

Student employment in hospitality and tourism: insights from a recent study

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Students' motives for working are primarily economic, though the proportion of the student body engaged in paid employment in this study is less than 50%. There is also evidence that this varies between students. Students in the final year of their programme were much less likely to work part time, and students in the further education (FE) sector were more likely to be engaged in paid employment than students at university. Students are attracted to work in hospitality organisations because jobs are plentiful and the work is generally appealing. Bar and restaurant work, in particular, allow students to work in contexts that have overlaps with their social life. The demand for labour at times when they are available, or when they can fit in two or three shifts around course work commitments increases the attractiveness to students. The impression created by this study is one of marginality from the student's perspective. Although economic considerations are indeed paramount as stated above, there is little sense of paid employment being an essential and key concern for students, particularly in the university sector. The impression created was that paid employment, was nice to have but not necessarily essential for most of these respondents. Perhaps most worryingly, students are not being developed as employees in most of the establishments concerned. Their work remains largely, routine and unskilled and they are supported with minimal amounts of training, are poorly paid, and are rarely promoted into supervisory or management positions.

Keywords: student work, casualisation, routine unskilled work, hospitality work

Introduction

This paper reports on the student survey element of a research project exploring the employment of students in hospitality and tourism organisations in Nottingham. The research explored current practices and experiences with both students and employers with a view to ensuring a better quality of recruits for the sector. This paper focuses on findings which identify current work patterns of the city's students together with the main employing sectors and job locations of full-time students working in part-time jobs in Nottingham.

Nottingham was chosen as the location for the study as a convenient sample area because of the location at the time of the research team within one of the city's universities. The research informed the development of a pilot study aimed at improving the employment of students in the tourism and culture sector. Initially, the study explored the nature of student employment across Nottingham and explored the numbers of full-time students who work part-time, their working patterns, job locations, reasons for working and long-term ambitions in relation to their current employers.

Nottingham city's population is 273 000 people, although the conurbation of Greater Nottingham is home to 633 000 people (Lashley, 2011). There are over 60 000 students, aged 18 plus, enrolled at the two universities and the student population at the main city centre further education (FE) colleges represent approximately 10 000, most of whom are 16 to 18 years old, though there is a small higher education provision in the FE sector through the delivery of

higher national programmes, foundation degrees and some full honours degree programmes. The research reported on in this paper was based upon face-to-face interviews with 1 549 students and the sample frame reflected the number of students at Nottingham's two universities and three city centre further education colleges. The research also included 135 telephone interviews with local hospitality and tourism employers, though findings from this aspect of the research are presented in another paper (Lashley, 2011).

Background

Employment practice in the hospitality and tourism sector has been dominated by 'casualisation' (Lucas, 2004). Employers, faced with peaks and troughs in demand for hospitality and tourism services that are further exacerbated by unpredictable environmental factors such as changes in weather or socio-political events, and seasonality, have adopted numerically flexible employment strategies (DfEE; 1999). Casual and part-time staff has allowed labour supply to be increased and decreased as customer demand varied. Student labour has been a key source of supply to meet the need for flexible supply (Canny, 2002). The demand for employees is often consistent with student study patterns; evenings, weekends and non-class time allow students to be flexible in their take-up of paid work (Curtis and Lucas, 2001; Lashley, 2005b; Jha, 2006).

The demand for added seasonal labour in Nottingham is itself a response to the student economy. The local economy is stimulated by the added spending on accommodation, food and drink, retailing and leisure activities by in-coming students in Nottingham. The report suggested that a conservative estimate showed that disposable student income alone adds an additional £6 million per week to the city's economy during the academic year (Lashley, 2011). Bar, café, restaurant, retail and leisure organisations find that they need to recruit extra employees to meet this seasonal influx of increased demand. The research showed that some employers deliberately recruit students to meet the added demand created by the student economy. However, many respond by recruiting additional part-time and casual staff for busy trading periods, only some of which happen to be students.

