

Work-Life Balance:
Do First Year Graduates have it?

By Seamus Tyler-Baxter

A thesis submitted for a Master of Business Degree at the University of Otago, Dunedin,
New Zealand

Abstract

Work-life balance is an important topic that is worthy of study and is becoming increasingly popular among researchers. There is a lack of knowledge contributing to the work-life balance issues for new graduates. This study seeks to explore how graduates in their first year of post-university study, experience work-life balance.

An interpretive methodological approach was taken to this study. A qualitative method of semi-structured interviews was used to engage with first year graduates who were in their first year of work post-university. Data was collected through recording and transcribing. Thematic analysis was used to understand how new graduates in their first year of work perceive the relationship between work and non-work life.

The results suggest that first year graduates perceive that they have a good work-life balance. Specific to this group of first year graduates was that their primary concern in their non-work life was socialising and leisure activities. The major influence on their work-life balance was their enjoyment of the structure that work provided to their work-life balance compared to university. They had a tendency to segment rather than integrate their work-life balance. However boundary management activities suggested significant interaction occurred between their work and non-work life. This suggested that there was significant overlap in both positive and negatives ways in both directions between work and non-work life. Their work-life balance was also largely connected to their career goals and aspirations for travel. They were willing to sacrifice their non-work time to be more successful in the future through a long-term perspective of delayed gratification.

Preface (Acknowledgments)

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Bronwyn Boon as her expertise and dedication has provided the motivation to engage with this topic, and gain the absolute most from it. A thank you must also go to those in the department of management who have helped me along the way to completing this project.

I must also acknowledge my friends and family who have endured me through my studies. The help has been greatly appreciated. Cheers.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Literature Review.....	4
2.1	Importance of Work-Life Balance in the 21 st Century.....	4
2.2	Work-Life Balance Defined.....	9
2.3	Work and Family Issues.....	13
2.4	Work-Life Balance for Graduates.....	14
2.5	Theorising the Interactions between Work and Non-work Lives	15
2.5.1	Managing the boundaries	17
2.5.2	Models of boundary work	18
3	Methodology	22
3.1	Position of Research	22
3.2	Field of Engagement	25
3.3	Semi-Structured Interview	27
3.4	Data Collection	29
3.5	Data Analysis	29
4	Results.....	31
4.1	Graduates view of work-life balance	31
4.2	Current work-life balance in relation to university work-life	34
4.3	Segmentation-Integration Continuum.....	40
4.4	Managing the work and non work-life boundary.....	43
4.4.1	Key types of interactions.....	44
4.4.2	Facilitation of Interactions	49
4.5	Work-Life Balance in Context of “Future” Aims and Goals	54
5	Discussion.....	58
6	Conclusion	64
6.1	Limitations	64
6.2	Implications for Further Study.....	65
6.3	Contribution	66
7	References.....	67
8	Appendix.....	73

List of Tables

Table #1: Demographic information of participants.....	32
Table #2: How first year graduate participants view work-life balance.....	37
Table # 3: Key differences between work-life balance at university and work.....	41
Table # 4: Segmentation-Integration Continuum Model.....	46
Table # 5: Emotional Interactions between Work and Non-work Life.....	50
Table # 6: Mental Interactions between Work and Non-work Life.....	52
Table # 7: Telecommunications as a way of interacting between work and non-work life....	55

1 Introduction

The inspiration for this thesis came from an observation that was made talking to peers who had recently started or were about to start their first post-university job. They talked about their enjoyment of the flexibility they had at university to do what they wanted when they wanted. They were already feeling the pressure of working life or were anticipating an increased work load. This led to the idea that first year graduates would be an interesting group to study in terms of the difficulties they face in balancing their work and non-work life. The observation suggested the different context of university and working would provide a platform for first year graduates to provide a unique insight into their experience of work-life balance. From this observation a research problem was developed which could be taken to the literature; ‘explore how graduates in their first year of post-university study, experience work-life balance’.

Work-life balance is an important topic to study and this is shown in the large amount of literature focusing on it. There are various definitions of work-life balance but for this study the objective definitions are not useful rather a subjective approach is taken where work-life balance involves “a perceived balance between work and rest of life” (Guest, 2002, p. 263). Much of the focus in work-life balance is on work-family balance where the emphasis is on people with dependant family and it neglects young people who do not have dependant family. This aspect of the literature is not useful because it does not help in addressing work-life balance for first year graduates. The relationship between work and non-work life is displayed in the literature as the managing of boundaries. Much of this focuses on the negative aspect of the interactions between work and non-work life and it is argued that more research needs to focus on both the negative and positive interactions. Finally, there a variety of models used to theorise the interaction between work and non-work life. However Nipper-Eng (1996) provides the segmentation-integration continuum which is used in this study to theorise the management of the boundary between work and non-work.

This review of the literature has prompted the question of how new graduates in their first year of work perceive the relationship between work and non-work life. In investigating this five specific research questions are being asked; How do first year graduates view their work-life balance; how do the new graduates perceive their current work-life balance compared to their work-life balance while at university; in the way that new graduates manage the

boundary between their work and non-work lives, where are they located on the segmentation-integration continuum; do first year graduates experience interactions between their work and non-work life as either conflict or as positive interactions or both; do future aims and goals affect the expectations of work-life balance of first year graduates.

This study took an interpretive methodological approach. This allowed for an in-depth investigation into how the target population, of first year graduates, perceives the relationship between their work and non-work lives. Semi-structured interviews provided the qualitative method for engaging with the empirical field to explore how first year graduates post university, experience work-life balance. The method of data collection was through recording and transcribing of the interviews. Finally data analysis was conducted in the form of thematic analysis to establish and organise the results.

This study will show that overall this group of first year graduates believed they had a good work-life balance. The determining factor for this was how restricted they felt in their ability to socialise and pursue leisure activities in their non-work life. This was dependent on their current work and non-work life circumstances. The major influence on their work-life balance was the structure that work provided compared to the flexibility experienced at university. The structure helped them achieve a better sense of balance in striving for or maintaining separation between their work and non-work life. This is shown by the majority of this group of first year graduates being located closer to the segmented end of the segmentation-integration continuum (Nipper-Eng, 1996). However they still allowed positive emotional interactions to spill from one domain to the other but tried to avoid negative spill over. They facilitated interactions between work and non-work life through the use of cell phones and computers which acted a useful tool for achieving work-life balance. Bringing social aspect of non-work life through relationships with work mates also represented a way in which they facilitated interaction between the domains. This contributed to them feeling respite at work and improved their work environment. This allowed them to manage the boundary between their work and non-work life and was important to achieving work-life balance. This study will also show that this group of first year participants have a long-term perspective of work-life balance through delayed gratification. In this sense they were willing to sacrifice their non-work time to be more successful in the future because they were young graduates starting out in their careers. The overall major contribution this study makes to the work-life balance is it begins to fill the gap that was identified in terms of work-life balance for younger members of the workforce.

This thesis is structured into five main chapters. Chapter two is a review of the work-life balance literature. Chapter three describes the methodological approach and the method used to collect the data. Chapter four displays the results that were found from the data collected. Chapter five is the discussion chapter where there is a discussion of the results. Finally the last chapter six concludes with a summary of the thesis and its contributions and includes implications and limitations of this study.

2 Literature Review

The need to balance the demands of work and personal life has always been a part of human life as people have always had children and elderly parents to care for, they have always pursued hobbies and leisure activities, devoted time to community activities as well as the need for paid employment (Friedman, Christensen, and Degroot, 1998). In order to balance the demands of work and personal life an individual attempts to create “a perceived balance between work and rest of life” (Guest, 2002, p. 263). The structure of this literature begins with four important factors that contribute to the importance of work-life balance in the 21st century. This is followed by the various definitions of work-life balance where the objective approach is opposed to the subjective approach. The focus of the work-life balance literature on work/family issues is then discussed. This highlights that there is a gap in the work-life balance literature in terms of how younger first year graduates balance their work and non-work life. Finally the interactions between work and non-work life are addressed in terms of boundary management. In doing this Nippert-Eng’s (1996) segmentation-integration continuum is used as a way to theorise the management of the boundary between work and non-work life.

2.1 Importance of Work-Life Balance in the 21st Century

Work-life balance continues to be an important topic for research and policy (Guest 2002) and there are four significant factors that are contributing to this. These four significant factors will be discussed in the following section: (i) changing work force demographics; (ii) Increasing intensity of paid work; (iii) blending of public and private lives; and (iv) impact of telecommunications. These four significant factors generate debate around the quality of work-life in the organisation literature and encourage investigation into work-life balance.

(i) Changing work force demographics

The changing demographics of the contemporary workforce influences work-life balance. This is reflected in increasing participation of woman in the labour force leading to more dual income families (Kirchmeyer & Cohen, 1999). There has also been an increase in the number of single parent families and workers with elderly care responsibilities (Breagh & Frye,

2008). There is also an increasing proportion of the older population continuing to work past the normal retirement age of 65 (Bohle, P., Buchanan, J., Cooke, T., Considine, G., Jakubauskas, M., Quinlan, M., Rafferty, M., and Ryan, R, 2008, p. 33). This has contributed to an aging workforce due to improvement in health status of older people and changes in retirement income benefits (Bohle et al, 2008). In combination with this there have been a reduced number of younger people entering the workforce for example 20 to 24 years olds being the only group not to have seen an increase participation in the workforce between 1996 and 2008 in New Zealand (Bohle et al, 2008, p. 32). The consequence of a diverse workforce is that they may think about issues like work-life balance in quite different ways.

There is discussion about the differences between generations and work, with the focus on three primary generations; baby boomers, generation X and generation Y (Glass, 2007). The focus of this study however is not a comparison between the different generations and does not want to take up the implicit assumptions of homogeneity within the generations, that is a feature of this literature. Instead the focus is on how first year graduates experience work-life balance and in this sense it may contribute to the understanding of generation Y. What particular challenges do they face as they adjust from education into the paid workforce? Will they be experiencing a change in the work-life balance context as they move from university to the work environment?

(ii) Increasing intensity of work

The increased interest of work-life balance in the literature can be related to the notion that paid work is becoming an increasingly dominant aspect of people's lives (Lewis, 2003). As individuals find they are engaging in more and more paid work within the contemporary organisation they are beginning to question their quality of life. There is a large body of literature surrounding the quality of working life and while this is not the focus of this study it is important to touch upon this. This is because quality of working life encompasses the characteristics of work and the work environment which includes interactions between and among workers, job content and job context (Bagtasos, 2011). There is also debate in the quality of work-life literature arguing that it should not only encompass work lives but that it also affects and shapes many of the components of the total quality of life (Harrim and Al-Qutop, 2011). This is important because this argument highlights where the link can be made to work-life balance as the quality of work-life affects non-work life. Quality of working life

is relevant to how individuals' perceptions of the increasing demands on their work lives and their ability to balance their work and non-work life.

Contributing to the increasing demand of paid work in contemporary working life is the issue that individuals are facing more work and longer hours. This has been identified by Kanter (1995) where many workers are facing more work and longer hours contributing to them having less time or mental energy. More recent statistics support this claim with long working hours continuing to prevail in New Zealand, where around a third of workers are working more than 40 hours a week (Bohle et al, 2008).

In response to this, there is a counter argument that work places are becoming more flexible. In some cases the employers are seen to be altering the work place so employees have more flexibility in deciding where and how they want to work (Bagtasos, 2011). Specifically, development of technology has implications for a more flexible work place as is discussed in the following telecommunications section. The issue of flexi-work place policies is also discussed in the objective definition of work-life balance section.

There has also been an increase in the intensity of work over the past decade and this has been attributed to factors such as; advances in technology and information load, the need for speed of response, the importance attached to quality of customer service and its implications for constant availability and the pace of change with its resultant upheavals and adjustments which all demand time and can become a source of pressure (Guest, 2002, p. 257). How the increasing dominance of paid work in people's lives and the increased intensity of work contributes to the pressure and stress felt by individuals is important to recognise. In conjunction with this is how this pressure and stress influences individuals in their attempt to reach a desired work-life balance.

(iii) Blending of Private and Public Lives

Another aspect in the literature which can relate to the increased interest in work-life balance is the blending of private and public lives. This has come with the promotion of entrepreneurial and creative work identities. The idea of entrepreneurial work identities is well documented in the literature and focuses on the individual as an 'enterprise of the self' (du Gay, 1996). Reich (2000) identifies this as 'the sale of the self' where financial success depends on how well you sell yourself and describes that selling yourself can be a full time job. Kanter (1995) conceptualises the idea of the enterprising self, as individuals'

accumulating human capital such as skills and reputations to enhance that person's value in terms of future opportunities. Both Reich (2000) and Kanter (1995) recognise the pressures that this entrepreneurial work identity can have on the individual. 'The sale of the self' makes relentless demands on individuals' lives and they may even have to sacrifice friends and family to the incessant demands of getting ahead (Reich, 2000). The individual needs to gain career assets and placing a greater emphasis on work place demands as the new work force struggles to juggle out of work responsibilities, turning family issues into public issues (Kanter, 1997).

In conjunction with Reich (2000) and Kanter's (1995) views of entrepreneurial work identities is Florida's (2002) idea of the creative class. The creative class are people who add economic value through their creativity as they are paid principally to do creative work for a living (Florida, 2002). Individuals in the creative class are impatient with the strict separations that previously demarcated work, home and leisure (Florida, 2002). Florida's (2002) identification of a creative class does not specifically imply or identify the pressure that is placed on individuals by the entrepreneurial work identity. Rather he acknowledges a group of individuals that identify with a creative work identity in an attempt to combat the demands of organisation life. In this sense the creative class represents how the enterprising self can also be positive as it in itself can enable greater workplace balance. This is shown through the creativity they bring to their lifestyle in both their work and non-work life. In this sense, public and private lives are blended in the creation of work-life balance. Critiquing this blending of the private and public lives is Du Gay (1996). He highlights that the boundary between the private and public are blurred in the call for employees to take up this enterprising identity. This is where the previous emphasis of the bureaucratic organisation is based on the separation of 'work and life' (Du Gay, 1996, p. 24). However in the vision of the self as enterprise there are no longer distinct spheres each with its own particular ethos but rather a single continuum within an overarching rationale: enterprise (Du Gay, 1996, p. 25). It is this blurring of these spheres that feeds into the growing complexity of work-life balance. This blending of the public and private world had direct implications for the relationship between work and non-work life, as will be discussed in section 2.5 below. Will first year graduates experience this blending of the public and private life? If so will it have an impact on their work-life balance?

In following Reich (2000), Kanter (1995) and Florida's (2002) ideas the individual now has more choice about what career path they take or choose to associate with. This enables them

to pursue careers where they can reach what they perceive as a desired work-life balance. Career was conventionally linked to the firm and this meant doing what the firm wanted and being grateful for the opportunities the firm brought your way (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). However the firm today no longer provides lifelong careers and the accumulated experience has shifted from the firm to the individual (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). The connection here is that individuals can associate with an entrepreneurial work identity through being an 'enterprise of the self' because career is individualised. This can be reiterated by the idea of a boundaryless career which does not characterize any single career form but rather a range of possible forms that are not bounded. In doing this people take responsibility for their own career futures (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Schein (1996) supports this argument that growing numbers of people are endorsing a 'lifestyle' career anchor. This implies that their primary career objective is to balance and integrate their personal needs, their family needs and the requirements of their career. Juxtaposed to this, is the argument by Inkson and Arthur (2001) who identify a new company perspective of employees being career capitalist's who manage their own career investments. They argue against the common view that companies invest in people but instead individuals can be seen as investors in companies. The individual is the one who makes the decisions on which opportunities to seek, which path to explore and this comes from people pursuing their own career objectives (Inkson & Arthur, 2001).

