

MORE AND LESS: PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE PROFESSIONAL PART-
TIME EMPLOYEE

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(ABSTRACT)

The workforce of today is a far cry from the workforce of yesteryear. Not only have there been changes in who works, but how one works as well. The traditional nine-to-five work day has been replaced by a plethora of flexible work options, including flextime, telecommuting, and part-time employment. Until recently, most part-time workers were those who worked in low-level, low-paying jobs. However, with the influx of women in the workplace, as well as the desire for more leisure time and the need for retraining and updating of skills, more people than ever before desire professional part-time jobs. Although considerable research exists comparing full-time to part-time workers, little research is available which examines the experiences of the professional part-time employee.

The central question of this study concerned which factors exist within an organization, as well as within the part-time professional and supervisor, to influence levels of job satisfaction and commitment.

A questionnaire was mailed to 805 members of the Association of Part-Time Professionals which gathered demographic characteristics about the employee and supervisor, and the provision of benefits for employees. Additional questions concerned attitudes of co-workers, anticipated effects on career advancement, access to staff training, and provision of space, equipment, and clerical support. The final sample included 319 part-time professionals across the career spectrum.

A variety of statistical techniques was used to examine the relationships among organizational and supervisor characteristics and the individual characteristics of the participants. Factor analyses were employed to identify the different participant attitudes. The bivariate relationships between attitudes and respondent and organizational characteristics were used to develop multivariate models.

Participants generally had high levels of job satisfaction and relatively neutral levels of commitment. Part-time professionals felt positive about their access to equipment, clerical assistance, and office space, but less so about their economic compensation. They were generally satisfied with the work they were asked to do and their treatment by supervisors and co-workers. Access to benefits was variable.

Implications for the Adult Educator/Human Resource Specialist are discussed with recommendations made as to how both can promote and advance the needs of the part-time professional. Areas for future research are also presented.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Problem.....	2
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose of the Study.....	6
Research Questions.....	7
Significance of the Study.....	7
Definition of Terms.....	8
Limitations of the Study.....	9
CHAPTER II - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	10
Motivations for Part-time Employment	11
Advantages of Using Part-time Employees.....	13
Disadvantages of Using Part-time Workers.....	14
Classifying Part-time Jobs.....	14
Who Decides About Part-Time Employment.....	15
Changing Corporate Culture: Flexible Work Options.....	16
Attitudes Toward Part-time Employees.....	19
Job Attitudes Among Part-time Employees.....	19
Summary.....	20
CHAPTER III - METHOD	21
Participants.....	21
Procedures.....	21
Instrumentation.....	22
Questionnaire Design and Development.....	22
Data Preparation.....	25
Data Analysis.....	25
CHAPTER IV - RESULTS	27
Participant and Organizational Characteristics.....	27
Employment Information.....	27
Representativeness of the Participants.....	29
Recoding and Construction of the Indexes of Benefits.....	30
Development of the Measures of Employee Attitudes.....	31
Construction of the Indexes of Employee Attitudes.....	33
Relationship with the Categorical Independent Variables.....	37
Relationships with the Benefits Measures.....	42
Relationships Among the Dependent Measures.....	42
Explaining the Attitudes of Part-Time Professionals.....	43
Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Responses.....	62
CHAPTER V - DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	64
Summary of the Study.....	64
Discussion.....	65
Conclusions.....	67
Implications for the Adult Educator, HRD Specialist.....	68
Areas for Future Research.....	69

REFERENCES	70
APPENDICES	
A Pilot Study.....	75
B Cover Letter and Questionnaire.....	84
C Coded Questionnaire.....	93
D Occupational Data/Job Categories.....	103
E Recoded Categorical Variables.....	104
F Technical Information about Factor Analysis.....	107
VITA	108

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	Page
1 Statistical Characteristics of Benefit Measures.....	31
2 Means and Standard Deviations for Likert-Type Items	32
3 Factor Analysis of Job Satisfaction Items	33
4 Factor Analysis of Organizational Commitment Items.....	34
5 Factor Analysis of Part-Time Experience Items.....	34
6 Factor Analysis of Supervisor Behavior Items.....	35
7 Indexes of the Statistical Characteristics of Attitudes.....	36
8 F-Values for Anovas for Job and Organizational Characteristics.....	38
9 F-Values for Anovas for Supervisor and Participant Characteristics.....	39
10 F-Values for Anovas for Characteristics of Participant’s Job.....	40
11 F-Values for Anovas for Job Characteristics and.....	41
Demographic Variables	
12 Correlations of Attitudes with Benefits	42
13 Correlations Among Employee Attitudes.....	44
14 Multivariate Model for Explaining Job Satisfaction	45
15 Multivariate Model for Explaining Organizational Commitment.....	47
16 Multivariate Model for Explaining Commitment to Part-Time Work.....	49
17 Multivariate Model for Explaining Attitudes about the	51
Distribution of Non-monetary Resources	
18 Multivariate Model for Explaining Attitudes about the	53
Distribution of Monetary Resources	
19 Mutivariate Model for Explaining Attitudes about	54
Career Opportunities	
20 Multivariate Model for Explaining Attitudes about Co-Workers.....	56
21 Multivariate Model for Explaining Attitudes about Supervisor.....	58
22 Multivariate Model for Explaining Attitudes about	59
Overall Accommodations	
23 Multivariate Model for Explaining Attitudes about Taking Leave.....	61
24 Attitude Means for Significant Effects of Specific	62
Supervisor Characteristics	