

MULTIPLE JOB HOLDING - A WORKING OPTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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Abstract

This paper considers the motivations and experiences of young people who are multiple job holders. The research is based on structured face-to-face interviews with 73 people aged 18-34 years who worked in café/restaurant and/or creative occupations. Young people working in either occupational group were ambivalent about why they held multiple jobs: they reported wanting to work in this way and also having to, for financial and other reasons. However, whereas those in café/restaurant jobs often saw multiple job holding as a transitional work arrangement to support themselves and their lifestyle while they pursued other activities, those in creative occupations tended to view multiple job holding as a long-term working arrangement. Despite the negative impacts multiple job holding had on many aspects of their personal and social life, most young people described multiple job holding overall as a positive experience. These findings add to our understanding of the range of work options now taken by younger workers and point to some policy implications.

Introduction

This paper further builds on research into multiple job¹ holding by focusing on the experiences of young people. The overall research programme, which began in 2001, has two main objectives. These are to develop a profile of multiple job holding in New Zealand over recent years; and to identify factors which encourage or inhibit the adoption of multiple job holding as a strategy, and determine its impact on individuals, families and communities.

An analysis of Census data from 2001 showed comparatively high levels of multiple job holding across some occupational areas. Subsequently, six occupational groups with varying levels of multiple job holding were selected for in-depth research. These are café/restaurant and creative occupations, farm workers, health professionals, small accommodation providers and accounting work². Interviews between 2003 and 2005 with 360 individual multiple job holders in these occupational areas explored people's current and past composition of work, reasons for holding multiple jobs, effects of multiple job holding on relationships and activities, ideal or future work options, and their personal assessment of multiple job holding overall. Reports on each sector can be found at: www.tba.co.nz/frst_projects/frstproject_tbsx0204.html.

This paper focuses on young people, who we define as aged 18-34 years. Of all the interviews conducted, 84 (23%) are in this age group. This younger age cohort was primarily represented in café and restaurant occupations (55 respondents) and creative occupations (18 respondents).

The young people interviewed held a range of jobs, both within and outside the six areas of primary focus. However, two-thirds considered their main occupation to be either café/restaurant work or creative work. Fifty-one percent of those in the café/restaurant sector and 56% of those in the creative sector identified their main job as being the same as their occupation. Most young people interviewed had held two jobs in the previous week, but over a quarter had held three. Working a 40 hour week was unusual: 65% had worked more than 40 hours in the previous week and 23% had worked fewer than 30 hours³.

¹ Multiple Job Holding in New Zealand, Programme TBAX0204 funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology.

² A job was defined as paid or unpaid work doing a set of tasks for an employer, or for the respondent's own family/whānau/hapū business. It includes being employed by others, being self-employed and employing others. Multiple job holding is defined as holding more than one job at a time, and includes doing the same work for multiple employers.

³ Full-time work is defined by Statistics New Zealand as 30 hours or more per week.

Most of the young people interviewed from the café/restaurant sector identified their main occupation or job as barista, waiter/waitress or café worker. The Census shows multiple job holders in these combined occupations overall are overwhelmingly young (77% were aged below 35 years in the 2001 Census). The majority of people in these occupations are young (as above), as are the majority of multiple job holders in these occupations⁴. Looking at multiple job holders in each occupational group, 87% of waiters, 70% of counter assistants and 70% of bartenders were aged 34 years or below in 2001.

The most common occupations given by young people surveyed in the creative sector were music teacher, artist and actor. The 2001 Census found that 22% of people working in creative occupations held multiple jobs, but only 30% of these were aged below 35 years. Like café/restaurant occupations, multiple job holding in the creative sector does not appear to be age-related. Looking at each occupation separately, young people aged below 35 years made up 58% of actors, 29% of music teachers and 21% of artists.

Literature review

While statistics on non-standard work in New Zealand are limited (Spoonley, 2004), international and local literature describes a rise in levels of non-standard work in industrialised societies over the last twenty years. Non-standard work is typically defined against standard work, which is characterised by a career of stable and continuous employment with a single employer, working full-time hours over a regular working week and being paid a wage or salary (Spoonley, 2004; Dupuis and McLaren, 2006). Conversely, non-standard work includes non-permanent job tenure, part-time work or work that involves long hours, self-employment, temporary and seasonal work, multiple job holding, independent contract or freelance work, working from home and working 'under the table' (Carroll, 1999; De Bruin and Dupuis, 2004). Some non-standard work has been labelled 'precarious', due to unpredictable hours, less job security and uncertainty around job tenure (De Bruin and Dupuis, 2004).

