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A Judgment Analysis of Psychological Contracts: Priorities of Part-Time and Full-time Employees in Relation to Fulfillment and Obligation to Stay

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Background and Objectives: The recent recession impacted the U.S. workforce in many ways. One of the significant changes that occurred was an increase in part-time employment. Research has shown that part-time employees who are satisfied with their organizations display similar positive organizational behaviors as their full-time peers, such as increased productivity, organizational citizenship behaviors, and intent to stay with the organization. Because of this, understanding how to fulfill the needs of part-time employees can impact organizational success. In this study, a psychological contract framework was used to examine the reciprocal relationship between part-time employees and their organizations. This study explored (1) what components are prioritized when forming a psychological contract, and (2) whether part-time employees prioritize different components than full-time employees.

Methodological Approach: A multi-level methodology was used. First, a policy-capturing approach was applied to examine the relative importance of psychological contract components in relation to perceptions of fulfillment and commitment. Second, a between-subjects analysis examined pattern differences based on employment status. An additional between-persons analysis explored the interactive relationship between employment status and job involvement.

Findings: The proposed psychological contract components all receive a significant weight by respondents when rating fulfillment and commitment. Additionally, differences were evident by employment status. Of note, part-time respondents gave much greater weight to the ability to control their own schedule and work-life balance. Results for the interaction between employment status and job involvement were less conclusive.

Conclusions: This study suggests that part-time employees do have distinct psychological contracts from full-time employees. Researchers and practitioners can use this information to create more fulfilling work experiences for this growing segment of the workforce.

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As the U.S. workforce evolves to meet ever-changing social and economic demands, organizations are anticipating a shift in the employment relationship. More specifically, employers are seeking new ways to understand worker needs, goals, and motivations (Shore et al., 2004). One of the key shifts in the workforce is an increase in part-time employment status (Gallagher & Conway, 2012).

From 2007 to 2012, the number of full-time employees in the U.S. decreased by nearly 6.3 million, while part-time employees have increased by 2.7 million (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Additionally, a large proportion of the jobs created between 2008 (the beginning of the recession) and 2014 have been part-time. Figure 1 illustrates the overall impact—while total employment has increased, there was a large decline in full-time jobs, resulting in more part-time employees. Part-time employees have traditionally been an important source of labor for many industries, including retail, medical, and food service. However, recently part-time work has increased in other areas, such as information technology and finance industries (Newton, 2006). In the U.S., part-time employees generally do not receive many of the key advantages of full-time employment status, such as health benefits, paid time off, and retirement contributions (David, 2005). Yet, it is still important for employers to attract and retain this growing workforce. Retention is important, because the cost to replace an employee averages between 50% and 150% of that employee's wage or salary (Hay Group, 2010). It can be assumed that part-time employees are on the lower-end of the wage spectrum, but the replacement costs still add up: The Hay Group notes that recruitment and sourcing costs should be considered, training

new employees to replace vacancies takes time, and full-productivity is generally not achieved until the new employee has been in-role for several months.

Another important consideration is that workplace fulfillment and commitment levels for part-time employees tend to be the same as full-time employees at the same company (Johnson, Shannon, & Richman, 2008). Employees who are highly committed display positive workplace behaviors, such as innovation, customer service, discretionary effort, and concern for quality. These employee behaviors are highly sought-after by employers. For these reasons, organizations are interested in keeping part-time employees. Because part-time employees often do not receive the same advantages as their full-time counterparts, it is imperative for organizations to find alternative ways to keep this population satisfied and committed.

In order to capitalize on the advantages of retaining part-time employees, and to improve the workplace experience for this growing portion of the U.S. workforce, research is needed to provide further understanding of the employment relationship from the employee's perspective. In an employment relationship, both the employee and the organization must fulfill the expectations of the other, or the relationship will break down. Exploring how—or indeed if—part-time employee expectations and preferences are different from those of full-time employees can lend insight into employee motivation for these two groups. In this study, this exchange of expectations between the employer and the employee was examined using a psychological contract framework.

Psychological Contracts: Definition and Relevance

A psychological contract is an individual's beliefs regarding the exchange agreement with another (Rousseau, 1989, 1995, 2001). These contracts are based on reciprocal obligations between two parties that are continuously fulfilled over time (Rousseau, 1988). Scholars have

found that individuals involved in a psychological contract expect that the other party will reciprocate the contributions that they have made to the relationship in kind (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). Employees who perceive that their psychological contract with their employer is being satisfied experience contract *fulfillment*, which has been associated with many positive outcomes, including reduced turnover intentions, increased job performance, and increased job satisfaction (e.g., Shore & Tetrick, 1994; Zhang & Agarwal, 2009). In contrast, employees who perceive that their contract with the organization is not being honored experience contract *violation* or *breach*, which can result in workplace deviance, turnover, and decreased commitment (e.g., Bal, Chiaburu, & Jansen, 2010; Bordia, Restubog, & Tang, 2008; Kickul, Neuman, Parker, & Finkl, 2001). These cognitive and behavioral responses to the psychological contract have been a popular subject among researchers, and the positive and negative consequences have been well documented in the literature.