Most importantly, students generally meet the requirement of employers for service personnel who have good social skills and are able to generate customer satisfaction through appropriate levels of customer care (Warhurst et al., 2004). In many cases, students enter their first hospitality and tourism sector job with a high level of human capital because of their backgrounds. Past experiences as guests in restaurants, café bars and hotels ensure that students frequently understand the needs of service culture and customer expectations of frontline service staff behaviour, because they themselves have been regular customers. These qualities cannot be over-stressed, because in a situation where many jobs are typically undertaken by 'routine unskilled staff' with minimal training provided on the job, these social skills have been frequently identified by employers reporting both skill shortages and skill gaps (Lashley et al., 2002; Lashley and Rowson, 2005).

The trend towards more engagement in the labour market, by students, is not a uniquely British experience. Van der Meer and Wielers (2001) note that there is increasing incidence of student employment across most OECD countries, even in countries with limited traditions of student employment such as France and Spain. Curtis and Lucas (2001) estimate that there were one million students active in the British economy and that was set to grow by another 15% in 2011. The proportion of students working is difficult to assess and the subject of some disagreement, however, it is hard to disagree with Curtis and Lucas's view (2001: 39) that for significant number of students, 'their status has changed from full-time student to a combined status of student and worker'. It is also important to recognise that student employment represents a significant element of the labour market (Nixon et al, 2004).

Whilst there is a number of reasons why full-time students undertake paid employment, the key reason for the increases in student labour market participation is generally reckoned to be economic (Lucas & Ralston, 1996; van der Meer & Wielers, 2001; Jha, 2006; Barron & Anastasiadou, 2007). In a report for Aston University Student Shop, Jha (2006) estimated that total student debt in 2003–2004 had risen to £13bn and that the average student owed £8 430. Some estimate that average student debt will be £43 000 by 2023 and this will represent 83% of the first salary (Jha, 2006). In these circumstances, many students have strong incentives to find paid employment whilst they are studying as a means of reducing their debt level at the end of the course, and it is likely that these pressures will increase.

Although students represent an important source of the 'right kind of employee', for employers it is not necessarily a rational strategic choice. In other words, employers are exercising a kind of strategic pragmatism whereby they seek part-time workers and appoint students without deliberately seeking out students. They look for part-time and casual employees who are 'well spoken with a smart appearance' (Nixon et al., 2004: 2), and many of those who match these 'soft skill' requirements (Lucas, 2004) happen to be students. Certainly, when mapped with students' increased motivation to find paid employment, employer recruitment of students might be said to represent a 'coincidence of interests' (Nickson et al., 2004: 2).

This research reports on some findings related to this wider set of emerging issues for part-time student employment. The study will report on the numbers of students on full-time courses who work in part-time or casual employment; it will build an understanding of how much time they are employed on a regular basis, as well as the additional skills that are required if any, and levels of stability amongst the student employee workforce together with insights into how students secure jobs and in which sectors of the local economy.

Research approach

The research upon which this paper is based involved an integration of local, regional national sources of data about hospitality and tourism to gather estimates of employment levels, as well as claimed skill shortages and skill gaps together with levels of turnover amongst the sector's workforce. The research also undertook a substantial number of face-to-face questionnaire-based interviews with students at key locations in the local universities and colleges, as well telephone interviews with a stratified sample of local employers. This paper reports chiefly on the results of the student interviews.

Aims

This paper reports on one major aspect of the research project:

- To establish current levels and characteristics of full-time student employment in Nottingham.

Key issues

The research project was undertaken as a precursor to East Midlands Tourism's signature initiative aimed at both securing improved labour market performance through improved demand for and supply of high quality labour. Ultimately the region wanted to gain competitive advantage through high quality service provided to visitors. The research issues identified below informed the research and student profiles of those who are delivering improved frontline service behaviours.

Employment of students

The study intended to explore the use of students in the sector. Issues such as tenure and job role, training, recruitment processes, totals amongst the workforce and seasonal demand for student labour informed the project. The study gained insights into the current processes by which

employment takes place, including any rigidity within the current demand for labour, and potential barriers to employment. Pay, rewards and promotion issues were explored. The study considered generic skills needs and schemes for the recognition and certification of transferable skills, as these would enable employers to take account of prior training and work experience.

