Contingent faculty: What impacts their organizational commitment?

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Introduction
Since 1960, the percentage of contingent teaching faculty has increased 86%; these increases have occurred without fully understanding the impact on institutions or students.

Research Questions
1) How do part-time contingent faculty and full-time contingent faculty each compare to tenured/tenure-track faculty in their level of organizational commitment at four-year institutions?
2) What institutional practices, particularly relating to recognition, support, compensation, and shared governance, predict organizational commitment among full- and part-time contingent faculty?
3) How do institutional practices differentially impact the organizational commitment of contingent faculty compared to tenured/tenure-track faculty?

Theoretical Framework

Factors that influence organizational commitment

Commitment to students’ development
Commitment to teaching
Commitment to institutions
Where faculty invest their commitment

Methodology
2004 HERI Faculty data set
ANOVA - Compare PT, FT contingent faculty and tenured/TT faculty levels of organizational commitment
OLS Regression
• Block 1: Individual characteristics: age, race, gender, marital status, faculty rank, etc
• Block 2: Institutional characteristics: Institution type, size, and selectivity
• Block 3: Institutional practices: salary, benefits, shared governance, support, and rewards
• Block 4: Stress and job satisfaction variables: personal and work factors, teaching, overall satisfaction
T-tests - Compare differences in how institutional practices impact commitment

Findings

Demographics (n = 24,981)

Gender
Male 52%
Female 48%

Race
White 88%
Black 3%
Asian 4%
Hispanic 3%
American Indian 2%

Rank
Professors 23%
Assoc Professors 19%
Assistant Professors 24%
Lecturer 12%
Instructor/Other 22%

Status
Full-time 90%
Part-time 10%

Factor Analysis
Commitment to Students’ Personal and Social Development α = .90
Personal Stress α = .65
Job stress α = .63
Job satisfaction α = .74

Discussion

Comparison of Means Across Groups

Significant Institutional Practices
• Salary
  • Positive impact on contingent faculty for years of service
  • No impact on contingent faculty for commitment to teaching and institutions
• Recognition Practices
  • Peer recognition was a significant predictor for contingent faculty on commitment to students
• Support variables
  • Mentoring, development and satisfaction with relationships with administration were significant predictor for contingent faculty on commitment to students
• Mediating variables
  • Job stress and satisfaction were significant predictors for contingent faculty

Conclusion
Contingent faculty are more committed to students than tenured/tenure-track faculty.

Institutional practices related to peer recognition, mentoring and development help contingent faculty build commitment to Students’ Development.