The implication of this, for this study, is that some individuals face increased pressure in order to build up their career capital through being an 'enterprise of the self'. How do individuals see their work-life balance in relation to their career aspirations?

(iv) Impact of Telecommunications

The impact of technology is also an important dimension of contemporary work-life balance literature. In the tele-working literature there is a significant focus on the transfer of work to the non-work domain. This is driven mainly by the notion that technological advancement, particularly in telecommunications, has allowed work to enter more easily into the non-work domain (Hecht & Allen, 2009). This was also recognised early in the development of the tele-working literature by Shamir and Salomon (1985) who identified innovations in telecommunications technology increases the possibility of working from home. More recently Corpley and Millward (2009) have suggested that the emergence of portable computers and the advent of wireless equipment have made it easier for workers to communicate with the office and to work remotely. They suggest that this has affected the

natural physical boundaries between work and non-work domains as they have become fragmented. In line with this argument is the idea that the use of communication technologies has increasingly blurred the line between work and home where workers perform some or all of their work outside the traditional office setting (Boswell and Olson, 2007). While this aspect of the literature is interesting this study is not specifically focussing on people who work in the home space in a regular way, such as home workers, and so is not relevant for this study.

The impact of telecommunications technology and practice, however, is not limited to the concept of tele-work. Rather it has implications for work-life balance as it can act as a tool which allows individuals to interact between their work and non-work life. This prompts the question of how first year graduates use telecommunications to interact between their work and non-work domain. What roles do cell-phone and email play in their balancing of their work and non-work life.

2.2 Work-Life Balance Defined

Work-life balance is a social construction that originates from Western culture and describes the pressure and dilemmas that surround balancing paid work and personal duties and expectations (Lewis, Gambles & Rapoport, 2007). It is of concern to any individual who is interested in quality of working life and its relation to broader quality of life (Guest, 2002). The following definitions provide an insight into how work-life balance can be defined in the literature as the majority of definitions include satisfying both the commitments of work and rest of life. For example, Guest (2002, p. 263) defines it as “sufficient time to meet commitments at both home and work.” Another example “work-life balance concerns the ability of individuals to combine work with their other responsibilities or aspirations” (Sturges, 2008, p.118). However there are certain ambiguities that are discussed in terms of how work-life balance is defined and how it is researched.

The use of the word ‘balance’ in work-life balance has come under scrutiny as it can be perceived to have different meanings. The word balance can therefore be misleading as it may infer that there is an equal weighting given to work and non-work activities (Parris, Vickers, Wilkes, 2008). Balance can suggest that a similar solution for everyone would be a 50/50 investment of work and non-work life (Lewis and Cooper, 2005). This has led to some

of the literature suggesting that instead of using the term work-life balance, which can be misleading, the term work-personal life integration has been suggested (Lewis, Rapoport, & Gambles, 2003). While this may in fact suggest a more suitable definition it does not address the frailties of the definition of work-life balance.

A hint as to one of the issues surrounding the definition of work-life balance comes from the definition stated earlier by Lewis et al (2007) where it is described as a social construct. This is significant because a social construct can suggest that there is an element of subjectivity given to the meaning of work-life balance. In this sense the meaning will vary according to circumstances and that it will also vary across individuals (Guest, 2002). This brings about an important issue in terms of work-life balance and that is that 'balance' can have both an objective and subjective meaning and measurement.

Objective

Objective definitions of work-life balance such as 'Satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum role conflict' Clark (2000, p. 751), attempt to produce outcomes of balance through the measure of balance. This can be related to the idea that work-life balance initiatives and policies can have a positive impact on an organisation and the employee. This has come from the increased interest in work-life balance which has been driven by evidence that there are important benefits of this to organisations. It has been argued that this benefit comes from individuals achieving a better work-life balance, that in turn creates improved recruitment and retention, lower rates of absenteeism and a more satisfied and motivated workforce (Dex and Scheibl, 1999). This suggests that action is being taken by employers which address Parris et al (2008) issue that organisational focus must move past simply increasing individuals' awareness of the benefits of balance between work and the rest of life. They need to better enable practices to be put into action (Parris et al, 2008). This has meant that some of the work-life balance literature has focused on how work-life balance can be utilised by the organisation.

For example studies such as that done by Bloom, Kretschmer and Reenan (2006) focus on the idea that having a work-life balance is related to the productivity of the employee. This aspect of the work-life balance literature paints a glowing picture that putting in place work-life balance policies will be beneficial, not only to individuals but also the organisation. It also generates a more objective perspective of work-life balance. This is because for the

organisation to put in place work-life balance policies they need a definition which they can measure outcomes against, in an attempt to show that the policies are beneficial.

In the work-life balance literature there is a certain amount of debate to whether these policies are actually beneficial. This could be due to the difficulty of defining and measuring work-life balance objectively because it is a social construct. An example of this comes from Hecht and Allen (2009) who describe that there is a boundary between the work and non-work domains (this will be discussed in more detail later in section 2.5 below). They explain that by putting in place 'progressive' work features to try and encourage work-life balance such as on-site day cares and gyms, the organisation actually weakens the boundaries between work and non-work lives. This means that an individual's non-work life enters his or her working life. Hecht and Allen's (2009) study shows that this can lead to higher levels of conflict between the two domains.

Furthermore to this side of the debate, Poppleton, Briner, & Kiefer (2008) suggest that through informal sociocultural processes, flexible work arrangements can create problems in a team work context. This is reiterated by organisations who adopt family-friendly policies yet report discrimination and disadvantages experienced by some employees who access these policies (Brough and O'Driscoll, 2010). For example an employee who accesses parental leave provisions is commonly perceived to be less committed to work (Brough and O'Driscoll, 2010). These findings suggest that it is often difficult to implement flexible work arrangements in team environments because the arrangements have to be fair and it brings about the issue of where the policies need to draw the line.

These studies done using an objective definition approach to work-life balance are restricted by the assumptions made in defining it. For example in Clark's (2000) definition the assumption is made that work-life balance involves having a minimal role conflict. While this might be true for some it may not be for others. The essence of the problem with the objective approach is it pins the organisational perspective against the perspective of the individual. In defining work-life balance objectively the organisational perspective is dominant. It enables the organisation to measure work-life balance policy outcomes and ensure that it is related to employee's output and productivity. While the organisational perspective is important in the holistic sense focusing purely on it can be detrimental to the individual. This is recognised in the notion that striving for balance between work and non-

work life is problematic and could be further adding to the pressure felt by organisational employees (Rapoport, Bailyn, Fletcher, & Pruitt, 2002).

The individual perspective is important to recognise, firstly because understanding the individual employees' perspective on work-life balance enables the organisation to gain a better understanding of how their employee's view work-life balance. This ensures that rather than making assumptions in defining work-life balance they will be able to see how the employees themselves negotiate between their work and non-work life. Therefore determining the key factors involved in balance for their employees.

Secondly in terms of the research problem, investigating the individual's perspective is a key determinant. This is because to approach the research problem having made clumsy assumptions about work-life balance, will mean that valuable insights into graduates understanding and experiences of work-life balance will be lost. Given that this approach is not appropriate for addressing this problem it is important to consider the subjective approach to work-life balance.

Subjective

The important aspect of the subjective definition given to work-life balance in the literature is that it allows for the research to extract how first year graduates perceive their work-life balance. For example Guest (2002, p. 263) recognises this subjective approach where work-life balance is described as "a perceived balance between work and rest of life". This means that for some work-life balance will involve spending long hours at work perhaps because of the stage they are at in their career. Whereas for others a perceived balance may exist because they are able to limit the amount of time spent at work and spend more time doing something they enjoy in their non-work time. In this sense it is less about 'what is' work-life balance and more an approach that explores how it is achieved or not. Therefore the subjective position simply becomes "a perceived balance between work and rest of life" as Guest (2002, p. 263) suggest. It is more easily identifiable in the literature by the approach that certain researchers take to explore work-life balance.

A significant example of a subjective approach to work-life balance is the work of Nippert-Eng (1996). In her writing she argues that there is no right or wrong way to construct the boundary between home and work. In this sense she explains that her "assumption that meanings of 'home' and 'work' and the relationship between them are highly variable"

(Nippert-Eng, 1996, pg 565). This is in contrast to being confined by the parameters of an objective definition of work-life balance.

By defining work-life balance subjectively the issue raised by Parris et al (2008) around the misleading nature of the word 'balance' can be addressed. Defining work-life balance subjectively allows an insight into what an individual perceives as work-life balance and what it means to them.

The subjective approach allows the individual's perspective on how they perceive work-life balance to be investigated. The participants are able to shape their experience of work-life balance without being influenced by assumptions made in defining it objectively. Individuals will have varying ideas on what they perceive as 'balance' where one individual may consider themselves to have a balance, where compared to another individual they may not.

2.3 Work and Family Issues

An interesting aspect of work-life balance is that much of the attention has been focused on the interaction between work and family. The work-family issue often acts as a prompt for work-life balance research. However much of the work family research is focused on the conflict between work and family roles. This is identified by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) who describe that research into the interface between work and family continues to emphasise conflict, stress and impaired well-being. The negative focus on conflict is reiterated in the general findings in the literature that point to a negative spill over in terms of work-family conflict (Heraty, Morley & Cleveland, 2008). This finding was reiterated in a study by Williams and Alliger (1994) who found unpleasant moods spilled over from work to family and vice versa, but pleasant moods had little spill over.

Examples of this negative focus of the work family conflict can be found throughout the work family literature. For example Breaugh and Frye (2008) study focused on whether the use of family-friendly practices was related to a reduced work-family conflict. A second example is a study by Duxbury, Higgins and Lee (1994) who examined the relationship between work-family conflict and gender, family type and perceived control. While much of the focus has been on the conflict there have been recent attempts to focus more on positive aspects of work family interaction. An example of this switch in focus is Greenhaus and

Powell's (2006) study on work family enrichment where experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other.

Work family balance, while it is complex in its own right, excludes other aspects of individual's non-work life that are not included in family. This is shown by the focus of the work-family balance literature on the outcomes that are experienced in work and family roles (Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw, 2003). Therefore it could be seen to be only one element of work-life balance. This means that the literature on work family balance is restricting and while it may act as a prompt for work-life balance research it is not inclusive of all the aspects of non-work life. An important aspect of non-work life that is not included is the notion of leisure. Including the leisure aspect into work-life balance allows for a more holistic understanding of the components that make up a person's non-work life.

2.4 Work-Life Balance for Graduates

The work-family literature also neglects the younger members of the work force who may not have the responsibilities associated with dependent families such as children and/or a spouse to provide for. The large amount of focus on work-family interaction is an example of this neglect. I do acknowledge here that first year graduates may be of any age but given the usual profile of university graduates they are more likely to be in the 22 to 26 year old age bracket. The younger members in the work force may therefore be more likely to associate their work-life balance with other aspects of non-work life such as their ability to pursue leisure activities. The idea of leisure is argued in the literature and is closely linked to the quality of life (Unger and Kernan, 1983). For the purpose of this study the arguments surrounding the idea of leisure will not be pursued. However the idea that leisure can have an impact on quality of life and include physiological satisfaction that is present when engaging in all types of activities (Unger and Kernan, 1983) outside work, is important.

It has been argued in the literature that young people have a desire to develop and manage their careers on their own terms. An important aspect of this career individualism is achieved through the balance of their work and non-work lives (Loughlin and Barling, 2001). Struges and Guest (2004) have investigated this further in their study that explored the relationship between work-life balance, work non-work conflict, hours worked and organisational commitment in a sample of graduates in early years of their career. They argued that although

graduates seek work-life balance their concern for career success draws them into a situation where they work increasingly long hours and experience an increasingly unsatisfactory relationship between home and work (Struges and Guest, 2004, pg 5). This can be related back to the idea of building career capital by Inkson and Arthur (2001). This is in the sense that the younger members in the work force, i.e. first year graduates, may be willing to sacrifice their time through putting in longer hours to build up their career capital for career success in the future.

A second aspect that is lacking in the work-life balance literature is an understanding of graduates work-life balance post-university. While there has been a body of literature debating the movement of graduates from university to work there is a gap in terms of this being addressed from a work-life balance perspective. For example Biggeri, Bini and Grilli (2000) looked at the transition of graduates from university to work and argued that this transition was complex but did not refer to work-life balance as adding to this complexity. Rather they focused on the effectiveness of universities and course programmes in graduate's ability to enter the job market (Biggeri et al, 2000). There has also been a limited amount of literature on university students' work-life balance while they are studying. However one example comes from an Australian study into medical students attitudes towards work-life balance (Tolhurst and Stewart, 2004). An interesting aspect of this research is that they argued that students referred to a balance of work, family and lifestyle as an important factor in their career decisions (Tolhurst and Stewart, 2004). This is closely related to the point touched upon earlier by Loughlin and Barling (2001) who argued that an important influence on career individualism for younger individuals is achieved through work-life balance.

The lack of work-life balance literature focusing on young people in the work force and post-university graduates shows there is a gap that needs to be addressed. This research will attempt to contribute to this gap through understanding how graduates in their first year of post-university study, experience work-life balance.

2.5 Theorising the Interactions between Work and Non-work Lives

The work-life balance literature is continuing to develop and its popularity among researchers is increasing. Much of the early debate in the work-life balance literature focused on the 'Myth of Separate worlds' (Kanter, 1989). The premise of the myth was that in the modern

industrial society , work and non-work life constitute two separate and non-overlapping worlds and could therefore be studied independently (Kanter, 1989). Kanter (1989) in recognising the ‘myth of separate worlds’ argues that while the myth is not without truths it is still far from the total picture. This line of debate has been picked up in more recent literature where the idea that there are two domains (work and non-work) is acknowledged but the fact that these domains are completely separate is no longer the major focus. A more recent contribution to the debate has been the argument that the work and non-work domains are now seen as being inextricably linked and having mutually important influence (Poppelton et al, 2008 and Kirchmeyer, 1992).

The different domains created by an individual’s work and non-work life interact in different ways. This gives rise to certain intangible boundaries that act as an interface between the work and non-work domains. The management of the boundary between work and life outside work is an important means of achieving work-life balance (Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate, 2000). Anyone who is in paid work can be seen as a home-work negotiator and they therefore engage in some sort of boundary work (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Nippert-Eng (1996, p. 7) has done extensive research on boundary work between ‘home’ and ‘work’ which has given rise to her concept of ‘boundary work’ which is “the practice that concretize and give meaning to mental framework by placing, maintaining and challenging cultural categories.” Boundaries are also addressed as “physical, temporal, emotional, cognitive entities and/or relational limits that define entities as separate from one another” (Ashforth et al, 2000). Boundary work specifically consists of the strategies, principles and practices that are used to create maintain and modify cultural categories (Nippert-Eng, 1996). It is important to note that boundaries vary from individual to individual which emphasises the subjectivity of work-life balance. Through boundary work an individual can bring together what is mental and practical, cultural and structural, and social and personal as categories are actively created (Nippert-Eng, 1996).

