Theses and Dissertations

5-1-2020

The impact of high-intensity work on student employees from disadvantaged social backgrounds

Jessica Della Hassell
Rowan University

www.manaraa.com

THE IMPACT OF HIGH-INTENSITY WORK ON STUDENT EMPLOYEES FROM DISADVANTAGED SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS

by

Jessica Della Hassell

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Higher Education
at
Rowan University
April 2, 2020

Thesis Chair: Andrew S. Tinnin, Ed.D

Acknowledgments

I am overwhelmingly grateful for the wonderful support system that I have had over the course of my years. I have met a great many mentors and friends who without their support my success would not be possible. As such, I would like to start by thanking my mentors Kyle Bianchini, Julie Ta, and Jessica Williams without whom Graduate School would not be a dream that I thought possible. Their mentorship was invaluable to me during my undergraduate career and I extend a special thank you to them.

I would like to express my appreciation toward Dr. Andrew Tinnin, my thesis chair, who has aided me throughout this research journey. He continually displayed patience and understanding and I am grateful for his support. In addition, I would like to thank Charlie Kuski, Allie Pearce, and Brittany Auleta for being powerful influences on during my graduate school career. These individuals guided me, shared their experiences with me, and truly shaped my understanding of what it means to be a leader in one's field.

I am grateful to have a community at home sending me their support and love. Specifically, my mother and my cousin Joy who spent time listening to me and helping to shuttle me from New Jersey to Maryland as I worked to achieve my professional and personal goals. And to my close friends that have been by my side since the start of our college careers, please know that your love and care are the reason that I will be handed my degree. Dani, Jen, Jamal, Rob, and Matt—there are no words for how grateful I am to have had your support. Thank you all for the time that you have spent grounding me through my ups and downs and motivating me to be better. I love you all.

Abstract

Jessica Della Hassell
THE IMPACT OF HIGH-INTENSITY WORK ON STUDENT EMPLOYEES FROM
DISADVANTAGED SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS
2019-2020
Andrew Tinnin, Ed.D,
Master of Arts in Higher Education

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of high-intensity work on

low-income students at Rowan University. This study assesses the needs of students

from low-income families. It examines the impact of employment with regards to

engagement.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents (Continued)

Table of Contents (Continued)

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the Problem

As students across the country attend higher education institutions (HEIs), one of the choices each student must make is whether or not to work while attending college. This choice is influenced by perceptions of the impact that working may have on the students' success. There is only a small pool of knowledge to draw from concerning the specific impacts of student employment. However, researchers have found that student employment influences student success and development (Field, 2017; Mitola, Rinto & Pattni, 2018; Watts & Pickering, 2000). Kuh (2007) proposes that student success be defined broadly to include student engagement, satisfaction, and persistence/retention, and academic achievement, and post-college performance. Honing on student engagement and persistence, the general consensus of the research on this topic is that students who work on campus have higher rates of engagement, academic achievement, and are no less likely to graduate than their peers that do not work (Bozick, 2007, Choi, 2017, Dadgar, 2012; Field, 2017; Mitola et al., 2018; Watts & Pickering, 2000). However, there are dissenting opinions and a variety of factors that can impact whether students who work are successful in the college environment (Bozick, 2007; Dadgar, 2012).

Student engagement, involvement, and persistence are impacted by student employment. Additionally, student employment impacts students disproportionately depending on their socioeconomic status (Bozick, 2007; Choi, 2017). The research (Bozick, 2007) shows that students with disadvantaged social backgrounds are more

1

likely to participate in high-intensity work. This contrasts with students who are from advantaged social backgrounds that are more likely to have decreased success and persistence when participating in high-intensity work (Bozick, 2007; Choi, 2017). Essentially, how students prioritize their employment and academics impacts their ability to persist (Riggert, Boyle, Petrosko, Ash, & Rude-Parkins, 2006). That being said, Bean and Metzner (1985) considered whether the retention and persistence of employed students could be attributed to their individual characteristics, goals, environment, academic successes, and involvement of the student (Riggert et al., 2006).

There is a gap in our understanding of students that find themselves at the intersection of low-income and high-work intensity. Understanding ways of mending this gap will help students begin to recognize how they might be impacted by working during college. Additionally, it will help institutions of higher education design their student employment to better serve this population.

Statement of the Problem

Achieving equity is a core value of many institutions of higher education and low-income and minority students are becoming an increasing larger population attending college (Osei, 2019). There is a gap in outcomes between students with low socioeconomic backgrounds and students with higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Hoover, 2019). Further, students with low socioeconomic backgrounds are just as likely to take out loans but are more likely to work than their more affluent peers (Bozick, 2007; Osei, 2019). Understanding the needs of a diverse student populace is key to closing the gap between these groups of students. There is very little research on the

differing needs and concerns of low-income students and how institutions of higher learning can best serve this student population.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to examine the work-intensity and socioeconomic background of the Rowan University student employees. Surveys and interviews were conducted in order to learn more about the challenges and resilience of students that work at high levels of intensity and come from a low socioeconomic background. The study should aid the development of on-campus student employment programs and direct Student Affairs professionals in matters of socioeconomic support and inclusion.

Significance of the Study

This study investigates this gap around student outcomes linked to their socioeconomic status and work-intensity. By adding to the literature around this issue, there will be a larger body of knowledge for student affairs professionals to refer to gain a better understanding of how to aid the students that exist within this intersection. Educators will learn from students about how they prioritize work, classes, off-campus responsibilities and involvement as students participating in this study were asked about their barriers to engagement, involvement and success.

Assumptions and Limitations

The scope of this study was limited to students at Rowan University in Glassboro, NJ in the 2019-2020 academic year. The students observed were those who engage in high-intensity work and self-identified as poor or low-income. It is assumed that the self-reported information is truthful and an accurate representation of the students

3

understanding of their socioeconomic status. Selected students were interviewed to discuss their relationships with work, involvement, and persistence. Due to the student selection, there is the possibility of researcher bias due to having relationships with participating students.

This research does not examine a difference between freshman and transfer students traditional and post traditional students, or residential and commuter students. It is important to acknowledge that these are statuses may lead each student to be impacted by student employment differently.

Operational Definitions

1. Work-intensity: For the purpose of the study, work-intensity is measured in hours per week. More than 20 hours per week equates to high-intensity work. 10-20 hours per week equates to medium intensity work. 1-10 hours per week equates to low intensity work (Bozick, 2007; Choi, 2017).

2. Socioeconomic status (SES): A measure of an individual's economic and social position measured in education, income, and occupation. For the purposes of this study, low-socioeconomic status will be defined by if a student receives a Federal Pell Grant or self-identifies as low-income. Students may perceive or self-identify as being from an advantaged or disadvantaged social background.

3. Federal Pell Grant: A financial aid award given by the government to undergraduate students, who have never received a degree, that have shown a high level of financial need (Federal Student Aid, 2019). Students who receive a Federal Pell Grant will be considered as having a disadvantaged social background or low-socioeconomic status.

4

4. Student Success: Kuh (2007) proposes that student success be defined broadly to include student engagement, satisfaction, and persistence/retention, and academic achievement, and post-college performance. For the purposes of this study, we will define student success by student engagement and persistence as students who are more involved are more likely to persist through their college experience (Barnhardt, Trolian, An, Rossmann, & Morgan, 2019; Riggert et al., 2006)

5. Student persistence: The students' ability to return to complete their next year of their undergraduate education (Dadgar, 2006; Riggert et al., 2006; Watts & Pickering, 2000; Choi, 2017). For the purposes of this study, select students will be interviewed, asked about their obstacles, and they will be asked about their likelihood of continuing their undergraduate education the following year.

6. Student Engagement: The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) defines engagement as "the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities… [and] how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities that decades of research studies show are linked to student learning" (NSSE, 2019).

7. Student Involvement: All student employees maintain a basic level of involvement on-campus through their positionality to the office or department where they are employed. Involved students are engaged in co-curricular activities on-campus. These students may hold leadership positions, maintain on-campus employment, or be involved in multiple student organizations and clubs.

8. Student Leaders: A self-identified group of students that maintain a level of involvement on campus.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Does participating in high-intensity work impact college students with a low socioeconomic background?

2. How do students from families with limited economic resources prioritize work, off-campus responsibilities, involvement, and academic achievement?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II provides a review of the literature surrounding student employment and the needs of low-income students. This review summarizes the discussion around the differences in students with a low-socioeconomic background compared to their more affluent peers. Additionally, this review discusses the relationship between students and work including the impact that employment has on student involvement and persistence.

Chapter III details the methodologies and procedures used in this study. It includes information about the Rowan student population and a description of the population, sampling methods, data collection, and analysis.

Chapter IV clearly states the findings of the study. This section revisits the research questions and aggregates the collected data.

Chapter V discusses the findings of the study, analyzes the collected, and does so under the lens of the proposed research questions. It discusses the observations from the surveys and interviews to show a better understanding of the impact of high-intensity work on students with low-socioeconomic backgrounds.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

This review of the literature will focus on the impact of employment on students and the needs of students from low-SES families. It will discuss the impact of on-campus employment and work intensity focusing on student success examined through the themes of involvement and persistence. It will also discuss the particular needs of low-income students, including the challenges of having differing priorities than their peers, an altered internal self-image and belonging, a need for additional support.

The Impact of Student Employment

With regards to student employment, this literature review will focus on the outcomes of students who work on campus while noting differences in outcomes for students who work off campus. Riggert, Boyle, Petrosko, Ash, & Rude-Parkins (2006) note that research on this topic often does not include a difference between freshman and transfer students, traditional and post traditional students, or residential and commuter students. It is important to acknowledge that these are statuses may lead each student to be impacted by student employment differently. Moreover, there are a host of additional factors that influence student success and development.

It seems that many large scale HEIs have at least one department within their student affairs division that has completed an evaluation of their student employment model. These micro research reports cannot be used to provide an exact roadmap for every university to follow. But these reports may serve as outlines for other student affairs divisions to reference when changing their models to better support the development and success of their student staff (Thomson, 2013). In this case, micro

7

research is more useful to the practitioner while macro research is more useful to inform the choices of the student. Macro research on the impact of student employment on success and development seems to identify the direct impact on the individual student rather than highlighting effective elements of the specific student employment model that a university is using to gain positive outcomes. Therefore, each of these approaches to research on this topic has a particular use either to the student or the institution.

