain confidentiality:

The questionnaires will be kept in a locked filing cabinet within the university. Identifiers will be designed within a table to anonymise the responses which will be kept separate from the questionnaires.

The interview and diary data will be audio filed and only kept on a university network with password protection. During transcription the data will be anonymised for use away from the university.

The diary data will be sent electronically from university email address to university email address and a database created. Any printouts of this will be within the university and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Any data taken for use outside the university will be anonymised.

Guidelines consulted:

BERA (2004) Ethical Guidelines

Retrieved from the World Wide Web 10<sup>th</sup> April 2008

http://bera.ac.uk/publications/guides.php

BSA (British Sociological Association) (2004) Statement of Ethical Practice

Retrieved from the World Wide Web 30th April 2008

http://www.britsoc.co.uk/equality/


Cardiff University (2006) Ethical Approval of Research

Retrieved from the World Wide Web 30th April 2008

www.**cardiff**.ac.uk

<u>Specific Ethical Considerations:</u>

A front sheet explaining the research area and the aim of the research will be included in the questionnaire, for informed consent and an assurance of anonymity and confidentiality made. By the respondents completing the questionnaire, permission for the data to be used has been granted, however information regarding the use and storage of data will also be included.

A back sheet will also be included with the questionnaire informing the respondent that they may be asked to take part in a further semi-structured interview. If they are agreeable to do this, their contact details and a section to be completed for written consent will be on this sheet also. It will also be made clear here that they are not obliged to participate at a later date and also that they can withdraw from the study at any time.

A participant information sheet will be given to respondents at the start of the interview. This will again explain the research area and the aim of the research, with reassurances and information on the confidentiality and anonymity of the responses they will be making. Again it will be made clear that they can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason.

An information and instruction sheet will be given to respondents who are keeping the two types of audio diaries, with the same assurances as described above.

A copy of all of these information and instruction sheets are pages

<u>Front sheet for questionnaire:</u>

**Research on Student paid employment while in full time study**

**Participant Information Sheet**

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. The following will give you a short overview of what this means for you and the information that you give to me. Before you decide whether to take part please read the following information. If you have any questions about the study, please use the contact details below.

**What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose is to investigate whether there is any perceived impact on the experience of student life when paid employment has been undertaken while in full time study, and to consider if there is an associated impact on achievement levels.

**Who are the researchers and who is funding the research?**

The research is funded by the Economic and Social Sciences Research Council (ESRC). My name is Lyn Cavill and I am completing a PhD within the educational field. I will be supervised throughout by two senior researchers, Professor John Fitz and Dr Chris Taylor, and the research has the approval of the Cardiff University School of Social Sciences ethics committee.

**Questionnaires**

I wish to consider whether students completing a higher education degree feel that working while studying has any impact on the level of degree they hope to achieve and on their experience as a student, whether there are differences in this compared to how they felt

student life would be.  The questionnaire should take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete.


**Confidentiality and anonymity**


The questionnaires and the data obtained from within it will only be accessible to named researchers and will be kept securely, and in accordance with the UK data protection rules. They will not be used for any other purpose. An analysis of the information will form part of my report which will be assessed as part of my PhD. Further analysis may be published in academic and policy related journals and sources or form part of presentations to people interested in the subject.  Personal names will not be used in any publication or presentation (unless you wish otherwise). If I refer to your views, or quote you, I would refer to you in general terms.

**Participation**

Your participation in this research is of course entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

**Contact Information**

If you would like further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 02920692881 or by e mail on lyncavill@gmail.com.  I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the project.

Should you have any concerns regarding this study please contact:

Professor Søren Holm

Cardiff School of Social Sciences (SOCSI)

Glamorgan Building

King Edward VII Avenue

Cardiff  CF10 3WT

Tel: (0)29 2087 9051

http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi

<u>Back sheet for questionnaire:</u>

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.  As part of this research study I would like to ask selected respondents to take part in an interview or to record an audio taped diary on time management to gain more in-depth knowledge on undertaking paid employment while in full time study.

If you would be happy to take part in such an interview or complete the diary could you please fill in the consent form below.

