MEASUREMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN ADJUNCT INSTRUCTORS TEACHING WITHIN A MID-SOUTH COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM BASED ON HIRING ORIENTATION CHARACTERISTICS

Jennifer Lee Knott

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MEASUREMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN ADJUNCT INSTRUCTORS
TEACHING WITHIN A MID-SOUTH COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM BASED ON
HIRING ORIENTATION CHARACTERISTICS

By

Jennifer Lee Knott

A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Major: Instruction and Curriculum Leadership

University of Memphis
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the women educators in my life; my mother, stepmother, sisters, and friends; and to all teachers who give countless hours in dedication
to the pursuit of learning.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first thank my family for their support and dedication to my completion of this journey. Thanks also go to my friends who share in celebrating my success. I would not have developed the level of passion for my topic if it were not for the encouragement of Dr. Linde Bracato. The list of Tennessee Board of Regents faculty members and adjunct instructors who have supported me is long, but you know who you are—and I am grateful to you in particular for your perspectives. My close TNeCampus work colleagues and their consistent interest in my success were indispensable in driving me toward my goal. Finally, my sincerest appreciation for the involvement of my advisor, Dr. Amanda Szapkiw, and others on my committee, Dr. Cliff Mims, Dr. Leigh Williams, and Dr. Sandeford Schaeffer III. Thank you for your patience, common sense, expertise, and persistence in guiding me to this destination.
Abstract

The United States community college student population is a broad demographic that continues to grow. The result is a higher demand for classes and an increasing reliance of college administrators on temporary, part-time adjunct instructors. Temporary employees are found to exhibit a low organizational commitment (OC) to their employers. The social exchange theory and the concept of reciprocity served as the framework for studying OC of adjunct instructors in a mid-south community college system. A regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between three hiring orientation characteristics and OC, while controlling for years of teaching experience. Each variable was linearly associated with OC. A descriptive study was then employed to examine employment issues important to adjunct instructor commitment. Results demonstrated that adjunct instructors rated insufficient rates of pay, job insecurity, and a lack of respect as still significant in their perceived relationship with hiring institutions. Without making efforts to improve hiring orientations and other factors for adjunct instructors, hiring administrators risk losing their availability to other institutions or more satisfying work outside of higher education. The results offer administrators potential avenues for change.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The United States community college (CC) student population is a broad demographic and continually increasing in number, resulting in a high demand for classes and instructors. Their low tuition, open admission policy, and geographic proximity to home make community college a viable choice for first-generation students, students from low-income families, students changing careers, or students seeking employment credentials (Hawk & Hill, 2016). Community colleges provide higher education to a diverse population that may not have access by other means (Lyon & Denner, 2017). In a report for the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), Shapiro et al. (2015) state that nearly half of all students who completed a degree at a four-year institution in 2013-14 began their higher education career at a community college. More recently, community college students make up almost half of the undergraduate student population in the United States.

As the number of students increases and more classes are needed, community colleges have become increasingly reliant on part-time instructors (Rhoades, 2013). Comprising over 75% of all CC instructors in the United States (Coalition on the Academic Workforce, 2012), part-time instructors are expected to remain (Goldstene, 2015). Unfortunately, part-time employment is characterized by low commitment—a stark contrast with full-time employment. Full-time employees benefit from industry standard pay, job security, and other benefits such as healthcare and retirement. In addition to these benefits, full-time faculty members have the opportunity to become involved in activities organized by the institution (Meixner, Kruck, & Madden, 2010). As a result, they experience a connection to the institution and satisfaction with their employment circumstances, characteristics associated with organizational commitment (Hoyt, 2012). In comparison, temporary, part-time adjunct instructors have fewer opportunities
to connect with their employers (Jolley, Cross, & Bryant, 2014) and receive less pay for the same course load (Cadambi, 2018). Hence, organizational commitment in adjunct instructors remains low (DeLotell & Cates, 2016), leaving community college leaders reliant on temporary employees whose commitment to the institution and its success are uncertain.

Little research exists to explain adjunct instructor commitment to the institution (Ehrhardt et al., 2011). Research on private industry temporary employment hiring practices suggest a framework for understanding the employment experiences of adjunct instructors (Lapalme, Simard, & Tremblay, 2011). Thus, drawing from research on factors that influence industry temporary employment, this study explored the association between certain elements of the hiring orientation and organizational commitment of adjunct instructors employed in a mid-south community college system. The study also explored factors adjunct instructors report as influencing their perceptions of the institution. The continued existence of these factors was established and the influence on adjunct instructor employment was discussed.

**Adjunct Instructors and Organizational Commitment**

Adjunct instructors typically work on a temporary, part-time basis at fewer than 30 hours a week (Goldstene, 2015), which is related to their perceptions their hiring institutions in numerous ways. For example, low rate of pay combined with limited hours hinder access to a living wage (Fredrickson, 2015). As part-time employees, their scholarly achievements are often overlooked (Cadambi, 2016) and few community colleges devote resources toward their success, including activities such as training (Rhoades, 2013). As a result, adjunct instructors are discontent with their teaching circumstance (Waltman, Bergom, Hollenshead, Miller, & August, 2012) and perceive that institutions disregard their struggles (Diegel, 2013). The hiring orientation is an opportune moment for administrators to express their support of adjunct
instructors. These events are often the only major form of contact adjunct instructors have with their colleges, as community colleges are often limited in resources to provide extended support (O’Meara, 2015). Hence, these events are often the only time administrators can improve adjunct instructor perception of their intent to support them.

Perception, described in terms of emotional and psychological attachment to an organization, can be referenced as organizational commitment (OC). Organizational commitment quantifies the sense of connection between employee and employer (Jacobson, 2013; Kezar, 2013), and is defined by the extent to which an employee identifies with their employer values or goals (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). Loss of identity and connection with the employer results in a reduction of OC (Nijhof, deJong, & Beukhof, 1998). For the adjunct instructor, this loss can be characterized by a disinterest in institutional success (Rhoades, 2013).

The hiring orientation is one method for improving the perception of an organization’s commitment (Rhoades, 2013). Research on business organizations suggest that organizations that provide an orientation for new employees have greater success than those that do not (Owens, 2006), and in doing so, experience increased employee dedication (Ismail, 2016). Orientations provide new employees with the opportunity to learn about the organization’s norms and values (Bauer & Green, 1998). Saks and Ashforth (1997) found that employees actively involved at this level of learning become more socially connected with other employees, learn more about the institution (Meloncon, England, & Ilyasova, 2016), and are more likely to become dedicated to the organization (Ismail, 2016). Translated to the adjunct instructor population, an orientation that focused attention on their needs would likely change their negative perception of institutional concern and increase their organizational commitment. However, the current
economic climate is such that few community colleges can dedicate resources to an orientation
designed specifically for adjunct instructors (Bedford & Miller, 2013).

**Background of the Community College**

**The History of Community Colleges**

Since its establishment as an institution of higher learning, the community college (CC) has provided affordable advanced educational degrees for a broad demographic. Baylor University (Texas) initiated a model for CC education during the Long Depression (Windolf, 1992) of the late 1800s. When administrators discovered that many students could no longer afford to attend, they proposed a new curriculum design to reduce the financial burden. With the new plan, students could achieve a degree after two years of study with an option to extend their education two more years for an advanced degree (“The Community College Mission,” n.d.). Community colleges subsequently became the model for bridging educational opportunities from high school to university. Once referred to as “junior colleges,” these institutions experienced rapid growth as American “baby boomers,” people born between 1944 and 1961, reached college age (“Community Colleges Past to Present,” n.d.).

Community colleges serve a broad demographic, ensuring that almost any student who wants to obtain a college degree can enter school with minimal requirements (Hussar & Bailey, 2009). Students are often non-traditional in that they work full-time, manage families, or even serve in the military (Akroyd, Patton, & Bracken, 2013). The community college demographic is broad and sustains a steady growth of enrollments. This increase leads to higher demand for instructors, with a majority hired on a temporary part-time basis.
Governmental Influence on Community College Growth

Government programs set forth goals for colleges to graduate more students with completed certifications and degrees. The Complete College Act established in 2009 proposed to increase the number of college-degreed Americans, particularly in underrepresented populations (White House, 2010). The Lumina Foundation (2017) joined the efforts to reach 60% college-degreed Americans by the year 2025. The state of Tennessee governor’s office initiated the Drive to 55 Alliance; proposing 55% of Tennessee residents become college-degreed by the year 2025. This goal is supported by several programs, including the Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) and TN Reconnect, designed for adults re-entering higher education (Tennessee Higher Education Commission & Student Assistance Corporation, 2017). Even struggling community colleges are expected to contribute to these graduation numbers (Bryant, Cross, & Jolley, 2014). The result is that administrators have become reliant on streamlined hiring procedures to contract adjunct instructors for classroom instruction at rates much lower than full-time instructors.

The Problems Adjunct Faculty Face in Community Colleges

A report from the Coalition of the Academic Workforce (2014) stated that 75% of CC instructional faculty are now adjunct. The number of temporary part-time instructors and the dependence that colleges have on their work are parallel and intertwined in growth. The problems these instructors face are well-documented (Cadambi, 2016). Issues include insufficient pay (Knoedler, 2015), last-minute hiring practices (Goldstene, 2015), and job insecurity (Jolley, Cross, & Bryant, 2014). Many adjunct instructors teach two or three classes and still earn less than half of a full-time instructor’s salary (House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014). The fluctuation of enrollment numbers (Dolan et al.,
leaves adjunct instructors with little preparation time when hired at the last minute (Goldstene, 2015; Kezar, 2013).

These issues have repeatedly been documented over the past two decades, with little supporting data on how to change the situation (Cadambi, 2016). With little information on how or what to change, CC leaders may continue to sideline any changes to a hiring system that is fiscally beneficial to the institution (Rogers, 2010). The problem is that leaders are believed to be aware of the problems but choose not to act, diminishing any commitment adjunct instructors may have to institutional success (Savage, Webber, & Butovsky, 2012).

**Adjunct Faculty Organizational Commitment**

Adjunct instructor commitment to the institution is tenuous (Haynie, 2013), but hiring administrators can learn more about increasing organizational commitment by studying the factors associated with it. Organization commitment is important to consider as Meyer and Allen (2004) described it as evidence of persistence. It influences an instructor’s willingness to expend time and effort beyond teaching activities (Chapman, 2011; Hardré & Kollmann, 2012; Harshbarger, 1989; House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014; Mowday et al., 1979). As such, OC is directly related to institutional success (Neumann, Jones, & Webb, 2012). If institutional success relies upon a commitment of individuals to contribute to that success, then logically CC administrators should foster it within adjunct instructors (Carron, 1982; Meyer & Allen, 2004).

**Hiring Orientations for Adjunct Faculty**

For community colleges with limited resources, the orientation is often the first and only opportunity to offer adjunct instructors any meaningful support (Meloncon, England, & Ilyasova, 2016; O’Meara, 2015). It is the primary form of contact that instructors have with their hiring
institutions, and yet, there is little documentation of the association between orientations and adjunct perception of the institution (Rogers et al., 2010).

Orientations have generally been described as a time to welcome instructors and provide them with support to “hit the ground running” (Dolan et al., 2013, p. 41). Indeed, adjunct instructors favor orientations that provide clear expectations (Hardré & Kollmann, 2012), access to full-time faculty (Kezar, 2013), networking opportunities (Mandernach, O’Donnell, & Register, 2015), and technical support (Jacobson, 2013). Orientations can also be experienced as perfunctory and of little value (Gadberry & Burnstad, 2005). Some instructors do not even attend, even if required (Hoyt, 2012). There are thousands of adjunct instructors contracted to teach, but dissatisfied with the institution’s hiring procedures (Bryant, Cross, & Jolley, 2014). This study, therefore, explored the hiring process, and more specifically the hiring orientation. Also included in this study is an examination of 14 aspects determined as essential to adjunct instructor’s perception of the hiring institution.

**Theoretical Framework**

An appropriate framework for examining the relationship between the hiring orientation and organizational commitment of community college part-time adjunct instructors is the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964). The Social Exchange Theory describes the quality of the relationship that develops between people through the exchange of goods or services. A supporting concept is reciprocity, referring to the perception of equality through giving and taking (Gouldner, 1960). For example, in the relationship between a college and an adjunct instructor (Umbach, 2007), instructors offering their teaching expertise would expect in exchange support that would ensure their success in teaching.
According to the Social Exchange Theory, both the instructor and the institution would receive something of value (Emerson, 1976) and a perception of fairness would prevail. The expectation is that the relationship would continue as long as both institution and instructor agreed that it was fair. Based on these constructs, colleges would find ways to address the existing issues for adjunct instructors, and instructors would perceive justice for their professional contributions. A more profound loyalty would develop. As the orientation is often the optimum moment for an institution and instructors to engage, there is a need to explore its potential for developing adjunct instructor commitment in detail.

**Problem Statement**

Adjunct instructor working life has historically been burdened with insufficient rates of pay (Butovsky, Savage, & Webber, 2015; Meloncon, England, & Ilysavo, 2016), a lack of respect (Diegel, 2013), and job insecurity (Meloncon, England, & Ilyasova, 2016). Contemporary studies show that these problems continue to exist (DeLotell & Cates, 2016; McCoy-Speight, 2015) and have resulted in low levels commitment to the hiring institution (Waltman et al., 2012, p. 423) reflected in poor student outcomes (Rhoades, 2013; Carrell & West, 2010).

Research on the association between hiring orientations and organizational commitment (OC) in higher education is limited (Rogers et al., 2010). There is sufficient research on training and OC in the area of business and industry to serve as a frame of reference. For example, employees respond with greater dedication to an organization when training impacts them personally (Ismail, 2016). By offering training at all, employers can nurture a greater sense of connection in the employee and benefit from greater commitment to the organization (Bulut & Culha, 2010). However, a gap in the literature research exists on how commitment of adjunct
instructors is related to how they experience their training: the hiring orientation. To that end, this study sought to examine how adjunct instructors ranked 14 aspects of their working life that potentially influenced their perceptions of their hiring institutions.

**Purpose Statement**

This study examined the way the orientation was delivered, how long it lasted, and what it contained, to determine variance in adjunct instructor organizational commitment. Longer spans of time teaching for a single institution have been shown to lead to a closer association with the institution (Lawrence, Ott, & Bell, 2012). Thus, the number of years of teaching experience was employed as a control variable. A secondary purpose of the study was to determine the priority adjunct instructors placed on issues repeatedly documented as influential in how they perceived their hiring institution.

Organizational commitment (OC) serves as the criterion variable in this study, also described as a sense of connection between employee and employer. It exemplifies a willingness to expend time and effort beyond the typical instructor tasks, such spending time outside of classroom activities mentoring students (Harshbarger, 1989). Adjunct instructors not satisfied with the exchange of teaching and support between themselves and their institutions, will not be motivated to spend time on such activities (Hardré & Kollmann, 2012). Organizational commitment is an essential consideration in future hiring procedures, as a college’s very survival will be dependent on it in years to come.

Three characteristics of the hiring orientation were analyzed as predictor variables for their association with organizational commitment: hiring orientation mode, length, and content. Modes of orientation delivery vary but could be a scheduled seminar held at the institution, an online course with no deadline, or a combination of both modes. The study examined the mode
through which the administration delivered the orientation: face-to-face (F2F), online, or both F2F and online. The length could be as short as a single evening in which administrators serve a dinner and present a lecture or as long as a month long online course. Length of orientation was presented in three terms: one day or less, one week or less, or more than a week. Content might consist of an institution or department’s mission and vision, support staff contacts, or technical training. The content type choices were: technical information or support, teaching guidance, and campus contacts for support.

The history of adjunct instructor employment highlights certain aspects of their employment as ongoing issues for the population. Fourteen of these aspects were presented and sorted by the participants in order of importance to their perceptions of their hiring orientation. The new information provided a means for administrators to prioritize adjunct instructor needs.

