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The changing nature of student-ship: social inclusion and paid employment practices in the Bradley years

Joanne Dearlove
University of Wollongong, dearlove@uow.edu.au

James Marland
Australian Catholic University, james.marland@acu.edu.au

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Abstract

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Keywords

social, inclusion, changing, paid, nature, employment, practices, bradley, years, student, ship

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The Changing Nature of Student-ship: Social inclusion and paid employment practices in the Bradley Years.

James Marland
Lecturer in Theatre, Literature and Communication
Australian Catholic University
and
Joanne Dearlove
Lecturer, Learning Development
University of Wollongong

ABSTRACT

The Bradley review suggests that students with low socio-economic status (SES) need greater financial support than that which is currently offered to them if they are to take up university places and remain at university throughout their courses (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent and Scales, 2008). This recommendation is, in part, based on research into the necessity for low SES students to maintain paid, term-time employment throughout their higher education to meet their basic needs. This study is a companion study to one recently undertaken into this issue at another Australian university site (Dearlove & Marland, 2012). Consequently, it seeks to explore the connection between SES status and paid term-time employment at this site: a suburban campus of a national Australian university. This research used a four page questionnaire to establish average hours of employment, types of employment, the necessity for employment, the expenditure of the money earned, and the potential for interference between study and paid employment for the full-time undergraduate students participating in this research. As with the previous research, there was a remarkable level of similarity between the responses of the two SES groups studied (low and mid/high). As term-time employment appears to be an almost universal phenomenon driven by necessity, it seems that it is time for universities and government to attempt to assist students to manage these dual roles.

KEY WORDS

Bradley Review; SES; term-time employment; social inclusion

1. INTRODUCTION

The Bradley Review (2008) made various recommendations concerning strategies for the social inclusion of students, including those with a low socio-economic status (LSES). Although this Review was released five years ago, it has only recently (2012) come into official effect. To establish greater social equity, the Review identifies a number of possible

economic and social strategies that government agencies and universities might implement as a way to draw individuals with LSES into university study (p. 40-42). One such strategy proposed by Bradley is to provide increased financial support to LSES students, arguing that it is "critically important to attract financially disadvantaged students into higher education" (p. 47). What adds potency to this recommendation is that it already seems to be the case that many students are financially challenged and must negotiate a balance between their student, work and social/personal lives in order to remain at university (McInnis & Hartley, 2002; James, Bexley, Devlin & Marginson, 2007). This issue is becoming of interest at the sector level and is now targeted in a single item in the national University Experience Survey (UES) (Radloff, Coates, Taylor, James & Krause, 2012). A recently completed qualitative research project (Dearlove & Marland, 2012) has investigated the issue of paid work for undergraduate students at an onshore suburban satellite site of a major regional university in NSW. The campus was located in an area described by Baum, O'Connor and Stimson (2005, p. 68) as comfortable and "advantaged" (p. 67). Despite this, just over a third (34.47%) of the respondents were categorised as LSES on the basis of their parents' levels of education, the same measure employed in this current study. The research reported here seeks to explore the relevance of such findings to a campus of a university that has proactively sought to attract students in response to the Bradley initiatives.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Socio-Economic Status (SES): Academic Participation and Social Inclusion

Simon Marginson (2011) has appositely demonstrated the complexity of developing policies around the promotion of equity, where there is tension between issues of fairness and social

inclusion. While it is true that enrolled university students with a LSES are underrepresented, the factors associated with their limited numbers are complex. Current research on this topic (McMillan & Western, 2000; James, 2001; Bowden & Doughney, 2010; Smith, 2011; Brook, 2011) has identified a number of potentially limiting factors in relation to Australian universities' enrolments of students with LSES, and it appears that these factors are largely attitudinal. Some studies have unexpectedly demonstrated that students of a LSES share an equivalent level of aspiration to attend university as those students who have a mid/high socio-economic-status (M/HSES) (Smith, 2011; Bok, 2010). However, Zammit (2011) has suggested that students with M/HSES may be pedagogically privileged, in that they have a history of positive classroom engagement due to the type of knowledge that is valued. Such cultural capital is not as available to LSES students, which may ultimately impact on their participation in higher education. Further, students with a LSES may compound negative school experiences with scholastic self-doubt and, therefore, may lack confidence in their academic ability (Smith, 2011, p. 166). This factor maydiscourage them from entering university studies. Other research suggests that financial concerns and debt aversion, that is, attitudes to financial matters, may be a factor that results in students from a LSES taking up vocational training rather than a university qualification, although the research is inconsistent (Callender & Jackson, 2008; Forsyth & Furlong, 2003). In fact, James (2007) has argued that financial considerations for those of LSES are complex and that "the assumption that cost is the principal barrier to access" is a myth (p. 11). James (2007) posits that "[c]ost is a factor, but it is not the only factor. All the evidence points to lower levels of school achievement, lower aspirations, and lack of perceived personal relevance being far more potent factors" (p. 11).

