How Male and Female Graduate Students Manage Time While Pursuing Advanced Degrees

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Abstract

This study characterizes how males and females manage their time while pursuing graduate degrees and how graduate students manage their career and family while pursuing advanced degrees. This paper draws on a case study and includes interviews with female and male graduate students from Florida Atlantic University, observations, and the collection of documents. The study concludes that in order to balance career responsibilities and family, graduate students rely on organizational skills and family support, make sacrifices, and take a "step back" to handle stress. No major differences were found in how male and females manage these responsibilities.

Introduction

This case study was conducted as part of graduate course requirement at Florida Atlantic University (FAU). FAU was established in 1964 and is the first public university in southeast Florida and the first university in the nation to offer only graduate level courses. FAU's initial enrollment in 1964 was 867 graduate students, and then in 1984 the university decided to admit both graduate and undergraduate students.

Generally speaking, graduate degree seeking students take on a vast amount of added responsibilities to their lives. Due to the intense and specialized nature of post graduate programs such as Master's, Specialist or Doctoral programs one could argue it to be even more difficult to earn then an undergraduate degree. Additionally, while many people pursue graduate degrees as a full time student, it is not uncommon for graduate students to also manage a full time career. Graduate school is demanding, especially when mixed with careers, families, friends, and social obligations.

Statement of the Problem

There is ample evidence that indicates that those who pursue advanced degrees struggle with balancing their careers, families, and social commitments. According to an Esselte survey in the Boston Globe (Von Bergen, 2006), "...nearly forty three percent of Americans categorize themselves as disorganized, and twenty-one percent have missed vital work deadlines. Nearly half of respondents report that disorganization causes them to work late at least two times each week." With rising education costs and lower saving rates for the United States population, more people are bound to work on their jobs as they work on their graduate degrees, increasing

missed work and school deadlines, compounding the disorganization, frustration and stress that comes with managing graduate school while working full time (Michel, 2013). Yet, many people around the world have successfully completed graduate school while working and many more plan to do the same.

Succinct Introduction to Research Design, Purpose of Study & Research Questions

The purpose of this case study is to characterize how graduate students at FAU manage their time while balancing the demands of careers, family and social life while pursuing their advanced degree. Time management for the purpose of this study is defined as the differences in how males and females manage their time and how graduate students manage their career and family while pursuing advanced degrees. This study has been driven by two questions. First, "what are the differences in how males and females manage their time while pursuing a graduate degree?" and, "how do graduate students manage their career and family while pursuing advanced degrees?"

Role of Researcher

The researcher in this case study is currently pursuing a graduate degree at FAU and agrees it is difficult to balance careers, families, and social commitments along with the rigorous coursework. The researcher of this case study believes that it is possible to obtain a graduate degree as long as time is managed effectively. Additionally, the researcher believes graduate students must find a way to balance their career, family, and social responsibilities to be productive as a graduate student at FAU. Lastly, the researcher assumed there were differences in how male and female graduate students manage and prioritize their time.

Limitations and Delimitations

There were a few limitations that could not be controlled and which may influence the case study results. The Introduction to Qualitative Research class is a fast-track summer class of six weeks in length, which caused severe time constraints. For example, there was only enough time to collectively analyze twelve documents, conduct twelve formal interviews, and twelve observations, during the semester. The use of graduate students at FAU as a sample complicated the study simply because it is impossible to know the difference between graduate and undergraduate students without interviewing them. The researcher chose not to review or include documents to the study unless it was specifically geared towards graduate students at FAU, as the purpose of the study was to consider how students balance their advanced degree with their careers and families. To facilitate the research and as imposed by class requirements, FAU was chosen as the site of the research.

Significance of Study

By investigating the challenges graduate students who work full-time most commonly encounter and how they deal with these challenges, this case study may provide recommendations for future graduate students. Cases will vary as some students may have more demanding careers than others; many have children to care for, while others may be single and have family living in other states. If future graduate students can understand the most commonly occurring challenges, and the best strategies to manage them, they may be better able to plan for their graduate school experience.

Methodology

Research Design

The study design was an observational case study, (Bogden & Biklen, 1998) which was appropriate to collect data that might answer the research questions. The major data-gathering techniques were informal interviews supplemented by observations and document review.

Sampling Plan

Site. Florida Atlantic University (FAU) was chosen as the site of the study because it is not only the location of the class in which the researcher is enrolled, but the university in which all the members of this graduate class are enrolled in an advanced degree program. FAU is also the location at which the most appropriate potential subjects could be recruited, the site most accessible to the researcher performing the study, and the site at which the researcher's connection to potential subjects is the strongest.