Research Questions

Two questions were explored in this study. The primary research question was: “Are any of the three hiring orientation characteristics (mode, length, or content type) strong predictors of organizational commitment, when the influence of the covariate years of teaching experience is controlled?” The hiring orientation mode, length, and content were examined in association with OC. The second question “How important are certain employment issues to an adjunct instructor’s perception of their hiring institution?” asked instructors to rank, on a scale of 1-14, the importance of issues found in previous research as critical to an adjunct instructor’s perception of their hiring institution.

Hypotheses

These were the corresponding null hypotheses:
• \( H_1 \): Mode of hiring orientation (face to face, online, both F2F and online), length of hiring orientation (one day or less, one week or less, more than one week, or other), and content provided in the hiring orientation (technical support, campus contacts, teaching guidance) have no statistically significant association with adjunct instructor organizational commitment, while controlling for years of teaching experience.
  
  ○ \( H_{01} \): Teaching experience in years has no statistically significant association with adjunct instructor organizational commitment.
  
  ○ \( H_{02} \): Mode of hiring orientation (face to face, online, both F2F and online) has no statistically significant association with adjunct instructor organizational commitment.
  
  ○ \( H_{03} \): Length of hiring orientation (one day or less, one week or less, more than one week, or other) has no statistically significant association with adjunct instructor organizational commitment.
  
  ○ \( H_{04} \): Content provided in the hiring orientation (technical support, campus contacts, teaching guidance) has no statistically significant association with adjunct instructor organizational commitment.

• Research Question 2 (RQ2) is descriptive and does not convey a hypothesis.

Definition of Terms

The terms identified in this section are found throughout this dissertation and are provided for clarification in their application to the specifics of this study.

*Adjunct instructor:* A faculty member who is employed fewer than 30 hours a week, on a term to term contract basis—a working condition that can continue indefinitely. Adjunct instructors often work at the poverty level and without health benefits and have their contract
renewals determined by student evaluations (Bérubé, 2012). Gappa and Leslie (1993) identified adjunct instructors as individuals with little job security.

_Hiring institution:_ For the study, the hiring institution is the community college. Community colleges (CCs) offer two-year degrees that in many cases support the local community and workforce needs (Camm, Nixon, Smith, & Stafford, 2006). CCs also appear as the “the school” or “the organization.”

_Hiring orientation:_ The hiring orientation (HO?) is the process of providing adjunct instructors with information on the institution’s mission, contact information, and clarification of the expectations for teaching (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). For the present study, hiring orientation is also referred to as just “orientation.”

_Learning management system (LMS):_ An LMS is an online hosting platform that stores and delivers course files through a navigable interface, providing communication space between instructor and student, and hosts students and instructor accounts (Borboa, Joseph, Spake, & Yazdanparast, 2017).

_Online course:_ Online courses are taught entirely by computer-mediated instruction. Online course delivery is a cost-cutting measure for many CCs and a significant factor for the expanding population of adjunct instructors (Knoedler, 2015). Online classrooms are considered convenient in reducing full-time faculty load if face-to-face classes are full (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

_Organizational commitment (OC):_ Harshbarger (1989) defined organizational commitment as an association with the institution that inspires a willingness to expend time and effort beyond teaching activities. In this study, OC is also referred to as a “sense of connection” or just “commitment.”
Summary

As the community college (CC) student characteristics changed and grew over the decades, CC enrollments and the demand for instructors increased. Over 75% of instructors are employed as part-time adjunct instructors (Coalition on the Academic Workforce, 2012). Hiring practices have not addressed the multiple issues documented in the working lives of part-time instructors, prompting an investigation into the hiring orientation. An appropriate framework for the study is the Social Exchange Theory, which refers to a perception of equal or unequal exchange of goods and services, often framed in the relationship between employee and employer (Blau, 1964). Satisfaction with this exchange of goods and service can influence the level of organizational commitment (OC) an adjunct instructor has for the hiring institution (Fuller et al., 2006). This study examined the quality of such an exchange between adjunct instructors and the hiring institution through the experience of the orientation required at the time of hiring. The intent was to discover any association between the characteristics of an orientation and OC while controlling for the influence of years of teaching experience. The results of this study provide guidelines for change in hiring procedures and future relationship building with adjunct instructors. The results also provide new information in the form of priority in hiring aspects previously documented as critical to adjunct instructor perception of their hiring institution.

This document provides a review of the related literature on the topic of adjunct instructors, orientations, and organizational commitment in Chapter 2; an explanation of the research methodology in Chapter 3; a detailed explanation of the research analysis in Chapter 4; and a discussion of the results, application to current practices, and suggestions for future research in Chapter 5.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This review explores the scholarly literature on the increasing number of adjunct instructors in higher education, the economic influences on this increase, and the negative impact on the life of the adjunct instructor. This review also considers social exchange theory and the concept of reciprocity as a framework in studying the adjunct instructor’s perceived relationship with their hiring institution.

For more than twenty years, the number of adjunct instructors has been steadily rising, while tenure-track opportunities have fallen. In community colleges, the number of adjunct instructors is far higher than full-time faculty numbers—nearly 62.4% of all teaching staff (Wallin, 2004). In 2009, the American Federation of Teachers reported the number of adjunct instructors more than doubled from 2006 to 2009. A 2011 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) study indicated that adjunct instructor numbers in all of higher education exceeded full-time faculty for the first time (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Economic pressures have an apparent influence on the hiring decisions of administration, who can hire more adjunct instructors than full-time faculty for the same total cost. These adjunct instructors (who are often just as qualified) are paid far less than full-time instructors for the same teaching work and are not provided with health benefits—another cost savings for administrators (House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014). Administrators extend these economic benefits by hiring adjunct instructors on a contract-to-contract basis indefinitely, leaving them with little choice but to accept the work offered. This way of living for adjunct instructors is widespread, and little evidence exists of attempts to change the current hiring practices that perpetuate it (Cadambi, 2016).
For decades adjunct instructors were hired to fill the occasional teaching post when full-time instructors were not available. Not until around 2011 did researchers begin to reveal the impact of this hiring approach—that most adjunct instructors have been and currently still do live a life of economic uncertainty (DeLotell & Cates, 2016; McCoy-Speight, 2015). The low-level concern that most institutions have regarding adjunct instructor hiring practices compounds their difficulties. While pay rates have not increased in years, schools are hiring more staff. Only then is the remaining budget divided across the growing numbers of adjunct instructors employed at much lower rates of pay than full-time faculty. Little research to date on employment of adjunct instructors has been published by administrators, implying either a lack of awareness or of attention to the situation. The study sought to address this gap in the literature by investigating the onboarding process the hiring institutions require of most adjunct instructors.

Research on employment concerns of adjunct instructors has only recently received attention. Only until about 2012 did research on the individual experiences of adjunct instructors begin in earnest. Kezar and Sam (2013) found a lack of formality and consistency in how adjunct instructors were hired and processed throughout the hiring process. Using a social exchange framework approach, Dolan et al. (2013) sought to understand administrator interest in adjunct instructor working lives. They found administrator lack of interest in the lives of adjunct instructors had a negative impact on their motivation for teaching. In 2013, Diegel, a director of academic services, interviewed adjunct instructors directly about their experience with departmental chairs. The interviewees noted that administrators didn’t seem to have time to talk with them directly. One administrator even commented that adjunct instructors are “here today and gone tomorrow” (Diegel, 2013, p. 603), suggesting such conversations not worth their time. In a 2012 commentary, Haynie revealed how administrators can minimize adjunct instructor
contributions, saying that they “…are not here to do curriculum planning, they are here to fit a particular need” (p. 9). The level of dismissal adjunct instructors can experience was further emphasized by Bérubé in his 2012 commentary, in which he described the injustice of hiring instructors at a rate of pay so low that it doesn’t even support the middle-class lifestyle of the students that they teach. As of this writing, adjunct instructors still struggle to make a working wage, obtain health care benefits, and find job security.

Following the 2013 death of Mary Margaret Vojtko, a greater awareness of the working conditions of adjunct instructors developed (Goldstene, 2015). She worked term-to-term as an adjunct instructor for over 20 years for Duquesne University. She died of cancer on September 1, penniless and, as is typical for a part-time employee, without any health insurance. During the time she worked for Duquesne, she was never paid more than $3000 for teaching any one class and never held the possibility of full-time or tenure-track employment. The spring after she suffered through a winter without heat (she couldn’t afford it), she was informed that Duquesne had decided not to renew her teaching contract. A United Steelworkers senior associate in general counsel (Daniel Kovalik) blamed the university for her death for refusing the formation of an adjunct instructor’s union (Goldstene, 2015).

Adjunct instructors have turned to support from high profile unions in acquiring higher pay rates and preventing job loss. A report from the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education (NCSCBHE) stated that in 2012 at least 21 percent of adjunct instructors in the United States have organized (Berry & Savarese, 2012). The New Faculty Majority, founded in 2009, continues its advocacy work through social media. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU), founded in 1919 to support janitorial workers, has assisted adjunct instructors in forming new chapters. In 2013, SEIU Faculty Forward began
making a difference in the lives of adjunct instructors by advocating for pay increases and job security. While unionizing may be a means to gain belonging and strength, it is the publication of adjunct instructor employment issues that has been changing attitudes. “Designed to Fail” was written by an adjunct instructor and tells the story first hand (Goldstene, 2015). Goldstene (2015) found that even as tuition rates are on the rise, adjunct instructor compensation remains unchanged. Coincidentally, administrators’ salaries are getting bigger. Not only are budget decisions overlooking the needs of the adjunct instructor population, discussions of governance and curriculum commonly exclude adjunct instructors. Adjunct instructors live in fear of expressing their complaints regarding all of this, for should they say the wrong thing to the wrong person—even a student—they face the risk of not being rehired. In turn, this fear impacts the academic freedom that adjunct instructors might use to challenge students to prompt learning, were they not afraid of losing their jobs. Wiegard (2015) interviewed Kim Laffont, an adjunct instructor and founder of the South Florida Faculty Association (SFFA) union who described her experiences as an adjunct instructor working at multiple community colleges, and the job insecurity and reduction in working hours most adjunct instructors experience. Adjunct instructors still earn on average $2000 per course taught (Wiegand, 2015).

The role of adjunct instructor is limited and imposes restrictions on scholarship and critical thinking. Because adjunct instructors “fill a certain need” (Haynie, 2013, p. 9) for administrators, they are stuck in facilitator roles. The concern is that as facilitators, they are paid cheaply to merely deliver content but not the kind of instruction that sparks creative thinking. Knoedler (2015) pointed out that in this facilitation role, teaching a vocational course challenges neither instructor nor student to face the challenge of learning to think critically. Online education is prime for growing the numbers of adjunct instructors (Ortagus & Stedrak, 2013).
The technology allows for a single course developed by a full-time faculty member to be copied into as many “classes” as the number of student enrollments demands. This scenario is financially advantageous for the college as long as cheaper adjunct instructors can be located. But instead of budgeting more pay for instruction, colleges budget more for administration, which has been the practice for decades.

Relationships with private industry imply a level of access to curriculum design that was not of concern in more prosperous times. From the early formation of community colleges, the institution has been viewed as an incubator of vocational training (Drury, 2003). Cohen (1996) stated that the evolution of community colleges was promoted by the need for a workforce to operate the growing industries of the early 1900’s. Thus, the institution advocates for an industry-based curriculum that produces graduates credentialed and ready to work in a given industry. While a student may graduate to find a steady job, this curriculum design does not necessarily support the kind of critical thinking promoted by four-year institutions. A valuable instructor will want to push students past these limitations.

While helping students is a key motivational factor for adjunct instructors, their work circumstances place limits on the assistance they would otherwise offer. Adjunct instructors continue to profess student success as their core motivation for teaching (Chapman, 2011; Hardré & Kollmann, 2012; House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014; Rich, 2016). Equally consistently, they have expressed a need for respect and recognition and for a living wage (Diegel, 2013; Dolan et al., 2013; Eaton, 2012; Hoyt, 2012; Kezar, 2013). Up to the present study, the majority of higher education administrators still seem unable to understand how to address these needs (Bérubé, 2012; Chapman, 2011), and often quantify adjunct instructors as a resource in financial terms. Despite how this situates the instructors in a life
without resources or assistance to properly carry out their vocation, the hiring practices remain the same (Diegel, 2013; Goldstene, 2015).

**Rationale for Continuing Adjunct Hiring Practices**

The hiring of qualified scholars as part-time instructors has risen steadily by increments since the 1960s. In 1969, adjunct instructors numbered under 20% (House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014). In 1975, adjunct instructors made up a quarter of the faculty population (Haynie, 2013). Between 1975 and 2011, the number of adjunct faculty increased over 300% (House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014) and 100% between the years 2006 and 2009 (Bryant, Cross, & Jolley, 2014). Throughout the year 2009, adjunct instructor employment rose to nearly half of the entire faculty population (Haynie, 2013). The Coalition on the Academic Workforce (2012) reported that 75% of instructional faculty were employed as temporary part-time adjunct instructors. Adjunct instructors have become the new faculty majority (Goldstene, 2015) in colleges across the United States.

Community college administrators facing budget constraints must manage relationships with adjunct instructors or lose viability as an educational institution. In maintaining an available pool of adjunct instructors from which to draw, administrators need to understand and address their needs as professionals. They also need to provide ongoing support so that adjuncts can teach effectively. If a school perceives adjunct instructors as just facilitators of a course and the administration does not adequately support them, students may question why they are paying for the class (Waltman et al., 2012). Adjunct instructors treated as assets often become loyal participants (Mello, 2007). The alternative to the status quo of institutional neglect is to provide support and open communication, rather than allowing adjuncts to fend for themselves (Diegel,
2013). Equipped with more data on how to support adjunct instructors, administrators can learn to develop more effective hiring practices (Diegel, 2013) and potentially increase the commitment adjuncts may demonstrate toward the hiring institutions.

**Economic Pressure as a Rationale**

Community colleges in the last half of the twentieth century did not experience the same economic pressure and budgetary manipulation as they have since the beginning of the 21st century. The original purpose of the community college, once referred to as a “junior college,” was to act as a bridge to higher education for high school students ("Community Colleges in the United States," n.d.). Once enrolled, junior college students anticipated the transition to a four-year university. After WWII and the passing of the G.I. Bill, junior colleges changed their focus on high school students to the broader community, and the reference to “junior” was changed to “community” (“Community Colleges in the United States,” n.d., para. 5). Community colleges experienced rapid growth during the baby boomer era when the economy was becoming healthier and social awareness was on the rise (“Community Colleges Past to Present,” n.d.), a combination that likely led to a surge in adjunct instructor numbers.

While part-time and non-tenure-track faculty have long existed as class separation in higher education in the United States, the past 20 years of economic pressure have contributed to the increased hiring of adjunct instructors. In 2009 President Obama stated a goal to increase the number of college graduates to an all-time high by the year 2020, placing pressure on a particularly vulnerable segment of higher education, the community college (Bryant et al., 2014). Obama’s 2009 goal was to see ten million more graduates from community colleges beyond the two million expected, increasing the number of college graduates from 40% to 60% (Kanter, Ochoa, Nassif, & Chong, 2012). Funneling private resources toward student enrollment into
college is viewed by national and state leaders as one way to address economic hardships for both students and industry (Waltman et al., 2012). While it may benefit industry and students, higher student enrollment means increasing the number of classes and instructors to teach them. Unfortunately, continuing the current course of contract hire at such low rates of pay increases the number of part-time instructors without any job security (American Association of University Professors [AAUP], 2013). While the number of college graduates may be increasing, a student’s principal form of support continues teaching without the appropriate acknowledgement from administrators. Adjunct instructors have evolved into a cadre of poorly paid human beings, who struggle daily with low pay, lack of benefits, and job insecurity.

