

COMBINING PART-TIME STUDY & EMPLOYMENT: MOTIVATORS & IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL LIVES

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ABSTRACT

The Central Statistics Office has registered increased availability in part-time courses in Ireland over recent years. This study aims to investigate the motivators driving part-time study and the impact studying part-time has on professional and personal lives of full-time employees in Ireland. Utilising a qualitative research approach, data was collected using open ended, semi-structured interviews on six desirable participants and examined using thematic analysis. Extracted information was interpreted and discussed. Findings implied that the main motivators were based around career progression and opportunistic personal development. Results also demonstrated the emotional impact of coping with life balance and lack of employer support. Also, a competitive environment was evident amongst the perspective of further education. Conclusions drawn from the research indicated that modern Irish culture was a motivator to employ a career as a part-time student due to necessary requirements needed to progress in any capacity in an overly competitive economic society. It was also apparent that although the aspect of part-time study can negatively influence professional and personal life during its duration, the long term benefits and outcome of further education took precedence over issues experienced. Finally, findings revealed that emotionally, part-time students could strongly benefit in many aspects of life through greater, more accessible, employer support.

INTRODUCTION

This report will focus on the idea of combining part-time study and employment with the motivations or issues that incorporate this relationship, including the impact on individual lives in Ireland. The proposed aims of this study is to identify why people are motivated to study part-time alongside full-time employment and what implications this has on daily personal and professional aspects of their lives. In Ireland, there were 32,622 students enrolled in part-time courses at over 43 institutions in 2011. (Central Statistics Office, 2012). This Chapter will review literature on this subject and extract potential gaps found within these sources. Previous literature looks at what encourages and drives part-time study, the repercussions associated for individuals and how they manage and organise their daily routine. Finally, we will identify what issues have not been studied in great detail in relation to this topic allowing an area for further investigation.

1.1 DRIVING PART-TIME STUDY & EMPLOYMENT

There has been an increase in education over the last decade and a large amount of students are favouring part-time study. In the United Kingdom, 200,000 adults ranging from early twenties to retirement were enrolled in part-time study in 2000. (Brennan, Mills, Shah & Woodley, 2000). The economy in the twenty first century requires a highly skilled

workforce, therefore encouraging the increase of further education and academic progression. Skills are continuously modernised through a lifetime. There are higher proportions of part-time students now worldwide and mature students in the United Kingdom doubled between the years 1982 and 1992. (Kember, 1999). The number of mature students in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom is increasing and the close of the nineteenth century showed there were as many part-time students as there were full-time. (ibid.) In the United Kingdom; 2004-2005, 43% of higher education students were part-time and 56% of those were mature students, (Jamieson, Sabates, Woodley & Feinstein, 2009) showing the extent of individuals who undergo combining work and part-time study.

Due to international globalisation, emergence of transnational corporations and technological advances, subject choice in the United Kingdom in the 1990's changed from engineering foundations to business strengths with an increase of 94% within ten years. Almost half of the population of part-time postgraduate education was in the business, social, economic and political subjects and growth of MBA courses increased significantly. (Taylor, 2002). Also, student demographic changed in the early 21st century seeing increased international students; two one in five studying business disciplines. (ibid.) The following literature develops individual motivation that encourages people to work and study part-time.

1.1.1 MOTIVATION FOR PART-TIME STUDY

According to Taylor (2002, p. 59) "the increasing emphasis on part-time study reflects the growing importance of lifelong learning and continuing professional development within higher education, and within society as a whole." The motivation to study part-time may be described in terms of capital; the individual ambition of personal, educational, social and economical investment. Jamieson *et al*, (2009) describes benefits of part-time education through three dimensions; human, identity and social capital. Human capital refers to an

individual becoming more desirable economically and in the labour market due to increased academic knowledge through degree or university qualification. For example, benefits in terms of employment meant new jobs, career change, promotion, job satisfaction and higher income. Identity capital referred to qualification plus the individuals self efficiency and esteem, for example, human development, happiness, enjoyment of gaining knowledge, self confidence and attitude. Finally, social capital referred to networking and building connections with others in society to improve professionally. (Jamieson *et al*, 2009). It is suggested that British society may benefit from part-time degrees and incentives given by the government to increase lifelong learning for employability and economic success of the country. (Brennan *et al*, 2000). Likewise in the United States, Schuller, (2010) suggests that adult education pays off for multiple services in society and is seen as an investment.

In the United Kingdom, qualifications from universities have an impact on health, finance and social benefits for older students rather than those who gain qualifications in their youth. Financially, part-time students do well in terms of capital, as they do not sacrifice their wage while studying and tend to increase their salary after academic completion. However, earnings are not the only incentive to complete a part-time study course. (Jamieson *et al*, 2009). In the United Kingdom, post graduate study demand is increasing due to the economy and prospects of employment nationally. Expansion seems inevitable due to a number of factors. The influx of undergraduate students means an increased interest of further education and possible career prospects, the British economy recognises the importance of post graduate study and provides support to develop the concepts and demands from employers to enhance new skills and technological advances in the workplace. (Taylor, 2002). Globalisation of further education-technology, internet based education and developed delivery methods have allowed networking for international markets by the economy to recruit international students to promote transnational networks. Universities have become

more flexible in terms of delivery to suit employers leading to further increase of numbers of part-time students, career progression and professional development. (Taylor, 2002).

Although there are different motivators behind part-time education, literature focuses heavily on employment related reasons, not personal. Brennan *et al*, (2000) conducted research that focused on the idea of achieving work and equity goals through lifelong learning in the United Kingdom. 55% of participants thought that their part taking in study had been crucial in the advancements of work and income had increased by 28% for students that had graduated. Staff management responsibilities also increased by 30%.

The idea of personal capital to a part-time student proves that students profit overall based on ambition and employer support, making this a valid reason to juggle part-time study with full-time employment along with other factors listed. However, aside from these motivating drivers and benefits, inequality among employment and further education is universal and widespread, including other issues and implications people face when balancing part-time study and full-time employment.

1.2 BARRIERS OF PART-TIME STUDY & EMPLOYMENT

Balancing part-time study and full-time employment is knowingly difficult, but literature provides evidence that shows the extent of difficulties finding a suitable balance to alleviate stressors through negotiation and sacrifice, time management and financial burdens. The following section will examine previous studies relative to these areas and discuss the factors, barriers and implications part-time study and employment has on life.