**Consent Form**

| | **Please initial** |
|---|---|
| 1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have these answered satisfactorily. I am happy to take part in an interview and/or audio taped diary for further research for this study. | |
| 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. | |
| 3. I agree to take part in the study | |

If you are agreeable to participate in an interview or complete a diary could you provide me with the following details so I can contact you.  This information will be for my use only and will be confidential.

Name:

Telephone or mobile number:


Email address:


*Note:*

*This consent form attached to the questionnaire is for consent regarding being contacted to take part in an interview and/or audio taped diary so the text above the consent relates to this.*

<u>Interview information sheet:</u>

**Research on Student paid employment while in full time study:**

**Participant Information Sheet**

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. The following will give you a short overview of what this means for you and the information that you give to me. Before you decide whether to take part please read the following information. If you have any questions about the study, please use the contact details below.

**What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose is to investigate whether there is any perceived impact on the experience of student life when paid employment has been undertaken while in full time study, and to consider if there is an associated impact on achievement levels.

**Who are the researchers and who is funding the research?**

The research is funded by the Economic and Social Sciences Research Council (ESRC). My name is Lyn Cavill and I am completing a PhD within the educational field. I will be supervised throughout by two senior researchers, Professor John Fitz and Dr Chris Taylor, and the research has the approval of the Cardiff University School of Social Sciences ethics committee.

**Interviews**

I wish to consider whether students completing a higher education degree feel that working while studying has any impact on the level of degree they hope to achieve and on their experience as a student, whether there are differences in this compared to how they felt student life would be. The interview should take approximately 1 hour to complete.

**Confidentiality and anonymity**

The interview and the data obtained from within it will only be accessible to named researchers and will be kept securely, and in accordance with the UK data protection rules. They will not be used for any other purpose. An analysis of the information will form part of

my report which will be assessed as part of my degree. Further analysis may be published in academic and policy related journals and sources or form part of presentations to people interested in the subject. Personal names will not be used in any publication or presentation (unless you wish otherwise). If I refer to your views, or quote you, I would refer to you in general terms.

**Participation**

Your participation in this research is of course entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

**Contact Information**

If you would like further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 02920692881 or by e mail on lyncavill@gmail.com.  I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the project.

Should you have any concerns regarding this study please contact:

Professor Søren Holm

Cardiff School of Social Sciences (SOCSI)

Glamorgan Building

King Edward VII Avenue

Cardiff  CF10 3WT

Tel: (0)29 2087 9051

http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi

Thank you so much for taking part in this study.

**Research on Student paid employment while in full time study**

**Participant Information Sheet**

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. The following will give you a short overview of what this means for you and the information that you give to me. Before you decide whether to take part please read the following information. If you have any questions about the study, please use the contact details below.

**What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose is to investigate whether there is any perceived impact on the experience of student life when paid employment has been undertaken while in full time study and whether this has had a perceived affect on achievement levels. It is looking at the time management of students in particular.

**Who are the researchers and who is funding the research?**

The research is funded by the Economic and Social Sciences Research Council (ESRC). My name is Lyn Cavill and I am completing a PhD within the educational field. I will be supervised throughout by two senior researchers, Professor John Fitz and Dr Chris Taylor, and the research has the approval of the Cardiff University School of Social Sciences ethics committee.

**What will I be asked to do?**

The research is in three parts. The first was the questionnaire that you have already completed. The second part is two interviews; initially an interview to explain the audio taped diary and your role in my research, then an interview after you have finished the diary to ask your opinions on paid employment while in fulltime study. The third part is the audio taped dairy. This involves making a recording once a day for a week, on what you are doing in regards to time.

**Confidentiality and anonymity**

The audio taped data will only be accessible to named researchers and will be kept securely, and in accordance with the UK data protection rules. It will not be used for any other purpose. An analysis of the information will form part of my report which will be assessed as

part of my degree. Further analysis may be published in academic and policy related journals and sources or form part of presentations to people interested in the subject.  Personal names will not be used in any publication or presentation (unless you wish otherwise). If I refer to your views, or quote you, I would refer to you in general terms.


**Participation**

Your participation in this research is of course entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.


**Contact Information**

If you would like further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 02920692881 or by e mail on lyncavill@gmail.com.  I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the project.