2.2 Paid work practices of students: The Australian Context

Research into Australian university students' paid work practices and its impact on their academic performances, has uncovered a number of trends and raised a number of issues requiring further investigation; these issues are summarised here and discussed below. While the actual percentage of students involved in paid work and the average hours worked varies by cohort, it is clear that it is now the norm for students to work rather than the exception. The average number of hours of term-time work is increasing in general and overwhelmingly students are working out of necessity. The hours worked appear to reach a certain point (although this point varies across different studies, see Section 2.4 below) before negatively impacting students' academic results. Further, the work can have both direct and indirect negative effects on class attendances. However, there appears to be little evidence to suggest that paid work impacts to a greater extent on LSES than on M/HSES in the Australian context.

Research into the paid work practices of Australian undergraduate university students has now spanned more than ten years, beginning in earnest with the report by McInnes and Hartley (2002), and following a relatively brief mention of this issue in the McInnes, James and Hartley (2000) First Year Experience Report. The latter report pointed to a "trend…[towards]…less attachment and commitment to a range of aspects of university life and academic work on the part of those who work longer hours in paid employment" (p. xii) . The subsequent McInnes and Hartley (2002) report provided a more detailed picture of the situation at that time. They reported that the average hours of paid work per week was 14.7 and that for 75% of students this was their main or only source of income. They also reported an inverse and close relationship between course contact hours and hours of paid work, although the majority of jobs were neither directly nor indirectly related to the

students' courses of study. In this study, 68% of respondents indicated that they worked to pay for basic necessities such as rent, food and transport.

In 2007, the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee commissioned a report into student finances (James, Bexley, Devlin & Marginson, 2007), which painted a picture consistent with the findings of these earlier reports. James et al. (2007) found that 70.6% of full-time undergraduate students were working an average of 14.8 hours per week to afford basic necessities, transport, textbooks and related study materials. Almost 40% of full-time students felt work negatively affected their studies and 22.4% regularly missed classes to attend employment. A small case study into medical students at the University of Adelaide conducted at this time (Duggin & Keefe, 2007) claimed that missing morning classes was arguably the result of tiredness from the previous day's or evening's employment. They also suggested the possibility of a mismatch between the current students' needs for income and previous tertiary cohorts' financial situations. This circumstance could lead to a possible mismatch in mutual expectations between faculty and students.

As is often the case, some inconsistencies between research results exist, usually as a result of different methodologies. However, trends are still identifiable. The 2010 First Year Experience Report (James, Krause & Jennings, 2010) indicates that 61% of full-time students also worked part-time and comments that this is "[a] growing proportion…" (p. 1). The report notes that only five years earlier that 55% of full-time students were engaged in part-time work, although the average of nearly 13 hours of paid work per week remains constant over this reporting period. Nearly two-thirds of working students earned money for basic needs despite longer hours of work being related to poorer GPAs. There appeared to be a decrease in the number and percentage of students feeling work interfered with their studies. At this time, a study by Robbins (2010) focussed on both the "…need for students to work

during semesters…now impacting negatively on the quality of the educative experience" (AVCC 2007, Robbins, 2006 & Marriott, 2007, as cited in Robbins, 2010, p. 104) and on the vulnerability of students as employees in an increasingly deregulated employment market. Hall (2010) provides longitudinally researched results on the experiences of University of New South Wales (UNSW) students, showing increasing numbers and percentages of students working primarily in order to cover living costs, with decreasing numbers and percentages of hours spent on study and recreational activities. Most work was unrelated to the students' courses of study and the work often caused tiredness and decreased motivation. Hall points out that there is a finite point to the sorts of trade-offs students are currently making. This is consistent with the research (see section 2.4 below) that indicates a tipping point in the number of hours students can work before it impacts negatively on their results. Munro (2011) has added to the above numerically-based research outcomes by qualitatively investigating how students experienced their work-study balance. Students articulated a positive view of term time employment, despite difficulties with managing their dual roles.