Advantages and disadvantages of non-standard work

Dupuis and McLaren (2006) discuss the rise of non-standard work in reference to a greater employee demand for workplace flexibility, stating that such flexibility is typically associated with the rhetoric of work-life balance. Non-standard work can be a positive experience for those whose lifestyle demands flexibility, for example working parents (Carroll, 1999). However, some people employed in non-standard work may be disadvantaged by their working circumstances. Frequently, casual/temporary work excludes the employee from benefits associated with working for one employer for a period of time, including access to social protection (for example, paid parental leave in some countries) and security of job tenure (Spoonley, 2004). Leggatt-Cook (2005:11) notes the possibility that "it is the most vulnerable workers who are required to undertake the most insecure work".

The move to non-standard work has occurred both in response to global economic trends, prompting employers to restructure their workforce as needed (Department of Labour, 2002), and as a result of increased employee demand for workplace flexibility (Dupuis and McLaren, 2006). Global trends include globalisation⁵, the move away from manufacturing towards services, and technological changes. These are discussed in more detail below.

A trend towards globalisation is linked to an increase in non-standard work through the decline of local economies in favour of large companies operating in an international market (Leggatt-Cook, 2005). One result of this is a higher level of outsourcing to independent subcontractors in an attempt to cut costs (McRobbie, 2002). Some argue that globalisation has significantly altered the way work is structured, with the casualisation of work (with lower pay) emerging as one of its primary consequences, and casual/temporary employment being one of the fastest growing forms of non-standard work (Spoonley, 2004). Additionally, against the background of organisational restructuring, many researchers have stated that the notion of the 'career' as a linear and hierarchical progression within one organisation has been replaced by the idea of the 'boundaryless career', and with it higher job mobility and a sense of constant individual development (Leggatt-Cook, 2005).

Linked with globalisation is the rapid emergence of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies (ICT). While these new technologies have created new types of jobs and increased the popularity of certain industry sectors, they have also changed the way existing products are produced, increased the overall need for a more highly skilled labour force and reduced the need for lower skilled labour (Department of Labour, 2002). In addition, the technological changes have altered the way work is organised, allowing for increased information sharing, flatter management structures and a greater emphasis on flexibility and innovation (Department of Labour, 2002).

⁴ The overall percentage of young people amongst multiple job holders in all occupations (8.3%).

⁵ Anthony Giddens defines globalisation as "the intensification of world wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (cited by Hoogvelt, 1997).

However, McRobbie (2002) notes that these flexible, new working environments create the potential for blurring of work and pleasure, with work increasingly able to impinge on other areas of life.

Finally, in New Zealand the economy has moved from an agricultural foundation to one based on manufacturing and subsequently service-related industries (Department of Labour, 2002). Service industries not only include low-skilled production but are experiencing growth in knowledge-intensive services. Industry sectors experiencing growth include education, health, property and business services, leisure and entertainment and accommodation, café and restaurant services. Alongside this trend, the government has placed an emphasis on developing new forms of knowledge and networking for economic advantage. This emphasis informs policy decisions on industry sectors, work and education (Leggatt-Cook, 2005). The drive to move people into work has resulted in a push for people to become more entrepreneurial, selling their intellectual property rather than their products or services (Information Technology Advisory Group, 1999), and has prompted a government focus on industries with high growth potential such as biotechnology, ICT, design and screen production (Ministry of Economic Development, 2005).

These trends have also been reflected within New Zealand's labour market. In the 1980s and 1990s, the country underwent major economic and social upheaval, and one response to this was a rise in non-standard work (Baines and Newell, 2005). This is supported by census data, which shows a rise in the total employed population working in non-standard work from 23.6% in 1981 to 39% in 2001. Women typically made up a higher proportion of non-standard workers over this period, but the proportion of men also increased. Young people (particularly those making the transition from school/education to work, aged 16-19 years) and older workers (aged over 65 years) were the most common age groups to be found in non-standard work (Baines and Newell, 2005).