Research in this area has shown that the *outcomes* of the psychological contract (i.e., fulfillment or violation) have measurable impacts on employees and their behaviors, which, in turn, affects the organization. However, how employees *form* these psychological contracts with their employers is less clear. Scholars have found that, though anyone can engage in a psychological contract with their employer, all psychological contracts are not the same for all employees (e.g., Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Different employees and organizations have different priorities, and the employment relationship and psychological contracts that form will be influenced by those priorities.

Because employees have strong reactions to psychological contract fulfillment and violation, understanding how employees assign value to specific aspects that make up a contract may help organizations better understand employee priorities, preferences, and motivations.

Researchers have identified several factors that contribute to the development of an employee's psychological contract. Many of these are related to the job itself, such as human resource policies, recruiting tactics, and early on-the-job experiences (Rousseau, 2001). In addition to these structural-level influences, contract formation is influenced by a number of individual-level differences (such as previous employment experiences) and group-level individual differences, including cultural background and gender (Rousseau, 2011). Of particular relevance to this study was the role of employment status (i.e., part-time vs. full-time status), which is an area that has been generally overlooked in the psychological contract literature.

The Current Study: Addressing Gaps in the Literature

A review of the literature uncovered two gaps in the research stemming from the psychological contract framework: (1) precisely *how* psychological contracts are formed at an individual level remains unclear, and (2) the effects of group-level moderators are inconsistent. Before presenting the details of this study, it is important to understand the current state of the research conducted using this framework, with attention to existing gaps and unresolved issues.

Understanding Psychological Contract Measurement Issues. Part of the reason it has been difficult to determine how psychological contracts are formed is related to measurement. In particular, scholars have struggled to identify a measure of psychological contract formation that contains components that are uniformly valued across employees (e.g., Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest, 1998; Roehling, 2008; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). It is assumed that contracts are largely individualized between each employee and organization, so identifying a generalizable way of measuring the development of the psychological contract has been a focus for researchers in this area (Roehling, 2008). Scholars are still uncertain about how individuals assign relative importance to different components of these contracts, such as why one individual prioritizes

high pay more than any other aspect of their contract, while another individual will sacrifice high pay for job security. This is important, because the manner in which individuals prioritize the components of their psychological contract indicates the aspects of the contract that the individual most values, which could be useful for organizations to know as they attempt to create corporate policies that will satisfy and evoke commitment from their employees.

In an attempt to find a universal measure of components that contribute to the psychological contract, researchers have established that *perceived obligations* appear to be most influential in determining whether or not an employee will engage in and reciprocate behaviors in support of the contract (e.g., Herriot, Manning, & Kidd, 1997; Robinson et al., 1994; Rousseau, 2011). Two distinct sets of obligations have been identified in a psychological contract: The employer's obligations, and the employee's obligations. Examples of employer obligations, or what the employer is responsible to provide to the relationship, include opportunity for advancement, job security, high pay, career development, and support (Rousseau, 1990). Examples of employee obligations, or what the employee is responsible for providing, include working extra hours, loyalty to the organization, participation in extra-role behaviors, and staying at the company for a minimum amount of time (Rousseau, 1990). While numerous lists of specific obligations have been created, studies have produced inconsistent findings regarding how employees process and arrange these components in their perceptions of their own psychological contracts (see Freese & Schalk, 2008). It also remains unclear whether individual differences, such as employment status, affect the way individuals prioritize the different components of the psychological contract.

To address these gaps, I designed a judgment study, using a multi-level methodological technique that has yet to be applied to the psychological contract literature. First, I examined the

relative importance of distinct components of the psychological contract in relation to two outcomes: (1) employee perceptions of the employer's fulfillment of the psychological contract, and (2) employee perceptions of their own obligation to the employer. Second, once the individual appraisals of the psychological contracts were examined (a within-persons analysis), I conducted a between-persons analysis using this information, examining pattern differences based on employment status, in which status is dichotomized in terms of part-time versus full-time employment.