Thank you so much for taking part in this study.

**Audio Diary Instructions:**

This diary aims to show how your time is allocated throughout the day. It is important to gain knowledge on how much time you spend on the different activities you do, so try to accurately record what you have done and at what times throughout the day.

To make recordings throughout the day is a good idea, though if this is not feasible you can make a recording in the evening as a summary of time use.

In every recording include:

- Time of day – make a note of when and how long you spent on any particular activity to give a picture of the whole day.
- Mood – how did you feel, at the time, about the time having to be spent on that particular activity?
- Time management – how do you feel about your day overall in relation to how your time has been spent

Please can you describe these in detail for an understanding on what you think about what you spend your time on?

If you forget to record the diary, don't worry, just record the entry when you remember, but could you record that this is a late entry.

I am interested in every way you spend your time and appreciate that this is a 'snapshot' of a week in your semester, and that things happen that influence how your time is managed.

Extra description:

Your entry for the diary can be as long or as short as you want to make it. However, if you have time for a longer, more detailed entry this would be really useful for me. The following guide may help give you ideas on what you might want to include:

Home – sleeping, housework, shopping (with travel time)

Family, friends and partners – visiting and socialising (with travel time)

Leisure activities – relaxation, 'me' time, hobbies, phoning and texting, social life, sport/keep fit activities, computer activities such as web sites and msn, Facebook etc, any travel time

University – studies such as reading and preparation times, research, exams and coursework, attending lectures and seminars, attending talks etc on subject area, other activities such as meetings with personal supervisor or fellow students, university societies, social life, and travel time.

Paid employment – hours worked, preparations for work and travel time, extra shifts, shift work.

Essential appointments such as dentist, GP etc – travel time, time there.

Voluntary work – hours and travel time

**Research on Student paid employment while in full time study**

**Participant Information Sheet**

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. The following will give you a short overview of what this means for you and the information that you give to me. Before you decide whether to take part please read the following information. If you have any questions about the study, please use the contact details below.

**What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose is to investigate whether there is any perceived impact on the experience of student life when paid employment has been undertaken while in full time study and whether this has had a perceived affect on achievement levels. It is looking at the time management of students in particular.

**Who are the researchers and who is funding the research?**

The research is funded by the Economic and Social Sciences Research Council (ESRC). My name is Lyn Cavill and I am completing a PhD within the educational field. I will be supervised throughout by two senior researchers, Professor John Fitz and Dr Chris Taylor, and the research has the approval of the Cardiff University School of Social Sciences ethics committee.

**What will I be asked to do?**

The research is in three parts. The first was the questionnaire that you have already completed. The second part is two interviews; initially an interview to explain the audio taped diary and your role in my research, then an interview after you have finished the diary to ask your opinions on paid employment while in fulltime study. The third part is the audio taped dairy. This involves making a recording once a week for twenty weeks, on what you are doing in regards to time.

**Confidentiality and anonymity**

The audio taped data will only be accessible to named researchers and will be kept securely, and in accordance with the UK data protection rules. It will not be used for any other

purpose. An analysis of the information will form part of my report which will be assessed as part of my degree. Further analysis may be published in academic and policy related journals and sources or form part of presentations to people interested in the subject. Personal names will not be used in any publication or presentation (unless you wish otherwise). If I refer to your views, or quote you, I would refer to you in general terms.

**Participation**

Your participation in this research is of course entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

**Contact Information**

If you would like further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 02920692881 or by e mail on lyncavill@gmail.com. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the project.

Thank you so much for taking part in this study.

**Audio Diary Instructions:**

This diary aims to show how your time is allocated throughout the week. It is important to gain knowledge on how much time you spend on the different activities you do, so try to accurately record what you have done and at what times throughout the week.

To make recordings throughout the week is a good idea, though if this is not feasible you can make a recording once a week as a summary of time use.

In every recording include:

- Time spent – make a note of when and how long you spent on any particular activity to give a picture of the whole week.
- Mood – how did you feel, at the time, about the time having to be spent on that particular activity?
- Time management – how do you feel about your week overall in relation to how your time has been spent

Please can you describe these in detail for an understanding on what you think about what you spend your time on?  If you forget to record the diary, don't worry, just record the entry when you remember, but could you record that this is a late entry.