An important aspect of boundary work that is identified in the literature is the effect of boundary strength. According to both Clark (2000) and Ashforth et al (2000) strong boundaries are constructed in order to maintain work and non-work as separate domains, whereas weak boundaries are constructed to facilitate fluid interaction between domains. It has been identified that boundaries are built around a working individuals work and personal life yet it is the boundary strength that affects the interaction between the boundaries. Both Clark (2000) and Ashforth et al (2000) suggest that each domain and its boundaries vary in

strength. This is because working individuals have a preference for the relative strength of their boundaries where the strength of the boundaries influences the interaction between work and personal life (Asforth et al, 2000).

2.5.1 Managing the boundaries

The interaction between the boundaries of each domain has gained a significant amount of attention in the work-life balance literature. A common aspect in the literature is that the interaction between the two domains and the boundaries can be fluid. This can be related to the importance of not just focusing on the negative aspects of the interaction but understanding that interactions can occur in both directions and can be either positive or negative in a form of boundary permeability (Hecht and Allen, 2009). Boundary permeability reflects the extent to which an individual might be engaged in one domain, while physically located in another or at times that are traditionally devoted to the other (Hecht and Allen, 2009).

The importance of focusing on both positive and negative interactions is not reiterated in a large proportion of the work-life balance literature. This is due to the dominant focus on the conflict that occurs between an individual's work and non-work life in the literature. This is where a major element of the work non-work interface is the conflict a person may experience between the work role and other life roles (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1995).

An example of a study that has a negative focus is Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep's (2009) study which addresses work-home conflict and boundary violations. They present a model that argues that certain boundary work tactics reduce the negative effects of work-home challenges. Another example is Grant-Vallone and Ensher (2001) who conducted research into the effect of two types of work and personal life conflict and organisational support on expatriate employees' well-being. Their findings argued that reduction in personal life interfering with work and work interfering with expatriates personal lives is vital to retain high quality employees. This argument can be aligned with Kreiner et al (2009) where the focus is on the negative aspect of interaction between work and non-work life and this negative relationship can be managed or reduced.

Poppleton, Briner and Kiefer (2008) identified this negative focus through their critique of work and non-work research as having a negative bias. They argue that more literature needs to focus not just on the conflict that occurs between the two domains but both the positive and negative aspects of work and non-work interaction. This argument has begun to be addressed through research that focuses on the positive interaction between work and non-work life. There are instances where work and non-work can be allied and more specifically when work and leisure can be allied (Boon, 2006). This is where individuals seek out employment relationships in a particular industry setting and geographic location that allows them to partake in their leisure activity of choice creating a desired work-life balance (Boon, 2006). Krichmeyer (1992) also challenges the view of domain relationships being conflict ridden in work-life balance literature. She argues that this line of thinking has obscured the idea that positive outcomes are possible and that researchers who set out to investigate negative outcomes are likely to find them rather than positive ones (Krichmeyer, 1992).

The focus on both the negative and positive aspects of interactions between the work and non-work domain is an important aspect of this research. This is significant because this study will be taking the approach that the work and non-work domain are inextricably linked, and interaction occurs in a synergistic manner where both positive and negative interactions occur. In doing this the different experiences of individuals will be able to be investigated without bring a prior negative bias.

2.5.2 Models of boundary work

There are number of models that have been theorised to explain the interactions between work and non-work life within the work-life balance literature. This can be identified through the variety of different forms the interaction between the domains can take. Early work by Wilensky (1960) identified three models that began to explain this relationship. These included the ideas of spill over, compensation and segmentation (Wilensky, 1960). While there are other models of interactions between domains, these particular three models are still relevant and present in more recent work-life balance literature.

The *spill over model* in particular is widely used and identified in recent work-life balance literature. The spill over model suggests that one world can influence the other in either positive or negative ways. In this sense it asserts that experiences in one domain carry-over to

affect, mood, behaviour and experience in another (Snir and Harpaz, 2002). A significant example of the spill over model's use in the literature is Krichmeyer (1992) study which has been touched upon already because of its contribution to the argument towards focusing on more positive aspects of the work non-work relationship. In Krichmeyer's (1992) study she examined the nature and predictors of spill over from the work to non-work domain and argued that positive domain satisfaction enhanced positive spill over between the domains. However spill over theories have some problems in that they have limited focus (Clark, 2000). Clark (2000), suggests that generally only emotional linkage are included in spill over and they do not acknowledge other connections between work and non-work life such as behavioural.

The *compensation model* identifies that where an individual may be lacking in one domain, in terms of demands or satisfactions can be made up in the other (Guest, 2002p. 258). This model is not so widely used in the literature and has been criticised for its negative focus. This is recognised by Sumer and Knight (2001) who argue that compensation occurs when workers respond to unsatisfying conditions in one domain by becoming more involved in the other.

The *segmentation model* which hypothesis that work and non-work are two distinct domains of life that are lived quite separately and have no influence on each other (Guest, 2002, p. 258) (Sumer and Knight, 2001). Again this model is not widely adopted in recent literature and is closely related to the 'myth of separate worlds' (Kanter, 1995) and the issues that have been identified with it.

These models provide an interesting and varied view of boundary work in terms of the way in which individuals manage the interactions between the two domains. As has been stated earlier it is important that work-life balance research addresses the boundaries between work and non-work life as fluid and permeable and that it will vary from individual to individual. Although all of these models provide a useful insight into boundary management and the interactions between the domains, they are limited by the fact that they only focus on certain types of interactions between the two domains.

Another model of boundary work has been put forward by Nippert-Eng (1996). This model is the segmentation-integration model where individuals manage the boundaries between work and non-work life through a process of segmenting and/or integrating the domains (Bulger, Hoffman & Mathews). Nippert-Eng (1996) describe the model as a continuum reflecting the

extent to which work and non-work can be kept separate or intermingled with one another. It is important to understand the two extremes of the continuum from Nippert-Eng (1996, p. 5-6):

Segmented: the mental boundary between realms is clear and impregnable, resolutely preserving the distinctive characteristics of each sphere. Everything belongs to home or work, two mutually exclusive categories. They alternate between two different 'selves' or ways of being.

Integrated: no distinction exists between what belongs at 'home' or 'work' and when and where they are engaged. 'Home' and 'work' are one and the same, one giant category of social existence, for no conceptual boundary separates its contents and meanings.

Nippert-Eng's (1996) integration-segmentation continuum represents the two extreme types of interaction or lack of interaction that can occur between the work and home domain. The continuum allows the relationship between work and non-work lives to be theorised. While Nippert-Eng (1996) first proposed this, others in the literature have also used the integration-segmentation continuum to theorise the relationship between work and non-work domains. An example of this is Bulger, Hoffman and Mathews (2007) who explore the segmentation integration continuum using a cluster analysis approach. This is where they classify individuals in terms of their boundary management practices (Bulger et al, 2007). This highlights one of the advantages the continuum has over other models as it has the ability to incorporate all of the types of interactions between the work and non-work domains. However rather than using cluster analysis to locate individuals on the continuum, this research will take an approach similar to that used by Nippert-Eng (1996). This provides conceptual access to a subjective understanding of work-life balance that allows this study to, explore how new graduates perceive the work-life boundary and practice work-life boundary management.

From this review of the work-life literature the overall research question of, 'how new graduates in their first year of work perceive the relationship between work and non-work life?' will be addressed. In answering this, five specific research questions will be addressed;

RQ1. How do first year graduates view their work-life balance?

- RQ2. How do the new graduates perceive their current work-life balance compared to their work-life balance while at university?
- RQ3. In the way that new graduates manage the boundary between their work and non-work lives, where are they located on the segmentation-integration continuum?
- RQ4. Do first year graduates experience interactions between their work and non-work life as either conflict or as positive interactions or both?
- RQ5. Do future aims and goals affect the expectations of work-life balance of first year graduates?

3 Methodology

This study took an interpretive methodological approach where the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews was used. This approach was taken to the research problem which was to explore how graduates in their first year of post-university study, experience work-life balance. At the centre of this research study is the specific research question: “How do new graduates in their first year of work perceive the relationship between work and non-work life?”

The exploratory nature of the research problem and specific research question means that there is a need for an interpretive approach to the research. This allowed for an in-depth investigation into how the target population perceives the relationship their work-life balance. This approach will be argued and justified throughout this methodology through the explanation and discussion of the position of this research which includes the interpretive perspective and ontological assumptions. The field of engagement will be discussed in regards to the types of participants that will be targeted and how initial contact will be made with potential participants. A table is also provided with demographic information relating to the participants. Interviews will be used as the qualitative technique in which data will be collected through engagement with the empirical field. The method of data collection through recording and transcribing of the interviews will also be discussed. Finally, data analysis was conducted in the form of thematic analysis to establish and organise the results of this research.

3.1 Position of Research

The position of this research is linked to the interpretive approach that was taken to the research. Exploring how graduates in their first year of post-university study, experience work-life balance required a certain interpretive approach. The interpretive perspective is opposed to the functionalist perspective in the fact that it is informed by a concern to understand the world as it is (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Burrell & Morgan (1979) argue that from the interpretive perspective there is a need to understand the world at the level of subjective experience through the realm of individual consciousness within the frame of reference of the participants. Therefore to empirically access the subjective meaning of

graduates who are in their first year of work post-university there is a need to engage in an interpretive approach.

In conjunction with the interpretive approach are the ontological assumptions that were made for this research. The specific ontological assumptions are that social entities should be considered social constructions built from the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The world is seen as an emergent social process where reality is created subjectively by individuals. These assumptions have helped to shape this study and this can be reflected in the overall research question and the aims of this study. The research problem of how new graduates in their first year of work perceive the relationship between work and non-work life will be explored through how reality is created subjectively by the participants.

The ontological assumptions made for this study can be linked back to the argument that was put forward in the literature review section relating to the objective definition of work-life balance against the subjective definition of work-life balance. It was argued that the subjective approach to work-life balance was essential for this study. This is because work-life balance is a social construct (Lewis et al, 2007) so there is a need to understand it from the subjective level of the participant to ensure it is understood from their own context. Through approaching this study from an interpretive perspective with specific ontological assumptions, the participants subjective meaning of work-life balance could be investigated.

An interpretive approach is a common way in which the work-life balance literature has approached the empirical field. For example Poppleton et al (2008) study adopted a “qualitative diary methodology which explored insiders’ accounts of both the positive and negative aspects of work-non-work relationships and examined the role of context in shaping such relationships” p 481. The aim of Poppleton et al (2008) study to explore a relationship between work and non-work lives is very relevant to this study as certain similarities can be drawn. These similarities are drawn from Poppleton et al (2008) aiming to explore a relationship. This implies that they were attempting to gain an understanding of how their participants perceive work-life balance. In this sense they were able to subjectively identify and analyse the responses of their participants to understand their specific work-life balance context. This is where the similarity is drawn as the main aims of this study are to, ‘explore the understanding of how graduates in their first year of post-university study, experience work-life balance’ and ‘how they perceive the relationship between their work and non-work

lives'. However Poppleton et al (2008) differed in the qualitative method they used to engage with their empirical field. They used the qualitative diary method which is different to the semi-structured method but has similar underlying qualitative principals in the sense that it also attempts to gain the subjective meaning of the relationship of work and non-work to explore 'insiders' accounts' that are significant (Poppleton et al, 2008).

While the diary method has certain advantages in that it can gain an in-depth response of participants' perceptions over a period of time for example diaries can be completed for fourteen consecutive days (Poppleton et al, 2008). However the diary method is not appropriate for this study as it lacks the face to face interaction that is present in an interview. Interviews involve an interaction between the interviewee and the participant where the interviewee can prompt the participant into articulating their understanding of work-life balance. The diary method on the other hand does not allow for this interaction as an interviewee is not present and it only represents the participants' perception in written format.

While some of the work-life balance literature uses quantitative methods, often a qualitative method is used in conjunction. These mixed methods studies predominantly occur in two phases, where the quantitative method is used as a preliminary study that guides the secondary phase of the study using a qualitative approach. Examples of these types of studies are Corpley & Millward (2009), Lewis (2003), and Kriener et al (2009). In these studies the qualitative interview method was used in the second phase of study to obtain rich and descriptive data that explored the factors supporting and perpetuating the norms. The interviews were essential to these studies as they ensured a greater depth in the data collected was achieved. For example in Kriener et al (2009) study the second phase of the study used semi-structured interviews, which allowed for specific examples of participants experiences to be gathered. This showed that participants use particular tactics to manage the boundary between their work and non-work life. In this way the participant's subjective meaning to work-life balance tactics was made visible. This is important to this study because it helps to portray some of the benefits of using a qualitative approach in exploring how first year graduates perceive the relationship between their work and non-work lives.

Another example of the qualitative approach being taken to work-life balance literature is Nippert-Eng (1996) study 'Home and Work: Negotiating Boundaries through Everyday Life'. Her study provides an in-depth and descriptive account of how people experience the boundary between home and work and how they achieve balance between these domains.

Again like this study, Nippert-Eng (1996) intended to explore the subjective experience her participants gave to the boundary between home and work, and in order to engage the empirical field she used a qualitative interview method. Using this method enabled her to discover that participants faced no simple patterns and faced widely ranging problems. She was able to portray this complexity using in-depth examples of participant's experiences of negotiating work and non-work life. The way in which Nipert-Eng (1996) approached the empirical field is appropriate to this study in the sense that the subjective experience of the participants was sought in order to explore and gain insight into experience that individuals have in negotiating work and non-work life. It shows that in-depth descriptive data can be collected about an individual's work-life balance experience. It is important to the aim of this study as it allows for subjective and descriptive data to be collected for understanding how graduates in their first year of post-university study, experience work-life balance.

3.2 Field of Engagement

The participants targeted for this study were individuals who were in their first year of working since graduating with a university degree. The primary inclusion criteria for the participants were that they have to be in their first year of work since graduating with a university degree. By focusing on first year graduates, how they perceive work-life balance in their first year of work in relation to their university context is fresh in their minds.

The specific degree and job was not part of the selection criteria for the participants'. This is because the research problem for this study is to explore how graduates in their first year of post-university study, experience work-life balance. The exploratory nature of the research problem meant that the potential participants for this study did not need to be restricted by specific selection criteria such as a specific job or degree. The focus is on how the graduates perceive the relationship between their work and non-work lives no matter what the degree or job they are in.

However the specific degree and job a participant has is still information that will be collected during the interview. This is because it is an important aspect of the participant's subjective experience and helps to develop a picture of the work-life balance context from which they are situated. Again as the research problem is exploratory, the data collected has

the potential that it may unveil themes that may suggest that the specific degree or job are significant aspect of work-life balance and that they need further research.

Initial contact with the target population was made through contact with students from my classes at university who meet the research target criteria of being in their first year of work following the completion of a university degree. From here the snowball sampling technique (Bryman & Bell, 2007) was used to enlist the additional appropriate research subjects. When initial contact was made the potential participant was given an information sheet outlining what the study aims are and what they were going to be asked to do if they chose to participate in the study. Only participants that consented were included in the study.

The number of participants that were interviewed for this study was fourteen and the following table provides demographic information and the names of the participants¹.

¹ To protect the anonymity of the participants the names used are pseudonyms that come from All Black rugby players and Silver Fern netballers.

Table # 1: Demographic information of participants.