1.2.1 SUSTAINING BALANCE

Maintaining the correct balance between part-time study, employment and other aspects of life is the number one aim of most students during this period. Effectively dealing with factors of life leads to success of the worker in part-time study. (Kember, 1999). Stressors develop when finding optimum balance for individuals and the ability to identify issues, produce ability to negotiate and sacrifice various elements of life successfully. This is the foundation of sustaining manageable balance. According to Nicholl & Timmons, (2005) the top stressors of part-time study in Ireland include: attempting to balance work with part-time study, the prospect and preparation of examinations, completing and submitting assignments on time, the expected academic level at which assignments are written, as well as the amount of coursework given. Although examinations and assignments are seen as the most stressful aspect of part-time study, the article states that personal time management and meeting home responsibilities caused more stress. (ibid.) This is without looking at the type of work they are in and the amount of support received outside of institution capability.

In order to achieve suitable balance, all aspects of an individual's life must integrate well. Coping mechanisms to incorporate a balanced life rely on sacrifices students make to succeed and the negotiation of old ways for new ways to thrive in the progression of further education. However this is without recognising outside variable factors. These external factors would also have a significant impact of successfulness and mechanising balance in the student's life. (Kember, 1999). Part-time students are usually committed to heavy and demanding responsibilities between work and education; they do not separate their lives but intertwine them. Students whom are less successful at managing balance tend to drop out of part-time study. (ibid.)

Another factor faced when managing the correct balance in life is negotiation and sacrifice towards family and friends. Coping with conflicting and opposing environments is difficult. This compromise means sacrificing relationships with family and friends that can cause stress. As well as allocation for study, students should arrange specific times for family, which is important to produce effective coping mechanisms to maintain a healthy life, work and study balance. However, people find it difficult to distinguish between studying and other life commitments, so although most part-time students work, some students find it easier to forget coursework and blame it on work, family or friends. Other students realise that balance means giving up aspects of family and social life and are prepared to do this easier than others. (Kember, 1999).

Debard, (2000) states that being in full-time employment in the United States means inconsistencies in part-time education; attendance of individuals or completion of degrees may be surrendered. Full-time employment allocates the most time of daily life, besides sleep. Balancing life effectively also has implications on employment in terms of sacrifice. So ironically, if the reason an individual is studying part-time is to progress in the workplace and balancing work and study is particularly difficult, energy towards work may be compromised, therefore possible chance of promotion is compromised. (Kember, 1999). These aspects involved in maintaining steady, manageable life balance during part-time study and full-time employment are sustained by managing time effectively.

1.2.2 TIME MANAGEMENT

The main reason for failure of part-time study is insufficient time. (Kember, 1999). Time management and ability to divide time successfully between different aspects of life is an issue most part-time student's face. Poor use of time can lead to stress and inability to produce work on time. This is a waste for students who sacrifice their personal time to

partake in a demanding environment and can be a poor reflection on the individual that is studying to progress in education or career. (Hendry & Farley, 2004). Choice in a part-time course and the duration and hours needed per week should be taken into consideration when applying coping mechanisms for time allocation. Parish, (2004) suggests that availability of part-time courses in the United Kingdom which allow work to continue whilst studying is the main selling point. Successful time management can be beneficial to the student in many aspects of their lives and underestimating time can lead to the student becoming overwhelmed and less productive. Diaries and journals can be good tools for identifying deadlines and managing time to produce realistic goals and priorities. External factors are important when planning time in order to gain the greatest output of study.

Hendry *et al*, (2004) highlights certain issues related to time management of part-time study. The illusion of time is a problem most part-time students' face. Time is known to fly by as deadlines near, resulting in student panic. Ultimately this is down to bad planning and inaccurate dispersion of study tasks over the period of time given. Outside factors such as work, family, social commitments or unexpected events can also add pressure to the issue of time. "Procrastination is the thief of time." (Hendry *et al*, 2004, p. 87). This occurs when people are unable to prioritise and are unsure how to work or approach a difficult subject. Prioritising workload and not procrastinating is the aim when coping with time strategy. Part-time students have less time to set aside to do their studies and sometimes get distracted by work, finding it harder to concentrate on education.

The necessity of time planning is extremely important. Successful completion of any education task is dependent on the accuracy of time usage. Poor management of time means unlikelihood to complete tasks on time, which can be a poor reflection on the individual to cope well with stressors, workloads and the inability to balance all aspects of life. (Hendry *et al*, 2004). Time management becomes more controlled if there is a support system in place

for individual student needs that will be investigated further in the Chapter. Along with sustaining productive life balance and effective time management, another barrier that is explored by the literature is the financial aspect of part-time study.

1.2.3 FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF PART-TIME STUDY

In the United States, another factor is the growing number of part-time students due to lack of funding from governments for full-time education, resulting in the necessity to work and pay for institution fees simultaneously. (Kember, 1999). In contrast, according to Nicholl *et al*, (2005) financial aspects of part-time study and work are not prominent stressors in Ireland due to government support. This portion will look at financial barriers students face to maintain a manageable work, study balance.

Demands of financial aid are greater due to different expectations and motivations of students. In the United States, students feel pressure to pay for education and struggle to finance it and so interest in part-time study increases. (Debard, 2000). In 1998, 75% of students worked during education. 90% of time is spent working, not in college. In 1992-1993, part-time students were 43% compared with 41% full time students and 80% of students worked more than 34 hours per week. Students feel forced to work more than study due to lack of financial aid. (ibid.).

In the United States, there are pressures to seek further education, as adult education is a good investment for the future of individuals and international economies. (Schuller, 2010). Similarly in the United Kingdom, part-time study was desirable as it promoted employment success and economic success for the country, ultimately improving equity and unity. (Brennan *et al*, 2000). In trying to avoid debt, American students are compromising education success. Work is not the issue, but the amount of hours and types of work have negative effects on education without financial worry. (Debard, 2000). Ultimately,

programmes require institutional investment and administrative support. If employment of the student is strictly for money and to aid their education, the argument to support education combining work programmes would be difficult to establish.

In the United Kingdom, Taylor, (2002) suggests that post graduate students should pay for courses themselves, as their employer and the individual themselves are benefitting from the education. The reward of career development is the incentive. In Australia, adult learning costs more than for American or British students, due to, lower salaries, tuition fees minus earnings that are forgone when studying. (Schwartz, 2005). One article reviews a female part-time student who explains that she doesn't mind the financial struggle short term because she has time for her family and other commitments. However, in the United Kingdom, the negative aspects of part-time study include the length of time it takes to complete a course; double that of full-time courses, meaning being out of full time employment longer. (Parish, 2004). Money is a constraint of post graduate study and so self funding became more common, perhaps this is why there is an increase of part-time students in the UK. Professional development is something an individual plans and would save money to take on such expensive education opportunities. (Taylor, 2002). Financial support can be provided by personal endeavours or contributions by employers or family.

Graduate study is now a requirement for professional progression worldwide. Financial support is given through the Department of Health and Children in Ireland, but performance of academic study is still influenced by outside stresses. (Nicholl *et al*, 2005). These stressors may be reduced by financial and employer support, as well as support from family and institutions in personal life and the individuals effective use of time management to balance all aspects of life.

