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WHY STUDY PSYCHOLOGY AT MASSEY UNIVERSITY?

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined why students choose to study psychology at Massey University. In particular, the present study wished to determine whether or not students were driven by personality as stated in research carried out by J. L. Holland, or whether or not they were driven by the market-related model of career choice. That is, the present study wished to assess how effective the marketing of Massey University and/or psychology was in attracting students to these areas. The present study found that the marketing of Massey University and psychology did attract students. Further studies may research what keeps students interested in psychology and why there are large numbers of students enrolling in postgraduate courses in this area.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL STATISTICS

REASONS BEHIND THE INCREASING NUMBERS IN PSYCHOLOGY

PART ONE: OVERVIEW

The numbers of students choosing to study psychology at a tertiary level in New Zealand have increased dramatically over the last two decades. The present study aims to examine why this increase is occurring. It may be that influences in a student's environment are contributing to the rising numbers. These influences include parental and peer pressures, guidance counsellor advice, reading materials along with having psychology as a secondary school subject. Another factor that seems to be playing a part in this increase is the gender of potential psychology students. More women than men are now studying, graduating, and working in the psychological field. This increase seems to be due to differing goals and ambitions of the genders. The present study will also review career theories and discuss the usefulness of these in determining the career choice of individuals. In particular, the present study will discuss the vocational theory of career choice developed by J. L. Holland (1972). This theory examines how an individual's personality can determine the type of career path they choose. In comparison to the vocational theory of career choice, there will be discussion on a new type of career choice model, the market-related model of career choice. This theory will focus on how effective the advertising and market campaigns are in attracting potential candidates to certain occupations or particular universities and university courses. The present study will first review the general statistics behind the increasing numbers of psychology students.