Recently a longitudinal and statistically rigorous study conducted by Salamonson, Everett, Koch, Andrew and Davidson (2012) into nursing students' paid work practices, showed that during their three-year enrolment, students: increased their hours of employment, shifted to course-related employment, and working 16 hours per week was the limit before this employment negatively impacted their GPA. They noted that the clinical experiences gained through this employment did not seem to positively impact students' academic results even though the employment was increasingly work-related.

Finally, in the Australian context as elsewhere, the relationship between paid work and students' SES is poorly researched. James, Krause, and Jennings (2010) comment that the reasons for term-time employment varied minimally by SES but were more evident when age

was the discriminating factor. They also, reported that, in general, LSES students are far more likely to work to meet basic needs and support families (2010, p. 51). Otherwise, findings on this issue do not appear in the research literature.

2.4 Paid work practices of students: The Global Context

The tendency towards working in paid employment while studying full-time is a global trend. In the United States (US), the flexibility of university provision "allows and even encourages students to combine paid work with their studies" (Johnstone & Shroff-Mehta, 2011, as cited in Callender, 2008, p. 362). Studies in the United Kingdom (UK) show an upward trend in hours of employment per week over time. For example, Hunt, Lincoln and Walker (2004) show increases from 1999 to 2001 of 37.6% to 48.7% and Darmody and Smyth (2008) reported 6 out of 10 students in their study cohort were working.

The average hours worked by students vary by cohort and in the UK appears to be fewer than the average number of hours worked by Australian students. Metcalf (2003) reported that half her UK research cohort worked an average of 12 hours or less and three quarters worked 16 hours or less. Darmody and Smyth (2008) reported that most of their Irish research cohort worked only 6-10 hours per week.

The impact of students' employment on their studies is often the focus of concern and findings appear contradictory. Callendar (2008) links work to poorer marks. Hunt, Lincoln and Walker (2004) do likewise but only for second and subsequent years of study, while Wenz and Yu (2010) report a decrease of 0.007 GPA per hour worked. Pike, Kuh and Massa-McKinley (2008) provide a thorough analysis of the direct and indirect impact of paid work on academic achievement in the US context and show that there is a:

> statistically significant negative relationship … between working more than 20 hours per week and grades, even after controlling for students' characteristics and levels of engagement. An examination of the indirect relationships between work and grades revealed that working 20 hours or less on campus was significantly and positively related to grades
>
> (p. 578)

Thus, the actual hours of work can have a variable impact on student achievement, depending on the hours of employment undertaken.

In relation to the conditional impact of paid work on students of different SES in the US, Pike, Kuh and Massa-McKinley (2008) suggest that the impact relates to hours of work, not student characteristics. However, Metcalf (2003), Hunt, Lincoln and Walker (2004), Moreau and Leathwood (2006) and Cooke, Barkham, Audin, and Bradley (2004) all discuss the possible inequities in the UK that appear to result as the greater proportion of working students come from poorer circumstances. Thus, the relationships between paid work and SES remain unclear and are quite possibly influenced by the socio-political and socio-economic contexts in which the students are studying and working.

3. RESEARCH STUDY

This research replicates an investigation into the relationship between university students' work and study (Dearlove & Marland, 2012) conducted at an onshore suburban satellite site of a major regional university in NSW situated in an area described as comfortable and

"advantaged" (Baum et al., 2005, p. 67). This previous research focused on 'pre-Bradley' students, that is, a pre-2012 enrolment, whereas this current study focuses on a 'Bradley cohort', that is a cohort admitted under the first year of operation of the Bradley recommendations (2012). This study is intended to provide some insights concerning social inclusion and the paid work practices of a group of Australian students enrolled under the Bradley Review's recommendations and to allow comparison of these results with the results from a cohort enrolled at another Australian university site prior to the implementation of Bradley.

3.1 Research Questions

Drawing from the previous study (Dearlove & Marland, 2012), this paper addresses the following questions in relation to students in the Bradley era:

1. Are there any significant distinctions between LSES and M/HSES cohorts with respect to term-time employment in general, the number of hours worked, and the types of jobs worked?

2. What sorts of financial decisions or considerations are made by these students and are there any noticeable differences across SES cohorts?