Adjunct instructors are simply cheaper to hire than full-time instructors, who require benefits and a salary commensurate with their qualifications. Community college administrators typically pay an adjunct instructor a fraction of what a full-time instructor would cost (Haynie, 2013; Knoedler, 2015). Adjunct instructors typically make only 4% of what a campus makes from a single course (Knoedler, 2015); some adjuncts receive as little as $900 per course (Goldstene, 2012). Being a temporary part-time employee working on a term-to-term basis, means that you are essentially on call. This employment status is beneficial only to hiring administrators, especially when enrollment numbers are the only determinant of adjunct instructor employment (Cadambi, 2016). Adjunct instructors tolerate the unpredictability because they don’t make enough money teaching only one or two classes even to pay for their own benefits, so they take the work that is made available (Cadambi, 2016; Dailey-Hebert, Mandernach, Donnelly-Sallee, & Norris, 2014). The term-to-term hiring contract is typically the only formal agreement between an adjunct and the hiring institution, and incurs no other staff expenses (Dolan et al., 2013). As adjuncts are contracted to “fill a particular need” (Haynie,
that of teaching individual classes—no financial rationale exists to budget for office
space, e-mail accounts, or technical support (Kezar, 2013). In a sense, adjuncts are reduced to a
single concept: facilitation.

Temporary, part-time employment basis creates additional problems for adjunct
instructors by denying many employment benefits. The Affordable Care Act (ACA), signed into
law in 2010, requires hiring institutions to pay for healthcare for those working 30 hours or more
(Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010). Since the passing of the Affordable Care
Act, community colleges have reduced adjunct instructor work hours to avoid breaching the 30-
hour limit (Greenberg, 2014). By limiting the number of hours and adjunct instructor can teach, a
single institution can leave them working at the poverty level (House Committee on Education
and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014). Commitment to a single institution becomes a
perilous decision when multiple teaching jobs can be cobbled together for a more sustainable pay
rate. According to Kim Laffont, founder of the Broward College Adjunct Task Force, her hiring
institution would pad the hours she worked with “preparation hours” to justify the courses they
were not hiring her to teach (Wiegard, 2015). Before the ACA, adjunct instructors were allowed
eight classes a semester—double what a full-time faculty member might teach. Without the
restriction in number of classes, adjunct instructors could make a decent living on $2000 a
class—half of full-time faculty pay and without employment benefits (Wiegard, 2015).

The increase in adjunct instructors directly aligns with budgeting for and encouragement
of full-time faculty members to do more research (Ortagus & Stedrak, 2013). Administrators hire
adjunct instructors to teach so that full-time faculty can focus on research (Chapman, 2011;
Ortagus & Stedrak, 2013). According to Haynie (2013), some administrators believe that
adjuncts are only valued for facilitating a class. Adjunct instructors aspiring to participate in
research (Hoyt, 2012) feel the limitation to facilitator degrades the value of their scholarly contributions (Cadambi, 2016). Most adjunct instructors very much want to be perceived as professional educators and not just hired hands (Dolan et al., 2013).

**Real-world Experience as a Rationale**

Administrators who advocate for hiring scholars in an adjunct instructor capacity cite real-world experience as a rationale that benefits students (Umbach, 2007; Waltman et al., 2012). As adjunct instructors work in a temporary, part-time capacity as instructors, some may hold full-time jobs in their area of expertise (Wallin, 2016). Administrators explain real-world experience as an effective strategy in institutional effectiveness (Tipple, 2009), particularly when highly specialized disciplines are begin taught (Waltman, et al., 2012). They consider the experience brought to the classroom a benefit of adjunct instructors over full-time instructors, who have long been out of the industry (Wallin, 2010). In response is an increase in the number of courses taught by adjunct instructor professionals in their specialized areas (Umbach, 2007).

But despite appearances, real-world experience is not as common or valuable as administrators may believe. Meloncon, England, and Ilyasova (2016) reported that only 64% adjunct instructors reported having any extensive professional experience in the disciplines they teach. Although other studies found that students enjoy the idea of real-world expertise that their instructors may impart (Waltman et al., 2012), Ehrenberg and Zhang (2005) found student retention failed correspondingly with an increase in the number of part-time instructors. And while failing students implies poor teaching skills, Umbach (2007) argued that the failure to retain students is evidence of a lack of instructor support by administrators. These divergent perspectives reflect the different roles and views of the researchers, with administrative claims contrasting with the findings of scholars.
Influences from Online Education

Another contributing factor to the increased hiring of adjunct instructors is the growth of online education. As early as 2006, reports stated that around 20% of students had taken at least one online course (Allen & Seaman, 2007). From 2007 to 2012, online course enrollment grew 9.7%, while enrollment for all of higher education as a whole grew only 1.5% (Allen & Seaman, 2013). In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education reported 5.5 million students enrolled in at least one online course (Nielsen, 2016). Allen and Seaman (2014) reported at least 32% of college students had taken an online course—roughly one-third of all U.S. college students. In 2015, 70% of higher education institutions offered online courses (Blumenstyk, 2015). The majority of the online student population that colleges serve are non-traditional, working full-time, managing families, or serving in the military (Akroyd, Patton, & Bracken, 2013). For community colleges, this non-traditional population’s demand for online education will continue to be a fruitful enterprise.

Online education is a cost-saving measure for colleges facing a reduction in federal and state funding (Ortagus & Stedrak, 2013), especially when adjunct instructors can be hired cheaply to fill instructor roles. Colleges can save money by enrolling students in online instead of on-campus classes because the overhead cost to maintain a digital classroom is less than that to maintain physical classrooms (Knoedler, 2015). Also, fewer full-time faculty are needed to teach online classes because the delivery mechanism is commonly standardized. Online courses are typically designed and managed by a single full-time instructor and taught by multiple adjunct instructors (House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014; Knoedler, 2015). Administrators save money with this arrangement, by paying adjunct instructors a fraction of what they would spend on their full-time instructors to spend time
teaching. This single full-time/multiple adjunct instructor arrangement is the way many community colleges manage the development of their quite lucrative online curricula (Goldstene, 2012). However, this hiring scenario exacerbates the dissatisfaction that adjuncts have in being relegated to the status of a facilitator (Knoedler, 2015). Nevertheless, administrators anticipate the growth of online education, which is expected to benefit the institution financially (Nash, 2015). Therefore, it is essential to the survival of community colleges that administrators fully embrace adjunct instructors as a reliable and available workforce (Hoyt, 2012).

The Effects of Existing Adjunct Hiring Practices

Community colleges are increasingly reliant on adjunct instructors for teaching their classes. According to Dolan et al. (2013), higher education could not meet the educational demands of students without hiring adjunct instructors. And yet adjunct instructors continue to report neglect at the hands of their hiring institutions. The list of complaints includes exclusion from curricular planning (Bryant, Cross, & Jolley, 2014), last-minute hiring practices (Goldstene, 2015), and pay inequity (Knoedler, 2015). Community college administrators are in a dilemma. The trend toward adjunct instructors deprives students of the focused interaction and attention they might receive from a more stable group of instructors (Blumenstyk, 2015), but most colleges dedicate resources to other kinds of personnel rather than providing the support to adjunct instructors (Bedford & Miller, 2013). Without supporting research on how best to do it, institutions tend to sideline addressing the needs of adjunct instructors (Rogers et al., 2010). One instructor explains, “I know that there are [thousands] of us out there… who feel underappreciated and undervalued and underpaid” (Bryant, Cross, & Jolley, 2014, p.228). Administrators cannot continue to benefit from existing hiring practices if these practices continue to ignore the changes adjunct instructors need. This section explores the literature that
illustrates the impacts of hiring practices on instructors, on students, and on the future of higher education.

**Impacts on the Instructor**

Even though adjunct instructor hiring practices have not changed in the past decades, actual documentation on the individual experiences did not appear in the literature until around 2011. One study (Dolan et al., 2013) pointed out the missing piece for many adjunct instructors: administrator concern about their working conditions. The study was a follow-up to another study completed in 2009 and was designed to gain greater insight into statewide educational policy change in the state of Maryland. The results were generalizable to the greater adjunct instructor population in confirming what they had been requesting for years, including recognition of their professional contributions. In a broader perspective, the study confirmed a general lack of consistency in adjunct instructor hiring policies that extends beyond the state of Maryland, and that demand for adjunct instructor presence in the classroom will continue to grow (2013). However, from the administrator’s point of view adjunct instructors are transient and inexpensive, and there is no economic return if budgeting additional resources toward their well-being (Diegel, 2013). They become mere financial considerations, hired when enrollment numbers dictate, which leaves them in a perpetual state of job insecurity when the numbers are insufficient. In this hiring climate, administrator gains far outweigh any benefits for the adjunct instructor. Administrator salaries go up along with tuition (Goldstene, 2015) but adjunct instructor pay rates remain relatively the same (Haynie, 2013).

The little research extending into hiring policy and planning for adjunct instructors is in the nursing discipline (Brannagan & Oriol, 2014; Santisteban & Euges, 2014). With the Institute of Medicine’s (2010) call for increasing the population of nurses, hiring administrators began
facing a shortage of nursing instructors (Smeltzer et al., 2016). To fill the void, administrators began exploring ways they could keep existing instructors and increase the number of new instructors. In cases where administrators directly engaged instructors about their needs, effectiveness improved because of the resulting open rapport (Gutierrez, Candela, & Carver, 2012). Elder, Svoboda, Ryan, and Fitzgerald (2016) found return value for administrators who structure programs focused on the specific issues of adjunct instructors. By including an orientation appropriate to the discipline, sustaining open communication, and providing access to nursing mentors, administrators experienced an increased investment in their department’s mission (2016). Tailored orientations and mentoring were also a factor in improved nursing adjunct instructor performance (Brannagan & Oriol, 2014). Orientations that contained training on the course system with time for practice built the self-efficacy needed to develop better instructorship. Likewise, in pairing mentors with nursing instructors, the resulting teamwork produced a collective approach to problem solving (Brannagan & Oriol, 2014). Santisteban and Egues (2014) concluded that extending similar mentorship programs beyond the one-time orientation sustained adjunct instructors to becoming nursing program educators. The hiring practices and experiences by adjunct nursing instructors would likely apply to adjunct instructors teaching outside of the discipline.

**Low pay.**

Many adjunct instructors work multiple part-time teaching jobs just to live. The American Institute for Research reported the median income for teaching a single 3-hour course as $2700 (Hurlburt, 2016). Counted among the many tasks adjunct instructors do as part of their jobs are mentoring students, grading, and preparing for classes—all time that is typically unpaid. Administrator expectations that these tasks will be completed as part of teaching should be
clearly communicated at the time of hiring. Certainly, adjunct instructors are dedicated to their students, but spending unpaid time can create financial hardships. In 2014, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff (HCEWDS) opened an online forum for adjunct instructors to comment on their working conditions and received 845 responses from 41 states. One of the participants mentioned, regarding her pay rate, “My university pays $2100 per class which means even if I work at 100%, ten classes per academic year, I would only make $21,000” (House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014, p. 5). At the time of this report, the median salary (with benefits) was $47,500 for full-time instructors, while the median salary (without benefits) for adjunct instructors was $22,041. Adjunct instructors living in such economic circumstances are often forced to seek government support in the form of Medicaid, tax credits, and food stamps (House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014). Although many may hope for and seek out full-time teaching work, one adjunct instructor commented, “There are really no opportunities for advancement because there are very few full-time opportunities available, most likely because the schools are using more and more adjunct instructors instead of adding the higher-paid full-time positions” (House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014, p. 4). If instructors do not feel their pay rate is fair, administrators risk losing them to full-time work outside of teaching.

**Job insecurity.**

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff (2014) online forum found that most adjunct instructors work from term to term, contract to contract, indefinitely. This state of impermanence is the leading cause of job insecurity (Jolley, Cross, & Bryant, 2014). The unfortunate wrinkle in the scenario is that hiring institutions routinely rely on
enrollment numbers to determine whether or not they need to hire an instructor for a given term. Administrators will either add or remove adjunct instructors at the last minute based on those numbers (Bérubé & Ruth, 2015; Meloncon et al., 2016). When enrollment numbers are down, it is relatively simple not to renew an adjunct instructor’s contract (Dolan et al., 2013) and there are no drawbacks for the institution who doesn’t. The hiring institution is not bound by state and federal employment laws regarding contract employees, as they are with full-time instructors (2013). As a result, adjunct instructors are not eligible for unemployment benefits (Bérubé, 2012): The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) (Department of Labor [DOL], 2008) exemption for “learned professionals” assumes that all instructors are full-time salaried status, leaving adjunct instructors as contract employees without recourse. In the House Committee on Education’s (2014) survey of adjunct instructors, an instructor commented about her hiring department, “The process for rehire has no transparency. Classes for adjuncts are assigned or canceled less than a week before the semester begins, every semester” (House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014, p. 21). Consequently, whether an adjunct instructor teaches or not is indeterminable.

Inadequate notification of teaching assignment.

Term to term contractual hiring, while convenient for hiring administrators, wreaks havoc on the adjunct instructors’ abilities to present themselves as the educated professionals they are (Diegel, 2013; Street, Maisto, Merves, & Rhoades, 2012). It leaves little time for training or learning about the institution or the department (Kezar & Maxey, 2012; Waltman et al., 2012); or for becoming familiar with how to direct students to appropriate resources (Goldstene, 2015). Adjunct instructors often feel as if they are learning the materials along with the students (Kezar, 2013). A perception of disrespect and inequity exists for the adjunct instructors, who respond
“they are not investing in me, so I don’t have to invest in them” (Waltman et al., 2012, p. 423). Because they are dependent on multiple teaching jobs, adjunct instructors find themselves often in an on-call status (Christensen, 2008). Many are compelled to come to the hiring institution’s rescue at the last minute and are guilt-tripped if they do not (Jolley, Cross, & Bryant, 2014). When assigning adjunct instructors at the last minute, they become the nameless and faceless reinforcements that keep things running.

**Impacts on Students**

Ultimately, adjunct instructors working in poor conditions can have a negative impact on students. Students can perceive when their instructor is ill-prepared as a result of being added to the class at the last minute. Diegel (2013) conducted research that explored the differing perceptions of teaching support between community college division chairpersons and adjunct instructors. The study suggested that chairpersons are key to an adjunct instructor perception of the college. Several departments were involved in the study, but the needs of adjunct instructors were common to all: maintaining open communication with their hiring department was key to the instructors in feeling supported. Professional development was also important to the adjunct instructor’s sense of importance to the department—it helped them improve their teaching skills. However, one administrator stated a disparaging reality, “I feel that (adjunct instructor) professional development is not on par with full-time faculty and I know that the student complaints I get are 99% (about) adjunct instructors” (Diegel, 2013, p. 602). The same administrator also acknowledged that full-time faculty members have access to more resources and support, and more time to focus on supporting students.

Adjunct instructors in the classroom appear to have a negative impact on student outcomes. Bettinger and Long (2010) found that student outcomes were negatively associated
with classes led by adjunct instructors. Similarly, students in adjunct instructor-led courses may initially do well in the first semester (through grade inflation in some cases) (Bettinger & Long, 2004), but see their success diminished in subsequent semesters with adjunct instructors (Carrell & West, 2010). Students can perceive when their instructor is not adequately prepared to teach a class and may lose confidence in their instructor, who may be a highly skilled teacher in reality (Rhoades, 2013). They may also feel cheated out of their tuition dollars if their instructors are not properly prepared to teach the course materials (Brannagan & Oriol, 2014). Parents, too, should be concerned about the impact of adjunct instructors who are often not provided with enough resources to teach their children properly (Bérubé, 2012). Even when administrators believe the quality of education that students are receiving is acceptable, it does not follow that adjunct instructors are supplied with the professional support needed to continue helping students achieve their educational goals (Dolan et al., 2013).