The number of people employed in part-time work doubled between 1981 and 2001, with younger workers (aged 15-22 years) making up the highest proportion of part-time workers (Baines and Newell, 2005). The proportion of those who were self employed increased by 130% in the same period (Baines and Newell, 2005): this change is particularly evident within some industry sectors. For instance, in screen production occupations, a large majority of the personnel are self-employed contractors or freelance workers (Pinflicks Communications and New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2003).

Proportions of people engaged in multiple jobs also increased during this time, with the highest proportions of multiple job holders aged 15-16 years, 40-44 years and over 75 years (Baines and Newell, 2005).

Young people and non-standard work

The age group that is the focus of this paper (18-34 years) spans two generational cohorts: those at the older end of the group (born between about 1961 and 1980) falling into the so-called 'Generation X', and the remainder (born from approximately 1981 onwards) being part of 'Generation Y'. Both Generations X and Y tend to be characterised by particular qualities that have an impact on the way they view and carry out work. It is argued that neither generation is interested in moving up a corporate ladder, but value having a balance between time in and out of work (Maynard, 1996; Tresize-Brown, cited by Leggatt-Cook, 2005). For Generation Y, work is ideally relaxed and non-traditional, flexible and meaningful, with value placed on gaining a range of experiences (Tresize-Brown, cited by Leggatt-Cook, 2005). These young workers tend to balance a range of commitments outside of the workplace, and do not necessarily see their work as a defining feature of their identity. Work is not typically viewed as an investment into their own future with a single company, and for this reason immediate payoffs from the workplace are sought (Tresize-Brown, cited by Leggatt-Cook, 2005).

Leggatt-Cook (2005) draws on previous literature to suggest that labour market entry for young people is much more risky than for previous generations, with more diverse options available alongside the pressure of taking responsibility for one's own success or failure. Young people spend more time in post-compulsory education than previous generations but, despite being well-qualified, can have greater difficulty successfully entering into the labour market (Lowe, cited by Leggatt-Cook, 2005). Dupuis and McLaren (2006) suggest that the growth in young people's participation in non-standard work, most apparent in the 15-19 year old age group, could be attributed to an increase in their engagement in tertiary education. As a consequence, they need to support themselves through part-time, temporary or casual work. It is suggested that some forms of non-standard employment (particularly involuntary temporary work) could have a negative impact on employees' long term employment options, as workers tend to take on lower skilled jobs that do not allow for further training and education (Spoonley, 2004). This is supported by Dupuis and McLaren (2006), who found that young people working part-time or in multiple jobs felt more secure in their jobs than those in temporary employment. Their findings challenge the idea that non-standard work is necessarily precarious by nature.

Multiple job holding

As one form of non-standard work, multiple job holding is not as prevalent amongst young people aged 18-34 years as other forms of non-standard work. However, census data shows that the proportion of young people aged 15-34 years (as a percentage of all employed young people of this age group) who work in multiple jobs has increased between 1981 and 2001⁶. Some industry sectors, for example the café/restaurant sector, employ larger numbers of young people (who may hold multiple jobs) than others. Two features often mentioned alongside multiple job holding (although impacting on both standard and non-standard work) are growing expectations around work performance and the expectation that people will work longer hours (Spoonley, 2004; McRobbie, 2002). This supports what McRobbie (2002:101) calls the “new youth-driven meritocracy”, whereby many young people must work extremely long hours in response to the expectation to perform in the new “talent-led economy”.

The expectation to perform at high levels is particularly evident in the creative sector, which is perceived by many young people as an emerging and glamorous industry (De Bruin and Dupuis, 2004). Thus, despite the uncertainty that can be a part of work in the industry, young employees seek opportunities to work in the sector and are often more than willing to work hard to gain a foothold in the industry (McRobbie, 2002).

Young people and multiple job holding

Overall, 23% of the people we interviewed were aged 18-34 years. Ninety-two percent of those interviewed in café/restaurant occupations were aged less than 35 years, as were 30% of those in creative occupations. Although there was some cross-over between the two groups, with some people engaged in creative work also in café and restaurant work and vice versa, most of the young people clearly identified with one occupational group. So, 88% of those in creative occupations identified their main occupation as creative, while 60% of those in café/restaurant occupations identified theirs as café/restaurant-related.