3. Does work interfere with commitment to academic study for LSES and M/HSES cohorts?

3.2 Research Site

The site of this study is a national university's suburban campus, located in a "middle-class advantaged" western Sydney suburb (Baum et al., 2005, p. 3.14). The suburb has "more high than low income households" (Baum et.al, 2005, p. 3.14) with "high proportions of educated professionals and new-economy workers" (Baum et.al, 2005, p. 3.15). Although the university is positioned in a "middle-class advantaged" suburb, much of the surrounding

areas are deemed to be of LSES (see below for an operational definition of SES). This university has actively recruited students with marginal ATARs[1]and from LSES in response to the Bradley objective of a 40% proportion of university graduates in the 25-34 age group by 2025 and a widening of participation. As Massaro and Martin (2009) have pointed out, even if the 20% of total enrolments which is to comprise students of LSES complete their degrees, this would still not achieve the 40% target. To do this, students with lower ATARS than have previously been enrolled will need to be recruited. This group of students have not been explicitly discussed by Bradley nor in the Australian Government's policy paper *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System* (Australian Government, 2009).

3.3 Participant Group

This Bradley cohort comprises students who form the first intake under the Bradley recommendations (Bradley, 2008). In the second semester of 2012, first-year full-time undergraduate students enrolled in subjects associated with the disciplines of history and performance studies in Arts and Education degrees were surveyed over a period of one week. One hundred and seventy-three students were given a questionnaire and 169 were returned giving a response rate of 97.7%. Full-time students (n=159) comprise the participant group in this research. The participant group's responses represented a response rate of 91.9%. This participant group was comprised predominantly of females (60.38%, n=96); of traditional age (that is, 18-20 years, 74.21%, n=118); and of M/HSES (73.58%, n=117). The majority were enrolled in a degree that related to education (59.75%, n=95), about one third were enrolled in an Arts degree (33.33%, n=53), with the remainder (6.92%, n=11) enrolled in either a combined Arts degree (n=9) or they failed to specify the nature of their degree (n=2).

[1] ATAR: Australian Tertiary Admission Rank - The ATAR is a percentile ranking measure used in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, which ranks the academic abilities of university applicants. It is a score out of 100 to two decimal places (Universities Admissions Centre (NSW and ACT), 2012, p. 1)

3.4 Method

This research project employed the same method as a companion project conducted with a different but predominantly middle class, pre-Bradley cohort (Dearlove & Marland, 2012). This was to facilitate comparisons across case studies. Participants in this research were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire concerning their current term-time employment practices, enrolment and demographics. Akin with the previous study, "[t]he questionnaire sought to establish average hours of employment, types of employment, the necessity for employment, the expenditure of the money earned, and the potential for interference between study and paid employment. The demographic information was used to determine the students' SES" (Dearlove & Marland, 2012, p. A-63).

The surveys were distributed during class time in the second semester of 2012 to students enrolled in history and performance studies subjects. The results were coded, entered into Excel, and counts and percentages were generated. Textual responses were categorised and counts and percentages were calculated.

3.5 Operationalisation of the concept of socio-economic status

This study measured SES based on each individual student's parents' levels of education in accordance with the recommendations by Bowden and Doughney (2010, p. 120) and James (2001, p. 464). The shortcomings of the postcode methodology are generally acknowledged (McMillan & Western, 2000; James, 2001; Bowden & Doughney, 2010; Bradley et al., 2008; James et al., 2008; and Western, 1998), and Bowden and Doughney argue that SES can be "measured by the level of parental education" (2010, p. 120). James (2001) defines LSES students as those whose "parents did not attend school, attended primary school, or attended

some secondary school" (p. 464). On this basis, any post-secondary qualification by either parent was considered to indicate M/HSES in this study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are summarised below under each of the research questions listed in the methodology. Comparisons will be made to the companion research project (Dearlove & Marland, 2012) as well as to national and international literature.

4.1 Are there any noticeable distinctions between LSES and M/HSES cohorts with respect to term-time employment in general, the number of hours worked, and the types of jobs worked?

On the basis of the results of this survey, there appears to be greater similarity than difference between the LSES and M/HSES groups in relation to their participation in term-time employment. The hours students spent in term-time employment appear to be relatively similar across the two SES groupings in this study (LSES and M/HSES) with two notable exceptions: non-participation and participation for 1-8 hours per week (see discussion below). Vocational orientations towards term-time employment appear to be similarly minimal between SES groupings. The influence of the location and rate of pay of the term-time employment may be different between the two SES groupings, although the poor response rates to these items render conclusions drawn on the basis of this information somewhat questionable.