It is imperative that both instructors and students have the means to know each other, so that learning does not suffer. With little time to update instructor records, instructors are often identified as “Professor Staff” (Rhoades, 2013) in campus literature or Web sites, leaving students unable to identify them by name. In an interview with Kim Laffont, founder of the South Florida Faculty Association, Wiegard (2015) investigated the impact that last minute hiring was having on the relationship between students and adjunct instructors. Regarding how much students need to know their instructors, particularly in community colleges, Laffont stated, “By forcing professors to not be available to their students, the administrations are really destroying the whole structure of education” (Wiegand, 2015, p. 490). A unique relationship exists between student and instructor that cannot be quantified.
Impacts on Academic Freedom

The temporary part-time employment status of adjunct instructors impacts academic freedom. A temporary contract employee is unlikely to continue behaviors known to jeopardize renewal of their contracts. As such, adjunct instructors are not protected from reprisals if their activities are unpopular with the administration or with individual students (Cadambi, 2016). Thus, providing honest feedback to students or administrators is a considerable risk for adjunct instructors to consider, and restricts any freedom to teach freely (Moser, 2014). “I often feel I can’t be as blunt with students as I think they would be helped by because they get irritated…” (Waltman et al., 2012, p. 425). Speaking one’s mind can mean a choice of survival or academic freedom for adjunct instructors (Dolan et al., 2013). As a result, adjunct instructors are reduced to merely disseminating course materials, while any personal investment in students dwindles (Goldstene, 2015). The temporary part-time status of adjunct instructors together with the existing hiring practices is a worrisome trend, as the opportunities to help a student efficiently learn become fewer.

Impacts on the Future of Higher Education

The escalating hiring in temporary part-time adjunct instructors could impact student advisement to longer-term academic careers. Community colleges have historically offered curriculum that prepare students for the workforce and not necessarily for four-year university education. Knoedler (2015) discussed the work of Veblen, who was critical of the trend in higher education, and believed that businesses were weakening the pursuit of learning. In regard to workforce-oriented education Veblen (2005) stated, “… Any disinterested preoccupation with the scholarly or scientific inquiry is thrown into the background and falls into abeyance” (p. 192). In this view, teaching students how to think critically is sidelined for industry profit. Colleges are
experiencing the impact of corporatization as federal and state support continues to disappear (Butovsky, Savage, & Webber, 2015). According to Veblen’s views, community colleges are gradually leaving the realm of higher learning to become centers of vocational training (Knoedler, 2015). The likelihood that as community colleges and industry partnership strengthens, industry aspiration may attain more oversight of the curricula students are learning (Cadambi, 2016).

All faculty, but particularly adjunct instructors who teach in an industry focused college find themselves losing any opportunity of being the kind of instructor they once aspired to be. Cadambi (2016) described how these instructors, who were once free to pursue their love of scholarship and to teach students to think critically, feel their work reduced to the narrowest definition of instruction. Even with their advanced qualifications, they spend most of their time facilitating a course for which they had little design input and supporting a curriculum to which they were not invited to contribute. Behrent (2015), a professor at Appalachian State University, explained the impact of corporate control over higher education in a presentation to Faculty Forward, a branch of the Service Employees International Union (Faculty Forward North Carolina, 2015). In the presentation, he explained how the corporatization that began during the economic crisis of the 1970s drove institutions to apply fewer resources toward full-time faculty and began hiring contract instructors on a temporary basis. As government support began to decline during the 1990s, hiring of part-time adjunct instructors exploded. Corporatized institutions are generally defined by the profits, expectations, and organizational culture that have their origins in modern day corporations. In following this model, institutions are employing disposable labor in a just-in-time manner to teach flexible, fluid, and disposable income courses. Goldstene (2015) further clarified what is happening when a corporation has
inappropriate power over an institution of higher education—that the cycle is self-perpetuating: corporate influence over higher education opens the door to corporate input into curriculum, which produces graduates that fit jobs in that corporation. The adjunct instructors hired to teach these classes become unwitting contributors to this disruption of higher education.

**Hiring Orientation**

The design of a hiring orientation can be effective in generating commitment to an organization. Particularly for part-time employees who spend less time with the organization and its staff, training has been directly correlated to reversing a sense of disconnect that could impact organizational success (Owens, 2006). Employees are typically provided with information about the organization and opportunities to network with coworkers. Employees who sense that the training personally impacts them are more likely to respond with a greater sense of dedication (Ismail, 2016). While doctoral and research universities can provide elaborate and extended orientation for their faculty (Trower, 2012), community colleges are typically financially stretched (O’Meara, 2015). Therefore, the hiring orientation should be carefully designed to nurture a sense of connection and convey ongoing instructor support (Brannagan & Oriol, 2014).

**Are Hiring Orientations Making an Impact?**

Still, even if the orientation is intended to be useful, participation may wane. Diegel (2013) found that the Tri-County Community College orientation presented topics that just did not interest the instructors. Dolan et al. (2013) found that although 83% of adjunct instructors participated in the orientation provided by Maryland Community College, the other 17% didn’t consider it worth doing. Hoyt (2012) found that for over a two-year period, only 56% of adjunct instructors attended an orientation at a Brigham Young University satellite campus. Santisteban and Egues (2014) studied nursing adjunct instructors to determine the impact on hiring
orientations on their ongoing commitment to teaching for the institution. These instructors required a hiring orientation that provided instructional support and skills development to support their teaching work (Santisteban & Egues, 2014). Santisteban and Egues also found that by providing an orientation that is also flexible in scheduling, hiring institutions may increase the number of participants.

A Sense of Inclusion

Community colleges have limited resources to apply toward hiring orientations, yet these events are the optimum time for administrators and instructors to establish a tone of inclusion in their relationship. Klein and Weaver (2000) found that people new to an organization developed deeper social relationships with others in training that included such as an organizational mission and values. The presence of this information encouraged engagement and discussion between new and existing employees. In similar research on employee inclusion, Ismail (2016) confirmed a positive association between training and employee attachment to the organization. He found that goal orientation was an important factor in organizational commitment, and that people who value learning in general are more likely to become attached to the organizations that provide trainings such as orientations.

In community colleges, hiring orientation events are opportunities for administrators to provide adjunct instructors with a sense of inclusion (Easton, 2009). The need for inclusion has been repeatedly cited in research. After asking the adjunct instructors what their “dream job” would look like, adjunct instructors stated a desire to connect with peers and improve their teaching practices (Meloncon, England, & Ilyasova, 2016). Orientations that present the institution’s philosophy and government strategy are known to increases a sense of connection for the employee (Meloncon et al., 2016; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). This study attempted to
define other aspects of the hiring orientation that impacted perception of the institution, expressed through the resulting data on organizational commitment.

Supporting Instructor Success

To ensure the success of their adjunct instructors, hiring administrators need to understand aspects of the hiring orientation and the resulting instructor commitment to the institution (Gappa, 2000). An orientation has the potential to impact their ongoing teaching work (Cadambi, 2016; Eney & Davidson, 2012), even after the orientation ends. Several examples appear in the literature. Hardré and Kollmann (2012) found that employees sought specific outlines of how they can best meet administrator expectations. The investigation of Dolan et al. (2013) asked instructors what topics should be covered in an orientation and found that teaching best practices was a preferred topic. Kezar (2013) found orientations that included course designer contact information, departmental goals, and standards for grading most impactful on an instructor’s sense of success. In online courses, Mandernach, O’Donnell, and Register (2015) determined that orientation programs need to convey the principles of online learning theory. Additionally, networking opportunities for online adjunct instructors were indispensable to ongoing success, particularly for those geographically separated from their campus. Adjunct instructors were most successful when orientations provided contact information for administrative staff throughout the term (Diegel, 2013). In assigning a campus contact or mentor, instructors could become immersed in the campus culture and respond more readily as an employee. In turn, when adjunct instructors continued to be proactive about contacting the campus, administrators learned new pathways of providing them with support.
Organizational Commitment

Community college administrators are often required to maintain access to adjunct instructors, while also caring for financial resources. The aim of administrators responsible for hiring should be to generate a positive perception of the institution in the adjunct instructor so that they might be more willing to teach when enrollments demand it. This review explores what organizational commitment is, how it is detected and measured, and provides examples of its existence in higher education.

Descriptions of organizational commitment are well-documented generally but missing in regard to specific aspects of the hiring process. Meyer and Allen (1997) described organizational commitment in terms of employee relationship with their organization and how the relationship impacts their well-being and contributions to the organization. Organizational commitment is revealed in various ways, including a positive view of coworkers, willingness to volunteer and offer support outside of one’s usual role, and contributing to decision-making discussions (Riketta, 2002). Organizational commitment is expressed through organizational citizenship, such as voluntarily service, participation in decision-making, and supporting organizational change (Lawrence, Ott, & Bell, 2012). An example is the tenured faculty member who participates in institutional governance and research for the institution (Bérubé & Ruth, 2015). Commitment is organized into three distinct types: affective commitment, where the employee feels a sense of shared values with the organization; continuance commitment, where the employee is committed to the organization out of need; and normative commitment, where the employee feels an obligation to stay with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Only affective commitment was associated with turnover within an organization (Garland, et al., 2013). Without identifying a singular setting under which commitment can be measured, none of the
organizational commitment types are consistent in their ability to predict employee retention. Previously underexplored, the hiring orientation was the chosen setting for this study of organizational commitment and temporary part-time adjunct instructors.

**Organizational Commitment in Higher Education**

Organizational commitment (OC) in higher education has often been examined through the relationship between the instructor and the hiring administrator. DeLotell and Cates (2016) discovered that a transformational leadership style, one in which a strong relationship develops between the leader (the hiring administrator) and the follower (the adjunct instructor), is a driver of OC. In this context, adjunct instructors face an impossibility of forming relationships with administrators and benefitting from the resulting support when access to those administrators is limited (Umbach, 2007). As a result, professional development opportunities such as invitations to committees or participation in curriculum design are not presented to adjunct instructors as options in their employment (Lawrence, Ott, & Bell, 2012). In full-time tenured faculty, OC aligns with the professional support they receive (Bland et al., 2006) and in the resulting loyalty expressed for their students (Savage, Webber, & Butovsky, 2012). Adjunct instructors are also committed to their students (Tipple, 2009), but less committed to a hiring institution perceived as not fairly supporting them in exchange (Thompson, 2003). “I guess I don’t really think much about my relationship to the college per se, as an institution... There is no buy-in for me… it has been just a job… they have never rewarded me” (Bryant, Cross, & Jolley, 2014, p. 227).

**Organizational Commitment and Social Exchange Theory**

Organizational commitment fits ideally within the frame of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976), which rests on the concept of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). Social exchange theory appears in the exchange of goods or services, as in the case of employer and
employee. For example, in the relationship between a college and its adjunct instructors, the instructors offer their expertise in both discipline and teaching in exchange for fair pay, adequate notification of work, and job security. Reciprocity deals with the fair trade between states of giving and taking, and when viewed within the employee/employer relationship, each receives something of value (Foa & Foa, 1980). The literature has illustrated that community colleges benefit in multiple ways from hiring adjunct instructors, but it is apparent that these benefits are not extended equitably in return (Cadambi, 2016; Goldstene, 2012; House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014; Kezar, 2013; Knoedler, 2015). Adjunct instructors receive less money than full-time faculty, are compelled to be available at the last minute, are not included in campus decision-making, and receive no employment benefits (Haynie, 2013). All of these factors detract from adjunct instructors’ abilities to form an abiding commitment to their hiring institutions (Bielkiewicz, 2011).

**Theoretical Framework**

The present study of organizational commitment from an adjunct instructor’s perspective rests upon the social exchange theory framework (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976), the core concept of which is reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). Reciprocity refers to the fair and balanced experience of give and take between persons or entities (Cook & Rice, 2006). Lawrence, Ott, and Bell (2012) found that organizational commitment parallels the quality of social exchange. A withdrawal of loyalty can occur if the partnership is no longer satisfying or beneficial (Bielkiewicz, 2011). In the case of an employer/employee, the employee who perceives balance in the exchange is likely to become more committed to their employer (Fuller et al., 2006). When employers value their employees’ contributions, for example, the chances of sustaining their loyalty during a crisis will increase (Moorman et al., 1993). Similarly, Bolger and Nir (2012)
found that even by empowering employees to use their talents, employers saw an increase in organizational commitment.

Social exchange theory illustrates how an individual’s perceptions of fair reward for what they have given to their employers is correlated to their commitment to the organization (Gouldner, 1960). Thus, when provided with rewards such as a fair compensation, benefits, and socio-emotional rewards such a sense of belonging, employee interest in an organization’s well-being increased (United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 2014). Therefore, in the ideal relationship between adjunct instructor and hiring institution, both would be satisfied with the exchange of work and reward and organizational commitment would thrive (Foa & Foa, 1980). However, in study after study researchers have found consistent documentation of adjunct instructor commitment elusive (Bedford & Miller, 2013; Bérubé, 2012; Bryant et al., 2014; Cadambi, 2016; Dailey-Hebert, 2014; Dolan et al., 2013). Adjunct instructors have historically suffered from alienation towards the institutions where they teach (Hoyt, 2008), leaving few opportunities for the giving and receiving that social exchange theory describes.

Administrators would benefit from both instructor commitment and student success, by responding to adjunct instructors in ways aimed at their teaching success (Jacobson, 2013). Having access to an instructor community, free professional opportunities, and online teaching certification were found important to adjunct instructors (Chapman, 2011). Further, success for adjunct instructors means having enough time to prepare for classes and being provided with the information that they need to support students (Chapman, 2011; Penn, Wilson, & Rosseter, 2008; Santisteban & Egues, 2014). Equally important, timely support such as technical training and information about best teaching practices (Suplee & Gardner, 2009) were stated needs, which
can be easily provided through venues such as the hiring orientation many instructors are required to attend.

**Summary**

The present study attempts to fill gaps in the research on adjunct instructors, their hiring experience, and how it contributed to their perception of their institution. The adjunct instructor participants in this study are hired by contract to work for any of the community colleges within a mid-south statewide community college system. Each college in the system routinely requires adjunct instructors to undergo a hiring orientation. A gap in the literature exists in the documentation of effectiveness of hiring orientations for retaining adjunct instructors for future semesters. Only in the last several years has any research been done by adjunct instructors themselves regarding their experiences as instructors.

Economic influences on community colleges, combined with a lack of understanding about the adjunct instructor’s working life contributes to budgetary decisions that benefit administration, staff, and full-time faculty—but not adjunct instructors. As long as institutional success is based on the number of degrees achieved, pay raises, and staff growth, administrators will continue with their existing hiring practices (American Association of University Professors [AAUP], 2013). Paid the lowest of any working professional in higher education, adjunct instructors are forced to take the teaching jobs doled out each term. No incentives exist for administrators to change their hiring practices, and yet, they risk losing instructors to a more lucrative job in private industry. The single opportunity that administrators have to communicate their concerns is the hiring orientation most adjunct instructors receive. The study provided administrators with data on what hiring orientation characteristics affect an adjunct instructor’s
commitment. The results document methods to improve hiring orientations and address a known gap in the literature regarding adjunct instructors and their working conditions.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of the present study was to examine the experiences of the adjunct instructor at their hiring institution. The study answered two questions. The primary research question of the study was: “Are any of the three hiring orientation characteristics (mode, length, or content type) strong predictors of organizational commitment, when the influence of the covariate years of teaching experience is controlled?” The predictive association between the predictor variables (hiring orientation mode, length, and content) and the criterion variable OC may provide administrators who are responsible for hiring adjunct instructors with the information needed to design a more compelling onboarding employment experience. The second question “How important are certain employment issues to an adjunct instructor’s perception of their hiring institution?” In a survey question, adjunct instructors were asked to rank the importance of issues (on a scale of 1-14) (Bérubé & Ruth, 2015; Goldstene, 2015; House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014; Jolley, Cross, & Bryant, 2014) to their perception of their hiring institution. This chapter describes the details of the investigation, including the study’s design, the participants, the setting, the instrumentation, and the data collection and analysis.