I am interested in every way you spend your time and appreciate that things happen from week to week that influence how your time is managed.

Extra description:

Your entry for the diary can be as long or as short as you want to make it.  However, if you have time for a longer, more detailed entry this would be really useful for me.  The following guide may help give you ideas on what you might want to include:

- Home – sleeping, housework, shopping (with travel time)

- Family, friends and partners – visiting and socialising (with travel time)

- Leisure activities – relaxation, 'me' time, hobbies, phoning and texting, social life, sport/keep fit activities, computer activities such as web sites and msn, Facebook etc, any travel time

- University – studies such as reading and preparation times, research, exams and coursework, attending lectures and seminars, attending talks etc on subject area, other activities such as meetings with personal supervisor or fellow students, university societies, social life, and travel time.

- Paid employment – hours worked, preparations for work and travel time, extra shifts, shift work.

- Essential appointments such as dentist, GP etc – travel time, time there.

- Voluntary work – hours and travel time

# **APPENDIX B**

The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification

**The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification**

**Introduction**

From 2001 the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) will be used for all official statistics and surveys. It will replace Social Class based on Occupation (SC, formerly Registrar General's Social Class) and Socio-economic Groups (SEG).

This change has been agreed by the National Statistician following a major review of government social classifications commissioned in 1994 by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (now the Office for National Statistics) and carried out by the Economic and Social Research Council.

The NS-SEC is an occupationally based classification but has rules to provide coverage of the whole adult population. The information required to create the NS-SEC is occupation coded to the unit groups (OUG) of the Standard Occupational Classification 2000 (SOC2000) and details of employment status (whether an employer, self-employed or employee; whether a supervisor; number of employees at the workplace). Similar information was previously required for SC and SEG.

The version of the classification, which will be used for most analyses (the analytic version), has eight classes, the first of which can be subdivided.

| The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification Analytic Classes | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Higher managerial and professional occupations | |
| | 1.1 | Large employers and higher managerial occupations |
| | 1.2 | Higher professional occupations |
| 2 | Lower managerial and professional occupations | |
| 3 | Intermediate occupations | |
| 4 | Small employers and own account workers | |
| 5 | Lower supervisory and technical occupations | |
| 6 | Semi-routine occupations | |
| 7 | Routine occupations | |
| 8 | Never worked and long-term unemployed | |

**Analytic Classes and Operational Categories and Sub-categories of NS-SEC**

| Analytic Classes | Operational Categories and Sub-Categories | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | L1 | Employers in large organisations | |
| | L2 | Higher managerial occupations | |
| 1.2 | L3 | Higher professional occupations | |
| | | L3.1 | 'Traditional' employees |
| | | L3.2 | 'New' employees |
| | | L3.3 | 'Traditional' self-employed |
| | | L3.4 | 'New' self-employed |
| 2 | L4 | Lower professional and higher technical occupations | |
| | | L4.1 | 'Traditional' employees |
| | | L4.2 | 'New' employees |
| | | L4.3 | 'Traditional' self-employed |
| | | L4.4 | 'New' self-employed |
| | L5 | Lower managerial occupations | |
| | L6 | Higher supervisory occupations | |
| 3 | L7 | Intermediate occupations | |
| | | L7.1 | Intermediate clerical and administrative |
| | | L7.2 | Intermediate sales and service |
| | | L7.3 | Intermediate technical and auxiliary |
| | | L7.4 | Intermediate engineering |
| 4 | L8 | Employers in small organisations | |
| | | L8.1 | Employers in small organisations (non-professional) |
| | | L8.2 | Employers in small organisations (agriculture) |
| | L9 | Own account workers | |
| | | L9.1 | Own account workers (non-professional) |
| | | L9.2 | Own account workers (agriculture) |
| 5 | L10 | Lower supervisory occupations | |
| | L11 | Lower technical occupations | |
| | | L11.1 | Lower technical craft |
| | | L11.2 | Lower technical process operative |
| 6 | L12 | Semi-routine occupations | |
| | | L12.1 | Semi-routine sales |
| | | L12.2 | Semi-routine service |