Skills sets and students

Previous studies have suggested that student recruitment would fall into a particular segment of the hospitality and tourism labour market (Lashley et al., 2002). Typically, jobs undertaken by students are likely to be low skilled and poorly paid, with low barriers to entry to the job (Warhurst et al., 2004). There is a potentially high level of supply, often through young people new to the labour market, or students working in part-time, casual or temporary posts. Pay rates are either on the national minimum wage or pitched at a point close to the legal minimum wage rate. For younger employees, the pay rate is below the adult national minimum wage. Opportunities to find alternative employment on the part of the employee, and alternative employees on the part of employers, tend to encourage high levels of staff turnover. In these circumstances managers do not see staff turnover as a major problem because labour is easily replaced and it can be a useful means of managing workforce flexibility and cost reduction.

The student body

The study established the nature of the current student body and student engagement in employment. It explored the characteristics of those in, or seeking, employment, including programme subjects, stage of the programme, organised work placements, the extent that student work was used as a source of evidence to develop transferable skills and future work competence. The study explored students' motives for working, needs from jobs, ambitions and thoughts about future careers in the sector. It also took account of barriers to employment and issues that could enable wider participation in employment in the sector.

Given the nature of the project to explore the perceptions, meanings and actions of student, employers, employees and other stakeholders of the employment of students in Nottingham's hospitality and tourism sector, a largely qualitative research methodology was required. That said, the research 'counted the countable' in an attempt to discover proportions, participation rates and other insights that help shape an understanding of the recruitment of students in the sector. Research methods were also in the form of surveys, using both closed and open-ended questions by structured questionnaires and telephone interviews. In both cases, the surveys were based upon stratified samples representing the population of students and the population of employers. These survey instruments were supplemented by a small number of case studies of individual students and employers of students.

Researching the sector

Establishing some of the statistics relating to the number of firms in Nottingham and Greater Nottingham involved the use of STARS (Lashley, 2005), People 1st (2005) and NOMIS

(2005), supplemented by other sources from local authority tourism sources, yellow pages and local authority business rates data. The research was largely desk-based, supplemented by telephone and face-to-face interviews, and was based on research undertaken for the Nottingham STARS Employers Group (Lashley, 2005). The research adopted an inclusive approach in terms of business size, but was conducted with 'employing' firms. In other words, family businesses, sole traders, and other sector organisations that do not employ staff were not included in the survey. Researchers favoured the People 1st 'footprint' as this includes more 'tourism' and 'hospitality' focused establishments – hotels, restaurants, pubs, bars and nightclubs, contract catering/food service providers, gaming, travel and tourism services, visitor attractions, youth hostels, holiday parks and self-catering and hospitality services. All definitions are flawed, because the customers in many of these businesses are not all tourists. That said, they do represent a common demand for labour with similar skills sets and tap the same labour market in any geographical location.

Researching students

The research recognised a number of variations amongst the post-16 student group. Using a pre-undergraduate and undergraduate framework, the research undertook surveys in two types of institution – further education colleges, and universities. The sample frame also reflected variations in both stages of study and subjects under investigation. For example, it is possible that students were less likely to work in paid employment in the final year of study because of potential conflicts with their studies. Similarly, there may be variations in their propensity to work in the sector depending on the subject being studied. Students in some of the more business related and applied subjects in hospitality, tourism and leisure may be more likely to be employed than those who study subjects in the physical sciences.

The questionnaires were administered at the premises concerned. The co-operation of the students' union was secured so as to gain maximum contact. Research instruments were developed following the general themes identified in the key issues section above and approved with the client. In addition, the research approach was flexible and adaptable to issues that arose during the research phase.