Design

Quantitative research was appropriate for the present study as it involves statistical data collection and analysis through techniques such as chi-square and multivariate design (Zawacki-Richter, Bäcker, & Vogt, 2009). For this study, a predictive correlation design was used because it allowed an examination of predictive association among multiple variables (Gall, Gall, & Borg 2007). The correlation design enabled the illustration of how each variable was associated with
levels of OC. A secondary analysis was conducted on 14 hiring aspects previously documented as critical in adjunct instructor’s perceptions of their hiring institutions.

**Participants and Setting**

Convenience sampling was used to select participants from within a mid-south state community college system consisting of thirteen institutions. The system hosts an online library of courses available for enrollment by all students from any of the colleges in the system. Often, students from multiple colleges are enrolled into the same online classroom. The courses are designed by full-time college faculty members. Each college that creates a course is also responsible for staffing each section of that course with an instructor. Student enrollment numbers determine the number of sections and instructors that will be needed. The online classes are taught by both full-time, tenured faculty and part-time adjunct instructors from any or all of the colleges. The part-time adjunct instructors from this online system served as the sample population in the study.

An invitation to participate in the study and complete a survey hosted via an online survey system was delivered by e-mail to 1,243 instructor (both full-time and part-time) addresses obtained from a community college system’s database as there was not a way to differentiate between part time and full time in the system. A response rate of 60% is excellent, and response rate of 40% is average (University of Texas, 2011). The response rate for the present study was low (19.7%, \( n = 245 \)). This poor response could be due to two factors: the nature of convenience sampling in accessing an existing database of contact information or the nature of the database content itself. As the limitations section explains, the database containing the adjunct instructor contact information relied on the coordination of the incoming records from multiple campuses, which in turn relied on individuals hired on a temporary, as-needed
basis (as adjunct instructors) to spend time for which they are not compensated to maintain their contact information. Given the transitory and temporary nature of adjunct instructor employment, the status of the 998 instructors who did not respond to the invitation may never be resolved.

Of the 245 instructors within the system who began the survey, 137 participants met the criteria of employment status of “part-time” (fewer than 30 hours a week). After removal of incomplete responses from part-time instructors, 116 cases remained.

While the volunteer rate was poor, the number of participants needed for running a viable analysis was met (Kar & Ramalingam, 2013). The recommendation for producing viable results in quantitative research is to have at least 30 participants for each of the predictor variables (Kar & Ramalingam, 2013). Three predictor variables were included in the present study (hiring orientation mode, length, and content), indicating that at least 90 participants would be needed. Other recommendations advise that the sample size for correlational studies should be at least 10 participants per predictor variable, which means that having 30 participants per predictor variable in the present study also increased the ability to detect more minute changes in effect size (Wilson & Morgan, 2007). A total of 116 cases were usable and analyzed.

**Instrumentation**

Online surveys are found to be both convenient and more efficient at conveying a sense of anonymity than other forms of surveys (Mueller et al., 2012). A survey developed with Qualtrics software and hosted by the University of Memphis was the data collection system used for measurement of the dependent variables involved in the study (Appendix B). The online survey was available continuously (24/7) for two weeks, allowing the participants convenient access. The survey was divided into four parts: Part I Demographics, Part II Organizational
Commitment, and Part III Orientation. Part IV contained a single supplementary ranking activity of documented issues in adjunct instructor employment.

Part I (demographics) followed Papavero’s (2009) three-part approach: About You (age, ethnicity, and gender), Education and Work Experience (years teaching, and degree attained), and Your Work (subject expertise/discipline, employment type, and details of work outside of teaching).

Part II of the survey was designed to measure OC, the criterion variable. Part II consisted of Mowday et al.’s (1979) organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ), documented as being valid and having a high-reliability rating in the original validation study (based on the coefficient alpha statistic ranging from 0.82 to 0.93) and follow up studies. Using the OCQ, Sass and Canary (1991) produced a coefficient alpha of .92 in their study of instructor–institutional identification and commitment. Hinds et al. (1991) calculated a coefficient alpha rating of .93 in their study of pediatric nursing stressors. Finally, the OCQ in Lawrence, Ott, and Bell’s (2012) study of instructor disengagement from their hiring institution showed a coefficient alpha rating of 0.73-0.88. The coefficient alpha for the current study was .88, indicating a high reliability rating of the results.

Mowday et al. (1979) described OC as “(1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values; (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization” (p. 226). Ten questions designed on a ten-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree,” collectively measured the level of organizational commitment (Appendix B, Part II). OC scores ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater organizational commitment.
Part III of the survey contained multiple-choice questions regarding the hiring orientation the adjunct instructor received from their hiring institution. The questions inquired about the mode of delivery (face-to-face, online, or both), the length of the orientation (one day or less, one week or less, more than one week, or other), and what information was contained in the orientation (teaching support, technical support, and campus contacts). The data from these responses served as the predictor variables.

Part IV contained a single ranking question that asked participants to order 14 elements critical to the relationship they perceive to have with the institutions where they teach. The elements included pay rate, notification of teaching assignment, job security, communication about expectations, access to administrators, inclusion in course design, choice of office hours, opportunities to connect with full-time faculty, compensation for time outside of teaching hours, health benefits, inclusion in departmental decision-making, professional development, and networking opportunities. The “other” choice allowed participants to insert any missing element that needed to be included, based on their individual experience. This question was used to answer question two.

**Procedures**

The research conducted required that institutional review board (IRB) approval be obtained (Appendix C & D). After IRB approval, community college distance education director in the system received notification of the study and date of initiation (Appendix E) as a courtesy. Three colleges requested formal approval from their campus-based IRB in addition to the initial obtained IRB approval. Additional approval was sought and obtained.

Before the survey was sent to the large sample population, a small group of administrators and instructors beta-tested the survey. Based on their feedback, the following
modifications were made: clarified instruction for participants to recall their hiring orientation as the “institution” rather than the statewide online system through which they taught classes; a question was added to clarify employment status; and the addition of “other” response option to Part IV of the survey was added. No issues were found with the length, operation of, or submission of the survey.

Convenience sampling was the method of choice for obtaining participants. A list of instructor names, contact information, and associated institution was extracted from the system’s enrollment management system. This list was used to send out an email invitation.

Two weeks after the start of the Fall 2017 term, an invitation (Appendix A) went out via e-mail and contained information about the researcher, the goal of the project, and a link to the online informed consent and survey. A series of reminders prompted participants to complete the survey on time. Christensen et al. (2015) found that multiple reminders are effective in increasing the number of survey responses. A follow-up reminder (Appendix E) went out a week before and the day before the survey closed. The schedule for communication was as follows:

- 9/4/17: Initial message sent to announce the coming survey
- 9/12/17: First invitation to participate
- 9/18/17: Reminder of time left to participate
- 9/26/17: Survey closed

After the survey ended, the data was downloaded and then imported into SPSS for analysis.

**Data Analysis**

A hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine research question one and determine the strength of the association between predictor variables of the campus hiring
orientation (mode, length, and content) and the criterion variable organizational commitment (OC). The variable years of teaching experience was considered an influence on a sense of loyalty and commitment and was used as a covariate. The significance level (a) for the analysis was set at 0.05.

Assumptions were verified prior to running the hierarchical multiple regression analysis. These assumptions examined included independence, linearity, homoscedasticity, collinearity, no extreme outliers, and normality. With a value that falls within the recommended range of 1.5 to 2.5, the Durbin-Watson statistic (2.137) confirmed the independence of observations (Field, 2013). Linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions were tested through examination of a scatter plot of residuals and unstandardized predicted values, where patterns were found to be consistent in form and distribution (Hair et al., 1998). The assumption of multicollinearity was tested through the examination of the correlation coefficient statistics, tolerance (no less than 0.1) and variance inflation factor (VIF) value (no greater than 10), which, together, illustrated the presence of a linear relationship between predictor variables (Field, 2013). The assumption of multicollinearity was met (T = 0.345, VIF = 2.89). No outliers were detected by examination of the residual statistics (-2.257, 1.994), which fell within the specified range (-3–3). The Cook’s Distance statistic is a measure of undue influence of a predictor variable that could contain outliers, detectable in statistics greater than 1.0 (Díaz-García & González-Farias, 2004). The Cook’s Distance statistic did not indicate any outliers (0, .470). A test of normality was conducted by an examination of histogram and P-P plot, demonstrating relative alignment with idealized diagrams (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Therefore, the hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. Results are found in Chapter 4.
The Friedman’s and Kendall’s W tests were conducted to obtain results from a single supplementary ranking question in the survey, which was used to answer research question two. The survey question prompted participants to rank the importance of 14 elements in relation to their perceived relationship with the hiring institution. A Friedman’s Test was then used to produce a mean statistic for each item in a ranking dataset (Yarnold, 2014). The Kendall’s W test is a normalization of the Friedman statistic. It tests for agreement in ranking. The range extends from zero (0), where there would be perfect disagreement among the participants, to one (1), where there would be perfect agreement and all ranks would match. The Kendall’s W statistic for this study ($W = .406$) indicated a moderate disagreement between participants in how the 14 elements were ranked in importance. The descriptive statistics output provided mean and standard deviation for each element. An exploration of the count of ranks #1, #2, & #3 was conducted and found the three highest counts for each rank were (respectively): #1 Fair Pay Rate ($n = 58$), #2 Adequate notification ($n = 19$), and #3 Job security ($n = 24$). Inferences of these results are provided in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4: Results

The primary purpose of the present study was to examine the association of the predictor variables (hiring orientation mode, length, and content) and the criterion variable organizational commitment (OC) while controlling for an adjunct instructor’s years of teaching experience. The secondary purpose was to determine if employment issues reflected in the past several years of research (Hurlburt, 2016; Meloncon et al., 2016; Kezar & Maxey, 2012; Waltman et al., 2012) are still important issues in adjunct instructor perception of their hiring institution. Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis of the findings based on the research questions supporting the study’s purpose. This chapter also provides details about the participants, descriptive statistics, assumptions and how they were met or not met, and the results of the data analyses.

Participants

A total of 245 instructors who were teaching in the online system responded to the survey (19% response rate); however, only 136 participants met the criteria: an employment status teaching “part-time” (12% final response rate). After removal of incomplete responses, 116 cases were left for data analysis.

A majority of respondents were female \( n = 82, 71.51\% \) as opposed to male \( n = 34, 29.49\% \). More participants fell within the age range of 55-64 \( n = 30, 25.9\% \) than any other age range (under 35, \( n = 5, 4\% \); 35-44, \( n = 31, 26.77\% \); 45-54, \( n = 27, 23.3\% \); 65-69, \( n = 14, 12.1\% \); 70 or older, \( n = 9, 7.8\% \)). The majority of the respondents were Caucasian \( n = 98, 84.5\% \), followed by African American \( n = 11, 9.5\% \). As to educational attainment, doctorate \( n = 50, 43.1\% \) and masters \( n = 47, 40.5\% \) degrees were obtained by nearly all of the participants. The participants had varying levels of teaching experience, with the fewest having 21-25 years \( n = 7, 6.1\% \), the most having 6–10 years \( n = 32, 27.6\% \). Participants with the least teaching
experience (1–5 years) \( n = 15, \) 12\% and the most teaching experience (26–30) \( n = 15, \) 12.9\% were identical in number. Of the disciplines taught, participants who reported their discipline as “other” compiled the largest individual category \( n = 32, \) 25.2\%, with other participants reporting teaching in the social sciences as second largest \( n = 24, \) 18.9\%. When asked the number of courses taught per year, the majority of participants reported teaching between 1-3 \( n = 49, \) 38.6\% and 4-6 \( n = 50, \) 39.4\% courses taught per year. Nearly half of the participants indicated they were employed in full-time jobs outside of teaching and were teaching fewer than 30 hours a week \( n = 51, \) 40.2\%. Table 1 provides additional demographic information.

Table 1

Demographics of Adjunct Instructors \( (N=116) \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( N )</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>85.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Degree Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-professional*</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Discipline</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (including Early Childhood Education)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education (Math, English and Communications)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences (Physics, Biology, Microbiology, Anatomy)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences (Human Services, Criminal Justice, Interpreter Training, Psychology)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course load per year</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3 courses/year</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>38.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–6 courses/year</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–10 courses/year</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 10 courses/year</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Employment Status</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple part-time jobs (&gt; 30 hours a week + benefits)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple part-time jobs (&gt; 30 hours a week, no benefits)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time (&lt; 30 hours a week) + full-time work outside of teaching</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time teaching (&lt; 30 hours a week)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time teaching (&lt; 30 hours a week), retired</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Numbers do not show those who began the survey and failed to complete it.*

*First-professional degrees are graduate-level credentials held in professional disciplines (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).*
Nearly half of the participants were employed in full-time work and teaching as part-time adjunct instructors. Table 2 provides details of all participant employment status.

Table 2.

*Employment Status Frequency and Percent per Level.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-time teaching (fewer than 30 hours a week) in addition to full-time work outside of teaching</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time teaching (fewer than 30 hours a week)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time teaching (fewer than 30 hours a week), retired</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple part-time teaching jobs amounting to 30 hours a week or more, no benefits</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple part-time teaching jobs amounting to 30 hours a week or more, plus benefits</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question 1: Hierarchical Multiple Regression**

A hierarchical multiple linear regression was conducted to examine the predictive association of hiring orientation (HO) mode, length, and content and organizational commitment, while controlling for years of experience teaching. The analysis was conducted to address the following research question: “Are any of the three hiring orientation characteristics (mode, length, or content type) strong predictors of organizational commitment, when influence of the covariate years of teaching experience is controlled?”
Descriptive Statistics

Organizational commitment served as the criterion variable and was measured through a set of 10 questions based on a 10-point Likert-scale with ratings that ranged from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 10 (Strongly Disagree). This set of questions was from the Mowday et al. (1982) organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ), a survey documented as having a high reliability rating (based on Cronbach’s alpha). Cronbach’s alpha is used to check the reliability of a research instrument, the measurement of which should be .70 or higher (Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991). The Coefficient Alpha reliability statistic of = .88 in the present study indicated a good consistency.

Table 3 contains the descriptive statistics for the covariate (years of experience teaching) and the predictor variables hiring orientation mode, length, and content. The median for the covariate, years of experience teaching ($M = 14.16$, $SD = 8.07$). The mean measurement of organizational commitment was 7.50 with a standard deviation of 1.52.

**Dummy coding.** Two predictor variables were recoded into dummy variables. Hiring orientation mode (presented as (1=face-to-face, 2=online, and 3=both face-to-face and online) was recoded into “0” (Face-to-Face) and “1” (Online). Table 3 provides the resulting data. Hiring orientation length (1=one day or less, 2=one week or less, 3=more than one week, and 4=other) was recoded into “0” (one week or less) and “1” (more than one week). Table 3 provides the resulting descriptive statistics.

Table 3
*Descriptive Statistics of the Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Mode</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2F (dummy coded=0)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation Length</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online (dummy coded=1)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week or less (dummy coded=0)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one week (dummy coded=1)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Content (yes=included)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus contacts</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching support</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical support</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sample size selected was 116.

Assumptions Verification

The data for this study were analyzed using a hierarchical multiple regression statistical approach, of which there are six assumptions: independence of observation, linearity, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, no outliers, and normality. The results of assumptions testing are as follows.

Independence of observation. The assumption for independence of observation was evaluated on the Durbin-Watson statistic. Based a Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.14, the assumption of independence of observations was found tenable.

Linearity. Assessment of linearity between the outcome variable (organizational commitment) and each predictor and criterion variable (hiring orientation mode, length, and content) was performed. The results showed the residuals forming a horizontally shaped band between the criterion variable (organizational commitment) and the predictor variables, illustrating that the assumption of linearity was met (See Figure 1).