Table 1 shows students' responses to questionnaire items related to general patterns of term-time employment, according to the students' SES.

Table 1: Data on Students' Patterns of Term-time Employment

Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Responses	
How many hours per week (on average) do you undertake paid employment, during the semester? (If not working during the semester, indicate '0' hours)		%	n=41	%	n=117
	0 hours	29.27	12	19.66	23
	1 – 8.5 hours	9.76	4	18.80	22
	9 – 16.5 hours	26.83	11	29.06	34
	17 – 24 hours	19.51	8	14.53	17
	25+ hours	14.63	6	15.38	18
	Unspecified	0.00	0	2.56	3
Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Responses	
If you work, why do you undertake the particular type of paid employment that you do: Work is related to my field of study		%	n=41	%	n=117
	Strongly Agree	7.32	3	5.98	7
	Agree	2.44	1	8.55	10
	Neutral	12.20	5	11.11	13
	Disagree	17.07	7	23.08	27
	Strongly Disagree	29.27	12	32.48	38
	Unspecified	31.71	13	18.80	22
Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Responses	
If you work, why do you undertake the particular type of paid employment that you do: Work is conveniently located		%	n=41	%	n=117
	Strongly Agree	19.51	8	23.93	28
	Agree	36.59	15	35.04	41
	Neutral	12.20	5	11.11	13
	Disagree	0.00	0	9.40	11
	Strongly Disagree	0.00	0	2.56	3
	Unspecified	31.71	13	17.95	21
Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Responses	
If you work, why do you undertake the particular type of paid employment that you do: Work is well paid		%	n=41	%	n=117
	Strongly Agree	17.07	7	11.11	13
	Agree	12.20	5	45.30	53
	Neutral	26.83	11	14.53	17
	Disagree	9.76	4	5.13	6
	Strongly Disagree	2.44	1	5.13	6

	Unspecified	31.71	13	18.80	22
Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Response	
If you work, why do you undertake the particular type of paid employment that you do: My work hours fit with my studies.		%	n=41	%	n=117
	Strongly Agree	19.51	8	20.51	24
	Agree	17.07	7	42.74	50
	Neutral	24.39	10	9.40	11
	Disagree	4.88	2	7.69	9
	Strongly Disagree	2.44	1	1.71	2
	Unspecified	31.71	13	17.95	21

The data related to students' paid employment in Table 1 show that the percentages of students from both SES groups who are in paid term-time employment are remarkably similar when working times are compressed to 0 to 8.5 hours (39.03%, n=16 for LSES and 38.46%, n=45 for M/HSES students), 9 to 24 hours (46.34%, n=19 for LSES and 43.59%, n=51 for M/HSES students) and over 25 hours (14.63%, n=6 for LSES and 15.38%, n=18 for M/HSES students). Where sizeable differences do occur between the LSES and M/HSES student groups are in the percentages of students not in paid employment (roughly 29%, n= 12 and 20%, n=23 respectively) and of those employed for between 1 and 8.5 hours (roughly 10%, n=4 and 19%, n=22 respectively). In these instances, the LSES group were less likely to participate in term-time employment and less likely to be working even these minimal hours. Reasons for these similarities and differences are impossible to adduce, although the results do suggest that SES may not be as reliably indicative of financial need as detailed in the Bradley Review, or that financial need is addressed by these two student groups in ways other than by undertaking term-time employment.

However, in comparison with data from the previous study (Dearlove & Marland, 2012), a greater number of students from both SES cohorts in this research were not participating in

part-time employment than in the companion research (22.15%, n=35 in this study and 13.07%, n=23 of the cohort in the previous research). In direct contrast to common beliefs concerning LSES students and their greater need for employment in order to sustain their studies (Bradley, 2008), this research and the companion research both indicate minimal differences in employment patterns between SES cohorts at both research sites. These results also contradict the UK patterns of student part-time employment and consequent concerns over inequity (Metcalf, 2003; Hunt, Lincoln & Walker, 2004; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; and Cooke, Barkham, Audin & Bradley, 2004) as a result of LSES students working more than M/HSES students. In this research and the companion research, paid employment practices were remarkably similar across SES groups. However, what this research does not address is whether LSES students had already withdrawn from their studies in response to difficult financial circumstances.