Sample. The researcher decided that the sample should share the following attributes: (a) they should be a mix of male and female graduate students currently taking courses at FAU; (b) they should be Master's, Specialist or Doctoral students, i.e. graduate students; and (c) they should all be employed, either full time or part-time, in or out of the university.

These attributes were chosen because the researcher determined that students with these characteristics are readily available among the student population and that such subjects might provide information that would help the researcher answer the research questions. The researcher took care not to require attributes that would have limited the potential sample unnecessarily. For example, the researcher first determined that FAU faculty and administrators should be eliminated from the sample. However, had that been required, the potential sample would have

been significantly restricted by virtue of the many graduate students that teach in undergraduate programs or serve as graduate teaching assistants. Therefore, that requirement was removed.

Data Collection

Observations. Observations were conducted in order to gain insight into how graduate students manage their work and family life while still being productive students. Specifically, the observations were to focus on the possibility of differences in how females and males behave while engaged in study, classes, and breaks at school. Three 30-minutes observations were conducted at the Management Ph.D. lab located in the FAU business building. The remaining three 30-minute observations were conducted in 15-minute increments of graduate class breaks. All observations were memorialized by the researcher using field notes and analytic memos as prescribed by an observation guide (Appendix A). The researcher followed the standardized observation guide that can be found in the appendix. They observed and recorded the physical surroundings of the site, the behavioral characteristics of the students, and the school-related activity of the students in order to identify signs of how school, career, and home life were being managed. As previously mentioned, the researcher was attentive to differences in the behavior of male and female students.

Documents. A variety of documents was collected and analyzed (Appendix B) in order to gain insight into the resources available to help graduate students manage their work and family life while at FAU. A total of twelve documents collected from a variety of sources, including FAU itself, the internet, periodicals, and journals were reviewed. The information that was collected was reported on document summary sheets, and reviewed and analyzed to

determine whether and how any of the information collected relate to the two main research questions.

Interviews. Twelve personal, in-depth interviews with FAU graduate students were conducted in order to gain insight into how graduate students manage their work and family life. The researcher targeted an equal number of male and female students to determine if any differences exist in how each gender prioritizes their time while being a student. Twelve interviews of approximately 15 minutes each were conducted. Each interview included 8 open ended questions (Appendix C) and each followed the interview protocol. Subjects were asked to consent to being voice-recorded and the interviews were later transcribed by each member. Each subject was given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using an iterative process of reviewing and coding. First, the researcher reviewed the data to organize it and to discover themes. The main themes of time, health, feelings, sacrifices and support that emerged from the data was distilled to thirteen separate codes the researcher felt better helped to interpret the data. The codes used were as follows:

- Time: TOrganization, TPlanning, TPRioritization, TLeisure
- Health: HPhysical, HMental
- Feelings: F+ (positive), F- (negative)
- Sacrifices: SCareer, SSocial, SSChool
- Support: STechnology, SPeople

After the code list was developed, the researcher reviewed the entire data set and recoded it a second time.

Reliability. Since relatively similar data was recorded across all measures, interviews, observations, and documents, the researcher believes the study to be reliable. However, it should be noted that the study was conducted during the summer session, FAU's least busy season, and that the sparse use of public space and relative scarcity of subjects could be attributed to that fact. The researcher determined that if the study could be replicated with a larger sample during the fall or spring semester to test reliability, it would be beneficial.

Validity. Whether the study measured what it was intended to measure, i.e., how graduate students balance work and careers while pursuing a degree, and whether there are differences in how the genders do this, cannot be determined. This may be due to the time of year, the relationships between the researcher and the interview subjects, or to the very small size of the study. Conducting the study again to validate the first study might be helpful.

Generalizability. The study results cannot be generalized to the general population of graduate students. This study involved a sample size far too small to generalize, and the interplay between subjects and researcher along with the time of year in which the study was conducted also are factors in the generalizability of the study results.