Homoscedasticity. The evaluation of homoscedasticity was conducted by examining the scatter plot of the residuals against the unstandardized predicted values. An examination of the
residuals found the spread of points formed fairly consistently across the predicted values, indicating that the assumption of homoscedasticity was found tenable (See Figure 1).

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1.** Scatter plot of residuals and unstandardized predicted values.

A Pearson’s r data analysis (Table 4) revealed a significant, moderately weak correlation between organizational commitment (OC) and campus contacts, $r = .245$, $n = 116$, $p = .008$; and a significant, moderately weak correlation between OC and hiring orientation length, $r = -.263$, $n = 116$, $p = .004$.

Table 4

*Pearson Correlations of Covariate, Predictor, and Criterion Variables.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Years of Experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Mode</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Length</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>-.501**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Technical Support</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>-.374**</td>
<td>-.716**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Campus Contacts</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>-.405**</td>
<td>-.693**</td>
<td>.726**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**57**
Table 4 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>.030</th>
<th>-.306**</th>
<th>-.600**</th>
<th>.631**</th>
<th>.692**</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Teaching Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Other Content</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>-.190*</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 OC</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>-.102</td>
<td>-.263**</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.245**</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Boldface type indicates significant results.

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

**Multicollinearity.** The presence of multicollinearity was examined using correlation coefficients and Tolerance/VIF values. All tolerance values were greater than 0.1 (the lowest is 1.0) and none of the VIF values were greater than 10 (the highest is 2.9), confirming no issues with collinearity (Warner, 2013).

**Outliers.** An examination of the case-wise diagnostics found no extreme outliers, as the Residuals Statistics Standard Residual statistic minimum (-2.257) and maximum (1.994) values fit within the assumption range (-3–3). In examining Cook’s Distance statistics, neither the minimum (.000) nor maximum (.470) values were greater than 1.0, confirming the lack of outliers and that no distortion in the outcome or accuracy of the data occurred.

**Normality.** The assumption of normality was tested using a histogram and P-P plots. The examination of a histogram with superimposed normal curve and a P-P Plot demonstrated no gross violations of the assumption of normality (See Figures 2[a] and 2[b]).
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Model Results

To examine research question one, a regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive association of hiring orientation (HO) mode, length, and content type and organizational commitment, while controlling for years of experience teaching. The model comprised four blocks entered sequentially. Figure 3 illustrates the sequence of entry into the regression model. Block 1 contained the variable years of teaching experience. Block 2 contained the addition of the hiring mode variable. Block 3 contained the addition of the hiring orientation length. Block 4 contained the addition of the hiring orientation content variables.
The first block examined in the predictive correlation analysis contained the control variable *years of teaching experience*, which was not statistically significant \( F[1, 114] = .206; p = .651, R^2 = .002 \). With the addition of hiring orientation mode variable in the second block, the variance explained in organizational commitment changed to negative (-) .06% (or zero), indicating that hiring orientation mode increased the model’s predictive ability less than a percent. This change in predictive capability was not found to be statistically significant \( F [1, 113] = 1.126; p = .291, R^2 = .012 \). With the addition of hiring orientation length variable in the third block, the variance explained by the model increased to 4.6%, which was a statistically significant change, \( F [1, 112] = 7.139; p = .009, R^2 = .071 \). With the addition of hiring orientation content variables in block 4, the variance in organizational commitment explained by the model increased to 8.1% \( F [5, 107] = 1.844; p = .110, R^2 = .145 \). However, this was not a
significant increase. The overall model was found to be significant, \( F(8) = 2.26, p = 0.28, R^2 = 0.145, \text{adjusted } R^2 = 0.08. \)

In the final model, the length of the orientation \((p = .02)\), the inclusion of teaching support (pedagogical guidance or teaching advice) \((p = .023)\), and the inclusion of campus contact information (assistance contacts outside of basic technical support) \((p = .023)\) each showed an individual statistically significant contribution to the prediction of organizational commitment (Table 5). The negative regression coefficient for length indicates that as the length increased, organizational commitment decreased. The inclusion of teaching support also had a negative regression coefficient, suggesting that providing guidance for teaching decreased levels of organizational commitment. The opposite was true for the inclusion of campus contacts information, which resulted in a positive regression coefficient. This indicates that if campus contacts were included in the orientation, the level of organizational commitment increased.

Standardized coefficients statistics are an indicator of the strength of association between the predictor variable and the outcome variable. Such as, the closer the number is to zero \((0)\), the weaker the association (Vieira, 2017). Based on the significant results, the provision of campus contacts \((\beta = .351)\) had the strongest positive association; and both hiring orientation length \((\beta = -.349)\) and the provision of teaching support \((\beta = -.299)\) had the strongest negative association with organizational commitment. Table 5 contains these and other coefficient data.
Table 5

*Coefficients data for organizational commitment in block 4.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>β</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years teaching</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation mode</td>
<td>.273</td>
<td>.350</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation length</td>
<td>-1.078</td>
<td>.458</td>
<td>-.349</td>
<td>-2.353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contained technical support</td>
<td>-.461</td>
<td>.454</td>
<td>-.150</td>
<td>-1.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contained campus contacts</td>
<td>1.066</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>2.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contained teaching support</td>
<td>-.908</td>
<td>.394</td>
<td>-.299</td>
<td>-2.304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contained other</td>
<td>1.070</td>
<td>1.219</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contained none of these</td>
<td>-.149</td>
<td>1.255</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>-.119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Boldface type indicates significant results.

**Research Question 2**

The Friedman’s and Kendall’s W tests were conducted to explore the results acquired to address research question two, “*How important are certain employment issues to an adjunct instructor’s perception of their hiring institution?*” A Friedman’s Test can produce the mean statistic for each item in a ranking dataset (Yarnold, 2014). The Kendall’s W test is a normalization of the Friedman statistic. It tests for agreement in ranking among the participants (Yarnold, 2014). The range extends from zero (0), where there would be perfect disagreement among the participants, to one (1), where there would be perfect agreement and all ranks would match. The Kendall’s W statistic for this study (W = .406) indicated a moderate disagreement between participants in how the 14 elements were ranked in importance.
The lowest mean was “Fair pay rate” ($M = 2.78$) and contained the highest count of #1 ranking ($N = 58$) of all 14 elements. The second lowest mean was “Adequate notification” ($M = 4.56$) and contained the highest count of #2 ranking ($N = 19$). The third lowest mean was “Job security” ($M = 5.16$) and contained the highest count of #3 ranking ($N = 24$). Table 6 contains mean, standard deviation, and associated ranking count for each element in the ranking question.

Table 6

*Part VI Supplemental Question Mean and Standard Deviation.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Selected as #1</th>
<th>Selected as #2</th>
<th>Selected as #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair pay rate</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate notification</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication about role</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to administrator</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion in course design</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of office hours</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting with full-time faculty</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation outside of teaching</td>
<td>8.19</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health benefits</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>8.87</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion in decision-making</td>
<td>8.86</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking opportunities</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13.68</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Boldface type indicates highest count per rank.

A dot plot of response rates of these three lowest means and associated ranking are illustrated in Figure 4. Not shown in the plot, but worth noting is the element “Health benefits.”
Nearly half of the participants classified as employed full-time outside of teaching (40.16%), thus a high probability of their employers providing them with health benefits (Table 2). The mean for “Health benefits” was much lower than expected ($M = 8.28$), given evidence in the literature that acquiring healthcare has been a major issue for adjunct instructors (Goldstene, 2015).

![Figure 4. Dot plot of response rate of ranks 1, 2, and 3.](image)

**Summary**

A hierarchical multiple linear regression was conducted to examine the predictive association of hiring orientation (HO) mode, length, and content and organizational commitment, while controlling for years of experience teaching. The results indicated that the overall model was significant and the null hypothesis, “The three hiring orientation characteristics (mode, length, or content) are not strong predictors of organizational commitment, while controlling for…” should be rejected, indicating that elements of the hiring orientation are associated with organizational commitment. Some areas of hiring orientation content also contributed individually and significantly to organizational commitment. The presence of teaching support (pedagogical guidance or teaching advice) ($\beta = -.299$, $p = .023$) showed a
negative association with organizational commitment, while the presence of campus contacts (assistance contacts outside of basic technical support) \((\beta = .351, p = .023)\) showed a positive association with organizational commitment. The orientation length variable \((\beta = -.349, p = .020)\) had a negative association with organizational commitment, suggesting longer orientations reduce organizational commitment.

The supplemental ranking question produced results regarding the importance that adjunct instructors placed on their perceived relationship with the hiring institution. Elements previously cited in the literature were ranked as the top three in importance (a fair pay rate, knowing when they will be assigned a teaching job, and having job security). For a majority of the participants, these issues have not yet been addressed in their hiring experience.

An interpretation of these findings, research limitations, and future research recommendations regarding these results will be addressed in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Summary and Discussion

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the predictive relationship between the adjunct instructor’s organizational commitment (OC) and their experience with the hiring orientation, while controlling for years of teaching experience in higher education. This study examined the way the orientation was delivered (mode), how long it lasted (length), and what it contained (content type), to determine how each was related to variance in OC in the adjunct instructor. The secondary aim was to garner information about factors that adjunct instructors consider important employment so that hiring institution can better understand perceptions of adjunct instructors. One hundred and sixteen adjunct instructors teaching within a mid-south community college system participated in this study by completing a survey, which produced data regarding demographics, teaching factors, hiring orientation characteristics, organizational commitment, and a prioritization of issues regarding adjunct instructor employment.

The survey data were then analyzed using a hierarchical multiple linear regression to examine the predictive association of adjunct instructor hiring orientation (HO) experience on organizational commitment (OC). The results demonstrated that there was a significant predictive association between HO mode, length, and content type and organizational commitment, while controlling for years of experience teaching. The overall model explained 8.1% of the variance in OC, revealing that over 90% of the variability in OC for adjunct instructors remains unexplored. The HO content contributed significantly to OC by individual type. The presence of teaching support (pedagogical guidance or teaching advice) had a negative association, while the presence of campus contacts had a positive association with OC. The orientation length variable had a negative association with organizational commitment, suggesting longer orientations reduced organizational commitment. In effect, orientations that
required more time from the adjunct instructors produced a negative perception of their hiring institution, most likely because they are not paid for the time. The results of research question two indicated that three previously documented employment issues for adjunct instructors (insufficient rates of pay, job insecurity, and a lack of respect) still exist and were rated significant in their perceived relationship with their hiring institutions.

This chapter will provide a discussion of these results, including an interpretation of the findings, a discussion of the limitations, implications for existing practices, and recommendations for future research.

**Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings from Chapter 4 are explored in this section, and connections with the literature presented in Chapter 2 are provided. These findings are organized by the two research questions, with a discussion of findings presented.

Research Question 1 (RQ1) posed, "Are any of the three hiring orientation characteristics (mode, length, or content type) strong predictors of organizational commitment, when influence of the covariate years of teaching experience is controlled?" The findings from this study suggest that a positive perception of the hiring institution by adjunct is associated with their hiring orientation. The orientation experience was analyzed using three characteristics: mode of delivery, length of endurance, and content type. To date and based on the review of literature, this appears to be the first study that has explored three specific elements of the hiring orientation and how each could possibly be influential on organizational commitment in adjunct instructors.
**Hiring Orientation Mode**

While the entire model, which included the mode of hiring orientation (HO), predicted organizational commitment (OC), the mode did not individually and significantly make a contribution to explaining the variability in OC. Online and face-to-face (F2F) modes of orientation may be influential on OC. In F2F orientations, instructors are introduced to administrative staff and learn about institutional philosophy with peers, an activity known to increase a sense of inclusion (Meloncon et al., 2016; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Orientations that are presented online provide networking opportunities for adjunct instructors who may be geographically isolated (Mandernach, O'Donnell, & Register, 2015) and were also effective for providing ongoing administrator access (Diegel, 2013). Perhaps little to no association was found between OC and mode of orientation as previous research that compares F2F orientations with online delivery methods demonstrates a strong association between the mode and length of hiring orientation. Results of Pearson’s correlation resulted in a moderate degree of correlation ($r = .501, p < .01$), indicating that orientations shorter in length were most likely delivered F2F. Though HO mode was not a direct significant factor in variance of OC, it is nonetheless associated by this correlation to the variance reported with HO length.

**Hiring Orientation Length**

Over 70% of the participants in this study reported an orientation lasting one day or less, which is congruent with research on community college orientations (O'Meara, 2015). Findings of the analysis indicated that there was statistically significant evidence of association between hiring orientation length and organizational commitment. As the length of the orientation increased, organizational commitment decreased. A possible explanation for this result is that research has indicated that adjunct instructors spend much of their extra time on uncompensated
activities such as grading students and an orientation (Street et al., 2012). For adjunct instructors hired by contract in a temporary capacity, time management becomes a priority, particularly when working hours are routinely monitored and limited to 30-hour or less (Wiegard, 2015). In another example, if expected to learn new systems, adjunct instructors were favorable to orientations that compensated for such training (Brannagan & Oriol, 2014). In the example of orientations that are delivered within a single evening, best practices, technical training, and other forms of support would be provided (Supplee & Gardner, 2009). Further research is needed to explore how shorter hiring orientations appear to be preferred over extended ones. Aspects such as training online and periodic professional training that can be offered perpetually online are areas for exploration (Mandernach, O'Donnell, & Register, 2015). If the negative association between organizational commitment and length of orientation is related to respect for uncompensated time, then research should explore how a longer hiring orientation should be compensated (Wallin, 2010).

**Hiring Orientation Content**

Finally, three types of content were explored: technical support, teaching support, and campus contact.

**Technical support.** The presence of technical support content type did not individually significantly contribute to the explanation of variance in organizational commitment (OC). This could indicate that other types of content were more important to instructors who already considered themselves technical proficient, or that perhaps the adjunct instructors were not aware of a need for technical support. Where technical support may be included in a single orientation event (Supplee & Gardner, 2009); more training is needed by adjunct instructors, though budgets do not routinely accommodate the expense (Kezar, 2013). According to Brannagan and Oriol
(2014), training for online teaching environments can be introduced in an orientation, but Chapman (2011) found that it is more effective if extended beyond the orientation. Future research would ask questions that detected levels of technical proficiency to clarify how much technical support should be offered and the duration of the support.

**Teaching support.** The presence of teaching support in the hiring orientation was negatively associated with organizational commitment (OC). In this study, OC can be described as a positive perception of the hiring organization or, in the case of adjunct instructors, the institution. As a criterion variable OC is often measured against one or more predictor variables to determine change in the level measured, which is classified as an association. Predictor variables can have a positive or negative association with OC, which can be either positive or negative. A negative association with the presence of teaching support in the hiring orientation could have multiple implications for adjuncts required to be trained in this area. It could indicate lack of administrator confidence in the adjunct instructor’s teaching ability. As student success is a key motivational factor, it follows that adjunct instructors would have the desire to be recognized for their teaching skills (Bryant, Cross, & Jolley, 2014). Thus, the suggestion to improve in teaching would be a logical cause for decreased organizational commitment. Therefore, the provision of teaching support should be determined by individual instructor need for support (Bedford & Miller, 2013; O’Meara, 2015).

The correlation between low levels of organizational commitment and teaching support may also indicate a reduced autonomy for instructors in the classroom. With a broad-brush approach, hiring administrators may attempt to maintain control over adjunct instructor activity (Kezar & Maxey, 2012). A common scenario for many community colleges is that a single full-time instructor is paid to design a course, which is taught by multiple adjunct instructors
(Goldstene, 2012). To this end, the administrator can more readily divert resources toward evaluating how well the course is being taught (Cadambi, 2016). The adjunct instructor, often scholars in their discipline, find themselves evaluated on their ability to teach a course for which they had no input (Cadambi, 2016). The reality is adjunct instructors are not typically included in the design of courses (Lawrence, Ott, & Bell, 2012), although they have historically expressed a desire for more involvement in their hiring institution activities (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Rich, 2016; Scott & Danley-Scott, 2015).