　　　　Intensity and on/off-campus work. In a comprehensive research analysis on the impact of student employment Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) found that students working low-intensity, part-time jobs on-campus were impacted positively by their employment while students who were full time or had part-time jobs off campus were negatively impacted (Mitola et al., 2018; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998). This analysis discovered that student retention and academic success can, under certain conditions, positively correlate with student employment (Mitola et al., 2018). This concept is demonstrated by Barndardt et al. (2019) who cited a study by Pascarella and Terenzini (1998) who found that students working more than 15 hours per week on-campus or 20 hours per week off campus were negatively impacted by their student employment experience. In this case, students working at higher levels of intensity saw a decline in their performance compared to students working at lower intensity levels of 10-15 hours per week (Barnhardt et al., 2019). The positive connection between student success and on-campus student employment is further reinforced by Mitola, Rinto, and Pattni (2018) who references a study by Pike, Kuh & Massa-McKinley, (2009; 2009) examining student grades that found students working on campus at 20 hours or less per week had

8

similar grades to students who did not work at all while students working off campus and students working more than 20 hours each week had lower grades.

One condition of this might be on/off-campus employment. Astin's (1993) research connected student persistence as being positively correlated with increased involvement with the HEI. Student involvement has a positive impact on student persistence because as students engage with their institution, they strengthen their connection to the campus environment, and become involved with faculty and peers. On-campus student employment is a student involvement opportunity that can provide students with the same opportunities as other student involvement activities. Therefore, on-campus student employment can aid HEIs in increasing student persistence, retention, and in preventing dropout (Bozick, 2007; Dadgar, 2012; Riggert et al., 2006; Yool, 2017). Further, the on-campus positions are specifically designed for students and provide students with the support of faculty, staff, and their institution for their academic achievements alongside peers in a similar environment (Mitola et al., 2018). Dadgar (2012) suggests that on-campus jobs may be designed to have more flexible hours that allow students to study and socialize compared to off-campus jobs where success is measured by outcome.

Student employment as a high-impact practice. High-Impact Educational Practices (HIPs) are educational experiences that facilitate learning outside of the classroom (Kuh, 2007). These practices have been shown to be beneficial for student learning, involvement, and development (Kuh, 2008). Kuh (2008) lists these practices as First-Year Seminars and Experiences; Common Intellectual Experiences, Learning Communities; Writing-Intensive Courses; Collaborative Assignments and Projects,

Undergraduate Research; Diversity/Global Learning; ePortfolios; Service Learning/Community-Based Learning, Internships; Capstone Courses and Projects. While Student Employment is not listed amongst the High-Impact Practices, research has suggested that HIPs create student belonging and thus increase rates of student retention and engagement (Kuh, 2007; 2008). As a result, colleges and universities have purposely designed their student employment positions to include a number of the same characteristics that HIPs have in order to have similar positive outcomes (Kuh, 2008; Mitola et al., 2017).

The characteristics of HIPs that give them a positive association with student learning and retention include academic challenges like higher-order learning, reflective and integrative learning, learning strategies, and quantitative reasoning; learning with peers through collaborative learning and discussions with diverse others; experiences with faculty through student-faculty-interaction and effective teaching practices; and the campus environment which includes the quality of interactions and whether the university has a supportive environment (Kuh, 2008). These characteristics indicate a student's engagement and can be applied to student employment (Mitola et al., 2017).

Mitola et al., (2018) describe student employee programs as rating high in peer interaction, student-faculty interaction, and requiring a large amount of time and effort. In a systematic review, Mitola et al. (2018) describe how employment can be viewed as a High Impact practice using the ways that academic libraries develop their student employees. Referencing the work of Kuh (2008), these researchers coded and noted which characteristics of student employment lined up with HIPs (Mitola et al., 2018). This work is similar to Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991, 2005) who synthesized research

of on-campus employment and found that it increases academic achievement, compared to off-campus employment, which decreases academic achievement (Barnhardt et al., 2019). This increase in academic achievement was influenced by on-campus student employment designed to have the characteristics of a HIP through increasing the amount of student-faculty interactions for students involved in this particular employment position (Barnhardt et al., 2019). On this, Dadgar (2012) notes that some jobs give students the ability to interact with adults who take on the roles of mentor and role model, which helps students feel supported by their campus environment (Dadgar, 2012; Kuh, 2008).

When treated as a student success initiative and purposefully linked to HIPs, student employment can become a meaningful opportunity that aids student success. Minto, et al. (2018) describe academic libraries as fitting into multiple characteristics of HIPs including time and effort, student-faculty interaction, learning with peers, discussions with diverse others, effective teaching practices through formal and informal feedback, integrative learning. By intentionally integrating these characteristics into their student employment models, academic libraries provide students with a path to student success (Mitola et al., 2018). This intentionality can be used by practitioners to model how on-campus jobs can provide students with avenues that may help them navigate college.

Student on-campus employment impacts student engagement. Student engagement increases student learning and development while increasing rates of retention and student satisfaction (Thompson, 2013). As a result, student engagement is valuable to the student and the institution. Astin's (1993) theory of involvement connects

11

student involvement with student learning and development, demonstrating the value of ensuring students become involved members of their campus community (Barnhardt et al., 2019). This in mind, student employment can have a significant and varying impact on student involvement. Considering the positive benefits of involvement, students must be able to strike a balance between these two issues due to the positive link between high levels of engagement and critical thinking, persistence, and academic achievement (Thompson, 2013). As such, the factors of student employment must be considered in determining its influence on engagement. Work intensity, relation to campus, financial need, and personal characteristics of the student can impact the beneficiality of student employment and the student's ability to be engaged (Barnhardt et al., 2019; Dadgar, 2012).

The intensity of an employment position can determine its influence on student engagement (Dadgar, 2012). Tinto's (1993) social integration model suggests that low intensity on campus jobs might help students adjust to life on campus and by proxy increase retention. While high-intensity off-campus work would do the opposite by physically separating students from campus, which limits students from adjusting to their new college community and engaging with other students and faculty (Dadgar, 2012). Moreover, physical proximity to campus resources and opportunities gives students who work on-campus an advantage when it comes to reaping the benefits of engagement compared to their peers employed off-campus (Riggert et al., 2006).

It should be noted that has been argued by scholars that student employment is not helpful for students (Riggert et al., 2006; Dadgar, 2012). Becker (1962) in their Human Capital Theory stated that students should not work during their college years as it

12

interrupts their ability to take full advantage of their investment in education (Dadgar, 2012). The financial need of the student can determine how they balance the relationship between engagement and employment. As the cost of college increases and with the influx of the student debt, college is considered to be a key component for future success (Field, 2017; Yool, 2017). Moreover, the financial benefit of working while attending college is undeniable as students can pay for their tuition while advancing in their degree (Dadgar, 2012; Field, 2017; Yool, 2017). As a result, student employment benefits the HEI and the student to promote student employment as an outside of the classroom engagement opportunity that can offset the cost of the college experience (Field, 2017; Thompson, 2013). The importance of linking student engagement and employment is growing as college employment becomes a regular part of the college experience (Thompson, 2013).

Student employment can help students be more engaged by providing them with opportunities for engagement through establishing incentives, structure, and discipline which motivates, and helps students to organize and balance priorities (Barnhardt et al., 2019; Dadgar, 2012). Motivation, balance, and organization are all personal characteristics that students develop that can relate back to student engagement and employment. Even though these elements are linked, Thompson (2013) notes that more research needs to be done for the benefit of practitioners developing student employment programs so that there can be a better understanding of how students engage in work and how that relates to their engagement in their institution.

Student on-campus employment impacts student persistence. There is a lot of research on the relationship between student on-campus employment and the ability of a

13

student to persist through their college experience. The impact of student on-campus employment on persistence varies based on perspective as well as student demographics and characteristics. As a result, there are three elements that must be considered when considering the impact that student on-campus employment has on persistence: the zero-perspective, the selection-to-work perspective, and the demographics or characteristics of the student.

Zero-sum perspective and the selection-to-work perspective. There are two perspectives on the impact of student employment to consider when discussing its influence: the zero-sum perspective and the selection-to-work perspective. The zero-sum perspective on student employment defines student employment as negatively impacting a students' experience (Bozick, 2007). This model defines student employment as a distraction from academic achievement that can lead to dropout. As students spend more time at their place of employment, less time can be used toward studying, extracurricular activities and other involvements. This perspective proposes that the limitations work imposes on school related activities change a student's focus from education to earning money. The result of this is that students will allow their grades to drop because the monetary benefit of working encourages them to leave school to work full time rather than complete their degree (Bozick, 2017). Although the zero-sum perspective should be taken into account, it contrasts with the selection-to-work perspective on student employment.

Selection-to-work sees poorly performing students as choosing to join the workforce because they are discouraged by their low levels of academic achievement. In this, students with high-intensity jobs find meaning in work rather than education due to

14

poor academic performance (Bozick, 2017). Despite the disagreement on the reasons behind students seeking employment, Yool (2017) agrees with Riggert et al. (2006) who note that the impact of student employment on persistence must be further investigated. In closing there are a multitude of factors and perspectives on student persistence, retention, and dropout but commitment to employment or the necessity of work can alter a student's priorities and their opportunities for academic and social engagement. This can, in turn, increase their risk of dropout (Riggert et al., 2006).

The zero-sum perspective and the selection-to-work perspective do not account for increased rates of student employment (Yool, 2017). In fact, Riggert et al. (2006) noted that student employment was an unavoidable factor in student life. The majority of the literature suggests that student employment does not negatively impact a student's persistence or academic achievement (Barnhardt et al., 2019). However, prior to the study by Hammes and Haller (1983), student employment was considered to be a detractor for college student rather than the student development opportunity that is now (Barndardt, 2019; Mitola et al., 2018).