Findings

Organizational Skills

The first finding that was revealed in the data was that all graduate students rely heavily on organizational skills and prioritization of activities to help them manage their career and family while pursuing advanced degrees. The data repeatedly showed that graduate students of both genders made references to staying organized at all times, which helped them balance a strenuous schedule, work commitments, as well as family and social relationships. The way in

which graduate students chose to keep themselves organized varied from student to student. For example, one graduate student explained in the document, *Tips from Graduate Students*, "I create an assignment matrix at the beginning of each semester that details the due dates of projects and specific readings for each class." Other graduate students reported that they believe the best way to stay organized is to keep a filing system of some kind, whether electronic or paper, of all the research articles relevant to your eventual dissertation topic.

Some graduate students focused their organizational skills on assignments and article reading, and others focused their organizational skills on creating daily routines to help them prioritize the completion of different activities. For example, in an interview, Ms. Mitchell (pseudonym) explained, *"I prioritized my daily activities by trying to keep myself on a strict schedule. I had a planned schedule that had to be followed to ensure that I had everything completed within a time frame."* Similar to Ms. Mitchell, another graduate student, Ms. Johnson (pseudonym) explained in her interview that she makes a to-do list to help her stay organized. Other graduate students created a daily routine that they followed to help them complete their tasks. In her interview, Zelda F (pseudonym) explains, *"I make a plan on what is due at school before I leave for work. At 8-10 at night I do my homework."* Also, like Zelda F. (pseudonym), Ms. D. (pseudonym) explained in her interview that she creates a routine at home where she sets aside two hours a night for school related work. Although graduate students may go about staying organized in different ways, it is clear that graduate students use different organizational techniques to help them manage their career responsibilities and family relationships while pursuing advanced degrees.

No Gender Differences

Another finding was that there were no major differences between how male and females balance their career responsibilities and family relationships while pursuing advanced degrees. Both men and women encountered the same challenges such as difficulties at work, a busy schedule, lack of time for family and social commitments, and both men and women handled these challenges in similar ways. Both genders relied on support from their family and friends, as well as their organizational skills and techniques to help them balance all of their responsibilities. In addition, both genders explained they often have similar techniques they use to alleviate stress including sleeping, working out, and watching T.V. Initially, the research team believed that there would be differences between how men and women graduate students balance their career and family responsibilities, but after a thorough analysis of the data, no major differences were found.

Sacrifices and Stress

A third common theme and finding uncovered by the research was how much students in the sample demonstrated a feeling they were sacrificing some aspect of the life they had before beginning their graduate program. Most interviewees experienced feelings that some aspect of life was being handled at less than one hundred percent. While most observed sacrifices were by far in the social aspect, there is evidence of this in all three-life aspects of the study: work, socialization, and school.

An example of social sacrifice is well summarized by Melanie Smith (pseudonym) in one of the interviews, *"The hard thing is to find time. I have come to grips knowing that I'm not going to be able to do everything with them (family) and they understand. It's a short-time, short-term, that hopefully in two years will be finished. But it's the sacrifice I am willing to make."* A school sacrifice told by Mrs. Donaldson, *"I was my nephew's confirmation sponsor,*

and I had to miss class that night, and I told my instructor. It was a commitment I had to keep. I was still penalized for that. I know missing that class reduced my participation score." Lastly, a work sacrifice in the interview with an educator, Ms. Mitchell stated, *"I find that it is very hard performing my career to the best of my ability and being a full time graduate student. I often find that a lot of areas such as paperwork, lesson preparation, and energy begin to lack."* This feeling of sacrifice was displayed by most of the interview subjects and was manifested whenever there was a discrepancy in how the student behaved before and after entering the graduate program.

The main concern for the subjects was how other people (spouses, bosses, co-workers, family, and friends) perceived this change in behavior and attitude. Ms. Johnson (pseudonym) explains, "*We have a tradition of going to lunch right after church, but lately I've been missing one or two because I have a paper due. But they understand, they understand. They say they miss me, but they understand."*

In some cases this was accompanied by guilt and how they dealt with this feeling was also important. The data suggested that how the graduate student managed this new identity of not being able to fulfill all obligations expected of them was key in managing the stress of being a graduate student while keeping a full time job. The graduate students that accepted not being able to get to everything and that believed others (spouses, bosses, co-workers, family, and friends) also accepted their new image were the ones that seemed to be able to better handle the inevitable stress and internal pressure. The graduate students that were still struggling with this new reality of not being able to live up to their previous work and social reputations gave us the impression of having the most trouble dealing with their new busy life.