There is a need to further explore successful alternatives to teaching support provided in hiring orientation as research has indicated that certain types of teaching support are needed. In Diegel (2012), one administrator stated, “Adjunct instructors are probably on their own as finding out where the ropes are…” (p. 601). To counteract the effect of blind leadership, the use of mentorship has been gaining momentum. Santisteban and Egues (2014) found that mentorship of adjunct instructors by full-time faculty produced better student outcomes for those instructors. For years, the nursing discipline has provided mentors for nursing instructors. West et al. (2009) found ongoing mentorship of nursing instructors secured a positive teaching experience and resulting commitment to the institution. Administrators who structured instructor programs by providing nursing mentors found increased investment in their department’s mission (Elder, Svoboda, Ryan, & Fitzgerald, 2016). Finally, a collective approach to problem solving was the result of mentor-nursing instructor pairing (Brannagan & Oriol, 2014). In a similar manner, the recommendation would be for administrators to assign mentors to assist them in supporting adjunct instructors.

**Campus contacts.** When campus contacts were part of the orientation content, levels of organizational commitment were higher than when campus contact information was not
presented. The results show that providing campus contacts to adjunct instructors during their orientation contributed to the organizational commitment they have for their institution. Previous research confirms that adjunct instructors, particularly those with doctoral degrees and several years of experience teaching, are not motivated by the presence of teaching support but still require access to campus administrators (Diegel, 2013). Administrators may assume that adjunct instructors need to understand what is expected of them and who to contact if information is needed (Hardré & Killmann, 2012). Similar to teaching support in the form of a mentor, future recommendations indicate that administrators should consider providing ongoing access in the form of campus contact personnel. This could be easily provided through an online networking or a web-based portal with a list of contacts, which would also promote an instructors sense of connection to their hiring institution (Slade, Robb, Sherrod, & Hunker, n.d.).

**Research question 2 (RQ2): “How important are certain employment issues to an adjunct instructor’s perception of their hiring institution?”**

The overall results of the data analysis for the first research question explained only 8.1% of the variance in levels of organizational commitment, and so, over 90% of the variance was available for exploration in future research. The following sections provide commentary on potential avenues for exploration and risks if existing employment practices are to continue. RQ2 asked for participants to rank elements that were important in their perception of their hiring institution. The results align closely to the outcomes of previous studies and are presented as potential areas future studies should examine in association with organizational commitment.

In ranking the elements important to their perceived relationship with their hiring institution, the participants contributed to the literature a prioritization that had not previously
existed. Under discussion are the top three ranked issues. However, prior to discussing the top three ranking, it is noteworthy to highlight an anomaly.

Having health benefits has been documented in the literature as an important issue in adjunct instructor employment (Goldstene, 2015; House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democratic Staff, 2014). Even so, a majority of the participants did not rank health benefits (9 out of 14) as relatively important to their perception of their hiring institution. This tepid ranking could be related to the fact that nearly half of the participants (42%) indicated an employment status of full-time outside of higher education and teaching part-time (fewer than 30 hours a week). One may presume that these participants received health benefits from their full-time employer. A discussion of the top three ranked elements—fair pay rate, adequate notification of teaching assignment, and job security—now follows.

**Fair Pay Rate**

Fair pay rate received the highest count of #1 rank placements ($n = 58$), which does correspond with previous findings. Insufficient pay for adjunct instructors who are not working full-time and relying on part-time or multiple part-time jobs make financial stability nearly impossible to achieve (Goldstene, 2012). Pay rate remains a concern for the participants of this study as it has been a concern of adjuncts in previous studies. In 2016, the reported median income for adjunct instructors for a single course was $2700 (Hurlburt, 2016). For approximately one-third of the participants in this study who stated that they taught 4-6 courses per year ($n = 50, 39.37\%$), that number calculates to an income of a little over $16,000. Previous research has shown that continuing the practice of hiring adjunct instructors at low rates will only increase the number of people living with job insecurity (American Association of University Professors [AAUP], 2013). Because pay rates appear to be solidly based on enrollment numbers (Ortagus &
Stedrak, 2013), other compensation tactics should be explored. Framed within the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the concept of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), the rate of pay an employer offers in exchange for an employee’s performance communicates worth. As employees, adjunct instructors understand they are not valued by administrators when their pay does not compensate them in the same way other institutions might (Hurlburt, 2016), nor for their devotion to students (Dolan et al., 2013). When viewed alongside the correlation between employee effort and compensation (Gerhart & Rynes, 2003) and compensation ethics (Moriarty, 2011), administrators might become very concerned with losing the teaching support they are receiving from their adjunct instructors.

The financial future of community colleges relies upon the wellness and availability of the adjunct instructor population, who are the very reason their student enrollments are even possible. For administrators to illustrate their commitment to the support of adjunct instructor success, budgetary considerations should be redesigned and increases in pay per course need considered.

**Adequate Notification of Teaching Assignment**

Adequate notification of teaching assignment was placed at the top of the #2 ranking \((n = 58)\). Previous findings confirm that late notice is an ongoing issue for adjunct instructors. A lack of notification conveys a certain amount of disrespect (Waltman et al., 2012). Hiring departments may be asking too much when they expect adjunct instructors to be available at the last minute (Jolley et al., 2014). Perhaps unintendedly, the practice still conveys a cavalier approach to hiring that makes a trusting relationship between instructor and institution difficult to establish (HCEWDS, 2014).
Unpredictability of work creates additional problems. First, when hired at the last minute, instructors have no time to be properly introduced to campus staff or the students. If listed in the system as “professor staff” (Street et al., 2012, p. 1) students may not perceive instructors as viable. Questions about instructors’ efficacy can influence student outcomes. Secondly, instructors do not feel their professionalism is respected when they are hired at the last minute (Diegel, 2013; Street et al., 2012). Moreover, instructors may feel shamed if not available on short notice (Jolley et al., 2014). Nonetheless, predicting when they need to hire instructors will continue to challenge hiring administrators (Bérubé & Ruth, 2015) as long as the decision is based on student enrollment numbers. The consequence of last-minute hiring is that instructors may not find themselves committed to such an institution, thinking “they are not investing me, so I don’t have to invest in them” (Waltman, et al., 2012, p. 423).

**Job Security**

Job security held the highest count of #3 ranking (n= 24). A majority of participants in the present study held full-time jobs in addition to part-time teaching. Nevertheless, they still ranked job security third in importance to their perceived relationship with hiring institutions. Greenberg (2014) estimated that by the year 2020, over 40% of adjunct instructors will still have no job security. Moreover, contracted instructors are not even eligible for benefits when their contracts suddenly evaporate (Bérubé, 2012). For both administrators and instructors, decisions to renew a contract unfortunately depend on enrollment numbers, which can either create the need for or remove an instructor from the semester term (Dolan et al., 2013). To maintain existing budgetary resources, hiring administrators unwittingly contribute to the number of people living without the benefits found in a full-time position, perhaps unaware of the problems
this creates (Haynie, 2013). To provide even short-term job security can make a huge difference to people struggling to support themselves.

The top three employment issues ranked by participants were a fair pay rate, adequate notification, and job security. These may be variables included in future studies on organizational commitment. Addition exploration of the study’s limitations and solutions are provided in the following sections.

Limitations and Recommendations

Limitations in empirical studies can limit validity, especially internal validity (Christensen, 2011). Therefore, the researcher must identify and disclose any limitations, which are described in this section. The sample came from an online enrollment system that was limited in scope. Though the system contained courses open for enrollment to all public state community colleges, not all of the schools participated equally in the creation or teaching of the courses. Therefore, some schools may have been underrepresented in the survey data. The participants were teaching online classes for the system, and as a result, this study is not generalizable to face-to-face adjunct instructors. In future studies, this population needs to be considered.

Technical Limitations

Some limitations of this study were technical. Campus e-mail accounts may have had e-mail filters in place that prevented spam or junk mail, so an initial announcement regarding upcoming survey came from the system's e-mail server, and not the Qualtrics system. All following messages came from within the Qualtrics system. Despite these measures, no documentation was available that all qualified participants received notification about the survey from either their email addresses or from Qualtrics. Of the total potential participants initially contacted, 1,013 may have fit the target population but were unreachable. As the messages to
these missing potential participants neither received a response nor were returned, the researcher had not way to know if these participants would have participated. Of the participants who fit the target population, several began the survey but did not complete it. There may be a couple of reasons for their non-participation. As temporary employees, adjunct instructors may believe they are easily expendable (Cadambi, 2016). As such, the participants may have feared job loss for providing negative perceptions about their hiring institution. Furthermore, adjunct instructors are not routinely involved in institutional decision-making (Haynie, 2013) and so, these participants may have perceived their feedback as inconsequential.

**Participant-related Limitations**

A majority of the participants held full-time jobs outside of their teaching as adjuncts. A full-time employment status may have created in those participants a sense of ambiguity about the nature of some survey questions. They may not have identified fully with the concerns presented, especially in the ranking question used for research question two. For example, those with full-time employment are unlikely to face job security or concerns about securing work on a term-by-term basis (Dolan et al., 2013). Further, those with full-time employment are likely practicing in their area of expertise on a daily basis (Wallin, 2016), leading to satisfaction with their jobs. Future research should compare employment experiences of those with full-time jobs outside of teaching with those working only part-time. Finally, instructors new to the system may have felt a certain compulsion to respond, and despite repeated reassurances to the contrary, may have had concerns of confidentiality.

**Other Limitations**

While the selection of variables for this study were based upon literature and theory, variables important to OC could have been missed. In fact, considering the effect size for the
results addressing the first research question, they were. Additional variables needed to be considered. For example, social isolation is an issue for online instructors that has been documented (Caglar, 2013; Golden, 2016; Maier, 2012). The issue of isolation is multiplied for online adjunct instructors (Dolan et al., 2011) and requires additional study, but the influence that isolation may have on OC was not covered in the present research. Examining this variable and others could extend research regarding the issues adjunct instructors experience (Bedford, 2013; Bérubé, 2012; Bryant, 2014; Dolan et al., 2013; Eaton, 2012; Goldstene, 2015; Knoedler, 2015) and contributed to research regarding adjunct instructor commitment to the institutions that hire them.

Convenience sampling was the method used in obtaining participants for this study. Participant contact information came from the available database records of the system where the study took place, which posed a limitation in achieving a more viable random sampling. Additionally, the results were not generalizable to the entire adjunct instructor population as the study took place within a unique statewide system of community colleges and universities. Furthermore, an employee of the system directed the research, which may have generated confusion about the employing organization described in the survey.

**Future Recommendations Based on Research Question Two**

Based on the results of research question two, three issues (a fair pay rate, adequate notification, and job security) drawn from the literature as significant to an adjunct instructor’s perception of their hiring institution need further consideration. By addressing how instructor need is determined, job security can be ensured, which would eliminate issues with notification, and pay could be increased. A brief discussion of the issues fair pay, adequate notification, and job security, and the implications for both adjunct instructors and administrators follows.
Increase Job Security by Reconsidering Enrollment-Based Hiring

Job insecurity may be a product of enrollment-based hiring and can be addressed by considering the elimination of late enrollments or averaging the number of enrollments over time. In eliminating the late enrollment option, administrators can assist both student and instructor. Late enrollments are known to negatively impact student success. Wyner (2014) found that students who started class after the first day were the first to withdraw. In a review of multiple studies North Virginia Community College Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (2014) found that late registrants were less likely to persist, earn a degree, or transfer to a 4-year university. A college could also average course enrollments over multiple years in order to determine the number of instructors needed on average. Administrators could make hiring decisions on a long-term basis and eliminate job insecurity for instructors (Birdsell Bauer, 2017).

In this scenario, when enrollments may not determine the need for a class, instructors can serve as student advisors. As instructors are intrinsically motivated by student success (Dailey-Hebert, Mandernach, Donnelli-Sallee, & Norris, 2014), they would likely be motivated by providing mentorship outside of the classroom. Hence, instructors would still be receiving compensation for their expertise, whether teaching or mentoring. Students would benefit as well because they receive practice-based mentoring from an instructor who is more consistently available to them than a part-time instructor. While instructor presence may seem an obvious necessity, the relationship between instructor and student is not easily quantified. Drawbacks in this relationship may reflect outwardly on the institution’s future success.
Increase Campus Contact and Support

It is known that where administrators were directly engaged with their instructors, teaching effectiveness and commitment was improved (Gutierrez, Candela, & Carver, 2012). For-profit universities practices could provide methods for further adjunct instructor support. Many are known to provide mentors throughout an instructor’s first semester, and who are also made available to assist in any subsequent semesters. Mentorship programs have been successful in developing organizational commitment in adjunct instructors (Brannagan & Oriol, 2014). In these cases, a sense of support is established at the start of the employment relationship. While success in adjunct instructor support and commitment has been established within the community college institution, this section presented alternatives that perhaps have yet to be considered.

Unionization

If the working conditions described in this study (insufficient pay, insufficient notification, job insecurity) continue unabated, temporary part-time instructors may consider turning to outside help. The “here today, gone tomorrow” (Goldstene, 2015) attitude regarding part-time adjunct instructors became much more objectionable upon the news of Margaret Mary Vojtko’s death on September 1, 2013. She was a dedicated French instructor who worked part-time for Duquesne University for over 25 years. She passed away in poverty, following the university’s decision not to renew her contract. Her well-publicized death led to the publication of “The Just-In-Time professor” by the House Committee on Education, and the launch of an adjunct instructor advocacy movement that still heavily influences higher education today (Goldstene, 2015).
Due to the lack of effective action from educational leaders, adjunct instructors have engaged unions a necessary support partner. From 2014 to 2016, nearly 10,000 adjuncts joined the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Even though the SEIU was not initially associated with higher education, its original intent was to assist part-time hourly paid workers. Through its support part-time adjunct instructors have found the SEIU more effective in addressing their complaints than other education unions such as the National Education Association (Bedford & Miller, 2013). The SEIU was able to acquire higher pay rates for adjunct instructors and a recognition of their rights to job security as part-time workers. Similarly, the United Workers Congress is an organization that supports workers who cannot access unions, such as in right-to-work states. It has among its newest members the New Faculty Majority (NFM). Formed in 2009, the New Faculty Majority serves as an advocate for higher wages and job security for adjunct instructors (Greenberg, 2014). Other unions such as the American Association of University Professors, the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Education Association have apparently missed the mark in protecting the rights of temporary part-time adjunct instructors.

Educational leaders may not be comfortable with the upswing in unionization. However, by preventing part-time instructor from joining unions (Kezar & Maxey, 2012), some institutions may be overlooking the connection to their increasing need for adjunct instructors. Institutions could improve adjunct instructor perceptions if they worked with them, instead of disallowing them from distributing union membership information (Lawless, 2017). Despite the rewards, unionizing makes adjunct instructors as temporary employees particularly vulnerable to job loss (Greenberg, 2014). However, adjunct instructors are acquiring some rights to better working conditions. In 2015, the SEIU proposed a raise in pay for a single course to $15,000, plus a
guarantee of five to six courses per year (amounting to $75,000 gross, but $35,000 after healthcare and taxes). Union membership is creating a shift toward improving the working life of part-time instructors. Adjunct instructors at Duke University voted to affiliate with SEIU, and in the Boston area, SEIU expects to see membership grow to 3,500. Due to the work of SEIU, Tufts now offers adjunct pay at $7300 per course, compared to the median of $2700 (Cadambi, 2016). Kim Laffont, Director of the Broward College Adjunct Task Force, offered sage advice citing Margaret Mead, “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world” (Wiegard, 2015, p. 493).