The largest group interviewed was aged 20-24 years (38%). Female respondents outnumbered males in both sectors, with young women making up 69% of café/restaurant workers and 83% of creative workers. Most respondents (68%) identified themselves as New Zealand European/ Pākehā, with 4% identifying themselves as either of Māori or New Zealand European/Māori descent. Seventy percent of young people from both sectors had a tertiary level qualification: 44% had a university degree, 10% had a qualification from a polytechnic and 16% had other tertiary qualifications. Respondents from both sectors most commonly earned \$10,001-\$20,000 or \$20,001-\$30,000 (25% each) from all jobs in the previous year.

A number of questions were raised by analysis of the interview data and the literature that relate to the experiences of young people in the sample:

- Is there a difference between the motivations and experiences of young people in café/restaurant and creative occupations?
- What are the effects of multiple job holding on young people’s personal and social lives.
- Is multiple job holding considered a long term working option by young people or is it used as a temporary strategy? That is, does multiple job holding suit people’s disposition or lifestyle, and is it an expected part of their working lives?

Motivations for engaging in multiple jobs

Young people were ambivalent about why they held multiple jobs: they felt they both wanted to work in more than one job and had to, for instance to build up their working hours. Those who wanted to work in multiple jobs (usually café/restaurant workers) tended to do so for extra income for discretionary spending, socialising opportunities or work flexibility.

Conversely, those who had to work in multiple jobs tended to do so to earn enough money to pay bills and live, to make up hours equivalent to a full-time job or to ensure some stability of income not achieved through a single job. While

T is a 24 year old fine arts student who works two jobs. Her main job is based at the university she attends, and she works as a research assistant facilitating an arts and projects space. The time she spends in this job is flexible, but usually adds up to around 10 hours per week. T also works for five hours on a Saturday as a retail assistant, and is involved in volunteer work. T stated that she had to work in multiple jobs. She offered several reasons why this might also be the case, especially for people in the creative sector: “People often have more than one project on the go. It’s about balancing your own interests and endeavours with your finances. Maybe artists prefer to work part-time because there’s a need for more time to work on your own [artistic] projects. Also, full-time creative sector jobs are rare and part-time work gives you a wider range of contacts.” Although T would like more stable working hours, she currently finds her working situation suitable and she intends to carry on working in more than one job at least in the near future.

⁶ While the proportion of people aged under 35 years in multiple jobs has increased from 4.2% in 1981 to 8.3% in 2001, it has not increased as much as the proportion of the population as a whole engaged in multiple job holding (from 4.2% in 1981 to 10.2% in 2001).

both café/restaurant and creative workers indicated such financial imperatives, they were more prevalent amongst creative workers.

- *Sometimes part-time work is all that is available.* (waitress)
- *People can't find full-time work, there's mostly part-time work available. To have a full-time equivalent you have to work in more than one place.* (café worker)
- *There's no guarantee [about where money will come from]. You have to get work where it comes.* (actor)

Young people in creative occupations often held other jobs to fund their creative work. These people were usually attempting to make a name for themselves within the sector, but were currently unable to generate enough income from their creative pursuits to make them self-sustaining. Consequently, they needed to take on other work to support their creative activity.

Other young people, typically from the café/restaurant sector, took on multiple jobs because they were saving for particular items or events (*"I choose to save"*) or wanted more discretionary cash (*"I like buying clothes and spending money on my car"*). One young woman said she liked the money she made as a waitress during the summer months, stating that it was one of the main reasons she worked in this area: *"I like to call it the earning potential"*.

Young people often needed multiple jobs to support households. These young people, usually from the creative sector, viewed their income as making an important contribution to their household. While contributing to the rent or mortgage of a property, these people were more likely to live with a partner or on their own, and were often also the sole or most steady income earner of the household. Young people whose income was not important to their household typically lived in a flatting environment (often as students), with others contributing equally to the daily running of the household. Their individual income did not contribute to their household other than in paying collective rent and bills.

