An Examination of Adjunct Faculty Characteristics: Comparison between Non-Profit and For-Profit Institutions

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Abstract

Institutions must understand the unique characteristics and motivations of adjunct faculty teaching online to more effectively support a diverse faculty population. The current study examines faculty characteristics and motivations to explore differences in the types of adjunct faculty teaching at non-profit or for-profit institutions. A survey of 859 part-time, online instructors found no statistically significant differences for gender, level of education, faculty typology (e.g., hope to obtain full time in higher education), or satisfaction; small differences were found in relation to ethnicity, academic experience, level of instruction (undergraduate or graduate), class size, and willingness to recommend online adjunct teaching to others. The results suggest that online adjunct faculty at for-profit and non-profit institutions are remarkably similar with regards to personal and academic characterstics as well as their motivation for and satisfaction with teaching online in an adjunct capacity. Not only does this lend support for the assumption that the nature of instruction is likely similar across for-profit and non-profit institutions, but also that best practices in faculty training, support and mentoring can be shared across institutional types. Recognizing the similarity in academic experience and preparation of online adjuncts, it allows faculty development initiatives and research to be shared, adapted and generalized across a wide range of of institutional types.

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The growth of online education (Allen & Seaman, 2014) has been accompanied by a simultaneous increase in the number of courses taught by adjunct faculty. As indicated by the Digest on Educational Statics (NCES, 2015), 1.5 million faculty are employed in the United States with almost half teaching in an adjunct position. From 2002 to 2009, online enrollments in higher education in the United States grew from approximately 1.6 million learners to over 5.6 million learners (Sener, 2010) with enrollments in online courses growing at a rate exceeding overall trends in higher education (Allen & Seaman, 2014; Bettinger & Long, 2010). At present, 49% of instructional faculty at colleges and universities in the United States are adjunct (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015); this reliance

on adjunct faculty extends to institutions outside the United States as well (Cowley, 2010; Gottschalk & McEachern, 2010; Husbands, 1998; Knight, Baume, Tait, & Yorke, 2007; Smith & Coombe, 2006; Tait, 2002). Reflective of this growth, institutions increasingly rely on adjunct faculty to teach online course offerings (NCES, 2011; Gappa, Austin & Trice, 2007) and, because of current economic conditions, the number of adjunct faculty teaching online will likely continue to grow (Dailey-Hebert, Mandernach, Donnelli-Sallee & Norris, 2014; NCES, 2011). While this growth has been noted across the majority of higher education institutions, there is a paucity of research on differences in characteristics and motivations of adjunct faculty as a function of their choice to teach at a non-profit or for-profit institution. To assist institutions in effectively supporting adjunct faculty, it is essential to understand unique faculty characteristics as a function of institution type (i.e., non-profit or for-profit).

The dependence of colleges and universities on adjunct faculty to teach online courses is largely a function of economics: adjunct faculty simply cost less than their fulltime counterparts (National Education Association, 2009). In addition, the contractual nature of the adjunct role allows institutions to hire (and release) faculty as a function of enrollments thus preventing salary or benefit expenditures when enrollments fail to meet projections (Berry, 1999; Rahman, 2001). The flexibility offered via adjunct faculty is particularly well suited to online programs. Without the limitations associated with classroom space or geographic availability of faculty, institutions can increase (or decrease) their online course offerings to reflect actual enrollments. Since the location and hiring of faculty are not limited to those in the geographic area and faculty are not under contract if courses do not meet enrollment, it is feasible (and potentially desirable) for institutions to have a pool of adjunct faculty available to schedule as enrollments dictate. Considerable research has examined the institutional value (Benjamin, 2002; Dedman & Pearch, 2004; Finder, 2007; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Grusin & Reed, 1994; Kekke, 1986; Levin, 2005; Reichard, 2003; Wagoner, Metcalfe, & Olaore, 2005; Wyles, 1998) and instructional effectiveness (Berry, 1999; Cowley, 2010; Lyons, 2007; Mueller, Sanderson & Mandernach, 2013; Peters, Jackson, Andrew, Halbomb, & Salamonson, 2011; Puzzifero & Shelton, 2009) of adjunct faculty. As discussed by Pankin and Weiss (n.d.) the majority of research focusing on adjunct faculty can be grouped into "rough categories centered on four topics: the status of part-time faculty, exploitation or the lack of justice for part-time faculty, their morale or job satisfaction, and the educational problems that are created by using part-time faculty" (p. 2). Missing in this conceptualization is an understanding of how the type of institution (i.e., non-profit or for-profit) impacts the characteristics and motivations of the adjunct faculty who choose to teach there; this study focuses on the characteristics of adjunct faculty teaching online as a function of institution type. Despite extensive debates on the benefits and limitations of for-profit institutions, there has been little discussion on the type of faculty who elect to teach at these schools. Recognizing that the intellectual rigor of for-profit institutions is a frequent topic of concern, it is valuable to gain a better understanding of the motivations and characteristics of faculty responsible for teaching within this educational environment.