**Conclusion**

Adjunct instructors are not necessarily committed to their hiring institutions, and this is a problem that needs to be addressed throughout higher education. Although the findings showed a negative association between longer hiring orientations and organizational commitment, previous research found that extended orientations that include mentorship produce positive outcomes for adjunct instructors. Similarly, the provision of campus contacts should be continued and modeled on mentorships that support instructors throughout the term. Further, administrators should continue to survey adjunct instructors for feedback on their experiences and make visible efforts to respond. Additionally, hiring could be conducted on an extended basis to year-long or even multiple year contracts. To extend the findings, similar studies should be conducted in other statewide systems and the findings compared, for a more comprehensive view of adjunct instructor employment. In this broader approach, the growth of part-time adjunct instructors could be arrested in its perilous impact and contribute to the sustainability of higher education on the whole.
References


Diegel, B. L. (2013). Perceptions of Community College adjunct instructor and division chairpersons: Support, mentoring, and professional development to sustain academic


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Yarnold, P. R. (2014). UniODA vs. kendall’s coefficient of concordance (w): Multiple rankings of multiple movies. *Optimal Data Analysis, 3*, 121-123
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Instructor Survey

The following survey questions (Appendix A) are an edited version of the survey originating from Randy James Hill of Liberty University, in his dissertation “Examining Adjunct Instructor Characteristics, Perceived Fit, and Teaching Modality to Determine if They Predict Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction at a Mid-Western Career College.” Permission to use these questions was received on February 8, 2017.

Part I: Demographic Information

A. About You

1. Did you teach a course during the 2016-2017 academic year within the TNeCampus online course system?
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. Please select your gender.
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Other

3. Please indicate your age as of May 1, 2017:
   a. Under 35
   b. 35-44
   c. 45-54
   d. 55-64
   e. 65-69
   f. 70 or older

4. Please select one or more of the following choices to best describe your racial/ethnic background.
   a. Caucasian
   b. African American
   c. Hispanic
d. Asian  
e. American Indian  
f. Pacific Islander  
g. Other __________

B. Education and Work Experience

5. Please indicate your highest degree level.
   a. Doctorate  
b. First-professional (credits beyond a Masters, including Educational Specialist)  
c. Masters  
d. Bachelors  
e. Associate  
f. Some college  
g. No college  
h. Other __________

6. Please indicate years of teaching experience (choose one on a scale of 1-10). [0-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10]

C. Your Job

5. Please indicate the discipline(s) in which you teach.
   a. Business  
b. Developmental Education (Math, English, and College Reading (below 100-level)  
c. Education (including Early Childhood Education)  
d. General Education (Math and English (100-level or above), and Communications)  
e. Health Sciences  
f. Natural Sciences (Physics, Biology, Microbiology, Anatomy)  
g. Social Sciences (Human Services, Criminal Justice, Interpreter Training, Psychology)  
h. Other __________
6. Please indicate your average course load per year.
   a. 1-3 courses/year
   b. 4-6 courses/year
   c. 7-10 courses/year
   d. Greater than 10 courses/year

7. Please indicate your employment type.
   a. Multiple part-time teaching jobs amounting to 30 hours a week or more, plus benefits
   b. Multiple part-time teaching jobs amounting to 30 hours a week or more, no benefits
   c. Part-time teaching (fewer than 30 hours a week) in addition to full-time work outside of teaching
   d. Part-time teaching (fewer than 30 hours a week)
   e. Part-time teaching (fewer than 30 hours a week), retired
   f. Other ________

Part II: Organizational Commitment
The prompts below represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. As you answer these prompts, keep in mind your hiring institution (e.g. University of Memphis or Nashville State Community College) as the "organization".
5. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Moderately Slightly Neither Slightly Moderately Strongly
Disagree Disagree Disagree Disagree Agree Agree Agree
Nor Agree

6. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Moderately Slightly Neither Slightly Moderately Strongly
Disagree Disagree Disagree Disagree Agree Agree Agree
Nor Agree

7. I would accept almost any types of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Moderately Slightly Neither Slightly Moderately Strongly
Disagree Disagree Disagree Disagree Agree Agree Agree
Nor Agree

8. I find that my values and the organization’s values are very similar.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Moderately Slightly Neither Slightly Moderately Strongly
Disagree Disagree Disagree Disagree Agree Agree Agree
Nor Agree

5. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Moderately Slightly Neither Slightly Moderately Strongly
5. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Moderately Slightly Neither Slightly Moderately Strongly
Disagree Disagree Disagree Disagree Agree Agree Agree
Nor Agree

6. It would take very little change in my present circumstance to cause me to leave this organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Moderately Slightly Neither Slightly Moderately Strongly
Disagree Disagree Disagree Disagree Agree Agree Agree
Nor Agree

7. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Moderately Slightly Neither Slightly Moderately Strongly
Disagree Disagree Disagree Disagree Agree Agree Agree
Nor Agree

8. I really care about the fate of this organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Moderately Slightly Neither Slightly Moderately Strongly
Disagree Disagree Disagree Disagree Agree Agree Agree
Nor Agree

9. For me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Part III: Hiring Orientation

The questions that follow are about any hiring orientation you may have participated in. Please respond to each prompt as best as you can.

1. I received an orientation from my hiring community college:
   - Yes
   - No

2. The hiring orientation I received was provided:
   - Face to face, at a scheduled time
   - Online
   - Blended (online and face to face)
   - Other: __________

3. The hiring orientation I received was:
   - One day long or less
   - One week long or less
   - More than one week long
   - Other: __________

4. The hiring orientation I received contained (choose all that apply)
   - Technical support information
   - Campus contact assistance information
   - Teaching support assistance and/or information
   - None of these
   - Other: __________

5. I received a hiring orientation from TNeCampus:
   - Yes
   - No

6. The TNeCampus orientation was:
   - Beneficial to my work as an instructor
   - A detriment to my work as an instructor
   - Neither beneficial nor a detriment
   - Other: __________
Part IV - Additional Questions - Supplemental

Research finds that there are certain elements that impact the working relationship between an adjunct instructor and their hiring institution (Diegel, 2013; Dolan, 2013; Kezar, 2013). Some of these are listed below. Respond to the prompt with your hiring institution in mind.

Which of the following has the most impact on or is most important to maintaining a satisfactory working relationship your hiring institution? (1 = has the most impact or is most important)

Select and then drag each item into rank order.

1. Fair pay rate
2. Health benefits
3. Job security
4. Access to campus administrators
5. Adequate notification of a teaching assignment
6. Choice of “office hours”
7. Communication regarding expectations
8. Compensation for time outside of teaching hours
9. Opportunities to connect with full-time faculty
10. Inclusion in departmental decision-making
11. Inclusion in course design
12. Professional development opportunities
13. Networking opportunities
14. Other ____________

Describe why your first choice is the most impactful (limited to 350 characters):

__________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B: University of Memphis IRB Approval Letter

Monday, July 24, 2017 at 10:02:52 AM Central Daylight Time

Subject: Re: PRO-FY2018-10 - Initial: Approval - Expedited
Date: Monday, July 24, 2017 at 10:02:37 AM Central Daylight Time
From: Jennifer Knott
To: Jennifer Knott

From: <irb@memphis.edu>
Date: Jul 24, 2017 8:20 AM
Subject: PRO-FY2018-10 - Initial: Approval - Expedited
To: <emartndl@memphis.edu>, <jlknottm@memphis.edu>

Institutional Review Board
Office of Sponsored Programs
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

Jul 24, 2017

PI Name: Jennifer Knott
Co-Investigators: Emery Martindale
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Emery Martindale
Submission Type: Initial
Title: Measurement of Organizational Commitment in Adjunct Instructors Based on Hiring Orientation Characteristics
IRB ID: #PRO-FY2018-10

Expedited Approval: Jul 21, 2017
Expiration: Jul 21, 2018

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. This IRB approval has an expiration date, an approved renewal must be in effect to continue the project prior to that date. If approval is not obtained, the human consent form(s) and recruiting material(s) are no longer valid and any research activities involving human subjects must stop.
2. When the project is finished or terminated, a completion form must be submitted.
3. No change may be made in the approved protocol without prior board approval.

Thank you,
James P. Whelan, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
The University of Memphis.
APPENDIX C: Tennessee Board of Regents IRB Approval Letter

Tuesday, July 25, 2017 at 9:51:58 AM Central Daylight Time

Subject: TBRCO IRB: Approval via Reliance
Date: Tuesday, July 25, 2017 at 9:49:59 AM Central Daylight Time
From: Seiler, Steven
To: Jennifer Knott
CC: Seiler, Steven
Attachments: PastedGraphic-1.ttf, Knott Reliance Statement.pdf

PI Name: Jennifer Knott
Title: Measurement of Organizational Commitment in Adjunct Instructors Based on Hiring Orientation Characteristics

Your IRB Application has been approved through based upon the reliance on the approval by the University of Memphis IRB.

You may now conduct your research within the guidelines of your approved application.

Attached to this email is the statement of reliance.

Thank you,

Steven Seiler
TBR Central Office IRB Chairperson

__________________________________________________________

Steven J. Seiler, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Sociology
Chair, TTU Institutional Review Board
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Tennessee Tech University
1 William L Jones Dr. | DN 201 (NEW OFFICE)
P.O. Box Number 5052| Cookeville, TN 38505-0001
https://www.tntech.edu/cas/sociology/
APPENDIX D: Recruitment Letter

Dear Community College Instructor:

I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in the Instruction and Curriculum Leadership department at the University of Memphis. As an adjunct instructor teaching within the TNeCampus online course system, you have been selected to participate in a survey to support the goals of this study. The purpose of the study is to determine which characteristics of the hiring orientation provided by your hiring institution impacts/impacted the quality of your employment relationship. The results of this study could benefit yourself, your campus hiring administrator, and other adjunct instructors.

This study is taking place within the Tennessee Board of Regents community college online course system, known as TNeCampus. As an administrator for TNeCampus, I want to reassure you that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision will have no effect whatsoever on your relationship with TNeCampus, and should have no impact on your relationship with the community college for whom you work. If you do decide to participate, you should feel free to answer quite openly. This survey is anonymous and does not contain questions that would identify you or your hiring institution.

The informed consent document linked below contains details about the study and your participation. It is not necessary to sign and return the form. You will indicate your consent electronically in the survey, which should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. View the UOM Consent to Participate in a Research Study.

Please send any questions you may have prior to taking the survey to jlknott@memphis.edu. If you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study after completing the survey, please contact me. I am being guided in this research by Dr. Trey Martindale, Faculty Advisor (emartndl@memphis.edu). Dr. Martindale’s qualifications can be found on his University of Memphis faculty profile page. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Knott
University of Memphis Doctoral Candidate
University of Memphis Department of Instructional Curriculum Leadership
jlknott@memphis.edu
APPENDIX E: Consent Form

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Measurement of Organizational Commitment in Adjunct Instructors Based on Hiring Orientation

WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?
You are being invited to take part in a research study about adjunct instructors who teach within the TNeCampus online course system, and how the hiring orientation provided by the individual community colleges encourages or discourages your commitment to your hiring institution. You are being invited to take part in this research study because as you are hired in the role of adjunct instructor, you are directly impacted by the hiring orientation experience. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about 175 of the adjunct instructors currently enrolled in the TNeCampus online course system.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?
The person in charge of this study is Jennifer Knott [doctoral student] (Jlknott@memphis.edu) of University of Memphis Department of Instructional Curriculum Leadership. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Trey Martindale [Advisor] (emartndl@memphis.edu). There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
By doing this study, we hope to learn of the three characteristics of the hiring orientation you have taken or experienced, which is a strong predictor of your sense of organizational commitment, described by Mowday (1979) as "(1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values; (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization".

ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
The only requirement for participation is that you are hired as an adjunct instructor by the campus providing the hiring orientation, at a rate of 30 hours a week (or comparable limits) or less.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?
The research procedures will be conducted online, by survey developed and hosted in the online survey tool Qualtrics, the results of which will be saved in the researcher’s password protected account provided by the University of Memphis. You will have 24/7 access to the survey for a period of two weeks, and can complete it at your convenience during that time. You will receive an alert message three days before the closing of the survey.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?
For the purposes of the study, you are being asked to read the e-mail that contains the invitation, review the consent letter that will be attached, and signify your consent by selecting the link to the survey. It will be at that time you will complete the survey.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?
To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
There is no guarantee that you will get any benefit from taking part in this study. Your willingness to take part, however, may, in the future, help society as a whole better understand this research topic.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?
If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering. If you decide not to take part in this study, your decision will have no effect on the quality or quantity of future employment opportunities with your hiring institution.

IF YOU DON’T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?
If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?
There are no costs associated with taking part in the study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?
We will make every effort to keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be personally identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private.
The survey results will be stored within the researcher’s password-protected Qualtrics account provided through the University of Memphis. The investigators will set Qualtrics to Anonymize Responses. The Qualtrics default is to collect IP address and GPS coordinates of respondents. By setting the survey to Anonymized Responses the investigator will not be collecting this identifiable information.

All data will be processed through the researcher’s password-protected account associated with the University of Memphis’ online SPSS statistical software. This study is anonymous. That means that no one, not even members of the research team, will know that the information you give came from you.

CAN YOUR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?  
If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study. The individuals conducting the study may need to withdraw you from the study. This may occur if you are not able to follow the directions they give you, if they find that your being in the study is more risk than benefit to you, or if the agency funding the study decides to stop the study early for a variety of scientific reasons.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLAINTS?  
Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Jennifer Knott at Jennifer.knott.tbr@gmail.com. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705. We will give you a signed copy of this consent form to take with you.

_________________________________________                  ________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study                  Date

_________________________________________                  __________________________
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_________________________________________                  __________________________
Name of [authorized] person obtaining informed consent                  Date
APPENDIX F: TNeCampus Letter of Support

TENNESSEE BOARD of REGENTS
Office of Academic Affairs & TN eCampus

5 August 2017
TO: Jennifer Knott

FROM: Gregory A. Sedrick, Ph.D., PE, Associate Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs

RE: Support of Doctorial Survey of TN eCampus Adjunct Faculty

I approve the support of subject survey based upon the approval of the TBR IRB of the survey questions, the guarantee of respondent’s anonymity, and the value of a summary response on the topic. A summary response of training needs for adjunct faculty who have been assigned TN eCampus Partnership courses would be an excellent input to our continuous improvement process. I look forward to see summary results and your interpretation of them.

Good luck on your research!
APPENDIX G: Survey Reminder Letter

Community College Instructors,

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete the survey that is part of my study on adjunct instructor organizational commitment to their hiring college. This study will examine the level of your organizational commitment, based upon the hiring orientation you received prior to beginning your teaching work. This study is intended to produce results that will inform your hiring administrators in future adjunct instructor hiring practices.

If you have not yet participated, please visit the Web site provided at the end of this message. This will take you about twenty minutes of time. Your contribution is critical in informing the outcomes of future adjunct instructor hiring practices.

Your responses are 100% anonymous, so you may be completely honest in your responses without fear of institutional consequences.

Thank you for offering your participation and support of this study. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Knott
University of Memphis Doctoral Candidate

LINK TO SURVEY:
Dear Distance Education Directors and Deans:

For the past three years, I have worked toward the completion of a doctoral degree in the Instruction and Curriculum Leadership department at the University of Memphis. My study protocol has been approved by the University of Memphis Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Tennessee Board of Regents IRB and has been vetted by a representative of the Office of the Chancellor at the TBR.

In approximately two weeks, I will begin collecting data in support of my research regarding adjunct instructors. The invitation to participate (with a link to the survey) will be e-mailed to the instructors enrolled within the TNeCampus course management system. The survey includes standard demographic questions, questions regarding organizational commitment, and questions about their campus hiring orientation. There are no questions asking for name or institution, and no other identifying information will be collected.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

All the best,
Jennifer Knott

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