Student demographics and characteristics. Student characteristics must also be taken into account when considering the impact of student employment. Bean and Metzner (1985) considered whether the retention and persistence of employed students could be attributed to the individual characteristics, goals, environment, academic successes, and involvement of the student (Riggert et al., 2006). Student demographics play a vital role in the effect of work on college persistence (Riggert et al., 2006; Bozick, 2007). In Bozick's (2007) research, he concluded that students with disadvantaged social backgrounds are more likely to engage in high-intensity work and are least likely to be

15

negatively impacted by student employment. This contrasts with students who are from advantaged social backgrounds that are more likely to have decreased success and persistence when participating in high-intensity work (Bozick, 2007; Yool, 2017). These scholars are essentially stating that how students prioritize their employment and academics impacts their ability to persist (Riggert et al., 2006).

The Needs of Students from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are impacted by student employment differently than their more affluent peers (Bozick, 2007). Since low-income students are more likely to engage in high intensity work there is a need to study the specific impact of the value that student employment has on this population. Kuh (2007) proposes that any high-impact practice, like student employment, can be a tool leading to student success. And, Astin's (1993) theory of involvement states that the benefits of student involvement include increased rates of retention and persistence, higher academic achievement, and overall student satisfaction.

Barriers to involvement. Although, Astin's (1993) involvement theory states that highly-involved students are more likely to persist, it can be difficult for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds to get involved when they are more likely to engage in high intensity work (cite). Essentially, it is more difficult for this student population to receive the benefits of student involvement because they have a difficult time finding a sense of belonging in the college environment (Ramburuth & Härtel, 2010).

Internal reluctance. Higher education is generally associated with wealth and status; therefore, it is important to create spaces where difference is viewed as positive

16

and low-income students can exist, feel valued, and receive equitable treatment. It is imperative to cater to this group of students as how they are perceived and how they relate to others can threaten their inclusion in a learning environment (Landers, "Dis-'Orientation'", 2017; Landers, "True Grit", 2017). Further, students with low-socioeconomic status may have difficulty being successful due to their own reluctance to reach out when in need of assistance. Additionally, they might feel inadequate leading to their own isolation (Landers, "True Grit", 2017). Therefore, low-income students may require attentive staff members that can provide them with private advising or help them advocate for themselves (Landers, "True Grit", 2017).

   Belonging. Students without a connection to their institution of higher learning or that lack a community on-campus can have decreased persistence. It is important for low-income students to have a sense of belonging on campus (Landers, "Dis-'Orientation'", 2017; Ramburuth & Härtel, 2010). This includes the presence of a support system, and recognition of their academic and intellectual abilities (Landers, "Dis-'Orientation'", 2017; Ramburuth & Härtel, 2010). Research (2017) by Kerry Landers, who interviewed low-income students at Ivy League institutions, states that race and income were predominant reasons that students feel like they do not belong. Because students learn from each other about classes and social opportunities, positive relationships with others play a role in a student's sense of belonging (Landers, "Dis-'Orientation'", 2017). "Students must feel a match between themselves and their friends to persist in college" meaning that students are more likely to persist if they are able to see themselves in their peers (Landers, "Dis-'Orientation'", 2017). In fact, low-income students indicated having difficulty communicating with wealthier individuals and reported feeling more

17

comfortable around those facing financial challenges. In a sense, this identity as low-income makes class status an obstacle from student belonging which can hamper student involvement (Landers, "Dis-'Orientation'", 2017). Often, low-income students feel more comfortable with their off-campus communities due to this gap in experience between themselves and those at their institutions (Landers, "Dis-'Orientation'", 2017; Ramburuth & Härtel, 2010). However, this can result in these students becoming less involvement on campus, taking away from their campus engagement, and causing them to lose out on the benefits of on-campus student employment for a sense of belonging. That is to say, student belonging has very high stakes for low-income students because they may question if they should even be in the university environment if they do not see themselves reflected in their institution (Landers, "Dis-'Orientation'", 2017; Ramburuth & Härtel, 2010).

There seems to be a gap in knowledge about the specific transition and learning needs of low-income students, and how to better engage these students with the appropriate teaching and support (Ramburuth & Härtel, 2010). Colleges and universities need to actively create supports for low-SES students by promoting inclusion, connecting these students to each other, and aiding their sense of belonging (Ramburuth & Härtel, 2010).

Conclusion to Literature Review

Student success is impacted by Kuh's (2007) elements of student engagement and persistence, and Astin's (1993) theory of involvement. However, the ways that employment impacts students complicate the way we look at student success. This is because the literature on student employment is vast but there are a lot of factors to

18

consider when attempting to understand the impact that it has on student success. Student

employment can be a benefit or a detractor to students depending on the intentionality of

the design as a HIP, on/off-campus status, intensity of the work, and the

demographics/characteristics of the students themselves. Because there are so many

variables it is important to acknowledge that more research must be done to determine the

direct impact of student employment on involvement, and engagement. This in mind,

student employment has a clear influence on student development.

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of the Study

This study was conducted at Rowan University, a four-year public institution in Glassboro, New Jersey. Rowan University has grown since its founding in 1923 Glassboro Normal School. Glassboro Normal School was a teacher's college focused on educating school teachers and addressing the issue of the lack of school teachers in South Jersey. However, as the community grew to demand post-secondary education, the school shifted to function as a small state college and renamed itself to Glassboro State College (GSC) in 1950 ("Rowan History", 2019). In 1992, GSC received, what is now known as "The Rowan Gift", a donation of $100 million from a businessman named Henry Rowan whose only stipulation was that GSC develop an engineering college in South Jersey ("The Rowan Gift", 2019). This gift led to the development of the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering and GSC being renamed Rowan College of New Jersey. Soon after, in 1997, Rowan College received university status. This growth was compounded by the enacting of New Jersey Medical and Health Sciences Education Restructuring Act in 2013. This resulted in Rowan University being classified as a research university. Additionally, Rowan was given the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's School of Osteopathic Medicine including its Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, all of which became the Rowan School of Osteopathic Medicine (RowanSOM), and Rowan's partnership with Rutgers-Camden to create health sciences programs in Camden, which developed into Cooper Medical School of Rowan University ("Rowan History", 2019; "Rowan University SOM History", 2019).

20

Rowan University's history of growth and development has led to its growth to now having a student population of nearly 18,500 students and 16,120 undergraduate enrollments ("Rowan History", 2019; "Our Past, Present & Future", 2019). The Rowan Gift brought GSC to now have the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering which is ranked #19 in the nation among the top undergraduate engineering schools ("Our Past, Present & Future", 2019). Also, Rowan offers 74 bachelor's, 51 master's, 4 doctoral degree, and 2 professional (medical) degree programs across its 4 campuses ("Rowan History", 2019). However, the school focuses on developing students beyond the classroom through its many opportunities for student involvement. This includes having more than 180 student organizations, 39 Greek Life organizations, 54 NCAA and club sports teams, and 14 campus honor societies (Campus Labs, 2019).

Population and Sampling

This will be a mixed methods concurrent convergent study. A concurrent convergent study allows for the researcher to collect two sets of quantitative and qualitative data at the same time in order to allow for better understanding of all the data collected (McMillan, 2016). Additionally, it helps with triangulation as information used in the interviews can be used to confirm the conclusions drawn from the survey (McMillan, 2016). While it has been understood through studies by Bozick (2007) and Yool (2017) that there is a difference between the impacts of high intensity work on students of different social backgrounds or socio-economic status, it would be best to redefine the terms "disadvantaged social background" and "advantaged social background". In such a way, "disadvantaged social background" and "advantaged social background" can be measured based on a multitude of factors including Federal Pell

21

grant eligibility, how a student identifies their familial wealth, and how a student identifies themselves. In this manner, all data and observations from the interviews can be analyzed together to develop more informed conclusions (Hammarberg, Kirkman, Lacey, 2016).

Moreover, a mixed methods concurrent convergent study is necessary because this study includes multiple elements that need to be analyzed side by side, related to one another, and interpreted (Creswell, 2017; Fetters, Curry & Creswell, 2013). Due to the inclusion of a survey portion being expanded on by a second interpersonal portion consisting of one-on-one interviews, the study must be concurrent and convergent. And, adding to the pool of research regarding the impact of social background and work-intensity will help determine if there is an overall trend for student affairs practitioners and researchers to consider when supporting their student employees.

The research shows that advantaged students are more likely to be impacted by high-intensity work than disadvantaged students but no matter the conclusion of the data analysis, it will be important to determine if involvement is impacted by the internal or intrinsic motivation of the student (Barnhardt, et al., 2019; Bozick, 2007; Dadgar, 2012; Yool, 2017). If this study was conducted sequentially it might not yield the same insight as a study that participates in one on one interviews after having already analyzed the survey data. The qualitative research following the quantitative should provide insight into the experiences of low-income students working at high levels of work-intensity (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Incorporating this data may provide a personal perspective that shows insight into the normative behavior or attitudes toward work and school as viewed by disadvantaged student groups (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Yool, 2017). The

22

quantitative study will leave room for anecdotes into the lives and mindsets of these students to better investigate their feelings of preparedness for balancing high-intensity work and school, resilience and coping methods that may play key roles in their having different rates of involvement (Bozick, 2007; Riggert et al., 2006; Yool, 2017).

In order to learn more about the challenges of low-income students that work at high levels of intensity and how to best aid the development of on-campus student employment programs, the target population for this study was all student workers on Rowan University campus. All participants in this study were current undergraduate students over the age of 18 but under the age of 24. The purpose of this is because students over the age of 24 cannot be legally claimed as dependents on their guardians' income tax forms (Bozick, 2007). Using these metrics, the research will focus on those students that are reliant on a parent or guardian and largely eliminate post-traditional students that may be self-reliant and have other outside commitments like children, families, full-time position or a secondary household income source (Bozick, 2007). This survey was conducted using Qualtrics, a survey platform for experience management (Qualtrics, 2019).

Data Collection Instruments

There is little research focused specifically on the involvement experience of undergraduate students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds that work at high levels of intensity. As a result, I needed to use data collection instruments that have been tested for validity and a supplemental concurrent instrument that would ensure reliability and precision (McMillan, 2016, p. 155-168). This resulted in the choice to use a survey instrument followed by a series of consequential individual interviews with participants

23

that meet interviewing criteria to aid equivalence and stability (McMillan, 2016, p. 163-167; McMillan, 2016, p. 344).