| | | L12.3 | Semi-routine technical |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | L12.4 | Semi-routine operative |
| | | L12.5 | Semi-routine agricultural |
| | | L12.6 | Semi-routine clerical |
| | | L12.7 | Semi-routine childcare |
| **7** | **L13** | **Routine occupations** | |
| | | L13.1 | Routine sales and service |
| | | L13.2 | Routine production |
| | | L13.3 | Routine technical |
| | | L13.4 | Routine operative |
| | | L13.5 | Routine agricultural |
| **8** | **L14** | **Never worked and long-term unemployed** | |
| | | L14.1 | Never worked |
| | | L14.2 | Long-term unemployed |
| | | | |
| **\*** | **L15** | **Full-time students** | |
| | | | |
| **\*** | **L16** | **Occupations not stated or inadequately described** | |
| | | | |
| **\*** | **L17** | **Not classifiable for other reasons** | |

**\* For complete coverage, categories L15, L16 and L17 are added as 'Not Classified'. The composition of 'Not Classified' will be dependent on the data source.**

The category names used for the NS-SEC do not refer to 'skill'. This is quite deliberate since the classification is not based on skill levels. The categories describe different forms of employment relations, not skill levels. Although the name of the third class in the '3' Class version of NS-SEC is 'Routine and manual occupations' this does not perpetuate the manual/non-manual divide. Changes in the nature and structure of both industry and occupations have rendered this distinction both outmoded and misleading.

# **APPENDIX C**

Questionnaire for survey

**SECTION A: This section asks about you, your family and the decisions you made regarding going into higher education**

A1. Are you:

Male ☐ Female ☐

A2. What is your ethnicity? Please tick the box that is most applicable.

White British ☐
White Other ☐
Mixed ☐
Asian or Asian British ☐
Black or Black British ☐
Do not wish to specify my ethnic group ☐
Other, please specify: …………………………………

A3. What is your age now? …………………

A4. What are the occupations of your parents at present:

**Father** …………………………… N/A ☐

Could you briefly describe his role:

………………………………………………………………

Not sure of father's role ☐

**Mother**…………………………… N/A ☐

Could you briefly describe her role:

………………………………………………………………

Not sure of mother's role ☐

A5.Has anyone in your family been to university? Please tick all that apply.

Parent ☐
Brother/Sister ☐
Grandparent ☐
Aunt/Uncle ☐
Cousin ☐

A6: What influenced you in your choice of study?   Please tick the box that was the most important for you.

Aim for a specific career (e.g. law or nursing) ☐

The subject area ☐

Other, please specify:………………………

A7: Is your course full time or part time?

…………………………………….


**SECTION B: This section asks about the employment you have had within school and thus far within higher education.**

*Please note: **Term time paid employment** is any paid employment taken throughout the teaching term of the university year and includes both weekdays and weekends.  This does not include paid employment in the holidays/vacations.*


B1. Did you undertake term time paid employment in your last year at **school/college**?

Yes ☐                    No ☐

If yes, how many hours, on average, were you in paid employment in a week?  ……………

B2: Did you take a **gap year** before going to university?

Yes ☐                    No ☐

If yes, what did you do during this gap year?   Please tick as many as applicable.

Travelling ☐

Saved to go to university ☐

Took a year out to have a break from studying ☐

Other reason, please specify…………………………..

B3: Have you undertaken **any** paid employment since you started at **university**:

Yes ☐                    No ☐

If No then please go to question C1 in the next section of this questionnaire.

B4: Did you undertake **term time paid employment** during your **first** year at university?

Yes ☐                    No ☐

B5: Did you undertake any paid employment in the **Christmas or Easter holidays/vacations**?

Yes ☐                    No ☐

B6: Do you currently undertake **term time paid employment** while at university?

Yes ☐                    No ☐

275

B7: What term time paid employment do you do **currently** undertake while at university?
Please tick all that apply.

| | |
|---|---|
| Retail/bar work/catering | ☐ |
| Clerical/office | ☐ |
| Nursing/health care | ☐ |
| Sport & Leisure | ☐ |
| University employment, such as in a library | ☐ |
| Teaching | ☐ |
| Sport & Leisure | ☐ |
| Student Union | ☐ |
| Customer service industry, such as call centres | ☐ |
| Other, please specify………………………………. | |

B8: Since you have been back in university, from the beginning of this semester, how many hours per week, on average, have you undertaken paid employment?  ……………….