Name	Age bracket	Qualification	Year completed study	Time spent in full-time employment
Conrad	20-25	Bachelor of Arts and Commerce and Post graduate diploma	2010	8 months
Jimmy	20-25	Bachelor of Business	2010	11 months
Richie	20-25	Bachelor of Commerce	2010	3 months
Tony	20-25	Bachelor of Sport and graduate diploma	2010	9 months
Anna	20-25	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) minor in marketing	2010	8 months
Irene	20-25	Bachelor of Commerce (Honours)	2010	7 months
Dan	20-25	Bachelor of Commerce	2010	5 months
Brad	20-25	Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Arts	2010	9 months
Kieran	20-25	Bachelor of Commerce	2010	6 and a half months
Casey	20-25	Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Arts	2010	9 months
Laura	20-25	Bachelor of teaching and learning	2010	7 months
Sam	20-25	Bachelor of Physical Education	2010	6 months
Jerome	20-25	Bachelor of Arts	2010	9 months
Colin	20-25	Bachelor of Commerce	2010	5 months

The sample size of fourteen may be considered to be relatively small. However, this number of participants was sufficient as the data reached a certain level of saturation where common themes were able to be identified and analysed from the fourteen participant's responses. As this research aims to pursue an in-depth exploration of first year graduates' work-life balance perceptions, this sample size was sufficient. It will be argued that while this study only represents fourteen individuals there is a level of transferability. This study contributes to the work-life balance literature and the understanding of new graduates' work-life balance. This is because the participants represented a relevant group of individuals that were worthy of studying in context.

3.3 Semi-Structured Interview

The semi-structured interview was used as the primary data collection method in this study. The interview is an integral technique used in qualitative research and is “probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 472). In order to gather subjective experiences and meanings around work-life balance from the participants the qualitative interview technique is the most appropriate. This is closely aligned to the interpretive perspective and the ontological assumptions taken to this study. This has been found in the work-life balance literature in studies done by Lewis (2003), Kriener et al (2009), Nippert-Eng (1996), & Poppleton et al (2008).

Using the interview technique allows for the participants, as individuals, to give their view and reflection of the social process that is involved in them balancing their work and non-work lives. This will allow for the subjective experience of the participants to be explored as to how they perceive the relationship between their work and non-work lives.

The development of literature around the qualitative interview technique and its use, is a relatively recent development. There was little on interview research in the early 1980s, according to Kvale (1996) who wrote the book ‘Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing’. However this has changed in recent times as qualitative research interviewing has become a powerful method for investigating subjects’ private and public lives (Kvale, 2006). “The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanation” (Kvale, 1996, p. 1). In this sense the interview provides a prompt for people to talk about, or articulate their perception, their lived experience, their sense of social reality in terms of work-life balance.

The questions that provided the semi-structure to the interviews are found in the question column in table in the appendix. While all of these questions were asked there were some questions that had not been predetermined that were asked. This was where the particular line of questioning in the interview needed to be investigated further. These specific questions were asked in the order in which they are displayed in the table in the appendix to allow continuity and flow throughout the interview. The questions were arranged into different sections determined by the contribution they gave to the five different research questions. This can be seen in the contribution column. In doing this it ensured that the research questions were able to be answered through the responses given from the participant’s. The

last column in the table in the appendix, notes and prompts, represents the intended outcome from the participants responses.

The task required of the participants was to take part in the interview which took approximately 20-30 minutes. The participants were given the information sheet and the consent form (found in the appendix) prior to undertaking the interview. This gave the participants an understanding of what the study involves and what it was attempting to achieve. The list of semi-structured questions was attached to the information sheet. There were two main reasons for this; firstly it allowed the participants to familiarise themselves with the questions that were going to be asked; secondly it helped to ensure that the participants were relaxed and felt comfortable about the questions. Both of these reasons allowed for more in-depth and valuable descriptive data to be collected. This was because the participants were able to think about how they would answer the questions and provide more examples of their work-life balance experiences.

3.4 Data Collection

The method of data collection was through recording the interview. The interview was then transcribed and sent to the participant to ensure that the interview was an accurate representation of what they had said and enable further authentication of the data.

3.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was the approach taken to the data analysis of this research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The process of thematic analysis identifies themes that are abstract constructs that researchers identify before, during and after data collection (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). This involved a process of three main steps.

Firstly all of the interview transcripts were transcribed to ensure that all of the information from the response of the participants was drawn on. This was an important step because it

allowed me to further understand what I had heard from the interviews and to immerse myself in the data that had been collected.

Secondly the transcripts were read over and a table was generated. In this table the general themes that were emerging from the collected data were identified. Next to these emerging themes, the questions that were asked of the participants that related to these themes were identified. The questions that were asked of the participants were aimed at answering the five specific research questions. This allowed for the participants responses to be pooled next to each question that related to a particular theme.

Thirdly from this table five broad themes were identified that could be used to answer the five specific research questions. The five broad themes are: Graduates view of work-life balance; Current work-life balance in relations to university work-life balance; 3. Segmentation-Integration continuum; Managing the work and non work-life boundary; Work-Life Balance in the Context of 'Future' Aims and goals. Within each of these five broad themes the specific sub-themes that underpin the broad theme were identified. Specific segments of text illustrating these sub-themes were identified.

4 Results

Five broad themes have emerged from the results and they aid in answering the research questions. Each broad theme will be discussed in turn and the important aspects that contribute to that particular theme will be discussed. These are connected and links will be drawn as relevant. The five broad themes that are displayed in the results are: Graduates view of work-life balance; Current work-life balance in relation to university work-life balance; Segmentation-Integration continuum; Managing the work and non work-life boundary; Work-Life Balance in the Context of 'Future' Aims and goals.

4.1 Graduates view of work-life balance

The first theme, graduates view of work-life balance, answers the research question 'how do first year graduates view their work-life balance?' In order to understand how the participants viewed their work-life balance they were asked whether they felt they currently had a good work-life balance. From the fourteen participants seven said yes they do have a good balance, two said they did not and five answered with a mixture of both yes and no. Table one summarises their response by the reason they gave for having a good balance, not having a good balance or having aspects of both.

Table # 2: How first year graduate participants view work-life balance.

Do you have a good work-life balance?	
Answer	Quotes
Yes	
<i>Not restricted by work</i>	Dan- I knock off work at a reasonable time and I can do that extra stuff after work. Colin- I still play sport and I'm still reasonably active so I still manage to fit in other stuff.
<i>Clear Distinction between work and non-work life</i>	Kieran- I'm working 8 till 5 and then I can do what I want after work and then all weekends. Brad- I can switch off at the end of the day... I don't ever work in the weekend.
<i>Enjoyment of work</i>	Richie- it's a good balance... I'm in an industry that I enjoy being in... a lot of work is what I enjoy doing. Sam- At work I quite enjoy it too... I can also hang out and have a bit of a bit of a fun time.
No	
<i>Felt restricted by work</i>	Tony- all I'm doing is really working and then on Sundays hung over pretty much and can't do anything. Conrad- I don't have the best balance... work quite long hours... sometimes you have to work in the weekends... so you don't get much time away from work.
Yes and No	
<i>Restricted to a certain degree</i>	Jimmy- I guess I don't have as much time as I'd like to go and do my own things, obviously in the weekends I can do what I want. Irene- its good but it could definitely be better... I definitely work more then what I would like. Laura- I definitely just don't have any chill out time at all so yes and no... I have a real good job.
<i>Dependent on the time of year</i>	Anna- think at the moment I do but I didn't at the start of the year the work was really really crazy and I was doing like 12 hour days... it has got better. Casey- I kind of swing backwards and forwards over this I sometimes feel like work is taking over... I was skiing in the weekend and on the whole I have a pretty good balance.

For those seven participants who felt that they did have a good work-life balance, three sets of explanations were provided. Firstly participants who have a good work-life balance suggest that one of the reasons is that they are not restricted by their work. They feel they still have the ability to carry out activities and do what they want in their own time when they are not at work. Colin, for example, still has time to play sport:

“I still play sport and I'm still reasonably active so I still manage to fit in other stuff.”

Secondly, participants identified it was the clear distinction that they had between their work and non-work life that enabled them to not feel restricted by their work. This meant that when they finished work during the week and in the weekends they are free to live their non-work life. This enabled them to gain a sense of balance. Kieran, for example, is able to do what he wants after work and in the weekends:

“I’m working 8 till 5 and then I can do what I want after work and then all weekends.”

This enables them to gain a sense of balance between the two domains because when they are working they are working and when they are not working they can do what they want. The important aspect of having a good work-life balance for these participants is related to being able to have time away from work which is free to them.

Finally participants perceived themselves as having a good work-life balance through their enjoyment of their work and the industry they worked in. Through their enjoyment of their work they are able to create a work-life balance context where they are not restricted by their work but in fact experience the opposite. They still have the ability to have free time outside work and to do the activities they want with the added bonus of gaining real enjoyment out of work. This is important in terms of them having a good work-life balance. Richie, for example, enjoys a lot of the work he is doing because he is in an industry he enjoys:

“it’s a good balance... I’m in an industry that I enjoy being in... a lot of work is what I enjoy doing.”

Not all participants felt that they had a good work-life balance. The two participants who did not have a good work-life balance, however, were by far in the minority. Like the participants who did have a good work-life balance, they viewed how restricted they felt by their job as being a major contributing factor. Both participants, Conrad and Tony, who did not have a good balance felt restricted by their work in terms of how their work affected what they could do outside work. Conrad, for example, had to work weekends and long hours:

“I don’t have the best balance... work quite long hours... sometime you have to work in the weekends... so you don’t get much time away from work.”

For both Conrad and Tony work clearly affected their non-work life as they were working too much. These participants had a clear sense that work was associated with working Monday to

Friday. This meant that working in the weekend and long hours during the week meant that their sense of balance was skewed. For these participants working in the weekends is a reference point for their work-life imbalance.

The remaining five participants gave a mixed response in respect to whether or not they had a good work-life balance. They were similar to the other participants in the fact that they mentioned being restricted by their work in terms of what they could do in their non-work life. However they still felt that to a certain degree they had a good work-life balance. Irene, for example, believes she has a good work-life balance but at the same time recognises that she works more than she would like:

“(work-life balance) it’s good but it could definitely be better... I definitely work more than what I would like.”

All of the participants who gave mixed responses found the question of whether they had a good work-life balance difficult to answer. In particular Anna and Casey described that their work-life balance has been affected differently at different stages throughout the year. Casey, for example, describes how she swings backwards and forwards as to whether or not she has a good work-life balance or not:

“I kind of swing backwards and forwards over this I sometimes feel like work is taking over... I was skiing in the weekend and on the whole I have a pretty good balance.”

When she felt work was taking over she would not have a good balance as she feels restricted by what she is able to do in her non-work life. However when she is able to do activities she enjoys such as skiing, she is able to reflect that she does have a good balance. These findings suggest that work-life balance for these participants and how they achieve it is very sensitive to their current working situation.

4.2 Current work-life balance in relation to university work-life

The second theme involves first year graduates current work-life balance compared to their work-life balance at university. This theme answers the research question ‘How do the new

graduates perceive their current work-life balance compared to their work-life balance while at university?’ The participants articulated two key dimensions that informed the contrast between work-life balance at university compared to work: accountability (self vs other) and flexibility vs structure. In identifying these two dimensions a better understanding of how graduates view their work-life balance can be achieved.

Table # 3: Key differences between work-life balance at university and work.

Key Dimensions	
<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="185 376 467 517">• <i>(self)</i> Self accountable for balancing work and non-work <li data-bbox="185 927 467 1182">• <i>(Other)</i> Work-life balance no longer on individual but accountable to their work, manager and clients 	<p>University (<i>Self</i>)</p> <p>Conrad- at university you've got no one on your case. Jimmy- at uni you're accountable to your work and your study and getting things on time... you're only accountable for yourself. Richie- uni is you, you're doing it for yourself so you'll do the work for yourself. Anna- at university you... don't feel like you have as much responsibility. Irene- at uni your completely independent and there no one telling you to be here or be there. Brad- not obliged or restricted by anyone... no daily deadlines that I have to meet. Kieran- At uni you have to be self disciplined.</p> <hr/> <p>Working (<i>Other</i>)</p> <p>Conrad- you've got no choice... there are certain expectations you have from a work place and when you're in the work force. Jimmy- you're dealing with other people and other people are relying on you more... now your accountable to your company your colleagues and clients. Richie- with work you're doing it for everybody like for the look of the academy and you've gotta get it done. Anna- you have to be there, people are relying on you. Dan- more pressures coming on that balance just with the extra responsibility. Casey- I do a lot more of what other people want me to do now. Laura- I have got to think about 30 children and their learning and their life you know so it is a big responsibility.</p>
<p>Flexibility vs Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="185 1554 467 1809">• Flexibility in their work-life balance to do what individuals wants when they want at university. 	<p>University (Flexibility)</p> <p>Conrad- At university... you don't have to turn up to anything you can sort of plan your own day... you've got the ability to do that seven days a week. Anna- at university you have so much flexibility. Dan- the free time isn't as abundant as it was at university. Brad- I don't have to report to anyone at uni. Kieran- As a student you're pretty flexible. Laura- at uni I was too social... sleeping... constantly out for lunch or constantly catching up with people. Sam- at university you can juggle your hours a little bit. Jerome- It was probably more flexible at uni. Colin- last year I could... do what I wanted when I wanted which was good.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure in their work-life balance provided by their obligation to be at work for a certain amount of hours. 	<p>Working (Structure)</p> <p>Conrad- work is a regimental structure... you will be there you know in your required hours.</p> <p>Jimmy- at work it's that nine to five I guess you know you fit things in and around when you can.</p> <p>Tony- at work you've gotta be there between this time and this time.</p> <p>Anna- working it's like all of a sudden nine to five you have to be there.</p> <p>Irene- you feel a lot more trapped in that you have to go to work every day.</p> <p>Kieran- at work you know you have eight till five.</p> <p>Casey- sometimes I don't feel like going to work and its frustrating having to.</p> <p>Sam- I have two days where I'm doing no work... I don't do weekends.</p> <p>Colin- well it's obviously more dominated now by going to work and actually having to turn up.</p>
--	--

Firstly it was clear that accountability was closely aligned with how the participants constructed their work-life balance. The contrast in accountability between the two different work-life balance contexts at university and first year working provided a valuable insight into the major influence on their work-life balance. The responses suggest that at university the accountability for balancing their work and non-work life rides solely on the shoulders of the individual (*self*). Richie, for example, at university did work for himself:

“uni is you, you’re doing it for yourself so you’ll do the work for yourself.”

Whereas in their first year working they suggest that the onus for balancing their work and non-work life is no longer purely their responsibility as they are now accountable to their work, manager and in some cases clients (*Other*). Jimmy, for example, has to deal with other people who are relying on him:

“you’re dealing with other people and other people are relying on you more... now your accountable to your company your colleagues and clients.”

The accountability or lack of it at university that affected the participants in this study's work-life balance is also closely linked to the following themes of flexibility and structure. At university the accountability for the participants is on themselves to manage their time to gain a work-life balance. This allows the participants to have a certain level of flexibility in how they manage their time and in turn their work-life balance. Whereas in comparison to when

they are working they are not only accountable for themselves but have a responsibility to their company, bosses and clients.

Secondly, the contrast between flexibility and structure participants experienced in comparing their current work-life balance to their work-life balance at university was identified. This was linked with how participants viewed and constructed their work-life balance. Flexibility will be addressed and explained first followed by structure.

The flexibility experienced by participants in their work-life balance at university can be directly related to the self accountability at university. This in terms of work-life balance means that they make their own decisions about what they do with their time at university. Therefore they decide how much time they want to spend studying or whether they go to lectures or not. Colin, for example, could do what he wanted when he wanted at university:

“last year I could... do what I wanted when I wanted which was good.”