The relatedness of students' work to their field of study is difficult to consider in this research cohort as the BA degree is not vocationally oriented and the combined degrees (for example, BA/BSW) require professional qualifications prior to related employment, so the researchers were reliant on students' self-reports of the relatedness. Based on these data, around half of each SES group (low=46.34%, n=19; M/HSES = 55.56%, n=65) felt their work did not relate to their studies, while only a few (LSES= 9.76%, n=4; M/HSES = 14.53%, n=17) felt it did. It should be noted that students did not identify or report on the general skills that are developed in the BA as being related to their employability or vocational placement. These data suggest that the motivation for students' participation in the type of employment they undertake lies outside future specific vocational pathways for these students. This is in contrast with the findings of Salamonson et al. (2012) when investigating the work patterns of students enrolled in nursing which is a highly vocationally oriented degree. Similarly, this

case study's findings contrast markedly with the companion research findings, which are more consistent with the Salamonson et al. results.

The convenience of the location of the work and the level of pay were both influences in students' decisions to engage in part-time employment, although the high non-response rate to this item and the high frequency of neutral as a response, combine to make any conclusions based on these responses highly tentative. Both the LSES and the M/HSES groups (LSES= 56.1%, n=23 M/HSES = 58.97%, n=69) indicated that the convenience of the location was a factor in their engagement in term time paid work. For the M/HSES group, a nearly equally strong motivator was the level of pay, with 56.4% (n=66) indicating that this influenced their decision to engage in the type of term time employment they did. Interestingly, only 29.27% of the LSES group indicated this while over a quarter (26.83%, n=11) were neutral, that is either unsure whether or not the level of pay had an effect on their decisions to engage in work or indicating it was irrelevant to this decision. Moreover, a further 32% of LSES students did not respond to this question at all (19% in the cases of M/HSES students).

A notable difference between the two SES groups in this research cohort is that the M/HSES group undertook employment because the hours of work fitted with their studies whereas this reason was less prominent among the LSES group (LSES= 36.58% n=15; M/HSES = 63.25% n=74). Note however that 24% took a neutral position and 31% did not respond. These response patterns represent a weakness in the data and mean that only highly tentative conclusions that require further investigation can be drawn. Keeping these weaknesses in mind, it seems that the role of pay and the necessity for work hours that fit with study patterns are two areas which might be operating differently in the two SES groups in this study. This difference requires confirmation and investigation elsewhere, especially as it

relates to a difference between the SES groups concerning their prioritising of their current activities (work and study) and their educational / career aspirations, that is, their short and long term planning goals. What this points toward is the need for a more refined and complex notion of SES that acknowledges some of the hard-to-define subtleties in this concept as well as the need to more fully investigate attitudinal factors that are associated with students' enrolment in universities and participation in paid work, rather than focusing on financial factors (Marginson, 2011; McMillan & Western, 2000; James, 2001; Bowden & Doughney, 2010; Smith, 2011; Brook, 2011).

4.2 What sort of financial decisions or considerations are made by these students and are there any noticeable differences across SES cohorts?

There were remarkable levels of similarity between the two SES groups in this study in relation to the financial decisions they made concerning essential and non-essential expenditures and their definitions of essential and non-essential items.

Table 2: Students' Responses to Questionnaire Items related to Expenditure Patterns Differentiated according to Students' SES.

Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Responses	
Please circle the proportion of your income (from work and other sources eg AUSTUDY) that you estimate is spent on essential and non-essential items		%	n=41	%	n=117
	0% on essentials and 100% non-essentials	2.44	1	4.27	5
	Between 1 & 20% on essentials AND between 80 & 99% on non-essentials .	19.51	8	12.82	15
	Between 21 & 40% on essentials AND between 60 & 79% on non-essentials.	21.95	9	26.50	31
	Between 41 & 60% on essentials AND between 40 & 59%	17.07	7	18.80	22

	on non-essentials.				
	Between 61 & 80% on essentials AND between 20 & 39% on non-essentials.	24.39	10	16.24	19
	Between 81 & 99% on essentials AND between 1 & 19% on non-essentials.	2.44	1	12.82	15
	BLANK	12.20	5	8.55	10

* No student indicated spending 100% on essentials and 0% on non-essentials

This research cohort appears to be less well off than the companion research cohort, with just less than a third of the M/HSES group (29.06% n=34) and just over a quarter of the LSES group (26.83%, n=11) spending 0-39% of their income on non-essentials. About three quarters of the previous research cohort was spending 0-40% on non-essentials. However, it is interesting that the expenditure patterns for both SES groups in both studies are similar, and it could be that something related to the locales is influencing expenditure patterns more than SES. Given that most participants are aged between 18 and 20 years (74%, n=169) it is possible that shared social activities situated around each locale and peer pressure to participate influences these expenditure patterns more than SES.