While research examining the increased reliance on adjunct faculty is not exclusive to online education in either the non-profit or for-profit sector, the growing number of adjunct faculty teaching in this mode demands closer examination of the considerations unique to this group (for general discussions concerning institutional dependence on adjunct faculty, see Bombardieri, 2006; Capriccioso, 2005; Carroll, 2003; Eisenberg, 2010; Fagan-Wilen, Springer, Ambrosino, & White, 2006; Finder, 2007; Glenn, 2008; Hickman, 1998; June, 2008; Klein, 2003; Marshall, 2003; Modarelli, 2006; Murphy, 2002; Pedersen, 2005; Smallwood, 2002; Stephens & Wright, 1999; Wilson, 2006; Woodson, 2005). Lazerson

(2010) highlights, "The shift to part-time faculty members, already under way during the last two decades, is accelerating, and almost no one knows the consequences" (Lazerson, 2010, B6).

Underlying the discussions concerning adjunct faculty characteristics is the need to ensure that students' learning experiences are not negatively impacted by the employment status, role of the faculty teaching the course, or the institution type (i.e., non-profit or for-profit). But a simple comparison of the impact of faculty members as a function of their employment classification (either fulltime or adjunct) fails to recognize the inherent variability both within and between these groups (Mueller, Sanderson & Mandernach, 2013). The nature of a fulltime faculty position implies a level of commitment to the institution and dedication to teaching outcomes. In comparison, less is known about the demographic characteristics, motivation and time-commitments of faculty members teaching on a part-time basis (Mandernach, Barclay, Huslig & Jackson, 2015); further, the available information doesn't differentiate our understanding of adjunct faculty based on whether the institution has a non-profit or for-profit status. Grouping all adjunct faculty into a homogeneous category fails to recognize the vast differences in those teaching in a part-time role (Mandernach, Register & O'Donnell, 2015). The current study examines characteristics and motivations of adjunct faculty to better understand how institutions can more effectively support this unique, diverse population. These factors are examined in relation to the institutional type (for-profit or non-profit).

Despite the fact that adjunct faculty represent a substantial percentage of instructional faculty in higher education, there is a need for increased research to understand how colleges and universities should effectively support adjunct faculty (Umbach, 2007). This need is intensified when focusing on research uniquely targeting adjunct faculty working remotely in the online classroom. The Coalition on the Academic Workforce (2012) reported, "The large and growing majority employed in contingent positions is rendered largely invisible, both as individuals on the campuses where they work and collectively in the ongoing policy discussions of higher education" (p. 1). Not only must colleges and universities develop policies, practices, and resources specifically targeting the needs of adjunct faculty as a whole (Bombardieri, 2006; Finder, 2007; NCES, 2010), but institutions need to recognize and embrace the diversity of this population to adapt support as a function of the variability inherent in this role (Mandernach, Register & O'Donnell, 2015; Mueller, Sanderson & Mandernach, 2013).