This flexibility shows that participants were more independent at university and they had more control of their work-life balance and how they managed it. While this on the surface may seem like it would create a more desirable work-life balance for the participants as they could do what they wanted when they wanted as Colin said. However it seemed to make it difficult to maintain a desirable balance without the structure that their job provides. This is shown by Laura saying:

“at uni I was too social.”

It is also reiterated in the fact that some participants explained that because of the flexibility in their work-life balance, it meant that university was always on their mind. The university work-life balance context was set up to be more integrated which is summed up well by Tony:

“uni, it’s always with you.”

An interesting exception to the rest of the participants in terms of flexibility was Jerome. At university he enjoyed the flexible aspect it brought to his work-life balance. However unlike other participants who shifted from the flexibility context to the structure of work, Jerome wanted to retain the flexibility. He recognised flexibility as a key determinant of his work-life balance and was something that worked for him. For example, he liked to mix it up instead of working Monday to Friday:

“keeping that variety and flexibility which I like with my personality... rather than being stuck in the same Monday to Friday, I can sort of mix it up.”

He retained this work-life balance through having two jobs which he did throughout the week. He would work building three days a week and then would paint two days a week. This therefore allowed him to retain the high level of flexibility to his work-life balance. This retention of flexibility can be shown in his response

The key aspect of work-life balance experienced at work, structure, is in direct contrast to that of the flexibility that was found to be so fundamental to work-life balance the participants experienced at university. The structure experienced by the participants in their current work-life balance is provided by their work. This means that the structure is external to them and is regulated by the participants being required to be at work for a certain amount of time each day. This structure has implications on how they achieve work-life balance. They know that they have to be at work for a certain period and when they finish they are in their non-work life and they are able to do what they like hence balancing their time. For example Conrad identifies that work has a regimental structure:

“work is a regimental structure... you will be there you know in your required hours.”

This can be linked back to the seven participants who said they do have a good work-life balance. They highlighted that the structure is what allowed them to have a good work-life balance because they were not restricted by their work and could fit in their non-work activities around the external structure set working hours provide.

An interesting aspect was identified in terms of a link between the structure and accountability. Participants only felt accountability to their work, manager and clients during the structured work hours. This meant that when they finished work and moved into their non-work life they no longer had this accountability, meaning that they were able to enhance their sense of work-life balance compared to university. Irene, for example, goes to work then she relaxes:

“I go to work than I relax... I like having weekends free.”

Structure can also be related back to the section where participants described that having a clear distinction between their work and non-work life contributed to them having a good

work-life balance. This is because the structure allowed them to separate their work and non-work life more distinctly. This will be looked at in more depth later in this section in terms of how participants interact between their work and non-work life through attempting to keep them separate. This separation between the work and non-work life is in contrast to the more flexible work-life balance experience at university and is summed up excellently by Brad who says:

“the boundaries are now more clearly defined so when I’m at work I’m in another office... I’m wearing like nice clothes... a uniform, I’m at a certain place where I can’t leave, you know... so when I’m there you know I know that that’s what I’m there for and when I come home you know I can be myself again.”

4.3 Segmentation-Integration Continuum

This theme involves identifying the participants using the segmentation-integration continuum (Nippert-Eng, 2000). This enables the research question of ‘In the way that new graduates manage the boundary between their work and non-work lives, where are they located on the segmentation-integration continuum?’ to be answered.

The continuum represents the two extreme types of interaction or lack of interaction between the two domains of work and non-work life. All participants showed characteristics of both segmentation and integration, however for the purpose of the results the participants have been classified into the category that they represented the most. The participants have been located on the continuum through their experiences of how they interact between the work and non-work domain and in conjunction with their response to whether or not they considered their work-life balance to be separated or integrated.

Table # 4: Segmentation-Integration Continuum Model.

<p>Segmented</p> <p>↑</p>	<p>Dan- I always keep them pretty separate I never bring work back to finish off at home... I like to keep them pretty distinct.</p> <p>Casey- I go by a different name at work... yeah its good and I behave quite differently at work... when I come home I try really hard not to think about work.</p>
	<p>Kieran- when I leave work at 5oclock I don't really think about it till I get back there the next morning at half past 8oclock.</p> <p>Colin- if I did have a bit of a shit day... I would probably make a conscious effort to try and leave it at the office... if I had a good weekend... I would definitely make an effort to leave it at home anyway.</p> <p>Conrad- I do keep them separate but I do integrate to a certain extent.</p>
	<p>Brad- it's not that easy sometimes to separate your work life with your social life... I think it is quite important especially if you're in a high stress or high pressure job... to try and separate it.</p> <p>Jerome- so I come out of work and that's me not working anymore so I don't intermingle the two, try not to anyway.</p>
	<p>Jimmy- I try and make it integrated but it is separated... I leave here and I go to work its work... when I get home and take my suit off... in my personal life.</p>
<p>↓</p> <p>Integrated</p>	<p>Anna- I would definitely prefer there was a line a more like bolder line between my work and my life like.</p> <p>Irene- I don't like bringing work home like I brought it home this weekend but I'm annoyed with myself for not finding the time during the week to get it done.</p> <p>Laura- I just can't keep it separate... I feel like it consumes my life even though I'm trying for it to not, but it does.</p>
	<p>Richie- it is very integrated it's not work at work leisure of work and stuff.</p> <p>Sam- I really enjoy working out as well as doing what I am teaching my clients through, so I guess you could say that my social life is my work.</p>

As was stated earlier all participants were segmented to a certain degree but the participants that have been placed in this category displayed more segmented work-life balance traits than the others. Through the participant's responses it seemed that often they described a desire to keep their work and non-work separate or even that they believed they kept them separate. However they still described situations where interaction between the two domains occurred. This is the importance of the continuum as it represents the two extremes and that in reality participants use elements of both segmentation and integration.

The two most segmented participants were Dan and Casey. Of these two participants Casey is very interesting and unique among the participants as she has gone to what could be

considered extreme measures to ensure that her work and non-work life are separate. This is shown by her using a different name while at work and then reiterated by her changing her behaviour at work:

“I go by a different name at work... yeah its good and I behave quite differently at work... when I come home I try really hard not to think about work.”

Kieran, Colin and Conrad are still positioned closer to the segmented end of the continuum than the integrated end. They are segmented in their thinking towards work-life balance and clearly separate work and non-work. Kieran, for example, says he doesn't really think about work when he leaves until he gets back there the next morning:

“when I leave work at 5oclock I don't really think about it till I get back there the next morning at half past 8, 8oclock.”

However they suggested that they do not mind working from home and have brought work home with them on occasions. Again for, example Kieran, describes that he sometimes prefers to do work at home:

“I can do it at work but I find it easier to do at home.”

This could suggest that their perception of keeping the two domains separate is different to others and they therefore do not recognise certain integrated interactions, such as working from home, as contributing to the integration of their work-life balance.

The next two participants are similar to Colin and Kieran in that they are more segmented than integrated. However Brad and Jerome differ in the fact that they suggest that they try to keep the two domains separate but that this is not always easy. Brad, for example, finds it hard to separate his work from his socialising but thinks it is important that they are separate:

“it's not that easy sometimes to separate your work life with your social life... I think it is quite important especially if you're in a high stress or high pressure job... to try and separate it.”

The final participant in the segmented section is Jimmy. He is interesting in the sense that he can be considered as being slightly more segmented than integrated. This is shown in his response where his work and non-work life are separate but he tries to integrate them:

Jimmy- *“I try and make it integrated but it is separated... I leave here and I go to work its work... when I get home and take my suit off... I’m in my personal life.”*

This is in contrast to Colin and Kieran who have a more integrated work-life balance but want it to be more separated.

The participants that are located in the integrated category, again, like the segmented category displayed traits that could be considered to be segmented. A commonality of some of the participants in the integrated category suggested that participants in their first year of work have a more integrated work-life balance as they are just starting out in the working world. They suggest that they try and keep the two domains separate or that they have a desire to keep them more segmented but find this somewhat difficult. This is similar to Brad and Jerome who are in the segmented section however the difference is that these participants, Irene, Anna and Laura, are overall slightly more integrated in their work-life balance. Anna, for example, would prefer that there was more separation between her work and non-work life:

“I would definitely prefer there was a line a more like bolder line between my work and my life.”

The last two participants are closest to the integrated end of the continuum. Both Sam and Richie have very integrated work-life balance which is attributed to their enjoyment of their jobs so they do not feel a strong desire to separate the two domains. Richie, for example, thinks of work as leisure:

“it is very integrated it’s not work at work leisure off work and stuff.”

They are both in jobs that they enjoy and these jobs involve what they like to do in their non-work life as well, therefore the two domains are very much intertwined.

4.4 Managing the work and non work-life boundary

This theme involves how participants managed the boundary between their work and non-work life. The way in which the participants managed the boundaries can be seen in the

interactions and the way in which the interactions were facilitated between their work and non-work life. Firstly two key types of interactions were identified from participant responses. This involved emotional and mental interactions where an aspect of one domain crossed the boundary into the other. Secondly two ways in which interactions are facilitated were identified. This involved telecommunications and relationship building being used to facilitate the interactions between the work and non-work domains. These themes contribute towards answering the research question ‘do first year graduates experience interactions between their work and non-work life as either conflict or as positive interactions or both?’

4.4.1 Key types of interactions

Two key types of interactions between the non-work and work life of the participants emerged from their responses. They contribute to the answering of the research question ‘Do first year graduates experience interactions between their work and non-work life as either conflict or as positive interactions or both?’ The two significant types of interactions were used in helping locate the participants on the segmentation-integration continuum (Nippert-Eng, 2000). However these interactions can all be considered as contributing to the participant’s level of integration in terms of their work-life balance. It again highlights the usefulness of using a continuum as all participants, even the more segmented participants, at a certain level displayed either or a combination of the key interactions. The two key types of interactions that emerged from the participants’ response were identified as; emotional and mental. They will be explained in turn.

Table # 5: Emotional Interactions between Work and Non-work Life.

Type of interaction	Examples
<p>Emotional</p> <p>Positive feeling from work transferred into non-work life</p>	<p>Jimmy- so if you have a good day at work lingers off and you have a good evening you know.</p> <p>Irene- If I've done a good presentation and I'm really happy with myself ... it puts me in a really good mood.</p> <p>Dan- I've had a really productive day at work I've felt like everything has flowed well... then when I get home...I'll be just yea feeling good about the whole situation.</p> <p>Casey- I've had a few wins you know and they make you feel really good in your personal life.</p> <p>Laura-it's a really rewarding job... you have a really good day or you have a really good week you have a good weekend.</p> <p>Sam-if I have a really good day say I did a solid amount of hours stuff was really productive... I tend to be more positive at home if I wake up it's a beautiful day I'm more motivated to get to work.</p>
<p>Positive feeling from non-work life transferred to work</p>	<p>Conrad-having a break off work for a day is quite a good thing... to keep your mind you know focused and on task.</p> <p>Richie- say when I get to actually coaching kids that feels like leisure to me.</p> <p>Brad- if I have a good time socially or I have a weekend away... I'm always happier going back to work... still kind of buzzing from the weekend.</p>
<p>Importance of fitness in positive spill over</p>	<p>Conrad- I think exercise is important to keep your mind you know focused and on task.</p> <p>Dan- if I've had a really productive day... I'll probably have more energy and yea ready to go out I would probably leave the house go out for a walk a run go to the gym.</p> <p>Casey- when I have been eating well and sleeping well and exercising well and stuff in my personal life I perform better at work.</p>

Firstly, the emotional interactions involve intangible feelings that permeate from one domain to the other. They occur both ways between work and non-work life for these participants. Amongst these participants it did not seem to matter whether the participant was more integrated or segmented. An important aspect of the emotional interactions is that it occurred in positive ways. This can be related to the positive spill over model (Snir and Harpz, 2002) and will be discussed in more detail in the discussion. Six participants identified that positive feelings created from a good day at work spilled over into them feeling more positive in their non-work life. Dan, for example, feels good at home when he's had a productive day:

“I’ve had a really productive day at work I’ve felt like everything has flowed well... then when I get home...I’ll be just yea feeling good about the whole situation.”

A further three participants identified positive feelings that they created in their non-work life spilled over into them feeling more positive at work. Brad, for example, has a good weekend and he is still buzzing when he goes to work on Monday morning:

“if I have a good time socially or I have a weekend away... I’m always happier going back to work... still kind of buzzing from the weekend.”

The importance of fitness in creating positive spill over between work and non-work life was also recognised by three participants. Of particular interest were Casey and Conrad who identified a connection with being healthy and exercising and keeping their minds focused. They are able to perform better at work if they are able to have time in their non-work life to keep healthy and exercise. Specifically, Casey performs better at work if she is healthy and fit:

“when I have been eating well and sleeping well and exercising well and stuff in my personal life I perform better at work.”

Table # 6: Mental Interactions between Work and Non-work Life.

Key type of interaction	Examples
<p>Mental</p> <p>Work is on their mind through negative aspects of work being brought home</p>	<p>Conrad- it's a mind frame you're stressed, you're stressed about what you have to do tomorrow.</p> <p>Richie- (work) No I definitely don't forget about it.</p> <p>Anna- it's really hard not to bring work home... it's like on your mind all day.</p> <p>Colin- I find myself sort of worrying about work and I'd just get stressed out at home so I do try and leave it at work.</p> <p>Sam- Psychologically, If I've got something big on at work... I would be thinking a lot about that... and it would be in my head a lot more.</p>
<p>The importance of switching off and unwinding to avoid negative spill over through segmentation</p>	<p>Jimmy- You know just trying to get my mind off work... you're in that mode you know you've got working hat on and it's a matter of taking it off and just relaxing I guess and unwinding.</p> <p>Tony- If you finish work and go home you don't even have to think about it.</p> <p>Brad- I tried to... separate work completely from home... just do things that would take my mind off work and take my mind of the people that I work with.</p> <p>Anna- Once you get home at the end of the day you can shut off.</p> <p>Dan- Normally I'll try relax on the couch... you know keep my mind off work.</p> <p>Casey- my flat mate and I often discuss our day and get whatever we needed to off our chests... it's good to switch your mind of because if you go to bed with it still racing from having concentrated all day it's hard to sleep so yea that's good for unwinding.</p> <p>Laura- on a day to day basis I can't switch off because even when I'm just about to go to sleep I'm like oh I've got an idea... or constantly thinking about what I could do and how I could make things better and what I can make.</p> <p>Sam- I'll just try and be like oh well its over I've earned some money fantastic.</p>
<p>The use of fitness to unwind</p>	<p>Irene- I don't feel like I can unwind unless I've gone for a run or played netball.</p> <p>Kieran- I have signed up at les mills here and I enjoy going down there and going there after work and it's a good way to sort of clear your head and sort of get away from work.</p>

Secondly, the mental interactions that occur between the participants work and non-work life, like the emotional interactions, is intangible. However the mental interactions differ as they involve work being on a participants mind when they come home from work, and their ability to then switch off from work when they get home. In this respect it involves negative spill

over and the participants recognise this by trying to avoid it happening. This can be related to a theme that was identified in the segmentation-integration section where participants identified that they would like to keep their work and non-work life more separate. They found this difficult and the fact that they often had work on their mind when they came home from work could be a contributing factor to this. Colin, for example, recognises the importance of trying to leave stress at work:

“I find myself sort of worrying about work and I’d just get stressed out at home so I do try and leave it at work.”