1.3 SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Personal support for part-time students who are balancing education and full-time employment is an important factor in a student's ability to juggle aspects of professional and personal life. Support from organisations, fellow students, colleagues, friends and family are extremely important. Graduate students may benefit from student to student contact or support organisations and should be focused and equipped to relieve stress. Discussing issues with peers, who understand the stress of part-time study, can help through times of high stress, by comparing other views. (Kember, 1999). This focus on student and personal relationships as well as professional success has shown beneficial factors for individuals, such as, personal, community and professional aspects in the United States. (Gustitus, Golden & Hazler, 1986).

According to Debard, (2000) support programmes in situ in the United States that involve an education course with paid work experience, help students with other factors in life. These factors involve individual confidence, individual self-worth, integration to the working world, recruiting ideas, employer-employee relations, social networking and support for students overall well being and encouragement. These structures support students with affirmation of life goals and career plans, although no evidence was gathered relating to financial support. (ibid).

Personal support of the part-time student may be found through other spheres; employers, colleagues and friends. Employer support of part-time study can be positive in terms of developing employee skills and advantaging the company, perhaps suggesting downtime to concentrate on study. Support and negotiation by an employer shows the value and the importance of staff to do well both in work and study whilst promoting effective balance for the individual under their circumstances. (Kember, 1999). Friends can be good

motivators and helpful in relation to study and their knowledge of different topics may help within aspects of study the student finds difficult. (ibid.). The most common support sought after by part-time students is from their families.

Student lifestyle can be a reflection of family influence. A family that understands that sacrifices need to be made during the integration process of work and part-time study will handle the stress and tensions better than those who do not, therefore providing the ability to support to their loved one. That being said there must be the understanding that difficulties will arise, conflict and stress, for example, moods of family members can change around exam time or concentration on studying and less time to work may affect finances of the family unit. Also, it is important to recognise that families may only be supportive of the student's choice to study and work if the family can see the overall aim and outcome of the decision. If the family thinks family life should be the priority, study can become harder to manage for the student. Childcare can be a negotiable factor between families that are integrating the process of part-time study to their lives. It also means that other family members may need to take on more responsibility. (Kember, 1999). The barriers and stressors that part-time students face can be reduced greatly by the systems of support in an individual's life. Support available can motivate an individual also, to willingly compete as a part-time student.

1.4 SUMMARY

The available literature reviews some reasons why people undergo part-time study while working full-time, whether they are employment related reasons or personal choice. Examined barriers that are common amongst part-time students involve issues of sustaining balance well, time management and financial problems that may arise. The literature heavily focuses on the necessity of support systems for part-time students. Most results from the

literature were formulated in a limited quantitative, statistical capacity. The majority of sources have been developed in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia, not Ireland. An engaging approach to investigate the topic of why people choose part-time study when working full-time, would be through an appropriate qualitative research design where feelings and emotions are extracted to convey an honest account of this topic in Ireland. The aim of this study is to provide an exploration and true depiction of what drives and motivates individuals in Ireland to study part-time, whether Irish society impacts on barriers part-time students face in their lives and what support systems are in place for this demographic in modern Irish society compared with other nations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research project was to generate data relating to people who study part-time in conjunction with work. The interest in part-time study has increased and the number of part-time students has risen in Ireland in recent years. The goal of this research was to discover why people do this and what effect balancing work with part-time study has on an individual's life, professionally, psychologically and personally. During the research process, questions were asked to obtain individual perspective on personal and professional motivation, development, issues faced, support and experience, therefore identifying similarities or differences due to personal experience or perception.

2.1. DESIGN

To achieve the goals presented by the purpose statement, it was critical that the correct research design method was chosen to extract desirable data. The interpretation of initial data would add specification and tighten the initial proposed general research question and facilitate further collection of information to theorise and conceptualise the findings of the research study if necessary. (Mason, 2002). The appropriate choice of research design for this study was a qualitative research method, as exploring a true depiction of what drives and

motivates individuals to study part-time in modern day Ireland compared with the USA, the UK and Australia. This required an open response from participants to access accurate data.

Qualitative research methods involve narrow samples, but in-depth analysis of words, images or human behaviour. Snape & Spencer, (2003, p.3) define qualitative research as providing:

‘an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories.’

Qualitative research methods rely on the quality or degree of excellence of information extracted by the researcher to produce relevant material. The desirable features of qualitative research analysis are the ability to produce phenomenon and constructionism. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, (2009) determine qualitative data is based upon meanings which are derived from discussion, data is reorganised into themes and analysis is conducted through the use of conceptualisation. As the research method chosen was qualitative in nature, inductive reasoning was used and induction allowed theory building of the topic based on initial generalizations, followed by revised suggestions based on collected qualitative data. (Scott & Marshall, 2009).

The topic of the research project is receptive and only qualitative research techniques, such as interviewing, can be used to reflect how participants feel, while availing of unique access to participants’ opinions, experiences and activities. (Kvale, 2007). Using semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to extract true reflections of why participants’ part-time study and what affect it has on their lives. The interview schedule consisted of 17 open ended questions to be discussed with the participant, ranging from general and educational background, motivators driving part-time study to overall experience. (See Appendix 2). The nature of semi-structured interviews and format of open ended questioning

allowed a natural flow of conversation and engagement between the researcher and the interviewee which also encouraged and prompted other questions leading to reliable data collection.

Interviews are a popular choice for qualitative research as it “reproduces a fundamental process through which knowledge about the social world is constructed in normal human interaction,” allowing accurate depiction of data. (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003, p.138). Semi-structured interviews were selected and allowed the researcher to cover key themes and topics discussed in the literature review while remaining open to the interview taking new directions based upon organisational context. According to Jankowicz (2005), the use of interviews are beneficial when complex or open ended questions are required as a part of the research, as is the case with this particular study.

A qualitative approach offered the interviewee the opportunity to reflect on personal experiences in an impartial environment. (Saunders *et al*, 2009). Qualitative analysis established a richer individual viewpoint through the collection of more detailed information from participants (Robson, 2002). Therefore, the inability to generalize the findings to a population or to quantify the sort of information the researcher required, the preferred method was primary data-led qualitative research design.

2.2. PARTICIPANTS

Sampling for qualitative research requires a strategic plan that must be practical, as data collection is usually focused to specific issues, processes or phenomena. (Mason, 2002). Criteria of participants in terms of age, gender and cultural background may be interesting when formulating and contrasting data, but was not essential for this study. However, to extract the most appropriate information relevant to the general research question, the participants had to have relevant experience in balancing work and being enrolled in part-

time study simultaneously. This is known as theoretical or purposive sampling. (Mason, 2002). Qualitative data methods were useful in selecting the correct sample; the sample was chosen specifically by the researcher to facilitate the needs of this particular topic.