Findings

Interviews with students secured 1 549 responses in four main locations. Just under 80% were enrolled at one of the two universities. Over 60% were in the first or second year of study, and 34 respondents were in a work placement period. Given the number of respondents from a higher education background, it is perhaps not surprising that most respondents were in the 19 to 22 age group (72.8%) and the gender split of respondents showed no obvious skew: 48.8% were male and 51.2% were female. Respondents were found to be located in a relatively small number of postal code areas: almost 80% lived in just seven postal code areas. These are mostly located around the core central areas of Nottingham City centre. Thirty-nine percent reported that they lived in just one area, postal code NG7. These locations cover what might be described as the core student accommodation areas

in the city, within easy access of the universities and college city centre campuses. Location factors are not likely to create major rigidities because the tourism and hospitality jobs are likely to be within reasonable access of these student areas.

Numbers working

Of the 1 549 students in the various locations who completed the questionnaire, 653 were currently working (42.2%) and of these 282 (43.2% of those working) claimed to be seeking alternative work. This suggests a potential movement in employment. A further 13% of these respondents were not working but were looking for work, though over 500 respondents (approximately 33.3%) declared they were not in work and were not looking for work.

Respondents revealed that student participation rates are not evenly spread. Respondents at Nottingham University were less likely to work in Nottingham's economy than those at the other institutions. Part-time work for Nottingham Trent University students is slightly over the average for all students, though 63.7% of respondents from New College Nottingham were working and 47.2% of People's College were working. The proportion of students from the further education sector is also further evidenced by the higher proportion (63.3%) of students interviewed from the 16–18 age band who were working. This situation might be a reflection of the vocational nature of programmes at these colleges, and the lack of funding support for full-time students in further education. Older students 19–22 and 23 and over were less likely to be working. Students in their final year of study were less likely to be working: just 81 of 543 respondents in the third year of study (14.9%) were in part-time work. Interestingly, a small number of respondents in their placement year were also working part time in Nottingham. Consistent with the findings that further education students were more likely to be working in Nottingham than university students, respondents who were on vocational programmes with pre-degree level qualifications were more likely to be working. Sixty-one percent of students on these programmes were working; students on a cluster of 'business' programmes (including programmes with 'management' in the title) were more likely to be working (46.5% of respondents) than students on arts, social science, engineering and science faculty programmes.

Where they work

Job titles gave some insight into the types of jobs being undertaken by students in Nottingham. Arranging the current job titles into recognisable clusters, it was possible to identify current work as located almost exclusively in service sector employment. Table 1 shows the results of this clustering process. The findings are somewhat crude because some confusion exists as to the exact nature of the role of 'assistant'. It could be that respondents are identifying catering assistant, retail, or shop assistant roles. In most

Table 1: Type of work undertaken by students in Nottingham

	Frequency (n)	Percentage %
Hospitality job	264	40.5
Assistant	157	24.1
Other services jobs	232	35.4

cases, job titles were quite explicit and could be located within the hospitality/tourism sector through job titles such as chef, cook, bar person, waiter, etc., or other services, through job titles such as sales assistant, retail worker, call centre operative, etc.

Table 2 represents the responses from those who have worked in different sectors and confirms that the key competition for student labour is located in restaurants and bars, and the retail sector, although call centres and leisure centres employ significant minorities. An interesting observation is that few appear to work in the hotel sector. Only 4% of student respondent claimed to have worked in hotels. It is estimated that there are 1 528 jobs in the hotel sector and given an average staff turnover rate of 51%, there would be approximately 790 vacancies in the sector each year due to staff turnover.

Table 2 confirms that the key sectors for student work were in bars and restaurants, shops and retail. Sixty-four per cent of respondents have worked in bars and restaurants, and 60% have worked in shops and retailing.

Reasons for working

Reasons for working in the sector were chiefly related to the need to earn money. 379 respondents (58.0%) mentioned money in their responses and 329 mentioned '*needing the money*' in some way or other. In some cases, respondents mentioned that they felt it represented '*easy money*' or '*good money*'. Although these comments on the value of the pay are interesting, it is hard not to draw the conclusion that these sectors were attractive because they required labour that was convenient for students, and that the sectors are attracting students because jobs are relatively easy to come by. For these respondents the effort-reward bargain is generally acceptable. The services sector was also attractive to some students because of the active nature of the work and involvement with people. One hundred and forty-one respondents (21.6%) reported that they worked in the sector because they enjoyed the work and working with customers.