Some young people worked in multiple jobs for the enjoyment and socialising opportunities associated with the mix of jobs. This was particularly true for young people working in café/restaurant jobs. Indeed, some described the desirability of particular positions, for instance because the workplace or the staff were seen to be 'cool'. Positions in these places were highly valued and people often waited for jobs to become available. Word of mouth about job openings was important in these cases. In addition, the work was sometimes linked to a lifestyle that included socialising with co-workers at the end of a shift. Two comments in particular captured the importance of this more sociable side to their employment:

- *People like the lifestyle – alcohol is a factor.* (espresso technician, 24 years)
- *Be irresponsible, creative and have fun before you get too old!* (DJ, 25 years)

Other young people held multiple jobs because of the variety of experiences that were offered, and the mix of skills they could use and gain. They liked the stimulation involved in going from job to job and workplace to workplace. The experiences of two students were typical. One young chef said *"the availability of new work places creates opportunity for new experiences"*. Similarly, a café worker held multiple jobs for *"the variation of work – I need the stimulation and want to gain experience in different jobs."*

Work flexibility is an important aspect of multiple job holding for some young people as it accommodates and supports their lifestyle. Flexibility is valued both because it allows people to take time off (*"it's easy to get time off and arrange holidays"*), and because it allows work to be structured around other activities and commitments (*"[I have] classes during the day hours [so] I work nights"*). For many, chasing flexibility required them to work several part-time jobs, rather than a smaller number of jobs with longer hours. This work strategy was common amongst café/restaurant workers and evident (but to a lesser extent) amongst young people in creative occupations (*"If you have a part-time job it's easier to negotiate for arts events and time"*).

F, aged 32, describes her main occupation as a beauty therapist, but her main job as a café worker. She spends around 12 hours per week in this role. She works 10 hours per week as a beauty therapist, and another seven hours doing health assessments. Her hours are flexible and varied. *F* believes that it is the variety found in multiple job holding that prompts many people to take on more than one job. She says *"the variety makes [work] more interesting – a change of venue"*. However, she also holds multiple jobs to *"hedge bets"* against insecurity of income, with each job contributing towards 30-40% of her total income. *F* finds that there are both positive and negative aspects to working in multiple jobs, but in spite of the positives, she does not intend to hold more than one job for more than two more months.

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Work experiences

Some young people felt that their multiple job holding could be partially explained by the nature of the industry sector in which their jobs were located. For instance, people considered that multiple job holding was a necessary strategy for survival in the creative sector. This is despite increasing governmental support through initiatives such as the PACE programme (Pathways to Arts and Cultural Employment, or the 'Artists' Benefit').

However, they did feel that recent changes in the creative sector had made job finding easier. For instance, the implementation of the New Zealand music quota and creation of the Big Idea website (an online community of creative industries in New Zealand) have helped promote the work of local artists, and therefore created work opportunities. As well, the growth of New Zealand's film industry and the perceived glamour that surrounds particular industries such as film and design, has led to greater credibility of the creative sector. This growth has opened up more work opportunities.

The nature of the café/restaurant sector also encourages multiple job holding. For instance, long opening hours and a mix of quiet and busy times create a wide range of part-time positions and split shift work. Thus, if people want to work in a mix of part-time jobs, the sector provides plenty of opportunities. The growth in the café/restaurant sector has also created more work opportunities overall. People in café/restaurant occupations attributed this growth to the development of a café culture in New Zealand and the lowering of the drinking age (thus increasing café and bar patronage).

In his previous working week, S worked a total of 45 hours. He is an actor, and spends time working as an actor, acting tutor, telecommunications representative and script writer. His hours are mainly self-directed, aside from a two hour tutoring block. S works in multiple jobs because he wants to, but said it was important for him to find time for his script writing. He has been involved in the creative sector for seven years, and has found it easier to get work in this sector more recently. He says, "the Government has made it easier for the actor. Helen Clark is more supportive of the arts and PACE allows people to find their own creative voice." While S currently earns a very limited income, he expects to earn more from his script writing in the future. He is very positive about his experiences as a multiple job holder and intends to carry on working in this way for the long term.

Effects of multiple job holding on lifestyle

Most young people found holding more than one job to be a positive experience.