Mrs. D and Mr. K explain, *"It's just impossible to go to everything. Go to work, go to school, and see my family, and still have a social life. That has caused a bit of tension with some of my friends, but I have had to deal with that. It's also hard when a lot of your friends are not in graduate school and working and don't understand the time that goes into pursuing this advanced degree," and, "Family is constantly annoyed that I don't have time to spend with them."* In summary, we discovered the ability to overcome the negative feelings that were a result of not meeting the expectations of significant others was key in how the subjects manage stress that comes with managing a career and family while pursuing a graduate degree.

Stress Management

No matter how organized, balanced, and well-supported the subjects were, most touched on an inevitable stress saturation point that emerges from time to time when pursuing a graduate degree and managing a career. A common theme uncovered in interviews is the need to temporarily and continually "step back" and "step away" when social lives, work or school stress inevitably and routinely reach a critical point. Some took a step back by shutting everything down, as we see with Ms. Mitchell refocus strategy, *"I have to be at 100% energy all day every day which takes a definite toll on me. What I find helpful is when I sit back, and refocus on my career,"* Ms. Sabs' alone time, *"Whenever I feel stressed, I like to just go home and veg out on the couch and not think,"* or Mrs. Shatner catching up on sleep,*" To alleviate stress? I fall asleep. I am simply too tired and as soon as I can shut down, I do."*

In contrast, others took this step back by stepping away and getting active, as evidenced by Mrs. Shatners getaways, *"Couple of months ago my husband took me to a weekend getaway. He asked me to leave my laptop at home so we could have a weekend together. It was really a lot of fun,"* Mrs. Smith daily cooking, *"Cooking relaxes me a lot, so I start my day cooking*

*breakfast for my daughter and my husband every morning," a*nd Mrs. Nicks daily physical activities, *"I run. I have to do something physical almost every day. Run, work out, ride my bike, whatever."*

Most graduate students in the sample mentioned how the "step backs" or "step aways" offered a chance to get away from the source of the stress which in turn provided a clearer mind that allowed for better time organization, planning, and prioritization. Even the students that admitted they did not have the time to sleep or to work-out acknowledged the need to take a break and to regroup was important in managing work, school and social lives.

Support

A final and important theme was the need to have support. Several graduate students talked about how they leaned on family and/or friends to meet the conflicting demands. Many said they could not pursue an advanced degree without support from their spouses. Support came not only in physically helping with chores, such as cleaning and cooking or making sure the kids were driven to their extracurricular activities, but also in emotional support in the form of shoulders to vent on, and bosses that understood to the overwhelmed students. In the interviews, many specifically mentioned how comforting it is when others understood that they could not keep up with birthdays, household chores, casual lunches, or social events. Conversely, the sharpest negative responses we got were when the perception was others did not understand the increase absence. Mrs. Fitzgerald highlighted this for us, *"People don't understand the deadlines you have (as a graduate student with a full time job), they don't have that and they expect you to carry out your normal activities with them."*

Discussion

The study presented here has implications for understanding how individuals deal with the conflicting identities of student, employee and social being. The findings show that individuals rely on identities, or the distinctive characteristics shared by members of a particular group, to determine their behaviors, including how they allocate their time and frequency of their engagement in activities (Anteby, 2008). For example, when sacrifices affected their identity, the students in the study were compelled to evaluate and decide if they were going to invest more time to repair the new identity. Additionally, identities are not necessarily stable (Anteby, 2008), a desire to repair their social identity usually resulted in sacrifices in the work or school identity. As also shown in previous research, this process was repeated until the individual was satisfied with the balance (Anteby, 2008). Although small in scope, the study adds to the understanding of why stressed, overwhelmed graduate students pursuing a the goal of graduation, strive to stabilize the different aspects of their lives, even when concentrating on only of those aspects one would be simpler.

Conclusion

This study revealed interesting data on the way graduate students at Florida Atlantic University go about pursuing their degree while balancing their careers and families. One significant finding indicates that male and female graduate students alike focus on being organized. Through the entire interview sample, the importance of staying organized repeated itself. Organization skills emerged as an attribute that graduate students with careers and families need to either possess or develop in order to optimize academic performance.

No differences were found between how the genders managed their time while pursuing advanced degrees. The data collected from the sample indicate that male and female graduate

students encounter similar challenges balancing work, family, and their pursuit of a graduate degree at FAU. The genders rely on support from their families and it appears that several techniques to unwind and release stress include working-out, sleep, going out with friends and family, and watching television are equally common among males and females.