The candidates for this research study consisted of six consenting adults, ranging from 25 to 45 years of age. Five participants were male and one participant was female. Four of the participants have previously experienced part-time study in addition to full-time employment and two participants are currently studying part-time in addition to full-time employment. All six participants were involved in business or humanity disciplines. A table has been constructed to equip the reader of participant information for possible personal interest. (See Appendix 3).

The sample was accessed through personal contacts and connections, but none were people who were known directly to the researcher. This initiated snowball or chain sampling, meaning an active participant in the study knowing another possible participant that fitted the criteria of the research. (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003). It is important to recognize that while these qualitative methods are well suited to this particular subject, there are limitations to all data collection within the research field. Snowball sampling can be time consuming so it is preferred that there are concrete participants already acknowledged by the researcher at the beginning of data collection to avoid time wasting.

2.3 PROCEDURE

Individuals were approached by phone call or email by the researcher. Each individual was debriefed with a verbal or written explanation during initial communication of the proposed study and arrangements were made to conduct the interview at a suitable and convenient time for the candidate. An important aspect of qualitative research design is the setting of the interviews. As the participants usually choose the venue, the researcher must be

able to adapt the setting to retrieve the most natural information possible. (Legard, *et al*, 2003).

In this case, the interviews took place in three of the candidates' homes, two in the candidate's workplace and one in a University study room. Prior to conducting interviews, participants were required to read and sign two consent forms, a copy for the participant and a copy for the interviewer. (See Appendix 1). Before and after the interviews, the interviewer reminded each candidate what the research study entailed, the rights of the candidate to withdraw without explanation, to question any concerns they may have regarding the study, accessibility to the results and interviewers contact details after their participation. The interviews were recorded using the voice memo application on an iPhone 4s, with participant consent and interviews lasted between 20 and 45 minutes. The device was practical, functional, and discrete and did not interfere with maintaining the natural setting of the interviews conducted, having little influence on how participants answered questions. After completion of each interview, the interviewer contacted each candidate by email or text message to thank them for their help and participation.

During the interview process, some issues were made known to the interviewer. This included setting distractions, such as time constraints on a study room, applying pressure to retrieve necessary information quickly. Also, noise and colleague distraction was a major issue in one particular interview. The recording was paused twice to allow for interruptions which may have affected the response of the candidate mid sentence. However, although distracted, making continuous notes on a printed interview schedule made revisiting the topic easier for the interviewer.

After the interviews were conducted, all interviews were synced to a password protected computer and transcribed verbatim to be reviewed for content and quality in order

to grasp a good sense of the collected data. This allowed greater understanding of the level of data that had been acquired.

2.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical considerations were identified relating to qualitative research methods and adhered to in relation to the Dublin Business School code of ethics. These are issues such as written consent, right to withdraw at any time, providing safety and prevention of harm for participants, anonymity, confidentiality and debriefing. Confidentiality was granted to the individuals who were interviewed, thus increasing the level of reliability. (Saunders *et al*, 2009). To ensure confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were provided for any identifying markers within the transcribed interviews. However, the concept of snowball sampling means that a third party may know someone is taking part in the research but not know specific details, therefore, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

According to Mason, (2002), conducting qualitative research poses limitations on a large scale, for example, the competence of the interviewer and their ability to not just extract description of topical information, but produce and provide explanations or arguments from the data. The competent researcher is careful not to interrogate the participants or abuse the situation, as there is an extent of power enthroned on them by asking someone questions. The researcher is not a counselor or therapist. Biggam, (2008), describes the importance of recognizing potential problems but also to show how they are addressed. Identifying issues and providing explanation to negate the risk of these problems occurring is applying good research strategy. For example, the potential of interviewer bias whereby the tone or questioning of the interviewer may create certain responses from the interviewees. Henceforth, adequate research on the relevant literature was conducted in order to appropriately prepare for the interviews. Questions were formulated and delivered in a non-

leading, open-ended manner in order to avoid biased responses. (See Appendix 2) (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008). Acknowledgement of ethical considerations and issues confirm and verify that the rights of the candidate were adhered to.

2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The method of analysis that was appropriate for this research topic was qualitative data-led thematic analysis. This process developed from imported transcribed interviews to QSR NVivo10, a qualitative analysis program, studied, interpreted and coded into common themes. Developed themes were sub-divided into smaller sub-themes which can be analysed independently in order to allow a more focused analysis (Yin, 2003). An attractive feature of using thematic analysis was the ability to construct social meaning that allowed the author to formulate an impartial view, from which appropriate conclusions and recommendations have been derived. (Saunders *et al*, 2009). These findings are represented through depicted themes shown in Chapter three.

3

RESULTS

As discussed in Chapter two, all participants that took part in this research have experienced the practice of part-time study whilst in full-time employment. From the data collected, common analytical points emerged and interpretive analysis extracted themes from the data in order to find out what motivates individuals in Ireland to study part-time and what impact it has on different aspects of their lives. Anticipated themes emerged, such as professional and personal motivators, challenges individuals faced in terms of balancing time and finances in their lives and how they receive support. Alternate themes materialized also, that will be developed and focused on. The themes are as follows:

1. Motivation for Part-Time Study
2. Sustaining Balance
3. Time Management
4. Financial Aspects of Part-Time Study
5. Support Systems
6. Emotional Impact relating to Part-Time Study
 - 6.1 Impressions of Positive Feelings as a Result of Part-Time Study
 - 6.2 Impressions of Negative Feelings as a Result of Part-Time Study

6.3 Emotional Impact on Support Systems

7. Outcome & Experience of Part-Time Study

8. Nature of Competition in Irish Society

3.1 MOTIVATION FOR PART-TIME STUDY

As expected, particular themes emerged from the existing literature. The motivation to study part-time in order to develop professionally and personally was evident. It is obvious that the driving factor to study part-time is motivated by career progression and ambition in Ireland.

I wanted to do an MBA anyway, because the business and commercial side of things were going to help me progress in my career for starters. (James)

I've managed to work my way up. I've got huge experience, em and then I decided in 2010 that I couldn't really go any further. So I went and did a Master's. (Hugh)

Similarly, personal development motivated part-time study and was evident in individual growth of confidence. Also, participants felt equipped to deal better with certain situations with this expansion of self-belief.

I felt like I've grown, I've felt like I have more confidence and stuff like that now that I'm doing a degree. (Philip)

I have a new found ability to articulate and to confront business issues and to engage with people to generate ideas, I must have changed something. (Andrew)

As well as confidence, participants conveyed their learned ability to multitask. A motivator relating to personal development was the result of increased maturity.

I didn't feel ready for it when I was younger and all I wanted to do was travel and see the world. Studying gives you pressure and I think as you grow older, you can deal with assignments easier. (Philip)

When you go back to college the second time around, after your undergrad, you're definitely more mature, you can appreciate it a bit more. (Alan)

These factors appear to be the driving force pushing people to study part-time, but with these ambitions bring forth challenges to the part-time student.