- *It suits my personality and allows me to do what I want.*
- *I enjoy the company I work for ... and enjoy the change. Painting is good when I allow time to do it. If I can't paint I feel unbalanced.*
- *I like change, things moving and progressing. I enjoy juggling [jobs] when it's going well. I like the variety and insight – they all feed into the experience of life... If I didn't have more than one job I'd be miserable!*

However, multiple job holding has downsides for young people, with negative effects on aspects of their personal and social lives. In particular, because of the long or anti-social hours they worked, multiple job holding tended to hinder young people's participation in social activities. Aspects of lifestyle that seemed to suffer most from multiple job holding included health, fitness and physical activity, entertainment and the general balance between work and personal life. Friendships could also be negatively affected by the long working hours, and evening and weekend work. Some of the comments included:

- *It's hard to co-ordinate jobs and fit in with my partner and friends.*
- *It's hard to have a social life because you work the nights that most people go out.*
- *The lack of time is the worst part. You can't go away for a weekend spontaneously.*

Multiple job holding as a work strategy

Multiple job holding is a long-term strategy for some young people, and a transitional arrangement for others. It is more common as a long-term strategy amongst young people in the creative sector. Most saw their jobs as supporting (although sometimes hindering) their creative work. There was both a financial aspect to this support and a sense that other jobs created a balance to the creative work ("*[My] distribution job is good in that it gets me away from the creative sector for a while!*"). This was particularly true of young people who were self-employed: "*People can't earn enough as self-employed to sustain themselves and their own creative pursuits. They need to find other work.*"

C (aged 19) is a student and holds two waitressing jobs. In the previous week, she worked 30 hours, although this was more hours than usual as she was on holiday from her studies. In her main job, C usually works over four week nights. In her second job she can work over three week days, and also in the weekend. She works in multiple jobs for two reasons: for the flexible hours she gets being employed at two workplaces, and for the money. Her main concern, however, is her study: "*I'm studying so I can't work days. So [work] is divided up between lectures.*" She finds that working multiple jobs has both positive and negative aspects, and intends to continue working in this way for the near future.

A number of young people identified ways to improve their work arrangements. For example, they indicated that better pay, working conditions or perks would improve multiple job holding for them. This also included having a better or more simplified secondary tax structure that was supportive of people who worked in more than one job ("*secondary tax is a big issue - like being penalised for having more than one job*"). Young people would also like hours that better suited their needs (that, is either more flexible or more stable), so that they could have sufficient time away from work and clearer boundaries between jobs.

For those in the café/restaurant sector, multiple job holding was typically viewed as a transitional stage before embarking on their ideal career path. Multiple job holding was often seen as a short term work strategy (“*[This is] not a career option, I’m doing it for the money*”) while they studied, saved, or were involved in other commitments. Factors influencing the amount of time these young people expected to continue holding multiple jobs included the need to have work that fitted around lectures and study periods, and uncertainty of work opportunities following graduation.

Some young people saw multiple job holding as more suitable to their disposition than holding a single job. Many of these young people also talked about the need for variety in their work (“*I get bored doing the same job all the time*”; “*I need stimulation and variety. It’s a choice*”) and this variety was often gained through working in multiple jobs.

Many young people indicated that their ideal working situation would still see them working in multiple jobs. This highlights the ambivalence they have about working in this way. Despite their seeing multiple job holding as either a necessity or a transitional arrangement, they still view it as an ideal working arrangement (albeit with some improvement in conditions and pay rates). This was much more pronounced in young people working in the creative sector. While only one in five young people in the café/restaurant sector thought multiple job holding was their ideal working situation, over 70% of those in the creative sector preferred to work in multiple jobs, despite the negative effects on their personal and social life. In research on multiple job holding in the creative sector, more than three quarters of multiple job holders of all ages preferred to work in multiple jobs (Osborne, Warren and McClintock, 2006), suggesting that there might be something about the sector or themselves that makes them prefer working in this way. For instance, even those well established in professional careers within the creative sector chose to work in more than one job, as illustrated by *P* (see text box, below).

G (aged 26) works 40 hours per week as a web developer within the music industry. He spends another 20 hours each week as a retail distribution assistant and does casual ‘music mixing’ every so often. The specific time he spends in each job is self-directed, except for his retail job hours, which are set. He is also involved in studying and does volunteer work. Referring to the need for people in the creative sector to work in multiple jobs, *G* says, “*If you’re self-employed it’s just the nature of the creative sector. You’re a creative person and need to be stimulated by more than one thing at a time.*”

Discussion

The rise in non-standard work, both in New Zealand and internationally, has occurred alongside and in reaction to the demand for workplaces to be responsive to global and local economic trends. One outcome has been the demand for both employers and employees to be more flexible. While some types of non-standard work can be perceived as precarious, with unsatisfactory hours, unstable tenure and poor pay, non-standard employment can also offer employees choice and flexibility in their working arrangements. Sometimes, both positive and negative elements can exist within one set of jobs.