An additional finding is the importance of addressing sacrifices and stress. The data suggest that much of the stress graduate students experience while trying to balance their career, family, and school appears to take an emotional toll on male and female graduate students equally. The subjects revealed their deep commitment to the pursuit of a graduate degree and their belief that their community, e.g., family, coworkers, and friends, do not understand the sacrifices that must be made to earn a degree. While this could be the graduate students' perception, the researcher find it to be an integral part of the conclusion of the study

Lastly, the researcher concluded that pursuing a graduate degree while balancing career and family is a stressful process regardless of gender. The words "sacrifice" and "stress", coded as HM (Health Mental), were repeated by respondents throughout the interviews.

Recommendations

The first and most significant recommendation based on this research is for graduate students with careers and families to understand the magnitude of the commitment they must make before they begin their program. The process of earning a graduate degree at FAU is time consuming and demands time and energy that are valuable to graduate students with career and family obligations.

While it is difficult to make one single recommendation, it can be recommended that potential graduate students invest in developing organizational skills, design a plan to balance

their careers and family with school, and develop a community of support. Such plan may include conversations with family members and friends that may be affected by the student's commitment. Another conversation and in-depth planning should involve the graduate student's place of work, if appropriate.

Recommendations for further research include the following:

- An evaluation of how family, friends, and coworkers perceive graduate students. This recommendation stems from the findings that graduate students in the study reported they sometimes feel their family, friends, and coworkers do not understand what they are going through. This can be validated through future research.
- A more in-depth study can be conducted to continue exploring possible differences in the way male and female graduate students balance their time while pursuing a graduate degree. This study did not yield differences, but a future study may result in findings of differences between genders.
- A longitudinal study of how graduate students find ways to unwind and improve the balance between family, career, and their pursuit of a graduate degree. Such study can potentially assist graduate students with their school work while promoting harmony and balance of family and career. This continuous research stems from the conclusion of this study where the researcher found that graduate students stressed the importance of finding a way to unwind to cope with the high levels of stress.

References

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Appendix List

Appendix A: Observation Guide

Appendix B: Document Summary Form

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Appendix D: Document List

Appendix E: Research Tables

Appendix F: Observation Table

Appendix G: Oral Presentation Handout

Appendix A

Observation Guide

Physical
- Room
- Layout
- Documents
- Physical items

Social
- Body language
- Gestures
- Facial expressions
- Groupings

Emotional
- Language
- Feelings
- Reactions
- Connections

Appendix B

Document Summary Form

Name of Document Data Received/Picked up

Significance

Brief Summary of Contents

Case study to which it belongs

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Title of Study: How the genders manage their time while pursuing an advanced degree.

Name of Interviewer:
Name of Interviewee and Position (M / F):

Place:
Interview Date:
Starting Time:
Ending Time:

Introduction:
Good morning/afternoon Mr. / Mrs. (name).
First of all, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview you. I know you have a very busy schedule, so I appreciate you giving me the time to meet with me today.
This 15-minute interview is an assignment for Introduction to Qualitative Inquiry, a graduate course in educational leadership taught by Professor Maslin-Ostrowski at FAU. The purpose is to obtain information about how graduate students manage their time while pursuing an advanced degree. Pseudonyms will be used in the biography and any identifying information, such as the name of your organization, will be removed.

As I mentioned in my email, one of the reasons I wanted to interview you is because you are a graduate student that holds a career in addition of pursuing your advanced degree.
Do you have any questions before we get started?
May I have your permission to record this interview?

Interview Questions:

1. Could I begin by asking you to describe your student schedule over the past academic year?
2. Tell me some of the challenges you have faced meeting the demands of your student academic schedule.
3. How do you prioritize your daily activities?
4. What do you normally do to alleviate stress after a full day at work?
5. Three part question: As a graduate student - what challenges have you faced managing:
    - Family responsibilities
    - (refer back to the opening statement of this question) Career
    - (refer back to the opening statement of this question) Social commitments

Closing Statement:
Thank you for your time and contribution to the study. As mentioned before, this is a confidential interview for a class.

If you like, I can provide you with the transcript of our interview so you can review your responses.
Would it be okay if I contact you if I have further questions?