Students from both SES groups in this study ranked the top three essential items in the same way, indicating no difference with respect to the prioritising of necessities. In fact, both groups ranked

food first: M/HSES 25.29% n=87; LSES 24.56% n=28,

transport second: M/HSES 21.51% n=74; LSES17.54% n=20,

study costs third: M/HSES:16.28% n=56; LSES14.91% n=17.

This was also true of the companion research cohort (Dearlove & Marland, 2012), although the actual items that were listed deviated very slightly from this study. Despite the geographical differences, there is marked similarity between the cohorts at both sites. Due to the different methods and reporting choices detailed in various studies, it is difficult to make detailed comparisons with published literature. However, the Australian research by James, Bexley, Devlin and Marginson (2007) and James, Krause and Jennings (2010) both indicate that the majority of students are working to meet basic needs or for necessities. This current research indicates food, transport, and study costs are key demands on students' earnings and these could be considered necessities for students. Similarly, Hall (2010) discovered that UNSW students were working primarily to meet living costs. These results consistently indicate that term time employment is not an optional activity undertaken by many students, but is in fact a necessity.

Non-essential items were also ranked similarly by both SES groups in this study. The first three items ranked by M/HSES and LSES students were the same and included entertainment, transport and clothing. A minor difference was that entertainment and transport were ranked in reverse positions by M/HSES and LSES respondents:

Entertainment: ranked first by M/HSES 32.57% n=71 and second by LSES23.68% n=18, leisure items: ranked second by M/HSES 20.18% n=44 and first by LSES27.63% n=21, clothes: ranked third by both groups M/HSES 18.35% n=40 and LSES22.37% n=17.

These results are further evidence of minimal differences between students of different SES backgrounds in relation to their involvement in term-time employment. In this case, their expenditure patterns are highly similar.

4.3 Does work interfere with commitment to academic study for either cohort?

Both SES groups similarly prioritised study over work by reducing their work hours to accommodate their study needs more often than the reverse. Both groups also reported similar levels of interference by term-time employment in their study.

Table 3. Table showing students' responses to questionnaire items pertaining to the relationship between paid work and study.

Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Responses	
How often, if at all, does your work interfere with your ability to study or attend classes?		%	n=41	%	n=117
	Always	4.88	2	3.42	4
	Often	21.95	9	22.22	26
	Sometimes	34.15	14	43.59	51
	Never	4.88	2	11.11	13
	Blank	34.15	14	19.66	23
Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Responses	
Please indicate which of the following statements best explains any interference your work creates with your ability to study or attend classes: Work conflicts with my scheduled classes.		%	n=41	%	n=117
	Strongly Agree	2.44	1	1.71	2
	Agree	7.32	3	11.97	14
	Neutral	19.51	8	20.51	24
	Disagree	21.95	9	25.64	30
	Strongly Disagree	14.63	6	18.80	22
	Blanks	34.15	14	21.37	25
Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Responses	
Please indicate which of the following statements best explains any interference your work creates with your ability to study or attend classes: Work takes up time that I would like to use for study.		%	n=41	%	n=117
	Strongly Agree	17.07	7	17.09	20
	Agree	29.27	12	35.04	41
	Neutral	12.20	5	17.95	21
	Disagree	4.88	2	5.13	6
	Strongly Disagree	2.44	1	4.27	5
	Blanks	34.15	14	20.51	24

Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Responses	
Please indicate which of the following statements best indicates the way in which your work assists with your studies: Work enables me to afford study.		%	n=41	%	n=117
	Strongly Agree	17.07	7	17.09	20
	Agree	31.71	13	36.75	43
	Neutral	4.88	2	13.68	16
	Disagree	7.32	3	9.40	11
	Strongly Disagree	7.32	3	4.27	5
	Blanks	31.71	13	18.80	22
Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Responses	
Have you had to decrease your work hours to accommodate your time needs while studying?		%	n=41	%	n=117
	Yes	56.10	23	52.14	61
	No	17.07	7	27.35	32
	Blanks	26.83	11	20.51	24
Question	Categories of responses	LSES Students' Responses		M/HSES Students' Responses	
Have you had to reduce your study load (i.e. moved from full to part-time, or dropped a subject) to accommodate your time needs for working?		%	n=41	%	n=117
	Yes	21.95	9	17.09	20
	No	51.22	21	65.81	77
	Blanks	26.83	11	17.09	20