Current Research on Psychological Contract Formation. Prior psychological contract studies have explored different ways to assess how individuals perceive the importance of different components of the psychological contract (see Freese & Schalk, 2008, and Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998, for reviews). These studies have employed a variety of methodologies. Researchers have used cross-sectional (e.g., Bellou, 2009; Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Rousseau, 1990) and longitudinal designs (e.g., Coyle-Shaprio & Kessler, 2002; Robinson et al., 1994), utilizing many different statistical techniques, including factor analysis (e.g., Edwards & Karau, 2007; Roehling, 2008), and multiple and hierarchical regression (e.g., McInnis, Meyer, & Feldman, 2009; Sels, Janssens, & van den Brande, 2004). Despite numerous attempts to identify universal components of the psychological contract that are uniformly valued across individuals, findings have been inconsistent. Reviewers of these studies have noted that developing a workable measure of employee psychological contracts is difficult, in part, because researchers tend to conceptualize contracts as distinct to particular employment relationships (Shore & Barksdale, 1998; Roehling, 2008).

In one study, Herriot and his colleagues (1997) used a critical incidents technique to determine a list of twelve employer obligations and seven employee obligations that are present

in a psychological contract. While their findings indicated that both employers and employees shared some agreement on which *employee* obligations were most important in a contract (e.g., timekeeping, good work, and honesty), there was no agreement about which *employer* obligations were most important. In another study, Roehling, Cavanaugh, Moynihan, and Boswell (2000) used a content coding technique to explore the components of the employment relationship. These authors also found twelve employer obligations and seven employee obligations, though they were slightly different than the components identified by Herriot and his colleagues (1997). The authors determined that, though these components seemed to be relatively universal, it was not possible to identify a generalizable "order" of the importance and priority of these components, as the employment relationship is different across individuals and across organizations.

There is a common thread shared by all of the previous techniques: All are exclusively between-person designs. To date, no studies in the psychological contract literature have combined a within-persons design with a between-persons design to examine the relative importance of the components of a contract.

The Analysis Model, Part I: Within-Persons Design

The first part of my study addressed the methodological gap in the psychological contracts literature by modeling individual judgments based on within-persons analyses, using a policy-capturing technique. In a traditional policy-capturing design, subjects are first presented with a series of profiles, which contains independent variables that are manipulated. Next, the raters make judgments on a dependent variable, based on the combination of independent variables presented in each scenario. To analyze, multiple regression is used to compute the relative importance of each independent variable on the dependent variable, which creates a

regression equation for each respondent. This equation represents a "captured policy" for each rater, showing how the rater combines and weights the information contained in each profile to arrive at a decision or judgment (Aiman-Smith, Scullen, & Barr, 2002; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). In the current study, the cues are six components of the psychological contract: (1) Job Security, (2) Career Development, (3) Personal Skill Development, (4) Enriched Work, (5) Work-Life Balance, and (6) Control Over Schedule. These six components were selected based on reviews of prior relevant studies, and are described in more detail in the Method section. I investigated the relative importance of these six components to two decision variables.

Decision Variables for the Study. There are many individual and organizational outcome variables that have been studied in the psychological contract literature. The current study focused on individual-level perceptions of the employee, as suggested by Rousseau (1998). Rousseau's (1989) definition of the psychological contract emphasized the individual's *perceived* reciprocity of the relationship between the two parties—an exchange of obligations that are mutually upheld. Because this is a key aspect of a psychological contract, I thought it was important to capture employees' perceptions of both sides of this relationship. Therefore, I measured the perceptions of both the obligations of the employer, and the perceived obligations that the employee owes to the organization.

Employer's fulfillment of obligations. First, I evaluated the extent to which the respondents perceive that the employer has fulfilled the obligations of the psychological contract. It has been shown that employees who perceive fulfillment of the contract experience positive outcomes, while employees who perceive that the obligations of the contract are being violated experience discontent (Tekleab & Taylor, 2003). The extent to which the employee perceives that the contract is being fulfilled is determined by whether or not the employer is upholding the

obligations that are valued by that employee. Because of this, the first decision variable I used in this study was the perception of fulfillment with the employment offerings; specifically, whether or not the employer was addressing the needs that were most important to the respondent.

Research Proposition 1: For each employee, the six components of the psychological contract will each be given a significant weight in the overall ratings of the employer's fulfillment of obligations, though each employee will prioritize the components differently.

Perceived obligation to the employer. Again, Rousseau (1989) emphasized the dual role of both the *employer's* obligations and the *employee's* obligations, so it was critical to capture the reciprocal nature of employment relationship in this study. Research has shown that employees reciprocate their obligations in a number of ways, including displaying extra-role behaviors, company loyalty, and mentoring (cf. Roehling et al., 2000; Rousseau, 2011). However, the most consistent obligation that appears in the literature is organizational commitment. Most commonly, studies examined the relationship between psychological contracts and affective commitment, or the emotional attachment that one feels toward one's organization (e.g., Cassar & Briner, 2011; Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, Henderson, & Wayne, 2006; Ng, Feldman, & Lam, 2010). However, normative commitment—here defined as perceived obligation to stay with the company if it is fulfilling its promises to the employee—was chosen for the current study, because it better aligned to the reciprocal relationship that is central to the psychological contract. Several studies have demonstrated the relationship between the psychological contract and normative commitment (e.g., McInnis, Meyer, Feldman, 2009; Shahnawaz & Goswami; 2011). As such, the second key decision variable I used was the employee's perceived obligations to stay with the organization—specifically, whether or not employees would promise to stay with the company for a minimum of two years.