The majority of research refers to "adjunct faculty" as a homogeneous body of instructors classified and grouped exclusively as a function of their part-time, contractual employment status. But, as highlighted by Gappa and Lesslie (1993), adjunct instructor lifestyles and motivation are distinct; broadly categorized, distinctions between adjunct faculty can be classified into four typologies:

- *Specialists, experts, or professionals* have full-time employment outside their part-time teaching responsibilities; these adjuncts teach as a means of sharing their expertise, networking with community members, or contributing to the discipline.
- *Freelancers* are individuals employed in two or more part-time jobs, or simultaneously hold a full-time job at another college or university.
- *Career enders* are professionals who are at or near retirement but desire to remain active in the professional community.
- *Aspiring academics* consist of individuals beginning their academic career; they teach in an adjunct capacity while trying to secure full-time academic positions.

While these typologies provide a useful framework for general differentiations between adjunct faculty, Wagoner (2007) cautions against a "one-size-fits-all conceptualization of part-time faculty" (pg. 26). Rather, Wagoner highlights two broad categories of adjunct faculty: 1) highly-skilled scholars employed fulltime in the private sector; and 2) less-skilled scholars seeking fulltime faculty appointments. Echoing Wagoner's "less-skilled scholars" and Gappa and Lesslie's (1993) "aspiring academics," Gottschalk and McEachern (2010) report an increasing number of adjunct faculty working simultaneously at multiple institutions while seeking a tenure-track academic position.

The concept of "aspiring academics" is not unique to online education. Across all modes of higher learning (face-to-face, hybrid, online or other), there are adjunct faculty working simultaneously at multiple institutions. The term "road scholars" developed as a play on words to reflect the phenomenon of adjunct faculty driving to multiple campuses to piece together employment opportunities; but the geographically remote nature of the online classroom takes the concept of "professional adjuncts" (Bedford, 2009), "full-time part-timers" (Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003) or "entrepreneurial adjuncts" (Carnevale, 2004) to a new level. The employment of campus-based adjuncts (i.e., road scholars) is limited by the physical proximity of nearby campuses; in contrast, the ubiquity of online teaching (combined with the contractual nature of the adjunct role) presents virtually no limits on the teaching potential of adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty who historically may have been classified as "aspiring academics" may elect to capitalize on the flexibility of online education to create their own fulltime role. In addition to fostering the possibility of "professional adjuncts," the flexible, remote nature of online teaching opens up the possibility of adjunct work to a new population of employed adults who would otherwise be alienated from higher education due to their physical distance from a campus (Bates, 2005; Bates & Poole, 2003).

In an attempt to delineate the various types and motivations of online adjuncts, Bedford and Miller (2013), adapted the work of Schnitzer and Crosby (2003) and Bedford (2009) to categorize adjunct faculty according to the following:

- Not professionally employed in the career in which the participant was degreed (Not Employed in the Field)
- A full-time instructor who also works part-time as an online adjunct (Full-Time Instructor)
- A full-time part-timer who is employed as an adjunct at several institutions (Full-Time Part-Timer)
- A full-time administrator who also works part-time as an online adjunct (Full-Time Administrator)
- A graduate from an advanced degree program and seeking her first teaching position (Recent Graduate)
- Looking for a full time faculty position at a higher education institution, using the adjunct position as a stepping-stone (Seeking Employment)

While these categories help to differentiate the goals and experiences of adjunct faculty teaching online, it is important to examine this information within the broader institutional context and in relation to associated demographic variables. The current study examines faculty characteristics and motivations as a function of institutional type to determine if there are differences in the types of adjunct faculty teaching at non-profit or for-profit institutions.

In 1998, Husbands challenged institutions to avoid making assumptions about adjunct faculty

as "there is still remarkably little nation-level information about their [adjunct faculty] numbers or the variety of their employment and contractual circumstances, let alone about their own views on the nature of their employment" (pg. 259). Despite more than 15 years passing since this challenge, colleges and universities still struggle to recognize the variability in adjunct faculty or understand how to best support the changing needs of this group. While research has made gains in differentiating between the various motivations and roles of adjunct faculty, there is still little known about adjunct faculty characteristics in relation to their choices for employment, availability to provide effective instruction, and ways that institutions can best support this heterogeneous faculty group.