The two SES groups in this study were similar in their prioritising of study over work. Over half of both groups (LSES= 56.1% n=23; M/HSES = 52.14%, n=61) had reduced work hours for study and a similar percentage of each group (LSES= 21.95% n=9; M/HSES = 17.09%, n=20) had had to reduce their study load to allow them to work. This similarity was also evident in the companion research (Dearlove & Marland, 2012, p. A-68).

For both SES groups, work interferes with study and classes to some extent for the majority (LSES= 60.98%, n=25; M/HSES = 69.23% n=81). Only a few students from either SES

group (LSES= 9.76% n=4; M/HSES = 13.68% n=16) found that work interfered with their scheduled classes. The companion research reported similar findings (Dearlove & Marland, 2012, p. A-68). These data are at odds with the findings of James et al. (2007) who found that 22.4% regularly missed classes for work. Duggin and Keefe (2007) argued that it was likely that students missed morning classes as a result of evening work, based on the students' reports that their employment caused fatigue and a hangover effect the next day. This interpretation was based on a high frequency of responses to a free response item in their survey. In contrast, large proportions from both SES groups in the study reported here (LSES=46.34% n=19; M/HSES = 52.13% n=61) found their part-time employment interfered with their study time, but not so much with their scheduled classes (LSES=9.76%, n=4; M/HSES=13.68% n=16), although again the poor response rate to this question necessitates caution with these findings. Hall's (2010) point concerning the finite trade-offs available to students who are juggling study, work and social/personal lives indicates the necessity for universities and government to acknowledge and share the responsibility for the management of these complex situations.

5. CONCLUSION

Overall, this study into term-time employment and SES indicates minimal differences between the behaviours of students from LSES and M/HSES. The hours students spent in term-time employment appear to be remarkably similar across the two SES groupings used in this study (LSES and M/HSES). Indications of vocational orientations towards term-time employment appear to be minimal amongst both SES groupings and both SES groups prioritised study over work. Also, both groups reported interference by term-time employment in their studies and there is remarkable similarity between both SES groups'

patterns of expenditure and rankings of essential and non-essential items. Students defined essential items as food, transport and study costs and this confirms the results of other studies which indicate that the money earned from term-time employment is used for necessities. The general agreement amongst published research findings (James, Bexley, Devlin & Marginson, 2007; James, Krause & Jennings, 2010; and Hall, 2010), and confirmed in this research, is that necessity is a key motivation for students' term-time employment. This implies that, outside of significant changes to the higher education context such as scholarships and bursaries, this phenomenon is now a permanent feature of the higher education landscape. The options available to students to take responsibility for making this situation viable are finite, as Hall (2010) has indicated. Pedagogically, the less time spent involved in studies is not in the best interests of students or universities. Furthermore, this phenomenon appears to be widespread, that is, not attached to any one SES group in particular. Consequently, it can be argued that it is timely for universities and government (especially in relation to a review of various funding and financial student support mechanisms) to take a part in addressing this situation, rather than leaving it entirely to students to manage.

Management of this situation at a systemic level can be complicated and have impacts on staff workloads and working conditions as well as government-provided student support, all of which is designed around the current 'traditional' degree structure. This makes it a complex negotiation that will take time to design and implement. Some of the options that may be investigated include timetabling on a trimester basis in order to reduce the students' subject load at any one time and so allow more time for both term-time employment and study. Providing employment options on campus for students could be considered as could

using technology strategically to reduce on-campus time while not reducing students' opportunities to learn from each other. For example: all first year classes conducted on campus with small tutorial groups: in second year introducing some on-line lectures but retaining tutorials; in third year moving to all on-line lectures with tutorials on campus. Such restructuring would necessarily entail a proactive rethink of the provision of student services, including the hours of coverage, the nature of the services provided and the role of student services in the development of a 'student life'. The revision of student loans (amounts and eligibility), increased bursaries and scholarships are also options to be reconsidered.

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