Appendix D

Document List

1. University Press (UP – FAU student magazine article): *"FAU summer communications courses disappear from schedule without warning"*
2. University Press (UP – FAU student magazine article): *"FAU graduate students teach how to teach at 2011 Changing Face of Research Symposium"*
3. University Press (UP – FAU student magazine article) *"Information for graduate students"*
4. University Press (UP – FAU student magazine article) *"Lukewarm results"*
5. FAU Curriculum
6. FAU Course Schedule/Catalog
7. Tips from Veteran Doctoral Students
8. Memo from Dr. Gail Burnaford regarding Doctoral Program Organizational Tips
9. FAU Flyer: How to Manage your Time
10. FAU Handout: ABCs of Time Management
11. Time Management Course or Seminar
12. FAU Time Management AcCESS Program at FAU Workshop PowerPoint
13. Grad Talk: Graduate College News and Events February Newsletter
14. FAU Annual Report

Appendix E

Research Tables

Research Tables			
Research Question	Observation	Document	Interview
What are the differences in how males and females manage their time while pursuing a graduate degree?	PhD Lab, Graduate Course Breaks	5, 6, 8, 10	1, 2, 3, 4, 5a, 5b, 5c
How do graduate students manage their career and family while pursuing advanced degrees?	PhD Lab, Graduate Course Breaks	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	1, 2, 3, 4, 5a, 5b, 5c
Interviews			
Interviewer:	Subject #1	Subject #2	
Researcher	male	female	
Researcher	female	female	
Researcher	female	female	
Researcher	male	male	
Researcher	male	female	
Researcher	male	male	

Appendix F

Observation Table

Research Questions	Observations
What are the differences in how males and females manage their time while pursuing a graduate degree?	
How do graduate students manage their career and family while pursuing advanced degrees?	

Appendix G

Oral Presentation Handout

Abstract

- How males and females manage time while pursuing graduate degrees

- How graduate students manage their career and family while pursuing advanced degrees
- Case Study: interviews, observations, and documents
- Organizational skills, family support, sacrifices, and "step back"
- No major differences between males and females

Introduction

The **purpose** of this case study is to discover and characterize how graduate students manage their lives while balancing the demands of careers, family, and social life.

Research Questions:

1) How do graduate students manage their career and family while pursuing advanced degrees?

2) What are the differences in how males and females manage their time while pursuing a graduate degree?

Significance of Study

- If future graduate students can learn what problems are common and some of the best strategies on how to manage them, they can better prepare for their program
- Graduate schools can benefit from this study by planning ways to facilitate the lives of graduate students

Methods

- Observational Case Study supplemented by interviews and documents (12/12/12).
- Sample limited to FAU grad students
- Iterative analysis process - codes determined findings
- Time, Health, Feelings, Sacrifices, Support

Analysis

- Reliability – similar observations
- Validity – valid only for this sample
- Generalizability – findings cannot be generalized to the population
- Small sample
- Interaction between subjects and researcher
- Inopportune time of year for site
- Time did not allow for validation

Findings

Organizational Skills and Techniques

- Repeated theme in Data
- Different Techniques
- Essential to staying organized
- Routines

No Major Differences between Men and Women

- Similar challenges
- Similar sacrifices
- Similar organizational techniques
- Similar relaxation activities

Sacrifices

- The word "sacrifice" was common in interviews.

- A feeling that some aspect of life was being handled at less than 100%.
- Most were social sacrifices
- How others reacted to the sacrifice was key
- Two ways they dealt with negative reaction:
- "Got over it"
- Worked harder to minimize the sacrifice.

Stress Management

- Inevitable stress and how to manage it
- "Step back" and "step away"
  Two techniques:
  - Step back/away by Shutting or slowing down
  - Sleep, "vegging out", TV, not thinking.
  - Step back/away by getting active
  - Weekend getaways, cooking, working out / sports.

Support

- Leaning on friends, family and bosses
- Physical and mental support
- Not having mental support was biggest complaint

Limitations

- The Introduction to Qualitative Research class is a fast-track summer class of only six weeks in length
- The broad sample of male and female graduate students at FAU limited the observations because it was impossible to know the difference between graduate and undergraduate students
- Researcher chose not to review or include documents to the study unless it was specifically geared towards graduate students at FAU
- By limiting the study to graduate students, it was more likely to capture students who have full or part-time jobs, family obligations, and a full social calendar.
- To facilitate the research and as imposed by class requirements, FAU was chosen as the site of the research

Conclusion

- The importance of organizational skills
- No gender difference
- The emotional toll and sacrifice
- Sacrifice and stress for both genders with no exception
- Best data collection tool was the interviews

Recommendations

An evaluation of how family, friends, and coworkers perceive graduate students
In-depth analysis of how male and female graduate students balance their time
A continuous research of how graduate students find ways to unwind and improve balance