The passing of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) further intensifies this issue. As outlined by ACA, institutions must provide benefits to any faculty member (adjunct or otherwise) working 30 or more hours per week (Moran, 2014). With budgetary constraints limiting the employment of any individual adjunct faculty member to under 30 hours per week, many institutions will be forced to restrict course assignments for individual adjuncts (Land & Salemi, 2014) resulting in an increased number of adjunct faculty needed to teach course offerings. This high (and potentially increasing) reliance on adjunct faculty, coupled with growing concerns about workload, instructional quality and adjunct support, demands increased attention to understanding the characteristics of adjunct faculty teaching online in relation to their institutional contexts.

Identifying the various characteristics, motivations and time-commitments of adjunct faculty is the first step in customizing development of professional programming, support and engagement for adjunct faculty teaching online (Mandernach, Register & O'Donnell, 2015). While there are shared needs consistent across all adjunct faculty groups (i.e., comprehensive orientations, ongoing professional development, pedagogical support, quality recognition, and a sense of community) (Donnelli-Sallee, Dailey-Hebert, & Mandernach, 2012; Elliot, Rhoades, Jackson, & Mandernach, 2015; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Gideon, 2007; Lyons, 2007), equally important is awareness of the unique needs of faculty sub-populations. The purpose of this study is to determine if differences exist in the characteristics, motivations, availability and obligations of adjunct faculty teaching online as a function of institution type (non-profit compared to for-profit). Results can be used to better understand how colleges and universities can tailor services unique to their institutional context to more effectively support this diverse faculty population.

Methodology

Participants

Nine hundred twenty-five faculty completed the anonymous, online survey; 66 responses were eliminated due to failure to teach in a part-time, online role at a postsecondary institution. The resultant sample size of 859 adjunct faculty (34.8% male, 65.2% female) was distributed evenly between 35-44 years (25.1%), 45-54 years (24.6%), and 55-64 years (30%), with a minority in the 25-34 years (9.2%) or over 65 years (11%) age categories. The majority of respondents reported White ethnicity (83.2%) with a small minority identifying with Hispanic or Latino (2.8%), Black or African American (7.9%), Native American (.8%), Asian (.6%), and Other (4.7%).

Most respondents teach at 4-year private schools (61.7%) with significantly fewer at 4-year public (20%) or 2-year (8.1%) institutions. In addition, 10.2% of faculty reported teaching simultaneously for both 2-year and 4-year institutions. Reflecting on institutional type, 43.9%

of faculty teach at a non-profit college or university compared with 56.1% teaching at a for-profit postsecondary institution.

Due to the nature of the sampling and survey distribution technique (as described in the procedures and design of the study), it is not known how many individuals ultimately received the request to participate; thus sampling error and response rate are unknown.

Materials

The online survey included 50 questions (4 of which offered the opportunity for open-ended responses) and took about 20 minutes to complete. In addition to demographic questions, participants were asked to rate (1-5; 1 = Not at all; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Moderately; 4 = Mostly; 5 = Total) the extent to which they perceived that statements (such as "I enjoy teaching college classes") applied to them. Respondents were also asked to select the response that best describes how true each statement (such as "I am satisfied in my role as a part-time instructor") was for them (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

Procedures and Design

The study utilized a descriptive, nonexperimental, survey design. Because there is no single, readily available database to form a proper population from which to sample part-time, online instructors, an online survey was developed and distributed via email, listservs and social media. A request to participate and a survey link were emailed to adjunct faculty at participating institutions (20 institutions were invited to participate in the research, six elected to send out the survey request and link to their adjunct faculty). In addition, a link inviting participation in the survey was posted to social media by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Furthermore, the survey link and invitation to participate was distributed via the following listservs: Minnesota Writing and English, Christian Adult Higher Education, Christian Business Faculty Association, Retention Discussion Group and Tomorrow's Professor eNewsletter. The survey link was active and available for approximately 3 months.