Qualtrics software is being used to develop the survey. Qualtrics is a reputable experience management platform used worldwide to gain insight into consumer experiences (Qualtrics, 2019). Serving over 10,000 enterprises, over 75 percent of Fortune 100 companies and being used by 99 of the top 100 business schools; Qualtrics is a reliable instrument for survey creation, data collection, distribution, and analysis (Qualtrics, 2019). Additionally, Qualtrics software was selected because it is one of the official survey tools of Rowan University. The other being, Baseline software developed by Campus Labs. Baseline was not used for the development of the survey instrument due to its requiring a specific department to distribute surveys when this survey will be distributed to student workers across the whole of Rowan University.

Prior to completing the survey participants will be provided with consent procedures to ensure that they are aware of the nature of the study. The survey instrument takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. This survey included multiple choice and open-ended questions aimed to identify the socio-economic background of the student, the work-intensity of the student, their involvement on campus, and their barriers to involvement and success. Those participants who chose to participate agreed to provide their email addresses and one was randomly selected to receive a $15 Visa Gift Card. The survey instrument including the consent form used in this study can be found in Appendix A.

Individual interviews will provide more insight. These interviews will take place on the Rowan University campus. Interviews will continue until 10 participants have

been interviewed or until saturation has been reached (McMillian, 2016, p.125; Quimby, 2012). Interviewing until saturation will ensure there is a consensus amongst the students interviewed for the study. It will increase the reliability of the study and allow for a convergent understanding of the survey data as each student will be able to articulate their barriers to involvement and success. The criterion for the interview will be students that have filled out the survey, identify as lower income or receive a Federal Pell Grant. The individual interview method of data collection will put participants at ease when discussing the sometimes-sensitive topics of socio-economic status, work-intensity, and support. Questions regarding life-history were derived from the *Fundamentals of Educational Research*, a list developed by the University of Kentucky on "50 Life Story Questions to Ask," the study "Perceptions of Work-Life Balance Practices Offered in the Collegiate Practice Setting," and the study "Career and family aspirations of female athletic trainers employed in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I setting" (Mazerolle, Eason, & Eberman, 2017; Mazerolle, Eason, Ferraro, & Goodman, 2015; McMillan, 2016). Additionally, the component of life-history within the individual interviews will be helpful in obtaining a broad perspective on how the participant has developed their perspective (McMillan, 2016, p. 347).

Prior to completing the interviews, participants will be provided with consent procedures to ensure they are aware of nature of the study, consent to being recorded during the interviewing process, and understand that the data will be destroyed once the data has been published and that the research will not include their names. These interviews will be semi-structured with a set of preestablished prompts for clarifying and elaborating. The goal of this structure is to have a direct interaction with select survey

25

participants through an informal conversation that encourages candid discussion while obtaining the necessary information (McMillan, 2016, p. 346). Students participating in interviews will be given false names to protect their privacy as there is risk involved in discussing one's life history, financial status, and work grievances. Participants who chose to be interviewed agreed to provide their email addresses and one was randomly selected to receive a $25 Visa Gift Card. The survey instrument including the consent form used in this study can be found in Appendix B.

Data Gathering Procedures

     Sample. The students chosen to receive the survey are all registered as Rowan University Student employees during the 2019-2020 academic year. These students work in a variety of on-campus positions including Residential Life, Student Activities, Public Safety, office workers, and other paid student positions. The survey will be administered, and selected interviews will take place between January 2020 through February 2020 at Rowan University. The data collected from this survey may help Student Affairs professionals at Rowan University better understand the needs of their student employees.

     Access to the sample. After gaining IRB approval, the sample for this study will be students at Rowan University. As an employee of Rowan University, I have the ability to utilize Qualtrics Survey Software to send information to all Rowan student employees. As surveys are received, students who meet the interview criterion will be identified for interviewing. After the data is collected, the data will be analyzed to determine if the consensus of the literature is confirmed.

Students will be incentivized to participate through the advertisement of a raffle to win a $15 Visa gift card which can contribute to paying for whatever financial need they may require. The participants that are selected for individual interviews will be entered into a raffle to win a $25 Visa gift card. The 2 students will receive their raffle prize in March 2020. The purpose of the raffle prize is to provide incentive for students to participate and disclose personal information. Moreover, as the semi-formal interviews will include students participating in higher levels of work intensity work so the monetary value will better incentivize those students that have to take time from school and work to participate in the research.

Data Analysis

The control variables for this study will be all variables that are not directly relevant to the research questions or contain too large of a body of work on their impact to be examined in full by this study. As a result, these variables will not be reported in the discussion of the results (McMillian, 2016; Bozick, 2017). This will ensure straightforward results that will inform the qualitative nature of the study. Data from the survey results was analyzed using Qualtrics and all information was stored within the Qualtrics database. The only information collected was student names and emails for the purposes of contacting qualifying participants for interviews and distributing prizes.

The individual interview portion of this data will be recorded, and all interviews will be coded into categories and subcategories based on the results of the semi-formal interviews (McMillan, 2016; Linfield, 2019). These categories will provide insight into the mindset of students working at high levels of intensity while attending college. Coding the data of the individual interviews will be key to understanding the impact that

27

working at high levels of intensity has on low-income students, their challenges

surrounding persistence and engagement, and their barriers to involvement. All data

from surveys and interviews will be destroyed once the study is completed.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Sample

The participants of this study were students employed on Rowan University campus between July 1, 2019 to January 4, 2020. The survey was distributed to participants through their Rowan email address on Thursday, January 30, 2020 with the data collection ending on Sunday, March 1, 2020. The survey consisted of both quantitative and qualitative responses with some questions being multiple choice, rank order, and text-entry. The participants of this survey included active and terminated student employees. The total number of surveys distributed was 1800, with a total of 360 surveys started. There were 311 participants that responded and 86% completed the survey. The overall completion rate for the survey was 17%. Table 1 shows the demographics of all surveys. Of the survey respondents 264 were undergraduate students. For the purposes of this study, low socioeconomic status and disadvantaged social background is determined by Pell-eligibility and self-identification. Of the sample, 102 of the students that consented to participate were Pell-eligible or self-identified as perceiving their family class status as lower-middle-income or lower-income.

To participate in the interviews, students had to complete the survey and be eligible to receive the Federal Pell Grant or perceive their family income as lower-middle-income or lower-income. Saturation was reached at the conclusion of 7 student interviews.

Table 1

Sample Demographics

Variable		f	%
Gender			
	Man	94	31.76
	Woman	199	67.23
	Other	3	1.01
Class Level			
	Freshman	16	5.41
	Sophomore	49	16.55
	Junior	97	32.77
	Senior	102	34.46
	Graduate	32	10.81
First Generation			
	Yes	91	30.85
	No	204	69.15
In/Out-of-state			
	In-state tuition	277	94.22
	Out-of-state tuition	17	5.78

Analysis of the Data

Surveys. There were 311 students that consented to participate in the research study. Of which 264 were undergraduate students. This research focuses on the experiences of undergraduate student workers. Therefore, the results of my data will exclude graduate student workers.

Participants were asked if they considered themselves to be student leaders on Rowan campus. The results were 156 responded yes (52.70%), 69 responded no (23.31%), and 71 responded that they were not sure (23.99%).

Participants were asked various indicators of economic status. Table 2 describes the various indicators of financial need of the sample. When asked how they perceive their family's class status 83 responded lowest-income or lower-middle income

30

(31.44%), 137 responded middle income (48.11%), and 54 responded higher-income or upper-middle-income (20.45%). Participants were asked about their primary form of transportation to work. The results were 11 participants used public transit (3.55%), 141 used a motor vehicle (45.48%), and 158 walked (50.97%).

Table 2

Sample Indicators of Financial Need

Variable		*f*	%
Perceived Class Status			
	Higher-income	5	1.89
	Upper-middle-income	49	18.56
	Middle-income	127	48.11
	Lower-middle-income	65	24.62
	Lowest-income	18	6.82
Off-campus employment			
	Yes	102	34.46
	No	194	65.54
Money to Essentials			
	Yes	51	19.32
	No	213	80.68
Financing Education			
	Loan	159	27.23
	Scholarship	157	26.88
	Family Support	166	28.42
	Personal Out of Pocket	102	17.47
Family Members Financing Education	1	92	34.85
	2	119	45.08
	3	5	1.89
	4	7	2.65
	Other	41	15.53

Table 3 describes participants' reflection about their support systems, belonging, and balance. When participants were asked if they feel supported by their on-campus

31

job: 78 participants selected Strongly Agree (33.77%), 86 selected Agree (37.23%), 45 selected Neutral (19.48%), 13 selected Disagree (5.63%), and 9 selected Strongly Disagree (3.90%). Participants were asked if they feel confident that they will be able to persist through college working at this level of intensity. The results were that 76 selected Strongly Agree (32.62%), 120 selected Agree (51.50%), 24 selected Neutral (10.30%), 11 selected Disagree (4.72%), and 2 selected Strongly Disagree (0.86%).

Table 3

Sample Participant Reflection

Variable	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
I feel supported by my job on campus.	33.77	37.23	19.48	5.63	3.90
I feel confident that I will be able to persist through college working at this level of intensity.	32.62	51.50	10.30	4.72	0.86
I feel like I belong on Rowan campus and consider myself to be an active member of the Rowan campus community.	39.06	39.06	15.88	5.15	0.86
I have a support system that helps me maintain a healthy balance between my academic achievement, employment, and off-campus responsibilities.	33.76	38.03	17.95	8.97	1.28
It is difficult for me to balance my off-campus responsibilities and my academic achievement.	6.87	25.75	30.47	26.61	10.30

32

Participants were asked to rank their priorities and their funding sources in order of importance and helpfulness respectively. This information can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Sample Participant Rankings

Variable	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*	n
Prioritization					
Current Employment	1	8	3.83	1.60	232
Other off-campus responsibilities	1	8	6.31	1.78	232
Academic achievement	1	8	1.94	1.21	232
Campus involvement	1	8	5.94	1.61	232
Preparing for classes	1	8	3.47	1.74	232
Participation in social events	1	8	6.53	1.45	232
Financial responsibilities	1	8	3.98	2.03	232
Familial responsibilities	1	8	4.00	2.21	232
Funding Sources					
Loans	1	6	3.29	3.24	228
Grants	1	6	3.62	3.17	228
Personal income	1	6	3.54	1.56	228
Scholarships	1	6	2.95	3.28	228
Familial income	1	6	3.28	3.10	228
Work-study	1	6	4.32	2.07	228

Participants were asked 3 text-entry questions on the survey. Participants were asked what stops them from getting more involved on campus. This text-entry question was coded into themes of commuter identity, time management, work and financial need, mental health, academic responsibilities, over-involvement, sports, off-campus responsibilities, lack of knowledge, safety concerns, and lack of interest and motivation. 63 responses noted time management as a barrier, 54 noted academic responsibilities, 40 noted work and financial need, 28 noted lack of interest and motivation, 24 noted mental

33

health, 18 noted over-involvement, 14 noted the commuter identity, 13 noted off-campus responsibilities, 1 noted lack of knowledge, and 1 noted safety concerns.