B9: When do you currently undertake your paid employment in a typical week?
Please tick all that apply

| | Weekdays | Weekends |
|---|---|---|
| 06.00 hours to 09.00 hours | ☐ | ☐ |
| 09.00 hours to 17.00 hours | ☐ | ☐ |
| 17.00 hours to 24.00 hours | ☐ | ☐ |
| 00.00 hours to 06.00 hours | ☐ | ☐ |

B10: Are your current hours of paid employment flexible, where you can take time off or reduce your hours if you need to?  Please tick the one that is the most applicable.

| | |
|---|---|
| Very flexible | ☐ |
| Some flexibility | ☐ |
| No flexibility | ☐ |

B11: Do you feel you have gained skills from undertaking paid employment?  Please tick the one you feel most applies.

| | |
|---|---|
| General transferable skills specific to employment (such as team working, communication skills) | ☐ |

Specific skills related to the career you would like to enter ☐

Do not feel I have gained any new skills ☐

B12: What do you use your wages from paid employment for?  Please tick as many boxes as apply:

Social Life ☐

Clothes and other consumer items ☐

Subsistence to live (paying utility bills, food etc) ☐

Rent ☐

Running a car/ transport costs ☐

Academic necessities, such as books or field trips ☐

Tuition fees ☐

Other,  please specify……………………………….

B13: Could you have afforded to come/stay at university without undertaking paid employment?

Yes ☐          No ☐

B14:  Was paid employment a factor in choosing your university? Please tick one box.

Very important ☐

Of some importance ☐

Not important ☐

B15:  Have you ever missed lectures or tutorials during your time at university because of paid employment?

Yes ☐          No ☐

B16: Have you ever handed in assignments late or required an extension during your time at university due to undertaking paid employment?

Yes ☐          No ☐

B17:  Do you consider that undertaking term time paid employment has adversely affected your **academic** studies? Please tick one box.

Agree ☐

Tend to agree ☐

Neither agree or disagree ☐

Tend to disagree ☐

Disagree ☐

B18: Do you consider that undertaking term time paid employment has adversely affected your **non academic** experience of student life? Please tick one box.

| | |
|---|---|
| Agree | ☐ |
| Tend to agree | ☐ |
| Neither agree or disagree | ☐ |
| Tend to disagree | ☐ |
| Disagree | ☐ |

**SECTION C: This section asks about your life as a student, both with regards to your studies and the experience of being a student.**

C1:  Are you regularly involved in any university societies?

Yes ☐                    No ☐

If yes how many hours per week, on average, do you spend on this? …………..

C2: Do you regularly undertake any unpaid voluntary work?

Yes ☐                    No ☐

If yes how many hours per week, on average, do you spend on this?..................

C3: How many hours a week, on average, would you say you spend on academic studies/field work/ lab work? …………………………………………………..

C4: Are you a member of any sports team?

Yes ☐                    No ☐

If yes how many hours per week, on average, do you spend on this? …………..

**SECTION D: This section asks about your finances related to higher education.**

D1:  Are you eligible for the Welsh fee grant waiver because your permanent place of residence is in Wales or you live outside the UK but inside the EU?

Yes ☐                    No ☐

D2. What sources of finance are available to you while at university? Please tick all boxes that apply.

| | Currently use | Have used | Can / would use |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student loan | | | |
| Bursary | | | |
| Grant | | | |
| Sponsorship | | | |
| Hardship fund in | | | |

| university | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Parental contribution | | | |
| Savings | | | |
| Wages (paid employment) | | | |

D3: Did you have any other source of financial income available to you?

Yes ☐                              No ☐

If yes, what is this? …………………………………………………….

D4: Regarding the parental contributions you receive, are these:

Regular contributions ☐

Contributions when needed ☐

Both ☐

I do not receive any parental contributions ☐

D5: How important would you say parental contributions are in financing a student through a degree?   Please tick the one you feel is most applicable.