Results

To examine potential differences in faculty characteristics, motivations and interests as a function of institution type, a crosstabs analysis was conducted between adjunct faculty teaching at non-profit versus for-profit institutions. As indicated previously, 44% (n = 374) of adjunct faculty reported teaching at non-profit schools with 56% (n = 477) teaching at for-profit institutions.

Faculty Characteristics

An analysis of demographic information revealed no statistically significant differences between the gender [$\chi2$ (1, N=838) = 3.59, p =.058] or age [$\chi2$ (4, N=844) = 5.14, p =.274] of adjunct faculty teaching at for-profit or non-profit institutions. Table 1 provides the percentage of faculty in each dimension:

Table 1: Faculty Demographics by Institution Type

		Non-Profit	For-Profit

		Institution	Institution
Gender	Male	38.5%	32.2%
	Female	61.5%	67.8%
Age	25-34	11.1%	7.6%
	35-44	22.5%	27.2%
	45-54	23.8%	25.3%
	55-64	31.2%	29.3%
	65+	11.4%	10.7%

Results did detect a statistically significant relationship [$\chi 2$ (6, N=839) = 12.86, p=.045] between institutional type (profit, nonprofit) and ethnicity. Cramer's V of 0.124 indicates a small size effect; see Table 2. An examination of the observed and expected frequencies reveals that instructors who are Black or African American are underrepresented in the non-profit schools and overrepresented in the for-profit schools.

Table 2: Faculty Ethnicity by Institution Type

		Non-Profit Institution	For-Profit Institution
Ethnicity	White	84.5%	82.4%
	Hispanic or Latino	1.9%	3.6%
	Black or African American	6%	9.1%
	Native American	1.6%	.2%
	Asian	.5%	.6%
	No response	4.1%	2.1%
	Other	1.4%	1.9%

Academic Experience

An analysis of adjunct faculty's level of education revealed no statistically significant difference [$\chi 2$ (7, N=848) = 9.62, p =.211] between adjunct faculty teaching at for-profit or non-profit institutions; see Table 3.

Table 3: Adjunct Faculty Level of Education

		Non-Profit Institution	For-Profit Institution
Level of Education	Associates	.5%	0%
	Bachelors	.3%	.8%
	One Masters	39.4%	42.3%
	Two (or more) Masters	9.9%	7.6%
	Juris Doctorate	.3%	1.5%
	Juris Doctorate plus Masters	.3%	.2%
	Doctorate	48.8%	47.5%
	Doctorate and Juris	.5%	.8%

	Doctorate		

Despite no differences in the level of education, an examination of the level of academic experience of adjunct faculty revealed a statistically significant difference [$\chi2$ (4, N=839) = 10.57, p=.032]between institutional type (profit, nonprofit) and academic experience. Further analysis (Cramer's V = 0.112) indicates a small effect size with instructors with less than five years' experience underrepresented in the non-profit schools and overrepresented in the for-profit schools; in addition, instructors with more than twenty years' experience were overrepresented in the non-profit schools and underrepresented in the for-profit schools. See Table 4 for a breakdown of adjunct faculty years of experience.

Table 4: Adjunct Faculty Years of Experience

		Non-Profit Institution	For-Profit Institution
Years of Experience	Less than 5	28.4%	34.8%
	6-10	30%	33.3%
	11-15	17.8%	13.2%
	16-20	10%	9.8%
	20+	13.8%	9%

Differentiation of Adjunct Faculty Role

An examination of the differentiation of the adjunct faculty role found no statistically significant differences in the types of adjunct faculty teaching online as a function of the institutional type [$\chi2$ (8, N=847) = 14.62, p =.067]; see Table 5.