3.2 SUSTAINING BALANCE

Issues with how to balance life and work was a struggle for most candidates, but, it was a barrier that people overcame or became accustomed to for the overall outcome of part-time study.

If that means studying at night or doing your assignments at night until late or getting up early before work (...) that impacts on your weekends as well, your social life, because you are trying to do all this while working. (Philip)

I'd say I took my foot off with work a little bit but it was worse in the first year of the course and then in the second year I think I became lot better at multi tasking and being able to balance my calendar better. (James)

However, these participants have sacrificed a lot in their lives, from health to enjoyable hobbies and social life. Michelle describes how tired she became from studying for three years without any holiday or rest. This would most definitely take its toll on an individual's health.

I did find it very hard to come home after a long day's work and open up the laptop and start working. Using up all my holidays for three years was tiring and I didn't have a break from study for three years. I was emotional, tired.

In terms of social life, a healthy balance between work, study and rest is necessary for a human to function, however, these participants have given up there social time for study.

I used to play golf every weekend; I haven't played golf in two and a half years. (Hugh)

The reality is that to successfully work and study part-time you must give up an aspect of your life according to this research. Alan regretfully conveys, ‘No three week jolly holidays or no two week trek around Cape Town or around Africa.’

3.3 TIME MANAGEMENT

As balancing aspects of life is a problem, it means that time also becomes a factor. It is suggested that part-time students feel that there is no time for anything other than work or study. There is suggestion that difficulties arise particularly relating to full-time employment.

I didn't really have any spare time to do anything. I probably found the calendar a little bit too full to be honest. That was one of the biggest issues. Really, time just sort of disappeared. I did not have any time to myself. (James)

At times I was up until five in the morning trying to get deadlines in and then getting up at seven in the morning to go to work. I didn't have as much time to do that when I was studying part-time as I did when I was an undergraduate. (Michelle)

Time as an issue allows people to reflect on what was suitable for part-time study curriculum. Alan thinks it is overwhelming the amount of hours that is required when part-time study is aimed at the working population.

You're looking at maybe 20 hours per week. Which is a lot considering it's part-time. Especially on top of working 5 days a week.

3.4 FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF PART-TIME STUDY

Another factor developed from the research was the issue of finance. In Ireland, part-time courses are popular and some institutions are private, therefore the course fees can be difficult and expensive for people to afford.

My college is private and we pay fees every year, so there are financial implications. The fees are quite large so you have to save up, because as well, you're paying rent and bills. (Philip)

Along with fee issues, there is lack of employer support financially. This has impacted highly on the participants. Hugh expresses his annoyance at lack of employer support financially and physically.

My company didn't finance it. They were ridiculous. They didn't give me any holidays; they didn't give me any study leave.

After I was finished the course, I never got offered a pay rise. They didn't support me financially in anyway during or after I had spent my money and it was very difficult. (Michelle)

3.5 SUPPORT SYSTEMS

As mentioned in Chapter one, support is an extremely important tool for success of the part-time student in terms of personal and professional support systems. It is evident that the research samples for this project are very much supported by family, making their experience easier to manage. James explains that his 'wife, she was one of the biggest support structures.' Likewise, Michelle gushes over the support she received from her husband. 'I had great support from my partner, he was brilliant.' Similarly, Andrew recognises and expresses his thanks to his wife for her support through difficult times.

The person who pushed me through the barriers most was (wife's name), so, I couldn't have done it without her. If somebody is not picking up the pieces around you or allowing that sort of freedom, it's not going to work. We're a team.

Along with partners, recognition to Irish mothers is evident. Hugh articulates his appreciation and gratefulness to his mother who helped him when there was no time to fulfil everyday requirements due to the demand of part-time study.

My mum would've come up and do the housework or if I needed anything, in fairness, cleaned, ironed she did it all. A good Irish mammy. So I had a lot of support there to take those things away from you so you could concentrate.

In comparison to personal support, all but one of the participants found their employers unsupportive. Non-support from employers is perhaps due to course irrelevance to participants' employment roles; however, participants experienced the same negative attitude from their employer, even when the course was entirely relevant, ultimately improving employee credentials.

Work doesn't support me at all. I don't think employers sometimes understand the value of supporting their employees through part-time study. Both in terms of time and money. (Alan)

Employers, they weren't great to be honest, but they would give me holidays when I requested them, but they didn't give me study leave. (Michelle)

From this sample, not personal but professional support is an issue that should be addressed, particularly due to the increase in part-time study in Ireland.

3.6 EMOTIONAL IMPACT RELATING TO PART-TIME STUDY

Through the research, it is clear that the emotional effect from part-time study plays a very big role in the participant's lives, whether positively or negatively and also a part in the lives of support systems.

3.6.1 IMPRESSIONS OF POSITIVE FEELINGS AS A RESULT OF PART-TIME STUDY

This study has extracted many positive emotions experienced by part-time students. These feelings and emotions are encouraging motivators to study part-time. Candidates showed particular feelings of enthusiasm and excitement at the prospect of starting a part-time course. Michelle reflects how she was 'really enthusiastic about the Masters'. James expressed that his employers paid for his course, however, he informed the researcher that even if they had not, he would have paid for it himself, proving his enthusiasm.

It was a €30,000 course, em; I would have paid for it anyway. I wanted to do it that badly I would have found a way to pay for it myself.

Participants further articulated encouraging feelings and emotions, such as the enjoyment of part-time study and the feeling of security it gave them. The idea of meeting new people and learning new topics also excited the idea of part-time study.

Very hard, very long, but very enjoyable. I enjoyed the course and the studying aspect of it but probably what I enjoyed more was meeting new people. (Michelle)

Well, I think it's a great thing, I don't know how long it has been around for but I think it's a great thing for students, for people who are older to come and do and get away from, life can be very boring at times, so it's a nice way to go away and meet people and get education at the same time. (Philip)

The psychological impact of doing a part-time course has had positive effect through these examined emotions and feelings, but it is most apparent through participant's feelings of achievement and satisfaction from being able to endure and accomplish the concept of part-time study, even at an older age. Andrew explains his progress through a tone of pride.

If you look at how it changed me, I went from operations director in here, now to being managing director half way through the course. I got more than I expected actually and I mean that in a good way.

I did extremely well in the course, but I think if I had done the course when I was 18 I would have a totally different view on it. (Hugh)

3.6.2 IMPRESSIONS OF NEGATIVE FEELINGS AS A RESULT OF PART-TIME STUDY

Aside from positive feelings and emotions, part-time study brought out a lot of negative emotions also, such as disappointment, insecurity, intensity and the feeling of being overwhelmed. These issues themselves may have a negative effect on an individual's life

without the pressures of part-time study and work. James shows his regret and upset on missing out on a special, personal memory of planning his wedding with his wife.