Employment stability

Responses to questions relating to employment stability amongst students revealed some interesting answers and were counter-intuitive. It is sometimes implied by industry commentators that students are unreliable employees because they leave employment to return home at term-end, or after the close of the academic year. These respondents, however, reflect considerable employment stability. Table 3 shows that for almost 27% of respondents their current job was their first

Table 2: Current and past sectors worked in

Sector	Frequency (n)	Percent (n = 653)
Bar	131	20.6
Restaurant	284	43.5
Hotel	26	4.0
Call centre	91	14.3
Leisure centre	131	20.6
Tourism services	6	1.0
Shops	152	23.3
Retail	239	36.6
Other jobs	36	5.5

Table 3: Numbers of jobs held

First job?	Frequency	Percent (n = 653)
Yes	176	26.9
No	475	72.7
Missing cases	2	
If 'No', how many jobs?		n = 475
One other employer	5	1.0
Two other employers	187	39.4
Three other employers	193	40.6
Four other employers	68	14.3
Five other employers	7	1.4
Six or more employers	15	3.1

job, and most reported having had three or four employers to date. Fewer than 14% of these respondents reported that they had had five or more employers during their student years. Twelve percent of respondents who were currently working reported that they also held down a second job.

These stability figures are further supported by responses to questions as to how long the respondents had worked for their current employer, and the time they had worked with their previous employer. Table 4 shows that relatively few respondents had worked for their employer for less than 10 weeks (6.4%). Fewer than 20% had worked with the current employer less than six months, one third had worked for the current employer for six months to a year and 48% had worked with the current employer for over twelve months, with just under 37% reporting that they had been with their current employer for over two years.

Patterns of stability also emerge from the time spent with the previous employer; just over 20% had worked with their previous employer for less than six months. Seventy-two percent had worked for the previous employer for over 12 months and 36% had worked for the previous employer for more than two years. The picture emerging, therefore, is that students tend to be quite stable employees; there is little evidence of rapid and frequent job change. Certainly there is little evidence of students leaving employment at the end of each term, or semester. It may be that non-residents to Nottingham leave a job during the substantial summer break, but considerable minorities appear to work with the same employer across and through academic years.

The general impression of medium to long-term stability in student employment is supported further by responses to a question that required respondents to indicate if they intentionally commenced a new part-time job at the beginning of each term. Of the 652 respondents answering this question, just 7 (1.1%) said they did start a job at the beginning of each term, and the 645 (98.9%) said they did not. A perceived criticism of student work patterns is that they tend to change jobs on a termly basis or flit between jobs, is not borne out by these results.

The time students spent working in part-time work revealed that students tend to work two to four shifts per week. Table 5 presents a frequency distribution in four hourly bands – the length of a typical shift period. Seventy-seven per cent of these respondents were work 16 hours per week, or less. The arithmetic mean of working hours across all working respondents was 12.7 hours, or approximately three shifts per week.

Table 4: Length of time with current and previous employer

Time with current employer	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Less than 10 weeks	41	6.4	6.4
11–26 weeks	79	12.3	18.7
6 months to under a year	214	33.3	52.0
1–2 years	71	11.1	63.1
over 2 years	237	36.9	100.0
Total respondents	642	100.0	
Time with previous employer			
Less than 10 weeks	16	3.8	3.8
11–26 weeks	70	16.6	20.4
6 months to under a year	30	7.1	27.6
1–2 years	152	36.1	63.7
over 2 years	153	36.3	100.0
Total respondents	421	100.0	

Table 5: Hours and days worked by respondents

Hours worked per week	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1–4 hours	42	6.5	6.5
5–8 hours	187	28.9	35.4
9–12 hours	123	19.0	54.4
13–16 hours	149	23.0	77.4
17–20 hours	87	13.4	90.8
21–24 hours	14	2.2	93.0
over 24 hours	45	7.0	100.0
Respondents	647		
Days worked per week			
1 day	154	23.7	23.7
2 days	187	28.7	52.4
3 days	79	12.1	64.5
4 days	49	7.5	72.0
5 days	99	15.2	87.3
6 days	18	2.8	90.0
7 days	65	10.0	100.0
Respondents	651	100.0	

The modal average working period is 5–8 hours, representing a couple of shifts per week, and only 10% of respondents worked more than 20 hours per week. Of these, 25 were working 30 hours per week, and 6 students were working 40; and one respondent claimed to be working 48 hours per week.