Table 5: Role of Adjunct Faculty by Institution Type

		Non-Profit Institution	For-Profit Institution
Faculty Role	Hope to obtain FT in higher education	8.1%	10.4%
	Retired from higher education	2.4%	1.9%
	Retired from another field	2.4%	3.7%
	Several part-time jobs including one teaching position	3.3%	4.5%
	Several part-time teaching jobs	3.7%	4.5%
	Fulltime employment outside of higher education	11%	17.8%
	Teach fulltime in higher education	4.8%	7%
	Maintains household	1.4%	1.4%
	Other	6.8%	5%

Instructional Environment

An examination of the instructional environment found statistically significant differences in class level (undergraduate or graduate) [$\chi2$ (2, N=847) = 22.48, p<.001] and typical class size

[χ2 (5, N=846) = 32.98, p<.001]. A Cramer's V of 0.163 for class level indicates a small size effect with undergraduate courses overrepresented in the non-profit schools and underrepresented in the for-profit schools; conversely, graduate courses are underrepresented in the non-profit schools and overrepresented in the for-profit schools. Examination of typical class size finds that class sizes less than 10 are overrepresented in the non-profit schools and underrepresented in the for-profit schools (Cramer's V = 0.197); see Table 6.

Table 6: Instructional Environment by Institution Type

		Non-Profit Institution	For-Profit Institution
Class Level	Undergraduate	59.7%	44.4%
	Graduate	18.3%	30.3%
	Both	22%	25.3%
Typical Class Size	Less than 10	8.6%	4.4%
	11-20	44.1%	48.1%
	21-30	36.3%	44.7%
	31-50	7.3%	2.1%
	51-100	2.2%	.4%
	More than 100	1.6%	.2%

Faculty Motivation

An analysis of faculty motivation for online teaching revealed no statistically significant differences in adjunct faculty's desire to remain active [χ2 (4, N=842) = 4.07, p=.397], receive extra income [χ2 (4, N=844) = 8.73, p=.068], give back [χ2 (4, N=846) = 3.41, p=.491], intellectual stimulation [χ2 (4, N=845) = 3.63, p=.459], and financial necessity (as measured by impact of part-time, online compensation on total annual income) [χ2 (4, N=843) = 8.21, p=.084]. Table 7 overviews faculty motivation for adjunct online teaching.

Table 7: Faculty Motivation for Adjunct Teaching by Institution Type

		Non-Profit Institution	For-Profit Institution
Remain Active	Strongly Disagree	13.4%	10%
	Disagree	16.4%	17.9%
	Neutral	15.6%	19.1%
	Agree	35.5%	35.1%
	Strongly Agree	19.1%	17.9%
Extra Income	Strongly Disagree	4%	2.5%
	Disagree	8.6%	5.9%
	Neutral	15.1%	15%
	Agree	44.4%	40.3%
	Strongly Agree	28%	36.2%
Give Back	Strongly Disagree	5.1%	2.7%
	Disagree	8.3%	8.9%
	Neutral	18.2%	19.9%
	Agree	40.8%	40.6%

		Non-Profit Institution	For-Profit Institution
	Agree	40.8%	40.6%
	Strongly Agree	27.6%	27.9%
Intellectual Stimulation	Strongly Disagree	1.9%	1.5%
	Disagree	4%	3%
	Neutral	9.9%	9.1%
	Agree	45.8%	41.9%
	Strongly Agree	38.3%	44.5%
Financial Necessity	Strongly Disagree	12.1%	11.7%
	Disagree	19.9%	13%
	Neutral	16.1%	16.3%
	Agree	20.2%	22.5%
	Strongly Agree	31.7%	36.5%

Faculty Satisfaction

An analysis of adjunct faculty satisfaction as a function of institution type found no statistically significant difference [$\chi2$ (4, N=847) = 5.56, p=.234]; see Table 8.

Table 8: Faculty Satisfaction by Institution Type

		Non-Profit Institution	For-Profit Institution
I am satisfied as a part-time, online instructor.	Strongly Disagree	4.8%	5.1%
	Disagree	9.4%	6.3%
	Neutral	13.4%	10.1%
	Agree	40.1%	44.8%
	Strongly Agree	32.4%	33.6%

In contrast, there was a statistically significant difference in agreement with the statement, "For friends and family that are academically qualified, I would recommend that they become a part-time online instructor" [$\chi2$ (5, N=848) = 15.39, p=.004]. Further analysis (Cramer's V = 0.135) indicates a small size effect with those at for-profit institutions being more likely to recommend adjunct teaching to their friends and families. Table 9 provides the levels of agreement by institution type.