P (aged 54) is a successful novelist. However, he also holds another job as a conceptual developer for a museum, and saw both jobs as his occupation. *P* works very regular hours in the museum, spending his mornings, from 5-7am writing. In commenting on why he has more than one job, *P* stated, “*The full-time job invigorates the writing*”. Initially, *P* wanted to work as a full-time writer but found it to be financially unsustainable. His job at the museum provides him with financial stability, and while he finds it frustrating not to have enough time to spend on his creative work, he finds multiple job holding to be a positive experience.

Multiple job holding, as one form of non-standard work, is increasingly a part of the working life of New Zealanders, especially within some occupational groups and industry sectors. As young people make up significant proportions of some of these occupations - for instance, waiters, bartenders and actors – they make up a significant proportion of multiple job holders in some sectors.

Individual reasons for multiple job holding related to young people’s life cycle stage, desire to broaden work skills and experience, general disposition and expectations about work, and extra financial needs. Some saw multiple job holding as a transitional work arrangement while studying or waiting for the ‘right job to come along’. Additionally, young people wanted to broaden their exposure to a range of work situations to help expand their skills and work experience, help them make choices about future work and increase their employability. Some, especially those in creative occupations, were attracted to multiple job holding because it suited their need for variety, change and flexibility. They felt that multiple job holding suited their disposition and, fortunately, found there was work readily available in occupational areas that appealed. Many of these young people did not expect or want to work in a linear career progression (see Tresize-Brown, cited by Leggatt-Cook, 2005). Some young people took extra jobs to increase their discretionary income, for instance, because they were saving for overseas travel.

Young people also attributed their multiple job holding to sector-related reasons. Those in the creative sector commonly had multiple jobs to financially support their creative pursuits or create professional and other networks in order to establish themselves. However, their reality was not noticeably different from that of their older counterparts. Rather, most multiple job holders in creative occupations, including established and successful professionals, found it necessary to hold more than one job at a time to support themselves and continue their creative work.

Some young people working in cafés and restaurants also attributed their multiple job holding to the characteristics of the hospitality sector. Given the influence of factors such as long operating hours, rush periods and seasonality on the human resource needs of cafés, restaurants and bars, many of the jobs available are part-time and/or involve shift work. Thus, young people variously found it difficult to get full-time jobs and easy to get part-time work to collectively create a full-time equivalent job or supplement a full-time job.

Research results suggest that non-standard work practices broadly fit with many of the work aspirations of young people grouped loosely within the Generation Y age cohort. For instance, particular occupations offer the flexibility that many in this age cohort require to enable them to pursue recreational, creative, educational and other endeavours. Perhaps for this reason, multiple job holding is viewed as a positive working experience (see Carroll, 1999; Dupuis and McLaren, 2006). Many young people willingly adopt this style of working and expect to continue it for the medium to long term, despite its negative impacts on other areas of life. In occupations perceived as glamorous (including café and bar work and work in creative occupations), young people seem more willing to accommodate the disadvantages of such job holding (see De Bruin and Dupuis, 2004).

The research findings suggest some policy responses that might either improve the work experiences of young multiple job holders or reduce their need to hold more than one job. These include a review of the secondary tax structure to ensure that multiple job holders are not disadvantaged (as they presently are), increasing opportunities for young people to gain work experience in a wide variety of sectors, and further strategies to increase the level of entrepreneurship in the creative sector, so that creative activities can be more self-supporting and financially productive.

Future research implications

This research has generated further questions around young multiple job holders that could be explored. Firstly, are young people attracted to particular occupations or jobs (for example some types of café/restaurant work) because these jobs allow them to engage in non-standard forms of work. It would also be useful to explore whether the youngest workers (those leaving education and entering the workforce) continue to have high rates of multiple job holding as they progress through employment. That is, does multiple job holding reflect generational characteristics, or does this pattern of work reflect their needs and opportunities at a transitional stage of life?

Finally, a number of young people in creative occupations were self-employed in one or more of their jobs. Further census analysis, including 2006 results, is needed to assess the extent to which those working in creative occupations are self employed overall, and how this might drive rates of multiple job holding in this sector.

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