

The SAS Project: A Longitudinal Analysis of Occupational Well-being and Commitment in Adjunct vs. Tenure-Track Faculty

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Background

- ✓ Post-secondary faculty have experienced increasing demands for quality teaching, research, and administration without corresponding increases in support (Cantano et al., 2010), contributing to greater stress and low psychological well-being (Watts & Robertson, 2010).
- ✓ Previous research has focused mainly on tenure-track faculty, with notably limited research exploring the experiences of precariously employed non-tenure-track faculty (AAUP, 2018).
- ✓ Recent research on non-tenure track faculty is mixed:
 - (a) Academic job security -> mental health challenges (e.g., Canadian contingent faculty; CAUT, 2018)
 - (b) Precariously employed faculty are commonly assumed to experience greater passion and satisfaction (Kim et al., 2019)

Rationale

- ✓ To address these inconsistent findings, the present study directly explored differences between adjunct (e.g., non-tenure-track) and tenure-track faculty in the U.S and Canada concerning their occupational well-being and commitment.

Methods

- ✓ Post-secondary faculty were recruited from U.S and Canadian post-secondary institutions via social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). Participants included both tenure-track (72.6%) and non-tenure-track faculty (i.e., adjunct, contract, contingent; 24.7%) who completed an online questionnaire at three time points (5-6 months lag.)



Measures

Intention to Quit: 3 items (e.g., adapted from Hackett et al., 2011)
Sample item: I think about quitting my faculty position
Response scale: 1 (never/very unlikely) to 5 (constantly/certain)

Job Satisfaction: 5 items (Moe et al., 2010)
Sample item: In most ways my job is close to my ideal.
Response format: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

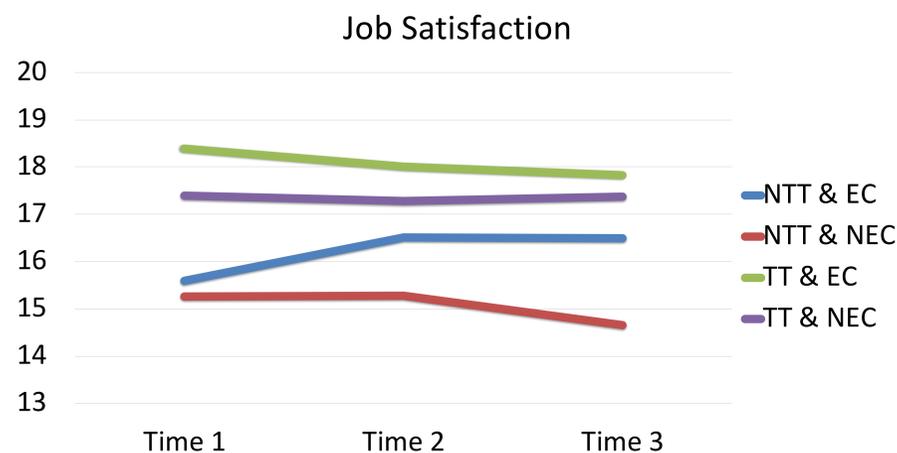
Intention to quit	$\alpha=.85$ (T1)	$\alpha=.85$ (T2)	$\alpha=.84$ (T3)
Job satisfaction	$\alpha=.89$ (T1)	$\alpha=.89$ (T2)	$\alpha=.89$ (T3)

Analysis

Repeated-measures ANCOVA

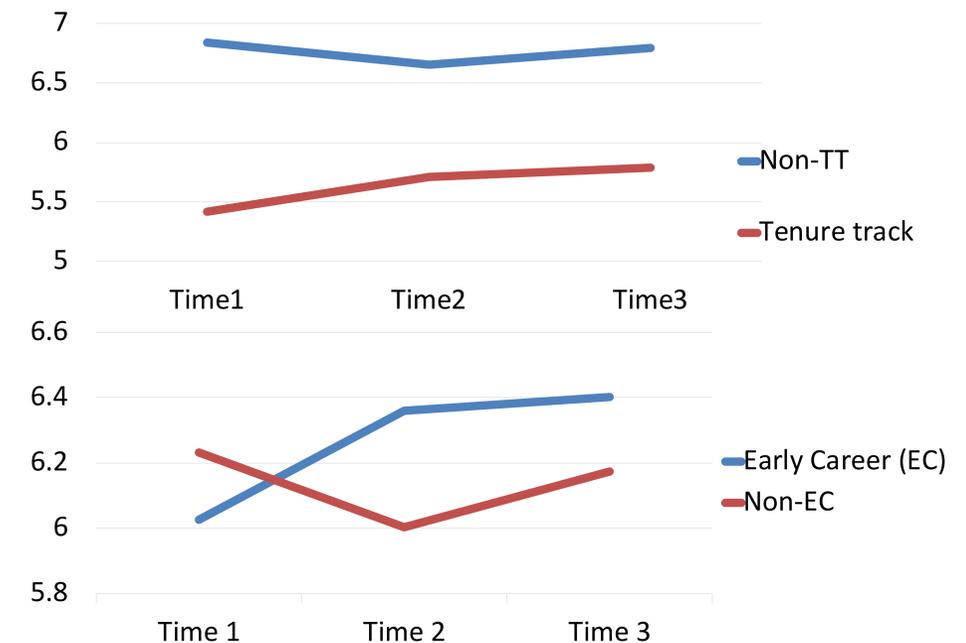
- ✓ Between-subject factors: Tenure status and early career status (<5 vs >5 years of experience)
- ✓ Covariates: country, gender, ethnic minority status

Findings



Job Satisfaction: Within-subjects three-way interaction effect; [$F(2,1204) = 4.02, p = .018, \eta_p^2 = .007$] as well as between-subjects effects of academic rank [$F(1,602) = 20.42, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .033$] and early-career (EC) status [$F(1,602) = 4.10, p = .043, \eta_p^2 = .007$]

Quitting Intentions



Quitting Intentions: Between-subjects effect for tenure status [$F(1,608) = 16.02, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .026$]; within-subjects two-way interaction of early career status x time [$F(2,1216) = 3.28, p = .038, \eta_p^2 = .005$]

Implications

- ✓ Study findings provide evidence of psychological challenges faced by non-tenure track faculty and the potential role of moderating variables such as early career status and development over time.



Lack of job security (e.g., low salary, short-term contracts) and professional development resources have clear negative effects on faculty persistence and well-being

Discussion points: As an increasing majority of faculty in Canada/U.S. do not have tenure-track positions, what institutional changes are needed to support their motivation and well-being?

Selected References

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