Participants were asked what prevents them from focusing on academic achievement. This text-entry question was coded into themes of no barriers, time management, work and financial need, social engagements, family and off-campus responsibilities, personal goals, other responsibilities, mental health, lack of sleep, heavy course load, over-involvement, and lack of motivation. Of the responses, 73 referenced work and financial need, 34 referenced family and off-campus responsibilities, 34 referenced having no barriers, 29 referenced time management, 25 referenced social engagements, 19 referenced mental health, 18 referenced over-involvement, 15 referenced a lack of motivation, 7 mentioned a lack of sleep, 6 referenced personal goals, and 5 referenced a heavy course load.

Participants were asked what they would like their employer to do to help them succeed. This text-entry question was coded into themes of no improvements, more paid hours, increased wages, flexible schedule, mentorship and guidance, and career development. Of the responses, 78 noted there was no need for their employers to improve, 28 referenced increased wages, 16 referenced increased hours, 26 referenced mentorship and guidance, and 8 referenced career development.

Interviews. Individual interviews were conducted to provide more insight into the needs of students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Interviews were conducted until saturation was reached at 7 individual interviews. The criterion for the interview was that the participants must be an undergraduate student who has filled out the survey, identified as lower income or be a Pell-eligible student.

34

Of the 7 students interviewed each worked 20 hours per week at some point in their college career. Participant 5, the student that worked the most, worked 55 hours a week for 2 years of their college career. Of the interviewees, 6 of the 7 participants did not see themselves as student leaders on Rowan University campus. Additionally, 5 of 7 students described themselves as socially disadvantaged. Regarding off-campus work, 4 participants had off-campus jobs during their college careers. All 7 students felt like they had a support system. Of the 7 students interviewed, 4 found their support on Rowan campus and 3 found their support at home. Only 2 of the 7 participants send money home to their family members for essential needs. Finally, 5 of 7 participants expressed feelings of stress and anxiety regarding their home lives.

Of the interviewees, 6 of 7 students expressed that they were happy with their on-campus work environments and that they enjoyed mentorship provided by the on-campus work experience. Of the 7 students, 4 expressed the desire for more money and 3 wanted to reduce their hours to make more room for other responsibilities while 2 of those students noted that they wanted to reduce their hours but could not for financial reasons. Sample quotes from the student interviews are provided throughout the research question responses below.

Research question 1. Does participating in high-intensity work impact college students with a low socioeconomic background?

Surveys. Of the sample, 21 of the undergraduate students fit the criteria for research question one. These results include students were Pell-eligible or self-identified as perceiving their family class status as lower-middle-income or lower-income. Additionally, it included students that worked over 20 hours per week. Of the students in

the population, the majority have off-campus employment and nearly half send money

home to their families to pay for essential needs. The full indicators of financial need of

this population can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

High Work Intensity & Disadvantaged Student Indicators of Financial Need

Variable		*f*	%
Off-campus employment			
	Yes	16	76.19
	No	5	23.81
Money to Essentials			
	Yes	9	42.86
	No	12	57.14
Financing Education			
	Loan	13	27.66
	Scholarship	15	31.91
	Family Support	9	19.15
	Personal Out of Pocket	10	21.28
Family Members Financing Education	1	10	47.62
	2	6	28.57
	3	1	4.76
	4	0	0
	Other	4	19.05

Disadvantaged college students working at high levels of intensity reflected on their experience working on-campus and maintaining balance. Table 6 contains the responses of this population.

Table 6

High Work Intensity & Disadvantaged Student Participant Reflection

Variable	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
I feel supported by my job on campus.	50.00	25.00	6.25	18.75	0.00
I feel confident that I will be able to persist through college working at this level of intensity.	23.53	52.94	23.53	0.00	0.00
I feel like I belong on Rowan campus and consider myself to be an active member of the Rowan campus community.	29.41	29.41	29.41	11.76	0.00
I have a support system that helps me maintain a healthy balance between my academic achievement, employment, and off-campus responsibilities.	29.41	41.18	11.76	17.65	0.00
It is difficult for me to balance my off-campus responsibilities and my academic achievement.	31.25	31.25	6.25	18.75	12.50

Participants were asked 3 text-entry questions on the survey. Participants were asked what stops them from getting more involved on campus. This text-entry question was coded into themes of time management, work and financial need, mental health, academic responsibilities, over-involvement, off-campus responsibilities, and lack of interest and motivation. Of the participants, 6 responses noted time management as a barrier, 5 noted academic responsibilities, 7 noted work and financial need, 1 noted lack

38

of interest and motivation, 1 noted mental health, 1 noted over-involvement, and 4 noted off-campus responsibilities.

Participants were asked what prevents them from focusing on academic achievement. This text-entry question was coded into themes of no barriers, time management, work and financial need, family and off-campus responsibilities, and mental health. Of the participants, 6 responses referenced work and financial need, 7 referenced family and off-campus responsibilities, 1 referenced having no barriers, 4 referenced time management, and 4 referenced mental health.

Participants were asked what they would like their employer to do to help them succeed. This text-entry question was coded into themes of more paid hours, increased wages, flexible schedule, mentorship and guidance, and career development. Of the participants, 5 referenced increased wages, 2 referenced increased hours, 6 referenced mentorship and guidance, 1 referenced flexible scheduling, and 1 referenced career development.

Interviews. Interview participants responded that when they worked closer to 20 hours or more per week it negatively impacted their mental health and their academic achievement. Each student expressed that working more hours was negatively impactful and felt that they made sacrifices to work at higher levels of work intensity. Common themes were mental health effects of stress and anxiety, lack of sleep, and lack energy and motivation. Participant 1 expressed the way that work impacted their experience:

> Yeah, it's difficult in ways you can't always measure either. Just in terms of I
> spent a lot of my time thinking about work. I spent a lot of my time engaged with
> work…over the last year and a half, two years in college, you know, I'm someone

39

who recently has been having like anxious breakdowns and anxiety attacks and
nervousness where I don't really know where they're coming from. And I imagine,
you know, when I'm busier those things happen more often. So I would say work
is probably a good not a direct factor in that, but certainly indirect effect on my
emotional mental well-being as well. It's just it's a mental strain and it's also, you
know, classes and everything to them when you factor that in. It's like it goes
from a 20 hour workweek to like 60 hours. Like, I'm just working all the time. I'm
up on something, whether that's work or classes or even, you know, you have to
put in work to keep your relationships stable with people. And I don't get a whole
lot of time where like mental health time to sort of really relax and do nothing
ever.

Participant 1's experience reflects the way that compounding high levels of work
intensity and stress can impact this population. While Participant 2 focused on the
structure required even for a low-income student to relax wherein, even taking time for
oneself must be carefully planned.

Yeah, definitely a lot of sacrifice like sleep from one that's sacrificed. Sacrifice
number two. I mean, time obviously given. But aside from working and aside
from, I guess, classes, a lot of the time outside of it, you spent planning, planning
when to eat, planning when to do things, and not a lot of time for like, you know,
binge watching Netflix on Saturday, like the time's likely not there. And if it is,
take it and know exactly what you're watching because you don't want to waste
time figuring it out. It's like very structured. It has to be structured for it to work.

40

Participant 3 expressed the social impact of work and their conflict between needing money and needing time to complete their homework and maintain relationships.

> Yeah, I definitely feel like my friends get annoyed at me because, like, I'm always working for them, always like in the studio. Like, I don't. I kind of make below like minimum wage at my job right now. And that makes me feel like I have to work even harder, more hours. So it takes away from the time that I need to spend being in the studio, creating and doing homework. So I feel like I spend a lot of my time burning the candle at both ends. So I feel very tired a lot of the time. So it's like I don't always want to or have the time to go out and do other things. Like I feel like I work just like nonstop and I really like my job and what I do there. But it definitely like money is just money that kind of makes me like that motivates me to keep working because I need it, you know.

These student experiences frame the impact that high levels of work intensity have students of low-socioeconomic background.

Of the 7 participants, 5 expressed that working many hours was necessary rather than optional. Although all 7 have worked at least 20 hours per week at some point in their college career, the 3 students that decreased their hours expressed relief and noted a reduction of stress and anxiety. Participant number 5 and 6 expressed that decreasing their work hours was beneficial to their overall health. Participant 5, who worked 55 hours per week for 2 years of their college experience stated

> I used to work at Home Depot and then I quit my job because it was that I worked overnight. You know, it's just very hectic and it's just extremely hard to do. You know, just paying attention in classes and stuff. So, I had to leave that job. And

41

then just strictly work here. I guess that since I have sickle cell sometimes you-- I don't have energy. That like, I felt that throughout the day. You know, I have no energy, no motivation to do anything. I don't want to talk to anybody. I just wanted to go to work. Not go. I didn't want to go to work. I went to work. I went to class went to work. Went to my apartment. And that's it. Slept. You know that's all of us-- I feel like was the biggest thing for me.

Regarding their health Participant 6 expressed that

The only reason I was working was because I had tuition to pay and I didn't want my family to like hold the cost. It was like I stayed on campus in the summertime so it was like my housing. So now, like, I knew I had to do everything I had to do. I couldn't take no breaks. So, I'm doing it-- I was super stressed. I didn't really feel like I was on the right track like in life. I just feel so like-- displaced. But after everything, I felt like, oh, OK. I can breathe. That's why like this semester I've been more slow and I kind of don't like that way. But it's because I was working so much so.

