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# **WHY STUDY PSYCHOLOGY AT MASSEY UNIVERSITY?**

A thesis presented in fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree  
of Master of Arts  
Massey Univeristy

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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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# CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Contents</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Chapter One: General Statistics</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Overview	2
1.2 General Statistics	3
1.3 Environmental Aspects	5
1.4 Is Gender a Factor?	8
<b>Chapter Two: Career Development Theories</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 Definitions and General Theories	13
2.2 Holland's Work: The Six Types in Detail	16
2.3 The Self-Directed Search	18
2.4 The Validity and Reliability of the Self-Directed Search	20
<b>Chapter Three: A New Theory of Career Development</b>	<b>26</b>
3.1 Definition of the Market-Related Model	27
3.2 Massey University's Marketing Strategy	28
3.3 School of Psychology's Marketing Plan	30
3.4 Advertising Mediums	31
<b>Chapter Four: Research Questions and Objectives</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Chapter Five: Research Methodology</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Chapter Six: Results</b>	<b>43</b>
6.1 Demographic Results	44
6.2 Activities and Competencies Results	50
6.3 Massey University's Marketing Results	53
6.4 Psychology Marketing Results	55
<b>Chapter Seven: Discussion</b>	<b>57</b>
7.1 Demographic Discussion	58
7.2 Discussion Related to Holland's RIASEC Codes	60
7.3 Massey University's Marketing Strategy	62
7.4 The Marketing of Psychology	63
<b>Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>65</b>
8.1 Conclusions	66
8.2 Recommendations	66
<b>Chapter Nine: References</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Appendix One</b>	<b>77</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Figure 1.</b> Graph showing the increasing numbers of psychology students in North America (MacDonald, 1997).	4
<b>Figure 2.</b> Graph showing the percentage of male and female students in the present study	45
<b>Figure 3.</b> Graph showing the ethnic distribution in the present study.	45
<b>Figure 4.</b> Graph showing the living arrangements of subjects in the present study.	48
<b>Figure 5.</b> Graph showing where subjects heard about Massey University.	49
<b>Figure 6.</b> Graph showing where subjects heard about Psychology.	50

## LIST OF TABLES

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Table 1.</b> Table showing the significant Independent t test results between the genders.	53
<b>Table 2.</b> Table showing the significant differences between secondary school students and non-secondary school students for the Massey University Marketing Factors.	54
<b>Table 3.</b> Table showing the ranked mean level of influence for each Massey University Marketing Factor.	54
<b>Table 4.</b> Table showing the ranked mean level of influence for each Psychology Influencing Factor.	56

# **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.