Closely related to the participants having work on their mind when they come home is their desire to try and make sure this does not happen. All of the participants to a certain extent placed importance on their ability to switch off from work and to unwind when they got home from work, even the participants that were far more integrated. This switching off and unwinding was important to the participants as it helped them to avoid negative aspects of their work spilling over into their non-work life. This is significant because it identifies that participants are willing to let positive emotional interactions spill over between their work and non-work life but that this is not the case for negative mental interactions. Casey, for example, talks to her flat mate to help her unwind and get work off her mind:

“my flat mate and I often discuss our day and get whatever we needed to off our chests... it’s good to switch your mind off because if you go to bed with it still racing from having concentrated all day it’s hard to sleep so yea that’s good for unwinding.”

Switching off and unwinding is important to the majority of the participants sense of work-life balance and further support from this can be linked to health and fitness, also recognised in the emotional interactions. For Irene and Kieran fitness represented a way in which they were able to unwind and take work off their mind. Kieran, for example, has just got a new gym membership and goes to the gym to unwind from work:

“I have signed up at Les Mills(Gym) here and I enjoy going down there and going there after work and it’s a good way to sort of clear your head and sort of get away from work.”

4.4.2 Facilitation of Interactions

Two significant ways in which the interactions were facilitated between work and non-work were identified by the participants. They also contributed to answering the research question ‘Do first year graduates experience interactions between their work and non-work life as either conflict or as positive interactions or both?’ The two ways in which participants facilitated the interaction between the domains are through; telecommunications and building relationships. They will be explained in turn.

Table # 7: Telecommunications as a way of interacting between work and non-work life.

Key type of interaction	Examples
<p>Telecommunications</p> <p>The use of telecommunications to interact with non-work life at work</p>	<p>Conrad- I think it's important to not shut yourself off. Tony- if one of my Friends calls... I definitely answer it. Anna- yea I will because there's no other time to do that admin stuff. Irene- when I'm at work my cell phone always rings and if its personal I'll take it... but a lot of the time I'm quite busy. Dan- one of mates called up and asked what I was doing this weekend... and that was while I was at work they just called my cell phone Brad- every day I'll txt people from outside my work... my cell phone I always have it turned on I always have it in a position where I can see if it's ringing or if I get a txt. Kieran- that definitely happens, if my phone vibrates or whatever and I've got to take a call from someone. Casey- I was on the phone to the IRD today... to be fair a lot of stuff has to happen during work hours you know. Sam- I'm feeling pretty organised at work then I might go on the computer and organise events. Jerome- you can take a call at work if you have to, I like that. Colin- yea I'll txt them back like organising lunch to do an interview.</p>
<p>The use of telecommunications where work contacts participants while they are in their non-work life and they feel obliged to respond</p>	<p>Conrad- If someone contacted me I would answer. Jimmy- my mobile um that's basically a hand held you know compact computer so when I come home I receive an email it'll ding... nine times out of ten I'll read it... if it's nothing important I'll turn it off and forget about it but if it's something important... you gotta reply. Richie- It's an essential tool and without it this couldn't work... the communication is day to day meeting... if I get a phone call from them at 8oclock at night I feel obliged I really should answer it. Tony- If work calls me I call straight back. Anna- my boss txts and calls me a lot haha if she needs stuff. Irene- my boss is pretty good... in that she would never call me... if she did she would be apologising. Brad- I would be absolutely fine with taking them I guess it's sort of part of the job really there's no point in not taking them. Sam- there's been times when I have got txts at mid night... I always have my phone on loud because it could affect what time I am going to wake up... so I am very contactable. Colin- They haven't yet but if it came down to it... it'll be expected of me... and it's something I would do.</p>

Firstly, telecommunications represent a tangible way in which the participants facilitated interaction between their work and non-work life, through the use of cell phones and

computers. All of the participants used cell phones as a way of interacting between the two domains. However there was one exception where Sam used the computer to access the internet as a way of interacting between the domains. This interaction using cell phones occurred in both directions for example taking calls from their non-work life while they were at work and taking work calls while they were in their non-work life. These two different directions of the interaction act as a useful way of displaying the responses from the participants.

The participants highlighted that they use cell phones to interact with their non-work life while they were at work. It was something that these participants were willing to do and for some it was an important part of their work life being able to be contacted by people in their non-work life. Conrad, for example,

“I think it’s important to not shut yourself off.”

Some of the participants identified that organising their non-work life at work was something that had to happen during working hours. Casey, for example, had to talk to the IRD on the phone during work because they were not open outside her working hours:

“I was on the phone to the IRD today... to be fair a lot of stuff has to happen during work hours you know.”

There was also one exception to this finding which was Laura who was so busy at work that she was not able to organise or contact people from her non-work life unless it was an emergency:

“generally I wouldn’t... I wouldn’t contact any one unless it was an emergency.”

The participants also highlighted that their cell phones enabled them to interact with work while they were in their non-work life. Nine of the participants commented on this interaction. It differed to the interaction with non-work life at work in the fact that it always involved them being contacted by their work. These participants felt a certain responsibility to answer these calls. Brad, for example, is fine with taking calls from work as there is no point in ignoring them:

“I would be absolutely fine with taking them I guess it’s sort of part of the job really there’s no point in not taking them.”

On the other hand some of the participants take the calls or emails depending on their importance but on the whole the participants felt obliged to take calls or reply to emails from work. Jimmy, for example, more often than not replies to emails on his phone but if they are not important he forgets about them

“my mobile, that’s basically a hand held you know compact computer so when I come home I receive an email it’ll ding... nine times out of ten I’ll read it... if it’s nothing important I’ll turn it off and forget about it but if it’s something important... you gotta reply.”

Secondly, the relationship building theme involves participant’s ability to make relationships at work and their ability to use this as a way of facilitating interacting between the two domains of work and non-work life. Also relationship building was suggested by the participants as a way in which challenges to their work-life balance could be overcome through finding respite at work. It also contributes to answering the research question ‘Do first year graduates experience interactions between their work and non-work life as either conflict or as positive interactions or both?’

The participants articulated that they had built relationships with the people they worked with. Ten out of the fourteen participants recognised this. Through building these relationships the participants were able to facilitate interaction between their work and non-work life. A way in which they were able to do this was to bring aspects of their non-work life to work through the relationship. Dan, for example, explains that his work mates watched him play rugby in the weekend and he was able to bring that experience to work on Monday:

“I’ll always have yarns at work about sport... a lot of the boys at work have similar interests... yesterday I had a rugby game and couple of people from my work came and watched... in the office on Monday we’ll have a yarn about the game and then we’ll talk about work after.”

Dan also highlights that work relationships can be brought into non-work life. This suggests relationships also allow for work relationships to enter into their non-work life. Jerome, for example, thinks it is good to continue work relationships outside work:

“the relationship it’s good to be friends not just at work... it’s good to have relationships with them outside work.”

However there was one notable exception where Colin had a lack of relationship between himself and his work mates. Unlike the other participants he did not have a strong relationship with his work mates so did not bring aspects of his non-work life to work or social with them outside work. This is shown in Colin’s brutally honest insight into his lack of relationship with his workmates:

“at my office they’re a bunch of fuck wits haha, so you don’t really want to... I don’t get on the piss with my work mates.”

The affect this had on Colin’s work-life balance was that it made it easier for him to separate his work and non-work life. This contributed to Colin’s location on the segmentation-integration continuum as being much closer to the segmented end.

The second aspect of relationship building that was articulated by the participants suggested that, building strong relationships at work helped participants to work towards creating a better work-life balance. Through the relationships they were able to feel a sense of respite at work as they were able to bring aspects of their non-work life to work. This is similar to the example shown earlier by Dan, however these particular participants used the relationships in an attempt to overcome challenges to their work-life balance. In this sense building relationships had a positive impact on their sense of a work-life balance.

Anna and Brad described that they did not have a good work-life balance when they started working but they did at the time of the interview. The relationships they had built at work allowed them to socialise with their work mates outside of work. This in turn allowed them to feel respite at work through bringing the experiences they had with their work mates outside work to work and helped them work towards their desired work-life balance.

Anna- “I didn’t (have balance) at the start of the year... we didn’t get involved in after work drinks... It’s just me and one other person and my boss and my work mate and me have ended up being really good friends so we hang out every weekend outside of work as well... we’ve got the same friends... in that sense we do bring a lot of our personal life to work because we’re such good friends.”

Brad- *“When I first started I really hated my job, I didn’t like the people I worked with... now I get on really well with my work mates.... we went to the All Blacks game a few weekends ago... Monday morning we were all talking about it... I guess it set up quite a good mood in the office... it’s good to understand how people operate outside work as well... that’s definitely a positive.”*

In contrast to Anna and Brad, is Conrad who didn’t have a good work-life balance when he started however unlike Anna and Brad he still believes he does not have a good work-life balance. Nevertheless Conrad is similar in that he identifies that relationships are important at work and that through building up relationships at work he is able to find respite and try and build towards having a better work-life balance.

Conrad- *“I work in quite a stressful environment where quite high pressure and you work quite long hours.... having friends and being social which is what I think is important within the workplace I think if you spend so much time these people, that people at work are your friends and you do actually get to enjoy the company of your friend... one of the best and biggest things I do enjoy about my work is that there are really good people there... I’ve got genuine mates who... I do tend to socialise with in and out of work so... there is a good social aspect in the work place.”*

Finally, Jerome can be seen to use relationships to overcome a challenge to his work-life balance. Jerome found that through having strong relationships with work mates he is able to bring in aspects of his non-work life to work that he finds enjoyable and this enables him to find respite in a day at work that might be boring;

“I have a friend I have been friends with for a long time at work, I know what he’s like outside work so can be a positive... something’s I see outside work as more enjoyable.”

4.5 Work-Life Balance in Context of “Future” Aims and Goals

This final broad theme involves how participants’ sense of work-life balance is affected now by their future aims and goals. It directly answers the research question ‘do future aims and goals affect the work-life of first year graduates?’ The participants were asked to respond to

the question “do your career goals affect your work-life balance?” This question allowed for important insights as to whether they believed their current work-life balance was affected by what they wanted to do in the future. 11 participants identified that their career goals do affect their work-life balance while the other three said they didn’t at this early stage.

From the eleven participants whose work-life balance was affected by their career goals, two significant themes were identified. The first and most important is that these participants indicated that at this early stage of their career they feel to achieve their career goals they have to make sacrifices to certain aspects of their work-life balance. Specifically they feel they have to sacrifice their non-work time so they can get ahead in the future. This sacrifice will be addressed in more depth later in this section but is identified here. Anna, for example, is willing to give up her non-work time now to be successful in the future:

“yeah they do (career goals) like I obviously want to be successful... I know to get that I need to work hard and I’m willing to not socialise as much and not do as much and not have as much down time if it means in the long run its going to make me more successful.”

A second theme which runs alongside the idea of sacrifice, is that participants want to be perceived as working hard and building a good reputation with their employer. Sam, for example, works hard now to build his reputation so he will reap the rewards later:

“yea I guess because I’m trying to work harder now so that I’ll reap the rewards later... try and look good for management and get a good reputation with clients.”

In contrast Casey is the opposite of these participants who said yes. She states she is not very ambitious which means that she is not willing to sacrifice and does not feel she needs to put in that extra effort to build her reputation. This means that her career goals still affect her work-life balance but just in an inverse way to the others:

“I’m not really that ambitious in my job which I think is probably why I’m not prepared to bring it home with me or put in more than I do.”

The three participants whose career goals did not affect their work-life balance identified that they currently do not but will in the future. These participants realise that in the coming years they would be given more responsibility and would have to make sacrifices in terms of their work-life balance but are delaying it for now. Dan, for example, realises this:

“not at this early stage but in the coming years I think it will... I probably have to do some extra hard yards extra hours which will put pressure on that spare time in the evenings but it’s something that just comes with the job I guess.”

The willingness of participants to sacrifice their non-work time to get ahead early in their career has been touched upon by the participants who said that their career goals did affect their work-life balance. This was further reiterated but participants who specifically mentioned and were aware that they were making a sacrifice. To these participants this meant that they were willing to create a perceived imbalance between their work and non-work life. This imbalance was created by allowing work to invade their non-work life creating a perceived sacrifice. However they viewed this imbalance as something that was necessary so that they could achieve a better sense of balance in the future. Anna, for example, feels she has to earn the right to leisure by working hard and that this will help her to be successful in the future:

“it’s never going to be perfect with your first job... you’ve gotta earn your right to leisure and that time to yourself and I feel like you do have to put in that hard work and yea it’s like a sacrifice you have to make if you want to be successful later on if you want that leisure time to come later on in life you have to do all the hard stuff now.”

A significant aspect of the participants, who mentioned this sacrifice, was that they felt it was something that they had to do. Jimmy and Dan, for example, both identify this sacrifice as something they do not like but that you have to do:

Jimmy- *“it’s something that I don’t like but you accept and it’s a sacrifice you know you’ve gotta make a sacrifice to do what you’ve gotta do I guess.”*

Dan- *“I guess it does get annoying sometimes... but it’s just something you have to do for work.”*

The idea of sacrifice can be linked right back to the difference that was identified between the participants current work-life balance compared to university. This is because the structure that work provides to work-life balance is compared to the flexibility of work-life balance at university for these participants. This change in context could mean that the participants feeling of sacrifice of their non-work time is heightened as they view it in comparison to their

flexible university work-life balance context. Colin, for example, identifies that working is the real world:

“It’s the real world.”

Also of interest was that four of the participants future goals involved travel. Specifically Jerome, Tony and Dan mentioned that they were sacrificing their non-work time now to earn as much money as they could so they could go travelling. In this sense it suggests that they were willing to have a work-life imbalance now so that they can earn money and compensate for the extra time and effort they put in to go travelling and not having to work. Jerome and Dan for example, are working hard now so they can head overseas:

Jerome- *“work hard you know and get a bit of cash money to be able to go over and travel and see a bit of the world.”*

Dan- *“I’d like to head overseas... I have to do some extra hard yards, extra hours which will put pressure on that spare time.”*

5 Discussion

Throughout this discussion chapter the research problem is addressed in exploring how graduates in their first year of post-university study, experience work-life balance. The most important factor in determining whether this group of first year graduates had a good work-life balance was their perception of how restricted they felt by their work. This can be related to the dominance of work-family literature and its narrow focus on the outcomes experienced in only work and family roles (Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw, 2003). This is in contrast to the contribution this study makes to the literature in that first year graduates are not influenced by dependent family. Rather their non-work life involved their ability to socialise and engage in leisure activities such as sport. In this sense first year graduates determine whether they have a good work-life balance in terms of how restricted they are by work in their ability to engage in social and leisure activities.

A second key influence on how participants viewed work-life balance was its changing nature, depending on their current work and non-work life circumstances. This can be related to the notion that paid work is becoming an increasingly dominant aspect of people's lives (Lewis, 2003). While the results displayed this to a degree, it was dependent on the current circumstance that the first year graduate was experiencing. This was shown by graduates who were undecided if they had a good work-life balance, as at certain times they felt work was dominant. Whereas at other times it was not as dominant and they felt they did have a good work-life balance. The dependence of work-life balance on current circumstance will be touched upon in the limitations section in terms of the usefulness of longitudinal studies.