Table 9: Recommendation for Adjunct Teaching by Institution Type

		Non-Profit Institution	For-Profit Institution
For friends and family that are academically qualified, I would recommend that they become a part-time online instructor.	Strongly Disagree	5.6%	3.8%
	Disagree	7.5%	3.6%
	Neutral	20.1%	14.3%
	Agree	32.9%	39.7%
	Strongly Agree	34%	38.6%

Tables 10 and 11 provide a summary of the results and associated findings that were statistically significant.

Table 10: Summary of Results (statistical significance)

Item	No Statistically Significant Difference	Statistically Significant Difference
Gender	X	
Level of Education	X	
Faculty Role		
• Hope to obtain FT in higher education	X	
• Retired from higher education	X	
• Retired from another field	X	
• Several part-time jobs including one teaching position	X	
• Several part-time teaching jobs	X	
• Fulltime employment outside of higher education	X	
• Teach fulltime in higher education	X	
• Maintains household	X	
Satisfied as a part-time online instructor	X	
Ethnicity		X (p=.045)
Academic experience		X (p=.032)
Undergraduate or Graduate		X (p<.001)
Class size		X (p<.001)
Would recommend to others being a part-time online instructor		X (p=.004)

Table 11: Over/Under Representation (Statistically Significant Differences)

Item	Non-profit Institution	For-profit Institution
Black or African American	-	+
< 5 years' teaching experience	-	+
>20 years' teaching experience	+	-
Undergraduate courses	+	-
Graduate courses	-	+
Class size < 10 students	+	-
Recommend being part-time online instructor	-	+

(-) = under represented   (+) = over represented

Discussion

Despite extensive debate about the differences in the academic quality of online programs at non-profit and for-profit institutions, the results of this study find minimal differences in the characteristics and motivations of the adjunct faculty who teach there. Findings revealed no statistically significant differences between the part-time, online faculty at for-profit and non-profit institutions with regards gender, level of education, faculty role or satisfaction. Consistent across both institution types, there are more female than male faculty (approximately 65% female to 35% male) and faculty represent an even distribution of age (approximately 25% in the 35-44 years age group, 25% in the 45-54 years age group, and 30% in the 55-64 years age category). Online adjunct faculty at both institution types are predominantly Caucasian (approximately 85%) with for-profit instituions employing slightly more Black or African American faculty than their non-profit counterparts.

Of greater interest than the personal characteristics, an analysis of the academic qualifications and experience also showed minimal differences between online adjunct faculty as a function of institution type. In both non-profit and for-profit institituions, approximately 50% of the adjunct faculty teaching online hold a doctorate degree with the other 50% possessing one or more master's degrees. Likewise, the level of teaching experience was comparable with approximately 30% of faculty at both institutions with six to ten years of teaching experience. While faculty at for-profit institituions indicated slightly less teaching experience than their non-profit counterparts, the difference was small with for-profit institituions showing more online adjunct faculty with less than five years teaching experience (approximately 30% at non-profit institituions compared with 35% at for-profit institutions). Equally important to note, faculty with extensive teaching experience (more than 10 years) was relatively equal across both institution types.

Analyzing the motivation for online teaching as a function of the various roles and lifestyles of adjuncts (Bates, 2005; Bates & Poole, 2003; Bedford, 2009; Bedford & Miller, 2013; Carnevale, 2004; Gappa & Lesslie 1993; Gottschalk & McEachern, 2010; Schinitzer & Crosby, 2003; Wagoner, 2007), this study found no differences in the motivations for teaching online or the part-time role held by faculty. Across both institution types, approximately 10% of online adjuncts teach in a part-time capacity with the goal of obtaining a fulltime teaching position in higher education. Likewise, regardless of whether teaching at a for-profit or non-profit institution, approximately 5% of online adjunct faculty are retired and 8% indicate they simultaneously work several part-time positions. Approximately 14% of respondents across institution types are employed fulltime outside of higher education and

5% supplement their fulltime position in higher education with adjunct teaching. While these trends are reflecting of current research on the lifestyles and roles of faculty electing to teach online in a part-time capacity, there were no differences in the trends as a function of institution type. Similarly, there were no differences in adjunct faculty's motivation for online teaching as a function of institution type. Across both for-profit and non-profit institutions, adjunct faculty overwhelmingly agreed that they teach online in a part-time capacity as a means of staying active, earning extra income, giving back to the profession and for intellectual stimulation.