Table 5 also highlights the number of days students work, and consistent with the number of hours worked discussed in the previous paragraph, the average (mean) student worked on three days per week, though this would comprise a range of full days and part days. Table 5 shows that over half the respondents worked on only two days per week, and over 60% worked for three days or less. That said, 65 respondents, amounting to 10% of working respondents, claimed to work on seven days per week.

The findings from this survey suggest that for the majority of students hours worked and the numbers of days worked are kept to two or three shifts per week with work covering two or three days per week. It is hard not to see work commitments, for the majority of students, as sufficient

to provide some extra income in a way that is compatible with their course demands as full-time students. For a small minority of students, however, work commitments exceed part-time work. These students are in effect working full time, working in excess of 24 hours per week on six or seven days per week.

Finding work

Informality dominates the current process whereby students secure jobs. Table 6 reports on the responses to questions about the method by which respondents secured their current job. Findings show that personal contacts and friends are key sources of jobs, though when fliers on premises are added, slightly less than 80% gained part-time work from these three informal approaches. Furthermore, many students worked in premises in which they also socialise.

What might be regarded as more formal approaches to finding work through job advertisements and recruitment agencies accounted for just 15% of the answers from respondents. That said, these findings reflect a passive and uncoordinated approach to job searching. Responses reported earlier suggest that some students were looking for work at the time of the survey and a sizeable minority were described as potential employees, though not actively seeking work.

Student work

The jobs undertaken by students are located almost exclusively in service sector occupations. Significantly, most students worked in bars and restaurants, or in the retail sector. Analysis of job titles confirmed that most students were in operational roles, with few indicating that they were in supervisory or managerial positions. This is further confirmed by responses to questions about promotion in their current job. Just 23 respondents (3.5%) of 649 who answered this question claimed to have been promoted by their current employer. The overwhelming majority stated they had not been promoted.

Most working students had been trained in their current role. Typically this had been at work rather than off the job. In some cases a combination of on the job and off the job locations for training was employed. Table 7 indicates that induction training was the most prominent purpose. However there is no way of knowing how formal or structured the training received. Given the large number of bar, restaurant and retail venues it is perhaps not surprising that 451 (70.3%) of respondents stated they had received customer

care training, though again there is little way of knowing the degree of formality or informality involved.

Less than one in five respondents claimed to have been trained in food hygiene. Importantly, when asked whether training received by one employer was recognised by another firm approximately 85% said it was not recognised by other employers.

The impression created by training activities reported by these respondents further confirms the general position and status of students in the workforce. They are typically employed as frontline employees, certainly at operative level. Bar work and food service activities (154/653) and retail work (156/653) were identified as the activities involved in most students' work. The reasons for working in the sector concerned were mostly expressed in terms of enjoying the work and the pay in relation to the work effort required. Work in these sectors seemed to provide these respondents with the optimal effort reward bargain, though flexibility and compatibility with university/college commitments was also an important consideration for working in the chosen sector.

Pay rates ranged from £3.00 per hour to £8.50, though 52.4% were earning between the then legal minimum wage of £4.85 per hour and £5.00 per hour. Whilst a majority of respondents are paid at the legal minimum rate, or within a few pennies within it, 28.4% were paid £5.50 per hour or more. Given the focus of this study, it is not possible to identify the contribution that tips and incentive schemes might have on the total reward package. The impact of these additions to wage rates vary between sectors, those working in certain sectors of the hospitality sector are more likely to have regular access to tips from customers, whereas commission on sales would be more the norm in some sectors of the retail sector. The key point is that students work in a context where minimum wage rates provide the bench mark pay rate for a majority, but where some employers are paying considerably above the minimum wage. Competition for scarce labour results in some employers' deliberately pitching wage rates above the legal minimums because it enables them to pick and choose labour. They are positioning the organisation to be an 'employer of first choice'.