I probably would've liked a little bit more free time to help with the wedding and stuff like that. I'll always regret that I never put the effort in with it.

Similarly, Andrew portrays disappointment of sacrificing time with his children.

And even on the kids it's a huge demand because they don't see you. You see them in the morning. You'd see them when they were asleep in the morning and when they were asleep every night. And every third or fourth day, you'd see them awake. It's very tough.

As well as personal disappointment, there is disheartening when it comes to employment prospects. Alan explains that there is no guarantee of any progression within his career, which is difficult, but he is hoping there might be.

They're not offering me other opportunities, you know, like normal ones, promotions and things. I'm hoping that it will stand to you in time.

Hugh feels the same negative impact on his professional career and expresses his annoyance at lack of enthusiasm from prospective employers who are looking for the best candidates.

I felt that realistically for our course, the money that we paid, there should be companies waiting for us to come out. Come and take the cream of the crop. But there is nothing set up, so you would be left idle again, you know, back where you started.

Most of these research candidates felt overwhelmed by the experience of part-time study and the amount of work that it involved.

There is a lot of studying and there are a lot of assignments, stuff to do and I kind of, I am working full-time, so your days, you're obviously working and your nights you're studying. Yeah, there's a lot of pressure. (Philip)

Equally, Andrew found the amount of work difficult and proposed stress into his life.

The volume of work. The volume of professionalism that's expected of you. The volume of the level of participation that's expected. The fact that you are relied upon for 80% of that course, instead of being independent. 80% of the course you're in groups and teams so you have to deliver. It's a stressful environment.

Ultimately, these negative emotional effects have impact on work and study life, but also on home life. Not only does emotion impact on the individual involved, but they have all considered the impact on their support systems.

3.6.3 EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON SUPPORT SYSTEMS

As encouraging and supportive family may be, they too experience emotional damage when it comes to their loved ones experiencing part-time study. Participants of this study recognised the difficult times loved ones had during their time of education, which also makes it difficult for the participants.

I think she misses me, because a lot of the time I am not there. You know I'm either working or studying. She kind of says, particularly after exams and exam time, "Oh I have my husband back for a while." It's hard for her. It's definitely difficult to be on that end. (Philip)

My wife, I think she was probably frustrated to no end because it meant we couldn't do half the things we wanted or she wanted to do. I'd imagine she felt a little isolated at times if I'm honest. Sometimes between work and study I was too tired to talk, it couldn't have been easy but to be fair there was never any complaint, she didn't whinge or moan. She was really supportive. I think there was an element that there was a greater good for us, for our family. (James)

It's apparent that the successfulness of the student would not be possible without the support of family and the hardships they have to put up with from their spouse.

The kids, they accept routine fairly easily, but they would see the tiredness and the frustration on (wife's name) face at times. Then you come home and all you get is in the ear. Em, and you feel like, I'm after doing all this today and I come home and you're expecting this, this and this from me, but you have to swallow it. You have to bear it. You have to be able to carry that properly because that's the choice that you made. So, yes, she had the right to be able to

bash me when I'm straight in the door (laughs) but, we try, we're a team so.
(Andrew)

3.7 OUTCOME & EXPERIENCE OF PART-TIME STUDY

According to the sample selected for this research project, all six participants report a very positive experience of part-time study in Ireland in combination with their full-time jobs.

Philip describes his current course as rewarding and beneficial.

It's been good. It's been really good. It was such a positive experience. It's helped me with time management and I've met some really lovely people through it and I think you know the lectures and the degree experience; it's something different from watching TV or something like that.

Some disciplines appeared more demanding than others. Participants explain that although the intensity of certain courses were challenging they still had a very positive experience.

Andrew found studying part-time, whilst still being able to earn money so rewarding and fulfilling that he is now considering a future employment in academia.

I have to say, every course was very rewarding and I actually found if I could have career studying, I think I would go for it. But I would do it again, yeah, because all the experiences have been so positive. I'd love to try and share the knowledge I've gained and share it back in some sort of teaching capacity.

As shown, there is a reason part-time study has become increasingly popular as it provides a gratifying individual experience. Hugh sums it up briefly but honestly; with nothing further to add, 'It was just a rewarding, positive experience. That's it.'

3.8 NATURE OF COMPETITION IN IRISH SOCIETY

As discussed, one of the main motivators to partake in part-time study is personal ambition and career progression. With this comes an element of competition that was evident

in three of the participant's education experience. Interestingly, these participants were the participants of a business related background. James describes one supportive classmate amongst a hostile environment.

He was a big support and worked quite closely with him. That was a rarity. People were quite competitive from the offset and I found that quite hard to adjust to. There were 25 people in the class and there were 3 or 4 in it that I would have said were up for helping out and sharing notes. The rest were quite selfish and self involved. I found that quite difficult. People wanted to win and be competitive.

I think they felt that they, some wanted to do it themselves and others really didn't want to part with information. It was almost like they were in competition with you. (Hugh)

Andrew, with a background in business, explains this process by particular courses attracting a particular type of individual.

You have the usual mix of people, the doers and the not so doers and those who really want to excel and to top the grade and to be honest with you. These were people who wanted to lead, to innovate, to go places. So that the different type of drive in people.

Secondary to this type of competitiveness is the expectation among modern Irish society. Participants in this study relayed to the researcher that nowadays, you needed to be the best and have the best education to obtain any type of career or advancement and this ignites a drive and competition in people to progress and better themselves as much as possible.

A lot of jobs, a lot of people have masters nowadays, so you have to go that extra step, and get extra qualifications if you want to stand out. I definitely think it's becoming more common. There's more pressure to have more qualifications. Because there is no work, this generation are all going on to do Masters if they can. (Michelle)

The reason is, there are a lot of people unemployed in Ireland. Therefore a lot of people going back to education to re-educate themselves in order to come out and try and be in a better position to get employed. (Hugh)

A lot of companies now will look for a Masters over a Degree and I think that's the way it's going. But there is also the expectation that you do continue to develop, people aren't just happy turning up 9-5, your clocking in. People are looking to continuously push themselves. (Alan)

This suggests that modern Irish society is developing with the rest of the world and there is a certain degree of expectation needed to do well. Part-time study allows people to progress without sacrificing their position financially.

3.9 SUMMARY

All of the participants described their experience of motivators, challenges and emotional state of being a part-time student whilst working full-time. In Ireland, participants expressed their knowledge of how and why we live in a competitive educated society and why it is a necessity for this generation to compete in further education to explore the outcome and experience, as well as the sacrifice, of part-time study. The following Chapter will examine these themes with reference to previous literature.