It is important to note that 6 of the 7 students interviewed expressed that work and finances prevented them from focusing on their academic achievement. Other issues noted were issues maintaining a social life and including time for self-care. However, only Participant 4 stated being uncertain that they would be able to persist through college working at their current level of intensity with their current job and family responsibilities. Participant 4 said, "It depends on like what my financial aid package is. I'm not really sure if I can come back." And, 5 of the 7 students interviewed specifically

42

mentioned money or financial stability as a part of their personal goals. Participant 7 started their response about their personal goals with,

> Okay, let's say I want to be financially stable. What else? I would like to have good mental health because I feel like I was all right before I got to college and then now I'm here and it's like a lil yee-haw. These are the things coming into my mind right now. Ok. I think you see me eating fresh Whole Foods every day. Moving every day like whether it's dance or yoga or walking or whatever… Just somewhere that has a lot of sun and like open, clean air. I don't really know what kinda… Just like space enough me and my stuff.

Participant 7 reflects a consensus where financial stability and their own space were reflected in the majority of student responses about their personal goals.

Working at high-levels of work intensity negatively impacts students with low-socioeconomic status. However, this seems to be a necessary as Participant 4 explains why they work in their on-campus position exactly 20 hours each week stating, "The check isn't enough if I like work less than that… I need it for payments right now. So, so far I haven't been able to make a payment like this semester yet because I haven't gotten enough money accumulated. And they ask for like the first payment to be like one big chunk. So you can't pay part of it off." This response is echoed by Participants 2 and 3 who have off-campus jobs in addition to their on-campus positions. Participant 4 further expressed the desire within these students to reduce their number of hours worked as further noted by their statement:

43

If I could get paid at least state minimum wage, I feel like I could maybe reduce my hours a little bit. Because right now I'm getting paid nine thirty-five because it's 85 percent of minimum wage. So that's not really enough like live. You know, if I'm paying for my-- my bill and like food or if I need clothes and anything like that.

The consensus is that working at a high-level of work intensity negatively impacts this student population but many of the students in this demographic have difficulty supporting themselves on 20 hours' worth of work alone.

Research question 2. How do students from families with limited economic resources prioritize work, off-campus responsibilities, involvement, and academic achievement?

Surveys. Of the sample, 102 of the undergraduate students that consented to participate were Pell-eligible or self-identified as perceiving their family class status as lower-middle-income or lower-income. Participants were asked if they considered themselves to be student leaders on Rowan campus. The results were 50 responded yes (51.02%), 23 responded no (23.47%), and 25 responded that they were not sure (25.51%). Table 7 describes the various indicators of financial need of the sample.

Table 7

Disadvantaged Student Demographics

Variable		f	%
Gender			
	Man	28	28.57
	Woman	70	71.43
	Other	0	0
Class Level			
	Freshman	11	11.22
	Sophomore	17	17.35
	Junior	35	35.71
	Senior	35	35.71
First Generation			
	Yes	53	54.08
	No	45	45.92
In/Out-of-state			
	In-state tuition	96	97.96
	Out-of-state tuition	2	2.04

Participants were asked to rank their priorities and their funding sources in order of importance and helpfulness respectively. This information can be found in Table 8.

45

Table 8

Disadvantaged Student Indicators of Financial Need

Variable		*f*	%
Off-campus employment	Yes	35	35.71
	No	63	64.29
Money to Essentials			
	Yes	35	35.71
	No	63	64.29
Financing Education			
	Loan	66	28.70
	Scholarship	69	30.00
	Family Support	46	20.00
	Personal Out of Pocket	49	21.30
Family Members Financing Education	1	39	39.80
	2	29	29.59
	3	2	2.04
	4	1	1.02
	Other	98	27.55

Disadvantaged college students reflected on their experience working on-campus and maintaining balance. Table 9 contains the responses of this population.

46

Table 9

Disadvantaged Student Reflection

Variable	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
I feel supported by my job on campus.	33.72	32.56	20.93	6.98	5.81
I feel confident that I will be able to persist through college working at this level of intensity.	35.23	39.77	18.18	5.68	1.14
I feel like I belong on Rowan campus and consider myself to be an active member of the Rowan campus community.	29.55	32.95	26.14	9.09	2.27
I have a support system that helps me maintain a healthy balance between my academic achievement, employment, and off-campus responsibilities.	10.34	25.29	27.59	25.29	11.49
It is difficult for me to balance my off-campus responsibilities and my academic achievement.	27.27	52.27	14.77	4.55	1.14

Participants were asked to rank their priorities and their funding sources in order of importance and helpfulness respectively. This information can be found in Table 10.

47

Table 10

Disadvantaged Student Rankings

Variable	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*	n
Prioritization					
Current Employment	1	8	3.70	1.49	87
Other off-campus responsibilities	1	8	6.30	1.79	87
Academic achievement	1	8	1.94	1.20	87
Campus involvement	1	8	6.10	1.37	87
Preparing for classes	1	8	3.49	1.84	87
Participation in social events	1	8	6.87	1.27	87
Financial responsibilities	1	8	3.53	1.75	87
Familial responsibilities	1	8	4.06	2.10	87
Funding Sources					
Loans	1	6	3.24	1.86	3.45
Grants	1	6	2.38	1.58	2.51
Personal income	1	6	4.03	1.14	1.30
Scholarships	1	6	3.03	1.85	3.44
Familial income	1	6	4.21	1.52	2.30
Work-study	1	6	4.10	1.35	1.82

Participants were asked 3 text-entry questions on the survey. Participants were asked what stops them from getting more involved on campus. This text-entry question was coded into themes of commuter identity, time management, work and financial need, mental health, academic responsibilities, over-involvement, sports, off-campus responsibilities, and lack of interest and motivation. Of the participants, 33 noted time management as a barrier, 25 noted academic responsibilities, 22 noted work and financial need, 8 noted lack of interest and motivation, 10 noted mental health, 7 noted over-involvement, 5 noted the commuter identity, and 8 noted off-campus responsibilities.

Participants were asked what prevents them from focusing on academic achievement. This text-entry question was coded into themes of no barriers, time management, work and financial need, social engagements, family and off-campus

48

responsibilities, personal goals, other responsibilities, mental health, lack of sleep, heavy course load, over-involvement, and lack of motivation. Of the participants, 50 referenced work and financial need, 30 referenced family and off-campus responsibilities, 31 referenced having no barriers, 13 referenced time management, 4 referenced social engagements, 9 referenced mental health, 5 referenced a lack of motivation, 2 mentioned a lack of sleep, and 2 referenced a heavy course load.

Participants were asked what they would like their employer to do to help them succeed. This text-entry question was coded into themes of no improvements, more paid hours, increased wages, flexible schedule, mentorship and guidance, and career development. Of the participants, 25 responses noted there was no need for their employers to improve, 16 referenced increased wages, 9 referenced increased hours, 12 referenced flexible scheduling, 11 referenced mentorship and guidance, and 7 referenced career development.

Interviews. Participants in the interview were directly asked how they prioritize work, off-campus responsibilities, involvement, and academic achievement. Of the 7 students interviewed, Participants 1, 2, 6, and 7 ranked academic achievement as the most important. It is important to note that Participant 1 and 7 where the only 2 students in the sample that said their paycheck was going into their pocket. As such, a statement by Participant 1 reflects the same the relationship that Participant 7 has to work and finances.

> I mean, it's the work part of the work life class kind of thing. It's interesting because, again, kind of something that gives you money automatically feels more important. You know, I mean, I think that's just kind of natural. If you have three

49

friends named to work life in class and, you know, work gives you five dollars every time you see them, you're going to want to do work more.

Although this view is shared by only 2 of the students interviewed, all students interviewed were Pell-eligible or identified as low-income. In the rankings, Participant 5 ranked current employment as the most important. Participant 3 ranked off-campus responsibilities as the most important and Participant 4 said that academic achievement was tied with current employment. Current employment was in the top 2 for every student interviewed. A statement by Participant 2 reflects the consensus of the interviews.

> I would say academic achievement. It's closely tied with financial stability. Just because I mean, depends on how much I have in my bank account, to be honest…So right now, like when you're low on funds, I suppose, like what becomes, I guess, the most important to you that, you know, it has to be finances? Am I supposed to not get evicted? Yeah, that's the whole point.

This statement provides a summary of the experiences of how this vulnerable population prioritizes work, off-campus responsibilities, involvement, and academic achievement.

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

This study investigated the challenges and resilience of students that work at high levels of intensity and come from a low socioeconomic background. It did so by analyzing student employees at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. It also inquired how students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds prioritize various responsibilities that being work, off-campus responsibilities, involvement, and academic achievement. The study consisted of a survey and follow-up interviews.

The survey instrument used to measure data from participants was aimed to identify the socio-economic background, the work-intensity of the student, campus involvement, and barriers to involvement and success. The survey was distributed online using Qualtrics software to 1800 students who were on payroll and identified as Rowan Student Employees. A total of 311 students responded or partially responded to the survey leading to a response rate of 17.3%. The qualitative and quantitative survey data was gathered by Qualtrics and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The individual interviews were to provide more insight. The criterion for the interview was that students must have filled out the survey, identified as lower income or been identified as a pell-eligible student. The results from the interview were then coded and into themes.

Discussion of the Findings

The Impact of High-Intensity Work and Socioeconomic Status on Student Employees Survey was developed to determine the impact of high-intensity work on socially disadvantaged students. Referencing the method by which Bozick (2007) and

51

Yool (2017) redefined the terms "disadvantaged social background" and "advantaged social background" to measure multiple factors and using guiding research interviews, the data collected from this study can be used to evaluate the impact of high-intensity work on Rowan Student Employees.

The findings demonstrate that compared to the sample, disadvantaged students have demographics that are largely reflect the overall sample. However, regarding their financial support these students are less likely to have more likely to be no family members financing their education. As the overall sample recorded 16.55% had 0 individuals financing their education, 32.77% had 1 person, 15.95% had 2 people and 2.36% had 3 or 4. This compares to the nearly double of the disadvantaged students having less individuals financing their education. The results were 27.55% had 0 family members contributing, 39.80% had 1 family member contributing, 29.59% had 2 contributors, 2.04% had 3 contributors, and 1.02% had 4 contributors.