I think parental contributions are essential to finance a degree ☐

I think parental contributions are helpful but not essential ☐

I do not think parental contributions are necessary ☐

D6:  Where do you currently live in **term time**?

Parental home ☐

Own home ☐

Halls of residence ☐

Shared house ☐

Other, please specify ………………………………….

D5: To which of these do you owe money?   Please tick all that apply.

Bank loans ☐

Student loan ☐

Overdraft ☐

Credit cards / store cards ☐

None ☐

Other please specify ………………………………….

*In each of the next three questions please tick the one box you feel most applies to you*

D6: Do you think that by the end of your degree you will:

279

Owe less than I thought I would ☐

Owe what I thought I would ☐

Owe more than I thought I would ☐

Have not considered this aspect ☐

D7: Which of the following describes how you feel about the money you owe?

I am anxious about the amount of money I owe and this is affecting my studies ☐

I am concerned about the money I owe but accept this as part of student life ☐

I am neither concerned nor unconcerned about the money I owe ☐

I do not worry about the money I owe ☐

I do not owe money ☐

D8: How do you feel regarding any debt you have accumulated through obtaining a degree:

I feel the money I owe is an investment for my future earnings potential ☐

I feel the money I owe may be an investment for my future earnings potential ☐

I feel the money I owe may not be an investment for my future earnings potential ☐

I will not owe any money because of obtaining a degree ☐

# **APPENDIX D**

Topic guide for semi structured interview

**Topic guide for semi structured interview:**

**What do I want to find out?**
Student perceptions of earning while learning, on the student experience overall, achievement potential versus reality, and debt while obtaining their degree, input of all work inclusive of voluntary work. These are perceptions – what will try to answer these?

**Demographics** – gender, ethnicity, age, class, University attended, course

**Choice of university and course -** why go to university? Decisions on going to University, expectations of the degree to future life opportunities, knowledge of funding prior to higher education, influence of generation attending university. Which university – choice influenced by paid employment? Stay where student has employment or attend University in an area where student employment is easily found.

**Attitudes to paid employment/why work** – motivations to undertake paid employment, what are wages for, necessities, luxuries. Which sociological factors influence students who undertake paid employment? Has paid employment become part of student life, are there changing attitudes towards paid employment while in full-time study. Social opportunities, opportunities to gain practical experience for CV.

**Attitudes to the actual employment** - enjoyment versus means to end, with no choice. General transferable skills. Expectations on paid employment while at University, knowledge on this. Affordability of University without paid employment. Prior paid employment before entering higher **education**.

**Paid employment effect on studies and student life** – perceived effects and levels of achievement by missing lectures and tutorials. Direct impact from clash of timing or indirect impact due to fatigue. Relationship with voluntary work

**Financial support** – what streams of financial support do students get, and from whom? How much do they need to live versus how much they think they need to live?

**Contracts/negotiations** – are these in existence between parents and students? Parental help, direct as money, indirect via application for loans, grants etc, subsidise student living at home, boxes of food, laundry etc Is parental help condition or unconditional? What are the negotiations, number of hours in employment, standard being achieved, use of money?

**Policing the finance** - does parental help impact on the number of hours in paid employment, reduced hours, change of shift pattern, time in year employed. Parent finance – money in families, gender influence, who has the money?

**Power relationships** – with employers, agency of student in the labour market. Have they the power to say no?

**Attitudes to debt** – debt related to entering higher education, type, level and anxieties around this. Does this change throughout the degree course? Is it an issue or has debt become part of student life. Typology of students affected by debt, psychological well-being

**Benefits from paid employment** – are there skills gained, transferable skills, specific skills from future career, experience for a CV. Formal skills – career and promotion. Informal skills – socialising communication, management of time, the soft skills that employers like. No skills.

**University expectations** - How does employment fit in with study expectations, what happens if too many hours worked? Time management issues.

**Student life** – did they have preconceived ideas of what the student life, what was the reality, what were the expectations around time management, was this affected by employment. Was enjoyment of the learning eroded because of time management juggling? Were sacrifices made because of paid employment e.g. lack of students activities participation

**N.B.** the topic guide was applied loosely, and though all themes were covered, the order was varied according to how the interview was flowing