Through analysis of the results, university work-life balance was very flexible whereas at work it was dominated by the structure of being at work for a certain amount of time each week. At university the onus of work-life balance was on the individual and they were therefore flexible in the way they created their balance. Whereas when working, the accountability was not only on the individual, but to their work, manager and clients meaning that they had to be at work for a certain period each week. This is related to work-life balance literature where organisations are attempting to make the work place more flexible. In the sense that organisations are putting in place 'progressive' work features to try and encourage work-life balance such as onsite day cares and gyms (Hecht and Allen, 2009). Also contributing to this are the emergence of portable computers and the advent of wireless

equipment that have made it easier for workers to communicate with the office and to work remotely (Corpley and Millward,2009). For these young graduates however, they enjoyed the structure that work provided. This means that the results for this study can be aligned with the argument that putting in place these ‘progressive’ work features can lead to higher levels of conflict between the two domains (Hect and Allen, 2009). First year graduates enjoyed the structure that work provided and it was an important aspect of how they perceived and achieved work-life balance. It helped them to achieve a better sense of balance, so flexible work place policies would begin to breakdown this structure that is so important to them.

Each first year graduate was clearly located somewhere on the segmentation-integration continuum (Nipper-Eng, 2000). The spread of the first year graduates on the continuum was relatively even however a higher number were located slightly more towards the segmented end. The determining factor for this was that first year graduates mentioned that their work and non-work life were separate or that they wanted them to be more separate. However it is very important to note that to a certain extent all of the first year graduates engaged in interaction between their work and non-work life. This finding is mirrored by Parris et al (2008, p. 113) who suggests that even those striving for separation revealed experiences where ‘work’ did not remain in the workplace but became an element of their ‘own time’. For these participants, this could be partly due to the fact that they may not perceive certain interactions between the two domains as contributing to the integration of their work and non-work life. This highlights the importance of approaching work-life balance subjectively in terms of how the young graduates “perceived balance between work and rest of life” (Guest, 2002, p. 263). In this sense young graduates perceived that they had separate work and non-work life or that they strived for separation and they did not perceive interaction such as working from home as contributing to this separation. This enabled the segmentation-integration continuum to be used to theorise work-life balance in much the same way as Nippert-Eng (1996) through identifying how the participants viewed their work-life balance as a means of locating them on the continuum.

Two key types of interactions between the non-work and work life of the first year graduates emerged from their responses. Firstly the emotional interaction can be related closely to the spill over model where one domain influences the other in both positive and negative ways. This is where participants who had a good day at work suggested that this good feeling then spilled over into their non-work life. They also identified that positive feelings in their non-work life can be transferred to work. This can be seen as positive spill over and is in common

with the findings of Snir and Harpz (2002), who assert spill over as experiences in one domain carry-over to affect, mood, behaviour and experience in the other. This finding was in direct contrast to Williams and Alligers (1994) who argued that unpleasant moods spilled over from work to family and vice versa but pleasant moods had little spill over. Clearly positive emotional spill over was evident with these participants but also behaviour spill over is recognised. It has been argued that generally the spill over model addresses emotional linkages and had no acknowledgment of behavioural connections (Clark, 2000). This finding of behavioural spill over provides an example which contradicts this argument. This is shown by the first year graduates through their behaviour in their non-work domain of keeping healthy and exercising. This allowed them to keep their minds fresh and sharp, meaning they were more productive at work. The finding of positive emotional spill over is also important because it helps to address the negative bias that has been argued in the work-life balance literature (Poppleton et al, 2008).

The second, mental interaction was characterised by work being on the first graduate's mind when they come home from work and them recognising the importance of switching off and unwinding. This can be related to increasing intensity of work over the past decade (Guest, 2002) , where around a third of workers are working more than 40 hours a week in New Zealand (Bohle et al, 2008). Some first year graduates also identified the demand on them from their work in terms of facing a large number of hours and work load. This is aligned with Kanter (1995) who recognised that the new work force are facing more work and longer hours which is contributing to them having less time or mental energy. In response to this the first year graduates recognised the importance of switching off which is also identified by Cropley and Millward (2009) who suggest that unwinding from demanding work during non-work time is essential for optimal health and wellbeing. Failure to unwind and switch off from work has been associated with a number of health-related problems. An interesting aspect of the unwinding process for first year graduates is that it often involved talking to flat mates when they got home to get work off their chest. This is again linked to first year graduates engaging in social activities in their non-work life rather than dependant families.

The emotional and mental interactions are very closely intertwined. This can be seen when first year graduates allow for positive emotional interactions to spill from one domain to the other but avoid negative mental spill over. They place a great deal of importance on switching off and unwinding from work to ensure that the negative aspects of work do not encroach into their non-work life. This can be related to them wanting to separate their work

and non-work life. From their perspective this means that they want to separate negative aspects or conflict from permeating from one domain to the other. Whereas on the other hand they are more than happy to not separate the positive aspects that permeate between the domains and so much so that this helps to improve their sense of work-life balance. This indicates that allowing positive aspects to permeate, enables first year graduates' to feel satisfaction and feel good about themselves and this is important to them in both the work and non-work domain. However the pressures and stress they feel at work can be detrimental to their satisfaction and enjoyment in their non-work life if it is brought home with them.

Two significant ways in which the interactions were facilitated between work and non-work were identified by the first year graduates. This can be related to the idea of boundary permeability (Hecht and Allen, 2009) where they were engaged in one domain, while being physically located in another or at times that are traditionally devoted to other. Firstly, telecommunications for these first year graduates, acted as a tool to facilitate interaction both ways between the work and non-work domains. This is somewhat different to the focus of the literature that focuses on technological advancements in telecommunications that have allowed work to enter more easily into the non-work domain (Hecht & Allen, 2009). While the first year graduates recognised that cell phones and computers allowed them to communicate more easily with the office (Corpley and Millward, 2009), they did not associate this with work to life conflict (Boswell and Olson, 2007). In this sense telecommunications could have been seen to exacerbate the negative mental interaction of work intruding into their non-work life. However they did not see it this way rather the first year graduates recognised that their cell phone was something that they could use as a tool for helping in balancing their work and non-work life. If they needed to be contacted at home they could be and if it was important they would take it. On the flip side if they needed to organise something in their non-work life they could use their cell phone to do this. The fact that these first year graduates have grown up in a world where they have been introduced to telecommunications from a young age may contribute to their ability to adopt cell phones as a tool in achieving balance. It is something that they have had with them on a daily basis since they were young and just because they are now working it is no different. This point is touched upon again in the conclusion chapter where this has implications for further research.

Secondly, through building relationships with work mates these first year graduates were able to facilitate positive interactions between their work and non-work domains. This was mainly through the respite they were able to feel at work from bringing aspects of their non-work life

into the work environment through the relationship. It was also through being able to extend their work relationships into their non-work time. In this sense they were able to bring the non-work social dimension into works' temporal structures as well as outside it through relationships where they engaged in activities such as after work drinks. This again is important as it helps to address the negative bias that has been argued in the work-life balance literature (Poppleton et al, 2008). However for some participants building relationships represented more than just positive interactions between their work and non-work lives. It represented an important strategy in which they were able to overcome challenges to their work-life balance through the respite they felt from bringing aspects of their non-work life to work. In this sense it can be related to improving their work-life balance through improving their quality of work life. This encompasses the characteristics of work and work environment that influence employees work lives (Bagtasos, 2011). Through building strong relationships first year graduates were able to bring social aspects to work. This contributed to improving their work environment and ultimately their perception of their work-life balance. The importance of first year graduates building relationships with work mates is linked to lack of dependant family they have. A major part of their non-work life is socialising and this does not stop while they are at work. While older members in the workforce have a dependant family to go home to after work, young first year graduates do not have this. They are therefore more likely to build strong social relationships with workmates not just at work but outside work as well.

The affect of career goals on first year graduates work-life balance and the sacrifice that they have to make suggests that their perception of work-life balance is not just short-term but is long term as well. This is shown in the fact that their perception of balance is not only the day to day balancing of work and non-work life but identifying that to gain a better work-life balance in the future they have to sacrifice it now. This can be directly related to Reich (2000) and Kanter (1995) view of the entrepreneurial work identity where the individual is seen as an 'enterprise of the self'. Sacrificing their work-life balance now enabling benefits later suggests that they are willing to build their human capital through developing their skills and reputations, which will enhance their value in terms of future opportunities (Kanter, 1995).

This idea of sacrifice was also identified in the literature where it was argued that although graduates seek work-life balance their concern for success draws them into a situation of work imbalance. This is through working increasingly long hours and experiencing increasingly unsatisfactory relationships between home and work (Struges and Guest, 2004, pg 5). However for these first year graduates it did not directly relate to an unsatisfactory relationship between their work and non-work life, as they perceived the sacrifice as something they had to do and, were willing to do. This therefore meant that their perception of the sacrifice did not directly relate to whether they felt they had a good work-life balance or not. This could be related to the fact that these first year graduates are young (20-25 years of age) and are only just embarking on their career. They are willing to make the sacrifice because they are young and just starting out, whereas older members who have been in the workforce for a longer period of time may be less likely to be so willing to make this sacrifice.

Also the first year graduates that identified their sacrificing of their work-life balance now for future plans of travelling can be linked to the idea of the boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Their career goals are not related to career in the sense of building up a reputation but more the sense that they want to pursue personal goals that are not specifically linked to working. This is reiterated in Inkson and Arthur's (2001) argument that the individual is the one who makes the decisions on which opportunities to seek and which path to explore. Through pursuing their own objective of travelling, they are following their own boundaryless career which helps them to create what can be perceived as a long term work-life balance. They sacrifice their non-work time now so that they have the ability to travel without being dominated by the need to work. In a sense this can be related to the compensation model where an individual may be lacking in one domain, in terms of demands or satisfactions and can be made up in the other (Guest, 2002). The connection to the compensation model is not in the traditional sense it is used in the literature but here it could be seen that through compensating their time now they are able to satisfy their desire to travel in the future. In this sense they are taking a long-term perspective of work-life balance in a form of delayed gratification.

6 Conclusion

Work-life balance for this particular group of first year graduates was interesting as overall they believed they had a good work-life balance. It was interesting that this was determined by how restricted they felt in their ability to engage with social and leisure activities that characterised their non-work life. Their work-life balance was dependent on their current work and non-work circumstance.

This group of first year graduates enjoyed the structure that work provided as it helped them to achieve a better sense of balance compared to the flexible work-life balance at university. The structure helped these new graduates in striving for separation between their work and non-work life. This meant that the majority of first year graduates were located more towards the segmented end of the segmentation-integration continuum. However they still allowed positive emotional interactions to spill from one domain to the other but they tried to avoid negative spill over. They facilitated interaction between the domains with telecommunications and for these first year graduates cell phones acted as a useful tool in balancing their work and non-work life. Relationship building with work mates also represented an important way in which the interaction between the domains was facilitated. They were able to bring social aspects to work through the relationship, which contributed to improving their work environment and ultimately their perception of their work-life balance. In this way they are able to manage the boundaries between their work and non-work life to help them to try and reach a work-life balance.

It was interesting that this group of first year graduates took not just a short-term view of work-life balance but also a long-term perspective in a form of delayed gratification. They were willing to sacrifice their non-work time now because they were young graduates just embarking on their careers.

6.1 Limitations

There are certain limitations that have been identified in this study. Firstly this study was limited by time constraints. The study had to be completed within a nine month time frame

which meant that a longitudinal study was not considered. However completing this study longitudinally could have been beneficial, for example; following the first year graduates from starting their first job post-university until they had completed one year in the job. This would have allowed for a more holistic view of the new graduates' work-life balance to be taken into account, through following how their work-life balance is affected at different stages throughout the year. This would enable work-life balance to be taken into account as more of a long term phenomenon rather than a snap shot.

Secondly the time constraint limited the parameters of the study in terms of the number of participants. While fourteen participants was sufficient as saturation was reached, if there had been more time to complete this study more participants could have been included.

Third and finally the use of the snow-ball technique meant that a wide variety of first year graduates were found that worked in a variety of industries. For a more focused context-specific study there could be a more comprehensive focus on individuals from particular industries.

6.2 Implications for Further Study

There are four implications specifically identified in this section. Firstly the finding that identified relationship building as a way of facilitating interaction between work and non-work domains was not identified in the work-life balance literature. This was found to have a significant impact on this group of first year graduates as it enabled them to overcome challenges and bring respite to work by bringing aspects of their non-work life to work. Therefore a study could be designed to investigate and explore the affect that building relationships with colleagues at work has on work-life balance.

Secondly the use of telecommunications as a tool to help reach work-life balance could be investigated further. It was clear that the first year graduates in this study used it as a tool to interact between their work and non-work life. Specifically the influence of the younger generations having grown up with cell phones could mean that they are better adjusted to its use as a tool to enhance work-life balance than the older generation. Therefore a study looking at the comparison of how first year graduates view telecommunications in terms of

work-life balance compared to workers who have been in the workforce for a longer period of time would be useful.

Thirdly a similar study could be done with individuals who enter the work force who have not gone to university. This would then allow this study to be compared to how workers entering the workforce straight from school who do not attend university perceive their work-life balance.

Finally the parameters of this study could be changed so that individuals from specific universities were interviewed. This would allow for a comparison of how different first year graduates from the different universities perceive their work-life balance in their first year of working post-university. This could be useful for universities. This is because it may begin to make universities more aware of work-life balance demands that face their graduates when they enter the work force. Therefore it could help the universities to prepare their graduates better for when they enter the work force.

6.3 Contribution

The major contribution this study makes to an understanding of the work life balance is that it begins to fill the gap that was identified, in terms of work life balance for younger members of the workforce. This is done through this studys' contribution to the general understanding of how graduates in their first year of post-university study, experience work-life balance. This can be useful for new graduates who have not yet entered the work force, organisations employing new graduates and universities.

7 References

- Arthur, M.B. and Rousseau, D. (1996). *“The Boundaryless Career: A New Employment Principle for a New Organizational Era”*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Ashforth, E., Kreiner, G. and Fugate, M. (2000). ‘All in a day’s work: boundaries and micro role transitions’. *Academy of Management Review*, 25: 3, 472–491.
- Bagtasos, M. (2011). Quality of Work Life: A Review of Literature. *Business & Economics Review*. Vol. 20, no. 2, p. 1-8.
- Biggeri, L., Bini, M., and Grilli, L. (2000). The transition from university to work: a multilevel analysis of the time to obtain a job. *Journal of Royal Statistical Society. Series A*, No.164, part 2, p. 293-305.
- Bloom, N., Kretschmer, T., & Reenen, J. (2006). Work-life Balance, Management Practices and Productivity. p. 1-46.
- Bohle, P., Buchanan, J., Cooke, T., Considine, G., Jakubauskas, M., Quinlan, M., Rafferty, M., & Ryan, R. (2008). The evolving work environment in New Zealand. Implications for occupational health and safety. NOHSAC Technical Report 10. Retrieved the 6th of April from <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/nohsac/pdfs/technical-report-10.pdf>.
- Boon, B. (2006). *“When leisure and work are allies: the case of skiers and tourist resort workers”*, Department of Management, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- Boswell, W., and Olson-Buchanan, J. (2007). The Use of Communication Technologies After Hours: The Role of Work. *Journal of Management*. Vol. 33, No. 4, p 592-610.
- Breaugh, J., & Frye, K. (2008). Work-Family Conflict: The Importance of Family-Friendly Employment Practices and Family-Supportive Supervisors. *J Bus Psychol*. Vol.22, p. 345-353.
- Brough, P and O'Driscoll, M. (2010). Organizational interventions for balancing work and home demands: An overview. *Work & Stress*. Vol. 24, No. 3, p. 280-297.

- Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2007). *“Business Research Methods”* Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Bulger, C., Hoffman, M., & Mathews, R. (2007). Work and Personal Life Boundary Management: Boundary Strength , Work/Personal Life Balance, and the Segmentation-Integration Model. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*. Vol. 12, No. 4, p.365-375.
- Burrell, G & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis. Part 1: In Search of a Framework*. Gower Publishing: Aldershot.
- Corpley, M., & Millward, L., (2009). How do individuals ‘switch-off’ from work during leisure? A qualitative description of the unwinding process in high and low ruminators. *Leisure Studies*. Vol. 28, No. 3, p. 333-347.
- Clark, S.C. (2000). Work/Family Border Theory: A New Theory of Work/Life Balance. *Human Relations*. Vol. 53, No.6, p. 747-770.
- Denzin, N., and Lincoln, Y. (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage publication Inc, London, UK. 2nd edition Printed in the USA.
- Dex, S. and Scheibl, F. (1999). ‘The business case for family-friendly policies’, *Journal of General Management*. Vol. 24, No. 4, p. 22–37.
- Du Gay, P. (1996). *Making up Managers: Bureaucracy, Enterprise and the Liberal Art of Separation*. ‘The Politics of Management Knowledge. Ed: Clegg and Palmer. SAGE: UK/USA/India.
- Duxbury, L., Higgins, C., and Lee, C. (1994) Work-Family Conflict: A Comparison by Gender, Family Type, and Perceived Control. *Journal of Family Issues*. Vol. 15, No.3, p 449-446.
- Florida, R. (2002). *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Hazard Press Limited: Christchurch, New Zealand.
- Friedman, S., Christensen, P., and Degroot, J. (1998). ‘Work and life: the end of the zero-sum game’. *Harvard Business Review*. Vol. 76, No. 6, p119-129.
- Glass, A. (2007). Understanding generational differences for competitive success. *Industrial and Commercial Training*. Vol. 39, No. 2, pp.98 - 103

- Grant-Vallone, E., & Ensher, E., (2001). An examination of work and personal life conflict, organizational support, and employee health among international expatriates. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. Vol. 25, No. 3, p. 261–278.
- Greenhaus, J., and Beutell, N. (1995). Source of Conflict Between Work and Family Roles. *Academy of Management Review*. Vol. 10, No. 1, p 76-88.
- Greenhaus, J., and Powell, G. (2006). When Work and Family are Allies: A Theory of Work Family Enrichment. *Academy of Management Review*. Vol. 31, No. 1, p 79-92.
- Greenhaus, J., Collins, K., and Shaw, J. (2003). The relation between work–family balance and quality of life. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. Vol. 63, No. 3, p. 510-531.
- Guest, D. (2002). Perspectives on the Study of Work Life Balance. *Social Science Information*. Vol. 41 No. 2, p. 255-279.
- Harrim, H., and Al-Qutop, M. (2011). Quality of Worklife Human Well-being Linkage: Integrated Conceptual Framework. *International Journal of Business and Management*. Vol. 6, No. 8, p 193-205.
- Hecht, T., & Allen, N., (2009). A longitudinal examination of the work-nonwork boundary strength construct. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*. Vol. 230, p. 839-862.
- Heraty, N., Morley, M. & Cleveland, J., (2008) Complexities and challenges in the work-family interface. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. Vol. 23 No.3, 209-214.
- Inkson, K. and Arthur, M.B. (2001) “How to be a successful career capitalist”, *Organisational dynamics*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 45-61.
- Kanter, R. (1989). Work and Family in the United States: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research and Policy. *Family Business Review*. Vol. 2, No. 1, p.77-114.
- Kanter, R. (1995). Workplaces, Careers and Employability Security. ‘World Class: Thriving Locally in the Global Economy’. Simon and Schuster: New York.
- Kanter, R. (1997). Restoring People to the Heart of the Organization of the Future. ‘Organization of the Future’. Eds; Hesselbein, Goldsmith, Beckhand. The Peter f. Drucker foundation: New York.

Kriener, G., Hollensbe, E., & Sheep, M., (2009). Balancing Borders and Bridges: Negotiating the Work-Home Interface via Boundary Work Tactics. *Academy of Management Journal*. Vol. 52, No. 4, p. 704-730.

Krichmeyer, C., & Cohen, A., (1999). Different strategies for managing the work/non-work interface: a test for unique pathways and outcomes. *Work and Stress*. Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 59-73.

Kirchmeyer, C., (1992). Perceptions of Non-work-to-work Spillover: Challenging the Common View of Conflict-Ridden Domain Relationships. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*. Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 231-249.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. California, USA: Sage Publications Inc.

Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance Through Interviews and Dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry*. Vol. 12, No.3, p. 480-500.

Lewis, S., and Cooper, C. (2005). *Work-life integration: case studies of organisational change*. Jon Wiley & Sons Ltd. West Sussex. England.

Lewis, S., Gambles, R & Rapoport, R., (2007) The constraints of a 'work-life balance' approach: an international perspective. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. Vol. 18 No.3, p. 360-373.

Lewis, S., Rapoport, R., & Gambles, R. (2003). Reflections on the integration of paid work and the rest of life. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. Vol. 18, No. 8, p. 824-841.

Lewis, S., (2003).The integration of paid work and the rest of life. Is post-industrial work the new leisure? *Leisure Studies*. Vol.22, p. 343-355.

Loughlin, C., and Barling, J. (2001). Young workers' work values, attitudes, and behaviours. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. Vol. 74, p 543-558.

Nippert-Eng, C. E. (1996). *Home and work: Negotiating boundaries through everyday life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Parris, M., Vickers, M., & Wilkes, L., (2008). Caught in the Middle: Organisations Impediments to Middle Managers' Work-life Balance. *Employ Response Rights*. Vol. 20, p. 101-117.

Poppleton, S., Briner, R., & Kiefer, T., (2008). The roles of context and everyday experience in understanding work-non-work relationships: A qualitative diary study of white- and blue-collar workers. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. Vol. 81, p. 481-502.

Rapoport, R., Bailyn, L., Fletcher, J. K., & Pruitt, B. H. (2002). Beyond work-family balance: Advancing gender equity and work performance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Reich, R. (2000). *The Sale of the Self*. 'The future of success'. Alfred A. Knopf: New York.

Schein, E. (1996), "Career anchors revisited: implications for career development in the 21st century", *Academy of Management Executive*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 80-8.

Shamir, B., and Salomon, I. (1985). Work-at-Home and the Quality of Working Life. *Academy of Management Review*. Vol. 10, No. 3, p 455-464.

Snir, R. and Harpaz, I. (2002), "Work-leisure relations: leisure orientation and the meaning of work", *Journal of Leisure Research*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 178-203.

Struges, J. and Guest, D. (2004). Working to live or living to work? Work/life balance early in the career. *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol.14 No. 4, p. 5-20.

Sturges, J. (2008). All in a day's work? Career self-management and the management of the boundary between work and non-work. *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 118-134.

Sumer, H. C., and Knight, P. (2001). How Do People With Different Attachment Styles Balance Work and Family? A Personality Perspective on Work-Family Linkage. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Vol. 86, No. 4, p 653-663.

Tolhurst, H., and Stewart, S. (2004). Balancing work, family and other lifestyle aspects: a qualitative study of Australian medical students' attitudes. *The Medical Journal of Australia*. Vol. 181, No. 7, p. 361-364.

Wilensky, H. L. (1960). Work, careers, and social integration. *International Social Science Journal*. Vol. 12,p 543–560.

Unger, L., and Kernan, J. (1983). On the meaning of Leisure: An Investigation of Some determinants of Subjective Experience. *Journal of Consumer Research*. Vol. 9, no. 4, p. 381-392.

Williams, K., and Alliger G. (1994). Role Stressors, Mood Spillover, and Perceptions of Work-Family Conflict in Employed Parents. *Academy of Management Journal*. Vol. 37, No. 4, p 837-858.

8 Appendix

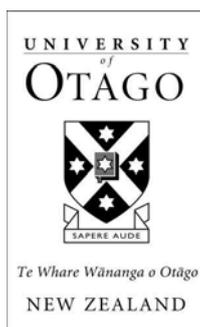
Table: Interview Schedule

Contribution	Questions	Notes/Prompts
1. Setting the context	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What year did you finish university? 2. What qualification did you obtain? 3. How long have you been working in full-time employment? 4. What industry is the company you work for in? 5. What is your role within the company? 6. What are your current living arrangements? 7. What age brackets are you located in; 15-20, 20-25, 25-30, 30-35 or 35-40? 8. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? 	These questions are introductory questions to try and gain some background demographic information on the participant. It will help to gain an insight into the participants' current work and non-work situation.
2. Time allocated to work and non-work activities in both university and working work-life balance contexts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Approximately how many hours per week did you spend on study last year? 10. Approximately how many hours did you spend on paid employment per week last year? 11. Approximately how many hours did you spend per week doing leisure activities? 12. Approximately how many hours per week do you spend at work this year? 13. Approximately how many hours per week do you spend doing leisure activities? 	These questions attempt to gain an insight into some specific differences between the work-life balance in a university context and work context. They act as important introductory questions that help to stimulate participants into thinking about their work-life balance.
3. How do graduates view their work-life balance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Do you currently feel you have a good balance between your work life and non-work life? Why or why not? 15. Do you feel restricted by your job in terms of what you can do in your non-work time? Do you feel this is a necessary sacrifice? 16. What does the balance in work-life balance mean to you? 17. What would your ideal work-life balance be like? 18. What would you have to do to achieve this? Do you think you will be able to achieve this in the future? 	These questions attempt to try and understand what the participant view as being a desired work-life balance. It enables an insight into the meaning that they give to work-life balance.
4. Segmentation-	19. Is your work life ever brought home with	These questions are

integration	<p>you? Can you give an example Are you Reluctant to bring work home with you or vice versa, do you make a conscious effort not to?</p> <p>20. Do you ever take aspects of your non-working life to work? Can you give an example</p> <p>21. Do you use separate diaries for work and non-work life? / Do you make time to organise your non-work activities while at work? Vice versa</p> <p>22. Do you ever do work at home?</p>	intended to aid in figuring out where on the continuum the participant is located. This will be done through the participant giving an insight into how strong the boundary between their work and non-work life is by providing examples.
5. Interactions between work and non-work life	<p>23. Can you give me an example of when conflict occurred between your work and non-work life?</p> <p>24. How did you deal with this? Was the strategy you used something that you think you will continue to use.</p> <p>25. Can you think of a positive interaction that occurred between your work and non-work life? An example could be that you get off work early for a sports training and this allows you to let off steam and ensure you are fresh and on task at work</p> <p>26. How do you unwind when you get home from work? Has this changed since you have been in full-time employment compared to university</p> <p>27. How contactable are you by work when you are at home? Do you see your cell phone as a device that you can use to help balance your work and non-work life?</p>	These questions attempt to gain further insight into specific examples of when interaction has occurred between the participants' work and non-work life in both positive and negative ways. These answers also help to guide the location of the participant on the segmentation-integration continuum.
6. Current work-life balance compared to university	<p>28. How do you feel your work-life balance is now compared to your last year at university?</p> <p>29. What were your expectations of work-life balance going into full-time employment?</p> <p>30. Did your work-life balance context at university set you up for the work-life balance context you now have in full-time employment?</p>	These questions are intended to gain an insight into the changing nature of the participant's work-life balance from the two different contexts of university to first year work.
7. Affect of future aims and goals on work-life	<p>31. Do your career goals affect your work-life balance?</p> <p>32. What do you think has influenced the way in which you view and achieve</p>	These questions are intended to conclude the interview and give the participants an

balance	<p>work-life balance?</p> <p>33. What else affects your work-life balance? Technology? Intensity of work? Telecommunications (physical boundary)?</p>	<p>opportunity to reflect on whether there career goals affect their work-life balance or anything else.</p>
---------	---	--

[Reference Number as allocated upon approval by the Ethics Committee]



Work-Life Balance: Do First year Graduates have it?

Information Sheet for Participants

My name is Seamus Tyler-Baxter and I am conducting a research study for my MBus through the department of Management at the University of Otago. I am interested in your experience of work-life balance as a newly graduated worker and how this compares with your work-life balance experience during your final year at university.

Thank you if you decided to participate and if not, I appreciate and thank you for thinking about it.

The aim of the study is to explore how graduates in their first year of post-university study, experience work-life balance. The specific aim of the study is to understand how new graduates in their first year of work perceive the relationship between work and non-work life. In conjunction with the overall five specific research questions are attempting to be answer;

- RQ6. How do first year graduates view their work-life balance?
- RQ7. How do the new graduates perceive their current work-life balance compared to their work-life balance while at university?
- RQ8. In the way that new graduates manage the boundary between their work and non-work lives, where are they located on the segmentation-integration continuum?
- RQ9. Do first year graduates experience interactions between their work and non-work life as either conflict or as positive interactions or both?
- RQ10. Do future aims and goals affect the expectations of work-life balance of first year graduates?

If you choose to take part, you will be asked to participate in an interview with Seamus Tyler-Baxter for approximately thirty minutes. The time and place of the interview will be by mutual agreement. With your permission the interview will be recorded and transcribed. A copy of the transcription will be sent to you to ensure it is an authentic record of the interview.

It is important that you understand that you can:

- Refuse to answer any particular question;
- Ask for the tape recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- Withdraw from the evaluation study at any time without any reason;

The information you provide in the interview will be reported in the results of this research. Every attempt will be made to protect your anonymity. This will be done by reporting demographic information in an aggregate form and any specific quotes taken from the data will use fictional name. In addition, only quotes that do not identify you will be selected.

The people involved in this research are Seamus Tyler-Baxter (researcher) and Dr Bronwyn Boon (supervisor). Tapes and transcripts will be kept in a secure place (audio files on a password protected computer) where no one but the study team can access it.

You may withdraw from participation in the study at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

Attached is a list of questions that will be asked during the interview.

If you have any questions about this study, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

- Seamus Tyler-Baxter, Student Researcher
 - Ph 027-6988028, email seamustb@hotmail.com
- Dr Bronwyn Boon, Management Department, University of Otago,
 - ph 03-479-8054, email: Bronwyn.boon@otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

[Note: The above statement should not be included if the project has been considered and approved at departmental level]

[Reference Number as allocated upon approval by the Ethics Committee]

[Date]

Work-Life Balance: Do First year Graduates have it?

Participant Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this study and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the study is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without any disadvantage;
3. All efforts will be made to protect my anonymity, and that of my Organization in documents that report on this research. If this is not possible my permission will be sought to use the identifiable material from my individual interview;
4. I understand that the interview will use semi-structured questions and that some of these may lead to supplementary questions to seek clarification or elaborate on particular points. I am also aware that I will not have to answer any questions that I am uncomfortable with during the interview;
5. I will receive a copy of the transcript to enable me to check it is a fair representation of our discussion;
6. The interview transcript and tape recording will be retained in secure storage and, after a maximum of 5 years, will be destroyed/erased;
7. The results of the study may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

I agree to take part in this study.

.....

.....

(Signature of participant)

(Date)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

[Note: The above statement should not be included if the project has been considered and approved at departmental level]