Finally, few students working in these roles were likely to consider long-term employment in the sector. Just over 20% of respondents said they would or might pursue a career in the type of business in which they were working part time. Almost 80%, therefore, categorically stated they would not look for a career in the sector concerned. That said, these responses have to be set in a context whereby most students are working in 'unskilled routine' occupations in which they

Table 6: Method of finding the current job

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
From friends	257	39.5	39.5
Personal contact	165	25.3	64.8
Flier on premises	95	14.6	79.4
From an agency	77	11.8	91.2
Newspaper advertisements	21	3.2	94.4
Student union	12	1.8	96.3
Internet	4	0.6	96.9
Other	20	3.1	100.0
Total	651	100.0	

Table 7: Training received by working students

Training received	Frequency	Percent (n = 653)
Induction		
Yes	572	87.6
No	81	12.4
On job	492	75.3
Off job	131	20.6
Health & safety	313	47.9
Food hygiene	119	18.2
Customer care	458	70.1
Other	9	

have had little personal development other than to aid job competence. Certainly, a more focused strategy could encourage more to think of careers with the organisation with which they have a part-time relationship.

Conclusion

Students' motives for working are primarily economic, though the proportion of the student body engaged in paid employment is in this study is less than 50%. There is also evidence that this varies between students. Students in the final year of their programme were much less likely to work part-time, and students in the FE sector were more likely to be engaged in paid employment than students at university. Also the subject of study was likely to influence participation in paid employment. Students on business and management and vocational programmes were more likely to work in paid employment. Whilst the experience of being a 'student and a worker' is true for some students, this is far from universal. Results suggest that the majority of students manage their time in paid employment in a way that suggests they are primarily students who work for some extra living money. The study showed that most students worked only a small number of shifts and for sixteen hours or less per week.

Students are attracted to work in hospitality organisations because jobs are plentiful and the work is generally appealing. Bar and restaurant work, in particular, allow students to work in contexts that have overlaps with their social life. The demand for labour at times when they are available, or when they can fit in two or three shifts round course work commitments increases the attractiveness to students. That said, the retail sector is a major competitor to these hospitality employment opportunities, and there is some evidence that pay rates can be better in retailing. Employers need to be aware of the real rates being paid in the local labour market and ensure that they at least match rates available to students working in retail and shop jobs. Student work is currently largely in part-time, operative level activities, where there is limited training beyond induction for most employees. For many, wage levels are at the minimum national wage, or within a few pennies of it.

The impression created by this study is one of marginality from the student's perspective. Although economic considerations are indeed paramount, as stated above, there is little sense of paid employment being an essential and key concern for students, particularly in the university sector. A higher proportion of students in the FE sector were in paid employment, and there is clearly less state support for students in these institutions, undoubtedly a factor influencing higher participation rates. In the university sector, the majority of home students need to bear a larger proportion of the costs of their education themselves. However, the nature of the charges and financing of studies is such that it is not creating a culture of students 'working their way through college'. For most of the respondents in this study, paid employment was being managed in a way that provided financial benefits at the margins of total study costs. The impression created was that paid employment was nice to have but not necessarily essential for most of these respondents.

Perhaps most worryingly, students are not being developed as employees in most of the establishments concerned. Their

work remains largely routine and unskilled and they are supported with minimal amounts of training, are poorly paid, and they are rarely promoted into supervisory or management positions. Few are offered or seek long-term relationships or careers with their employing organisations. For most, work in the hospitality sector represents an activity associated with student life, and they will 'get a real job later'. Sadly, the sector is losing out on an opportunity to develop relationships with these young people. The employment of students in part-time jobs during their academic time has the potential to enable employers to evaluate potential future talents, and for students it has the potential to provide some interesting and valuable experiences which could form the bedrock of a future career. Unfortunately, the potential benefits for both parties, are not being realised.

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