Regarding their sense of belonging, disadvantaged students, like the whole of the sample, feel supported by their on-campus job and reported feeling like they belong on campus. However, disadvantaged students perceive themselves as having less support and how they view their ability to persist does differ from the sample. Disadvantaged students are less likely to feel they have a support system. Of the sample, 70.72% of chose agree or strongly agree when asked about having a support system compared to 62.5% disadvantaged students. Moreover, disadvantaged students are slightly less likely to feel confident about their ability to persist through college. Of the sample, 82.76 chose agree or strongly agree when asked if they believed they could persist compared to 79.54% of disadvantaged students.

Research question 1. Does participating in high-intensity work impact college students with a low socioeconomic background?

The findings demonstrate that disadvantaged students participating in high-intensity work are impacted by 20 hours or more per week. These students have a different experience than the overall student experience. Participants remarked that time management, academic responsibilities, and work and financial need as the top three factors preventing them from being involved on campus. When asked about their barriers to academic achievement the most consistent themes were family and off-campus responsibilities, work and financial need, time management, and mental health. These survey questions were expanded upon through the interview process as students reported stress and anxiety around their financial need that impacts their mental health, physical health, relationships, personal goals, and engagement. Additionally, the majority of the students interviewed expressed that work and financial need prevented them from focusing on their academic achievement.

Research question 2. How do students from families with limited economic resources prioritize work, off-campus responsibilities, involvement, and academic achievement?

Regarding how students from disadvantaged backgrounds prioritize, it very similar to that of their more affluent peers. However, the difference is that disadvantaged students rank their financial responsibilities higher and rank campus involvement and participation in social events consistently lower. Additionally, students from disadvantaged backgrounds find familial income to be the least helpful source in funding

53

their education. Table 11 shows a visual comparison of how disadvantage students

ranked their priorities and funding sources compared to the whole of the sample.

Table 11

Comparison Student Reflection

	Sample			Disadvantaged	
Variable	Rank	*M*		Rank	*M*
Prioritization					
Current Employment	3	3.83		4	3.70
Other off-campus responsibilities	7	6.31		7	6.30
Academic achievement	1	1.94		1	1.94
Campus involvement	6	5.94		6	6.10
Preparing for classes	2	3.47		2	3.49
Participation in social events	8	6.53		8	6.87
Financial responsibilities	4	3.98		3	3.53
Familial responsibilities	5	4.00		5	4.06
Funding Sources					
Loans	3	3.29		3	3.24
Grants	5	3.62		1	2.38
Personal income	4	3.59		4	4.03
Scholarships	1	2.95		2	3.03
Familial income	2	3.28		6	4.21
Work-study	6	4.32		5	4.10

Conclusions

This study examined the work-intensity and socioeconomic background of the

Rowan University student employees. Through surveys and interviews information was

gathered about the challenges and resilience of students from a low socioeconomic

background and, within that population, work at high levels of intensity. Research

suggests that student employment impacts students disproportionately depending on their

54

socioeconomic status (Bozick, 2007; Choi, 2017). The study found that working while attending college impacts the success of disadvantaged students. Disadvantaged students understand their experience on campus differently than the whole of the student body. These students are less likely to feel supported and less likely to believe in their ability to persist. Moreover, Bozick (2007) shows that students with disadvantaged social backgrounds are more likely to participate in high-intensity work. This means that the experience of disadvantaged students working at high levels of intensity has even more challenges.

As demonstrated in the findings, it was found that disadvantaged students have similar priorities to the whole of the study body but fulfilling their financial responsibilities is important to them than their current employment. This could mean that these students are not concerned with how they fulfill their financial obligations as much as they are fulfilling them. It is understood that there is positive connection between student success and on-campus student employment (Mitola et al., 2018). Further, it is understood that students working low-intensity, part-time jobs on-campus were impacted positively by their employment while students who were full time or had part-time jobs off campus were negatively impacted (Mitola et al., 2018; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998). Students of a low-socioeconomic status are impacted by this as of the disadvantaged students 27.55% had no familial assistance in financing their education compared to 15% of the whole of sample.

The research shows that how students prioritize their employment and academics impacts their ability to persist (Riggert, Boyle, Petrosko, Ash, & Rude-Parkins, 2006). However, the survey portion of this study found that disadvantaged students prioritize

55

similarly to the whole of their peers recognizing that academic achievement and preparing for class are their priorities. In interviews, the disadvantaged students discussed their financial responsibilities as equal or very close in priority to their work responsibilities. Of the students interviewed, the majority stated that their academic achievement was their priority, but each discussed the mental health impact of having to participate in intense work to meet their financial needs. The common themes that these students discussed struggling with where off-campus responsibilities, familial concerns, maintaining mental health as well as social relationships.

Finally, respondents expressed the need for higher-pay that would allow them to work less hours to meet their financial needs. In interviews, students expressed a preference toward working on-campus due to the connect to Rowan and mentorship. Additionally, students expressed wanting to work more hours on campus or be paid more in on-campus positions so that they would not have to work as many hours off-campus.

Mental health issues due to financial stress was a common theme for disadvantaged students in the survey and the interviews. It can be concluded that more research needs to be performed on this area in order to further understand the impact that participating in high-intensity work has on student's mental health. Researchers have found that student employment influences student success and development (Field, 2017; Mitola, Rinto & Pattni, 2018; Watts & Pickering, 2000). This study confirms that participating in high-intensity work can impact student's ability to focus and motivation. Responses appear to indicate that financial stress and high-intensity work permeate the entirely of a student's experience.

As colleges diversify economically and low-income and minority students are becoming an increasing larger population attending college, understanding the needs of an economically diverse student populace is key to closing the achievement gap (Osei, 2019). It can be concluded that more research needs to be done to further understand how to best aid low-income students.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Based on the findings in this study the following are recommended for future practice:

1. Increased wages to combat the number of students working at high levels of intensity

2. Develop more on-campus employment opportunities so students can meet their financial needs with their on-campus position

3. Offering mentorship opportunities and referrals to mental health services and programming for lower-income students as they may deal with increased finance induced stress and difficulty at home

4. Providing more quiet places for students to study was requested because of issues with balancing travel time, home life, and work

5. Career development workshops focused on time management skills and career-based skills

Recommendations for Future Research

This study faced a few notable limitations in practice. The survey experienced a low response rate of 17.3%. This may be due to the inclusion of recently terminated student employees. Additionally, this survey was 27 questions in length so survey fatigue may have played a role in the low response rate.

Based upon the findings and conclusions of tis study, the following are recommendations for future research:

1. Develop a shorter survey instrument that specifically targets the priorities of low-income students and includes ranges for levels of work-intensity.

2. Expand the sample of the study beyond student workers, as student workers are limited to working 20 hours per week on-campus and may or may not have restrictions on whether they are allowed to take on additional employment.

3. Incorporate an element on mental health because there was a link between stress and financial stability and work intensity.

References

Barnhardt, C. L., Trolian, T., An, B., Rossmann, P. D., & Morgan, D. L. (2019). Civic Learning While Earning? The Role of Student Employment in Cultivating Civic Commitments and Skills. Review of Higher Education, 42(2), 707–737. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1201679&site=ehost-live

Bozick, R. (2007). Making it through the first year of college: The role of students' economic resources, employment, and living arrangements. Sociology of Education, 80(3), 261-284. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.rowan.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/2164840 10?accountid=13605

Campus Labs. (2019). Rowan University Organizations. Retrieved from https://rowan.campuslabs.com/engage/organizations.

Choi, Y. (2018). Student employment and persistence: Evidence of effect heterogeneity of student employment on college dropout. Research in Higher Education, 59(1), 88-107. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11162-017-9458-y

Creswell, J. W., Clark, V. L. P., Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2017). Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research. Retrieved from https://study.sagepub.com/creswell3e.

Dadgar, M., & Columbia University, C. C. R. C. (2012). The Academic Consequences of Employment for Students Enrolled in Community College. CCRC Working Paper No. 46. Community College Research Center, Columbia University. Community College Research Center, Columbia University. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.rowan.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED533521&site=ehost-live

Federal Student Aid. (2019, July 1). Federal Pell Grants. Retrieved from https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/grants-scholarships/pell.

Fetters, M. D., Curry, L. A., & Creswell, J. W. (2013). Achieving integration in mixed methods designs-principles and practices. Health services research, 48(6 Pt 2), 2134–2156. doi:10.1111/1475-6773.12117

Field, K. (2017, October 29). Making Students' Jobs More Meaningful. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/Making-Students-Jobs-More/241576

Hoover, E. (2019, September 8). Does College Really Work? Well, It Depends. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/Does-College-Really-Work-/247087.

Kuh, G. D. (2007). How to Help Students Achieve. *Chronicle of Higher Education, 4*. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ771702

McMillan, J. H. (2016). Fundamentals of educational research (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Mazerolle, S. M., Eason, C. M., & Eberman, L. E. (2017). Perceptions of Work-Life Balance Practices Offered in the Collegiate Practice Setting. *Journal of Athletic Training*, *52*(12), 1131–1139. doi: 10.4085/1062-6050-52.11.28

Mazerolle, S. M., Eason, C. M., Ferraro, E. M., & Goodman, A. (2015, February). Career and family aspirations of female athletic trainers employed in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I setting. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4495444/

Mitola, R., Rinto, E., & Pattni, E. (2018). Student employment as high-impact practice in academic libraries: A systematic review. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 44*(3), 352-373. doi://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2018.03.005

National Survey of Student Engagement. (2019). About NSSE. Retrieved from http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/about.cfm.

Osei, Z. (2019, May 22). Low-Income and Minority Students Are Growing Share of Enrollments, and 2 Other Takeaways From New Study. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/Low-IncomeMinority/246346.

Our Past, Present, & Future. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.rowan.edu/about/oppaf/index.html.

Landers, K. H. (2017). Dis-"Orientation." Postsecondary Education for First-Generation and Low-Income Students in the Ivy League, 89–109. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-63456-2_8

Landers, K. H. (2017). True Grit. Postsecondary Education for First-Generation and Low-Income Students in the Ivy League, 111–137. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-63456-2_9

Qualtrics. (2019). Meet the Qualtrics Experience Management Platform. Retrieved from https://www.qualtrics.com/platform/.