Interestingly, despite public discussion about the substantial differences many assume exist between non-profit and for-profit education, online adjunct faculty across both institutional types reported very high levels of satisfaction with their part-time, online teaching role. While faculty at both institutional types indicated that they would recommend online teaching to their friends and families, those teaching at for-profit institutions were even more likely to do so than their non-profit counterparts. Considering the high levels of reported satisfaction in relation to the motivations for teaching part-time online (both personal and financial), satisfaction is not simply a function of the financial compensation for online teaching but a more holistic satisfaction in which faculty are fairly compensated for their work and gain personal/intellectual satisfaction from the academic environment in which they teach.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Work

An integrated examination of these findings reveals that online adjunct faculty are remarkably similar with regards to personal and academic characterstics as well as their motivation for and satisfaction with teaching online in an adjunct capacity. Not only does this lend support for the assumption that the nature of instruction is likely similar across for-profit and non-profit institutions, but also that best practices in faculty training, support and mentoring can be shared across institutional types. Recognizing the similarity in academic experience and preparation of online adjuncts, it allows faculty development initiatives and research to be shared, adapted and generalized across a wide range of of institutional types.

While the characteristics and motivations of faculty teaching at non-profit and for-profit institutions are quite similar, the teaching environments do show slight differences. Online adjunct faculty teaching at for-profit institutions are more likely to be teaching graduate classes whereas a greater proportion of online adjunct faculty at non-profit instititions indicate teaching at the undergraduate level. This trend is not a function of the online adjunct faculty, but rather reiterates the student population targeted by each institutional type. Recognizing variations in the course level (along with the associated student characteristics and learning outcomes), institutions would benefit from creating faculty support programming that is most aligned with the specific nature of the course level being taught by faculty. For example, while faculty development initiatives across all levels are likely to include topics such as facilitating online discussions or managing online discussion forums, programming on this topic at the undergraduate level may emphasize strategies for creating an engaging discussion or tips for including instructional resources in discussion forums whereas programming on this topic at the graduate level may highlight how to utilize questioning strategies to promote critical thinking or the integration of professional experience in threaded discussions.

Across both for-profit and non-profit institutions, typical class sizes are very similar with most online classes having between 11 and 30 students. While non-profit institutions were

slightly more likely to have very small class sizes (approximately 9% with classes less than 10 students), large classes (over 50 students) were rare at both non-profit and for-profit institutions. As reported by online adjunct faculty, class sizes at both institutional types were aligned with best practices research for optimal course size to maximize learning and engagement in the online environment.

Future research should expand this work to explore other potential differences in faculty characteristics as a function of their teaching environment (e.g., faith-based versus non-faith-based schools or the interaction of faith-orientation with the non-profit/for-profit models). An understanding of how institutional status impacts the characteristics and motivations of faculty who elect to teach at each type of school can help institutions to attract, support and retain adjunct faculty. Recognizing that the remote nature of online teaching expands the potential faculty pool available for online part-time teaching, institutions may benefit from identifying faculty characteristics that show the greatest alignment with the institutional context and culture.

While this research supports extensive similarities between adjunct faculty teaching at non-profit and for-profit institutions, it is important to keep in mind the heterogeneous nature of both faculty groups. Essential to this understanding is an awareness that adjunct faculty are not the *same* at both institutional types, but rather that adjunct faculty are *equally and similarly varied* regardless of institutional type. A recognition of the varied characteristics and motivations of adjunct faculty mandates that all institutions adapt their faculty support and development to meet the needs of their unique faculty population.

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