4

DISCUSSION

The aims of this research study were to identify what motivated individuals to study part-time whilst in full-time employment and what implications it had on their professional and personal lives in Ireland through qualitative research analysis. Previous studies have mainly been conducted quantitatively in the UK, the USA and Australia, where research suggests the reasons driving individuals to study part-time are primarily due to professional development and career progression. Literature also discusses the problems that coincide with part-time study. These problems involve the difficult task to sustain balance in life, the issues surrounding time and financial implications. The final area that was a prominent aspect of part-time study was the necessity and importance of support for students. Therefore, this left an opening to discover from the sample what the emotional motivators and impact the concept of part-time study has on individual's lives in modern Irish society, what barriers were faced and support available.

4.1 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

From performed semi-structured interviews, the researcher sought to find common motivations for part-time study, barriers and information on support systems in an Irish capacity to compare with former research. As well as these themes, other aspects emerged

that related to the emotional influence and impact part-time study has on individuals in Ireland, overall outcome of their experience and the competitive environment experienced by some candidates and the relation to modern Irish society.

4.2 MOTIVATION FOR PART-TIME STUDY

Amongst part-time Irish students, the main motivation to study part-time was the need for career progression and to enhance future prospects economically. As well as this, the candidates expressed personal development and the essential improvement of confidence and sense of achievement. Individuals also expressed the social motivator of studying part-time to network with similar individuals through economic means. For example, Alan expressed his choice to study part-time through distance base learning. He expressed the advantage of networking and making business connections with people from other countries through an online course. Similarly, Jamison *et al*, (2009) discusses motivations for part-time study in three dimensions of human, identity and social capital. They suggest that the reason an individual desires to compete in part-time study is to become more desirable economically and to progress professionally in conjunction with developing their own personal identity and making social networking connections in a global economic society.

Increase in income is seen as the motivation to encompass part-time study in the United Kingdom and although Brennan, *et al*, (2000) suggests this as the prominent reason to study part-time, only one of the sample for this research has benefitted in terms of salary increase since completing their course. This may reflect on the difference between the United Kingdom and Ireland, as participants express difficulties experienced, even with the qualifications, required to get a job, let alone receive a raise in salary in Ireland.

Individuals that partook in this research study expressed the difficulties they experienced in receiving employer support. Although most candidates chose a course choice

relevant to their own careers, to possibly progress within their field of choice, employers did not encourage this motivation. This is dissimilar to what Taylor, (2002) states as a motivator. Taylor, (2002) suggests that employer support is the main reason employees undergo a career as a part-time student while continuing with their day to day jobs, in hope to further their education and enhance future employment and financial prospects.

4.3 SUSTAINING BALANCE

Participants found balancing aspects of life, such as work, family and leisure time extremely difficult when studying part-time. It was noted that in order to succeed, the sample suggested sacrificing certain aspects of their life, mainly leisure activities to concentrate on work and study. However, they also expressed how their effort in work was affected by study and stated that life was put on hold until their education commitments were completed. On the contrary, Debard, (2000) states that being in full-time employment in the United States of America compromises part-time study and results not the other way around. In Ireland, participants of this research found that their energy towards achievement of part-time study was of greater importance than their day to day work. Kember, (1999) suggested the idea of interlinking commitments and not sacrificing them completely in order to succeed, however, it appears candidates of this sample found suitable balance difficult to attain without forfeiting parts of their lives.

4.4 TIME MANAGEMENT

This research study shows that participants found the amount of time and hours allocated to them for certain tasks were limited and their days were taken up with blocks of responsibilities and not enough hours in the day. However, time management and coping with prioritising time did not appear to be a major issue. Although the participants

complained about how they had little time, they describe themselves with meeting deadlines and sacrificing other activities to manage their time better. It is also apparent that the longer they studied part-time, the more effective time management became. Similarly, Hendry *et al*, (2004) agrees that there is a waste of sacrifice of social activities if time management cannot be maintained successfully per individual part-time student. Dissimilarly, Kember, (2009) suggests that insufficient time steers part-time student failure, however, it is shown that it is not insufficient time, it is coping mechanisms of time use that is important and leads to success of the student.

4.5 FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF PART-TIME STUDY

The Irish sample had a mixed response to the implications of finance. One participant had no issue with money, as his employer paid for his course and he still had his income for other expenditure. Others found paying for further education difficult, even with a 20% tax refund given by the Irish government. This contrasts with words of Nicholl *et al*, (2005) who states working part-time students in Ireland do not stress in terms of finance due to government incentives. It appears that education and living costs in Ireland at the moment do not allow full-time employees to feel comfortable with their annual income and outgoing spending. Amongst the sample, it appears that it is rare for an employer to support an individual financially as is similar in the UK, where part-time study is benefitting the individual as well and so it is not a priority that an employer funds part-time students. (Taylor, 2002)

4.6 SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Support from partners and family is extremely important and helpful according to the participants. All the participants mentioned family support and recognised that their success

of part-time study was a result of this support. Similarly, Kember, (1999) notes that families who understand that sacrifices need to be made, handle tension and stress better, therefore providing a successful support system that encourages the student to succeed. In comparison, Irish employers were mentioned as unsupportive and as a result made the process more difficult. Debard, (2000) recognises the importance of employer support in the United States suggesting that part-time education helps and improves different spheres of life, such as, employer-employee relations and individual self-worth.

4.7 EMOTIONAL IMPACT RELATING TO PART-TIME STUDY

An aspect that needed to be explored within this topic was the implication of feelings and emotions. There were many positive feelings that arose from the participant input and acted as motivators to study part-time. Feelings of enthusiasm and excitement were apparent by some and this has a positive impact psychologically. The prospect of studying part-time was not negative by any participant. This proves the influence individual feelings and emotions have. All participants experienced these optimistic feelings, especially the satisfaction of completing a part-time course through experienced barriers. Likewise, Jamieson *et al*, (2009) previously mentions the importance of ambition and achievement towards psychological health of human beings.

However overwhelming the positive feelings and emotions part-time students' experience, candidates for this study express some negative attributes also. Participants show hurt and upset of missing family time and events; in turn, this causes strain on personal life and distraction of studies. This distraction appears to be short lived, as candidates express their recognition of the bigger picture. These negative emotions are side-lined due to the value of what part-time study will mean in the future for these individuals and their families. As mentioned, part-time students show huge gratitude to their families for their support and it

was noted that their family's feelings played a part on the attitude of the part-time student. James suggested that his wife didn't understand why he was so distracted, with no time for them and he suggests that it upset him to know that she felt left out. However, they both agreed to see the benefit in the long term for their family. Irish societal pressures exist and show through James' need to study part-time to progress any further in his career and ultimately provide better for his family.