Quimby, E. (2012). Considerations for Conducting Qualitative Research. *Doing Qualitative Community Research*, 104–146. doi: 10.2174/97816080525851120101 0104

Ramburuth, P., & Härtel, C. E. (2010). Understanding and meeting the needs of students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds. Multicultural Education & Technology Journal, 4(3), 153–162. doi: 10.1108/17504971011075156

Riggert, S. C., Boyle, M., Petrosko, J. M., Ash, D., & Rude-Parkins, C. (2006). Student employment and higher education: Empiricism and contradiction. Review of Educational Research, 76(1), 63-73,75-92. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.rowan.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/2141158 87?accountid=13605

Rowan History. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.rowan.edu/about/oppaf/history.html.

Rowan University SOM History. (2019). Retrieved from https://som.rowan.edu/oursom/leadership/history.html.

The Rowan Gift. (2019). Retrieved from https://sites.rowan.edu/henryrowan/gift/index.html.

Thompson, Lauren, "Rowan After Hours: the impact of student employment on student engagement" (2013). *Theses and Dissertations*. 411. https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/411

University of Kentucky. (n.d.). 50 Life Story Questions to Ask. Retrieved from https://simpson.ca.uky.edu/files/50_questions_making_memories.pdf.

Watts, C., & Pickering, A. (2000). Pay as you learn: Student employment and academic progress. Education & Training, 42(2), 129-135. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.rowan.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/2370698 10?accountid=13605

Appendix A

Survey Instrument

Impact of High-Intensity Work and Socioeconomic Status on Student Employees Survey

We are inviting you to participate in a research survey entitled "Impact of High-Intensity Work and Socioeconomic Status on Student Employees". We are inviting you because you work on-campus at Rowan University. In order to participate in this survey, you must be 18 years or older.

The survey may take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in the survey, do not respond to this electronic survey. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will all student employees working on Rowan University campus.

The purpose of this research study is to access examine the impact of work-intensity and socioeconomic background on Rowan student employees. This study will help us to gain a better understanding of the needs of student employees and their challenges. The study should aid the development of on-campus student employment programs and direct them in matters of socioeconomic support and inclusion.

Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey.

There may be some discomfort associated with this survey due to the topic of financial need and employment. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study you may help us understand the challenges that are faced by disadvantaged students working at high levels of work intensity. These findings will add to the knowledgebase, to further improve the understanding of the ways to support student employees.

Your response will be kept confidential. We will store the data in a secure computer file and the file will be destroyed once the data has been published. Any part of the research that is published as a part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact Jessica D. Hassell at the address provided below, but you do not have to give your personal identification.

This study has been approved by Rowan University IRB #Pro2019000887

Researcher:	Advisor:
Jessica Hassell	Andrew Tinnin, Ed. D.
Higher Education Administration Masters Candidate	Professor
Rowan University	Educational Services, Administration and Higher Education
hassel73@rowan.edu	tinnin@rowan.edu

62

Impact of High-Intensity Work and Socioeconomic Status on Student Employees
Survey

1. What is your age?
    a. 18
    b. 19
    c. 20
    d. 21
    e. 22
    f. 23
    g. 24
    h. Other: [short answer space]
2. How do you identify your gender?
    a. Man
    b. Woman
    c. Other: [short answer space]
3. What is your class level?
    a. Freshman
    b. Sophomore
    c. Junior
    d. Senior
    e. Graduate
4. I consider myself to be a Student Leader on Rowan campus.
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. I'm not sure
5. Are you a first-generation college student?
    a. Yes
    b. No
6. Do you pay in-state or out-of-state tuition?
    a. In-state tuition
    b. Out-of-state tuition
7. How are you financing your education? Choose all that apply.
    a. Loan
    b. Scholarship
    c. Family Support
    d. Personal Out of Pocket
8. How many family members contribute to your financing your education?
    a. 1
    b. 2
    c. 3
    d. 4
    e. Other: [short answer space]
9. Do you receive a Federal Pell Grant?
    a. Yes
    b. No

      c. I'm not sure
10. Do you have an off-campus job?
      a. Yes
      b. No
11. How many hours per week do you spend working?
      a. Up to 20 hours per week
      b. Over 20 hours per week
12. Do you send money from your paid positions to your family to pay for essential needs?
      a. Yes
      b. No
13. What is your primary form of transportation to work?
      a. Public Transit
      b. Motor Vehicle
      c. Walking
14. How do you perceive your family's class status?
      a. Higher income
      b. Upper-middle income
      c. Middle income
      d. Lower-middle income
      e. Lowest income
15. Rank the following, in order of their importance to you.
      a. Current employment
      b. Other off-campus responsibilities
      c. Academic achievement
      d. Campus involvement
      e. Preparing for classes
      f. Participation in social events
      g. Financial responsibilities
      h. Familial responsibilities
16. Rank the following funding sources, in order of their helpfulness to you.
      a. Loans
      b. Grants
      c. Personal income
      d. Scholarships
      e. Familial income
      f. Work-study
17. I feel supported by my job on campus.
      a. Strongly Agree
      b. Agree
      c. Neutral
      d. Disagree
      e. Strongly Disagree
18. I feel like I belong on Rowan campus and consider myself to be an active member of the Rowan campus community.
      a. Strongly Agree

b. Agree
c. Neutral
d. Disagree
e. Strongly Disagree

19. I have a support system that helps me maintain a healthy balance between my academic achievement, employment, and off-campus responsibilities.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neutral
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

20. It is difficult for me to balance my off-campus responsibilities and my academic achieving.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neutral
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

21. I feel confident that I will be able to persist through college working at this level of intensity.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neutral
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

22. What stops you from getting more involved on campus?
    a. [Text entry space]

23. What prevents your from focusing your efforts on academic achievement?
    a. [Text entry space]

24. What would you like your on-campus employer to do to help you succeed?
    a. [Text entry space]

25. I would like to be entered into a raffle for a $15 Visa Gift card.
    a. Yes
    b. No

26. What is your Rowan e-mail address?
    a. [Text entry space]

27. I understand that I may be contacted for an interview and if I am contacted for an interview I am eligible for a raffle to receive a $25 Visa Gift card.
    a. Yes, I understand

Interview Instrument

The Impact of High-Intensity Work on Student Employees from Disadvantaged Social Backgrounds Interview

We are inviting you to participate in a research survey entitled "The Impact of High-Intensity Work on Student Employees from Disadvantaged Social Backgrounds Interview". We are inviting you because you work on-campus at Rowan University. In order to participate in this survey, you must be 18 years or older.

The interview may take approximately 60 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in the interview, please respond to this email. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will all student employees working on Rowan University campus. The number of students interviewed will be 10 or until saturation is reached.

The purpose of this research study is to access examine the impact of work-intensity and socioeconomic background on Rowan student employees. This study will help us to gain a better understanding of the needs of student employees and their challenges. The study should aid the development of on-campus student employment programs and direct them in matters of socioeconomic support and inclusion.

Completing this interview indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the interview.

There may be some discomfort associated with this interview due to the topic of financial need. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study you may help us understand the challenges that are faced by disadvantaged students working at high levels of work intensity. These findings will add to the knowledgebase, to further improve the understanding of the ways to support student employees.

Your response will be kept confidential. We will store the data in a secure computer file and the file will be destroyed once the data has been published. Any part of the research that is published as a part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact Jessica D. Hassell at the address provided below, but you do not have to give your personal identification.

This study has been approved by Rowan University IRB #Pro2019000887

Researcher:
Jessica Hassell
Higher Education Administration Masters
Candidate
Rowan University
hassel73@rowan.edu

Advisor:
Andrew Tinnin, Ed. D.
Professor
Educational Services, Administration
and Higher Education
tinnin@rowan.edu

Consent to Audio/Video Tape

You have already agreed to participate in an interview conducted by Jessica Hassell, Higher Education Administration Master's Candidate. We are asking you for permission to allow us to audio record part of the project involving your individual interview. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the project.

The recording(s) will be used for analysis by the interviewer.

The recording(s) will not include any identifiable information. The recording(s) will only be shared with the master's candidate and advisor for this project.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above the permission to record during participation in the above referenced project. The advisor will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than those stated in the permission form without your written permission.

Name: _____

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Permission:

To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the purposes and procedures of this project including all the information contained in this permission form when requested. All questions of the participant have been accurately answered, and I have received a signed permission, indicating the participant has the contact information of the investigator's and read through the letter detailing the involvement and permission to be a participant in the project.

Person Obtaining Permission: _____

Signature: _____   Date: _____

To the best of my ability, I have provided information about the use of audio/video in the conduct of this project, including how it relates to the main purpose of this project and I have provided contact information of all relevant persons for the participant to contact for additional information.

Check the box here if audio/video taping willing occur and information was provided for the participant - □

67

The Impact of High-Intensity Work on Student Employees from Disadvantaged

Social Backgrounds Interview

1. How old are you?
2. What is your class level?
3. Tell me about yourself.
4. Tell me about your on-campus involvements.
5. Do you consider yourself to be a student leader on Rowan campus?
6. How are you financing your education?
7. Do you receive a Federal Pell Grant?
8. Of your financial aid which has been the most helpful to you?
9. Do you have an off-campus jobs?
10. How many hours per week do you spend working? Please include all your jobs in that total number of work hours.
11. Describe your average work week.
12. Do you send money from your paid positions to your family to pay for essential needs?
13. How do you perceive your family's class status?
14. How would you characterize your current family situation?
15. How many family members contribute to your household income?
16. How many family members contribute to financing your education?
17. Would you consider yourself as coming from an advantaged or disadvantaged social background?
18. What are your professional goals?
19. What are your personal goals?
20. Do you feel that working over 20 hours per week has been difficult, or that you have had to make sacrifices in order to do so? Please describe.
21. Do you feel as though you will be able to persist through college working at this level of intensity with your current job and family responsibilities?
22. What prevents you from focusing your efforts on academic achievement and your career goals?
23. What do you feel like your on-campus job or department could do to make your experience easier?
24. Do you have a support system that helps you maintain a healthy balance between your academic achievement, employment, and off-campus responsibilities? Please describe your support system.
25. Discuss how your work/life/class balance is impacted by your job responsibilities?
26. Where does most of your stress come from? Consider your work, life, on-campus involvements, off-campus responsibilities and/or class?
27. Do you have a support system that helps you maintain a healthy balance between my academic achievement, employment, and off-campus responsibilities? Where do you derive that support: work, home, on/off-campus?
28. What is most important to you: your current employment, academic achievement, campus involvement, off-campus responsibilities?