4.8 OUTCOME & EXPERIENCE OF PART-TIME STUDY

Due to a positive psychological impact part-time study has had on this research sample, they describe an overall positive experience with desire to proceed with further part-time education, even though difficulties were encountered. Experience of part-time study in Ireland was positive among this sample, but unfortunately, the literature researched does not suggest any positive idea of outcome for part-time students elsewhere. Although, as Parish, (2004) suggests, positive outcome and experience, along with success can be individual dependent, but made easier with good support and practical tool education, such as, implementing good time technique and deadline coping mechanisms.

4.9 NATURE OF COMPETITION IN IRISH SOCIETY

It is obvious through the raw data that the participants with a business related background recognised competition between classmates and a hostile environment between colleagues, unlike the participants with non- business related backgrounds. Participants with non-business related backgrounds expressed their college course environment as pleasant and supportive. It appears that candidates with a business background were extremely driven, being motivated by their position in career and need to increase financial stability. It is suggested by participants of business related courses that it is aggressive and intimidating to

work alongside students with this attitude. Hugh suggests that people were in it for themselves and wanted to get to the top without help from others or without initiative to support others. Other participants describe the necessity to be the best in Ireland at present times as jobs are scarce and the mandatory requirement is above and beyond what Irish history dictates. Business influenced course have perhaps increased and may be related to the prospect of globalisation. Multinational Corporations are widespread and need of suitable candidates for jobs is slim, therefore people are exceeding the norm of University degrees and doing multiple post graduate courses part-time. Similarly in the UK, Taylor, (2002) describes an increase in MBA courses over the last decade, in which three of this research participants have qualified from part-time.

4.10 LIMITATIONS

Due to the nature of qualitative research, time constraints were an issue in terms of accessing a larger sample to participate in this study. This meant that only a small sample's data could be analysed, leaving potential gaps in the research. As mentioned in Chapter two, snowball sampling was used and this limited the sample to particular disciplines of study making definitive comparisons difficult to analyse. This sample prevents generalisation and does not reflect the population of Ireland who study part-time and work simultaneously.

There is no evidence to suggest participants are dishonest with answers during semi-structured interviews, however, it is important that the researcher realises that their answers reflect personal feelings or perceptions of accounts and is noted as a limitation of this project. Likewise, thematic analysis is interpretive and subjective; therefore it is essential to understand that no two researchers may comprehend information the same way.

4.11 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Areas of this topic have been researched previously and comparisons have been made to data retrieved from this study, however, it has provided gaps in this topic that should be studied further. There is emphasis on career progression related to part-time study in this project. It suggests that future analysis must be done on the influence of international involvement. Due to the increase in part-time study opportunities for individuals and accessibility through online distance based learning, the process of globalisation must be accounted for to arrive at a true conclusion to the motivation behind this escalation in further education in Ireland. Feelings and Emotions were extracted from the data and suggested psychological impact on individuals who study part-time. Further analysis aimed to develop this idea would be helpful, particularly in relation to health and possible issues within the Irish economy at present.

An interesting area to suggest further exploration was the extracted topic of attitude and competition between working part-time students of business related disciplines versus non-business related disciplines within Irish Society. It is an interesting concept that was stumbled upon accidentally through thematic analysis and if time was not an issue, would have been incorporated into the general research question.

4.12 CONCLUSION

This research study aimed to develop previous research on motivations, barriers and support systems in Ireland, as well as extracting true feelings and emotions of the participants, including the impact modern Irish society has on these accounts. This research has provided further explanation of career progression and ambition as well as personal development amongst part-time students. Aside from motivators, impact of sustaining

balance, managing time and finance, as well as support, were examined. The research's strength lies in the uncovering of the positive outcome and emotions felt by part-time students and influence on the participants, equally, the influence Irish society appears to have on competition between part-time students who are in full-time employment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM



Combining Part-Time Study & Employment: Motivators & Impact on Individual Lives.

My name is Danielle Breeze and I am conducting research that explores the motivators that drive individuals in Ireland to study part-time when in full-time employment, the barriers faced and access to professional and/or personal support.

You are invited to take part in this study and participation involves an interview that will take roughly 40 - 60 minutes.

Participation is completely voluntary and so you are not obliged to take part. If you do take part and any of the questions do raise difficult feelings, you do not have to answer that question, and/or continue with the interview.

Participation is confidential. If, after the interview has been completed, you wish to have your interview removed from the study this can be accommodated up until the research study is published.

The interview, and all associated documentation, will be securely stored and stored on a password protected computer.

It is important that you understand that by completing and submitting the interview that you are consenting to participate in the study.

Should you require any further information about the research, please contact:

Danielle Breeze -Tel: +353 863486653 / Email: 1507865@mydbs.ie

Dr. Annette Jorgensen - Email: annette.jorgensen@dbs.ie

Thank you for participating in this study.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Schedule

Introduction

The objective of the interview is to gain an insight into the thoughts and emotions of what motivates people to study part-time and the impact it has on their lives. Questions are general in nature and the interview should take approx. 45 minutes.

1. Tell me about yourself; age, nationality, family status, interests, employment and education background.
2. Have you previously been/are you currently enrolled in part-time study? What was/is your subject of choice?
3. Why did you choose to study part-time?
4. What were/are your personal and professional motivators to study part-time?
5. How do you feel about studying part-time and its impact on your personal and professional life?
6. Did/do other commitments impact on part-time student life?
7. How have you developed as an individual in Ireland by studying part-time?
8. In your experience, what barriers/challenges have you faced as a part-time student?
9. How did/do you balance and prioritise different aspects of your life?
10. How did/do you cope with time management?
11. What financial aspects did/do you relate to part-time study in Ireland?
12. How did/do you receive support during your time as a part-time student?
13. How did/do your support systems feel about your choice to study part-time?
14. How would you describe the atmosphere on your course?
15. What are your thoughts regarding part-time students in modern Irish society?
16. How would you describe your overall experience as a part-time student?
17. If there was anything you could change about your experience, what would it be?

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND & INFORMATION

Name	Age	Gender	Occupation	Education Background	Special Interest
Michelle	29	Female	Nutritional Therapist	BA (Hons) Science Full-Time & Msc. Nutritional Health Part-Time	Diet & Nutritional Health
James	28	Male	Operations/Regional Manager	BA(Hons) Science Full-Time & MBA Part-Time	Business Management
Philip	29	Male	Assistant Manager	BA(Hons) Psychology Part-Time	Psychology
Hugh	35	Male	Global Manager	BA(Hons) Maths & Computer Science Full-Time, Msc. Forensic Science Full-Time & MBA Part-Time	Business Management
Alan	27	Male	Higher Crime Police Analyst	BA(Hons) Physics & Computer Science Full-Time, Msc. Risk Management Part-Time & Msc. Forensic Computer Crime Investigation Part-Time	Forensic & Crime Analysis
Andrew	45	Male	CEO	BSC IT Part-Time, Certificate in Business Part-Time & MBA Part-Time	Business Management

Figure.1. Participant Information