Research Proposition 2: For each employee, the six components of the psychological contract will each be given a significant weight in the overall ratings of the employee's perceived obligation to stay with that organization, though each employee will prioritize the components differently.

The Analysis Model, Part II: Between-Subjects Design

As I have mentioned previously, identifying patterns of preferences and priorities among employees can allow researchers and practitioners to better understand employee values and motivations. This second phase of my study, therefore, explored the extent to which the within-persons processes could be grouped together into meaningful patterns. After examining the relative importance of the psychological contract components to the two decision variables for each employee, I explored group-level differences using a between-persons model to determine whether psychological contracts are similar across all employees, or whether certain groups of employees prioritize components of the contract differently. Specifically, I added employment status as a between-group variable in anticipation that part-time employees may prioritize components differently than full-time employees.

Psychological Contracts and Employment Status

In her 1989 book, Rousseau notes that part-time employees are conspicuously missing from her explanation of the employment relationship. Her reason for not including them was that part-time employees represent many distinct employment relationships (e.g., short-term work for students, bridge-employment for post-retirees, parents with young children, etc.), so the actual conditions of those employment relationships may vary considerably across populations. Perhaps because of this, part-time employees have been relatively neglected in the psychological contract literature. Gallagher and Conway (2012) confirm that this is still largely the case.

The notable exceptions are few. Using a psychological contract framework, Conway and Briner (2002) conducted a study to understand the differences between part- and full-time employees in job attitudes, including job satisfaction, citizenship behaviors, intent to leave, and commitment. They hypothesized that the relationship for the attitudes would be weaker for part-time employees, but their results revealed inconsistent evidence for the moderating role of employment status. Employment status did moderate the relationships between psychological contract fulfillment and job satisfaction and continuance commitment, but did not moderate the relationship between psychological contract fulfillment and affective commitment or organizational citizenship behaviors.

In 2003, Gakovic and Tetrick used a Perceived Organizational Support framework to examine how perceived support related to employment status and other social exchange variables, including commitment, social and economic exchange relationships, and psychological contracts. Using a student population, they found that part-time employees reported higher levels of perceived organizational support, stronger economic exchange relationships, and lower continuance commitment than employees with full-time status. Full-time employees were more likely to feel obligated to their employer. However, the authors found that employment status had no effect on social exchange, affective commitment, or, notably, the obligations that the participants felt their employer owed them. Based on these findings, the authors determined that social exchange is probably relevant to all employees, regardless of employment status.

These two studies point out a recurring theme in the employment status literature—regardless of employment status, all employees have an employment relationship. When fulfilled, all employees display positive job attitudes. The question is not *whether* part-time employees have a psychological contract with their employers. Rather, what elements of the

psychological contract are more important to part-time employees, and what elements of the psychological contract are more important to full-time employees? To determine this, I conducted a between-groups analysis for two groups: Part-time employees and full-time employees. I predicted that the pattern of relative importance of the psychological contract components in reference to the two decision variables would be distinguishable by employment status group. In other words, part-time employees would prioritize different components than full-time employees.

Research Proposition 3a: How employees perceive that the employer has fulfilled its obligations will differ by employment status, such that part-time employees will not only prioritize contract components similarly, they will also prioritize components differently from full-time employees.

Research Proposition 3b: How employees will feel obligated to stay with that employer will differ by employment status, such that part-time employees will not only prioritize contract components similarly, they will also prioritize components differently from full-time employees.

Employment Status, Job Involvement, and the Psychological Contract

Rousseau (1989) determined that part-time employees may represent several distinct employment relationships, making it difficult to find a common set of obligations among all part-timers. In their examination of work attitudes of part-time employees, Wittmer and Martin (2011) make a similar assumption. They used a "part-time typology", which classified part-time employees based on demographics and personal attachments. One of the key variables in this typology was work role involvement. Part-time employees with higher work role involvement had higher commitment and better attitudes about their employer. Additionally, Martin and Hafer (1995) explored the role of employment status, job involvement, and work commitment on key

work outcomes, and found that while high commitment led to low turnover in both employment status groups, the level of job involvement was different. For full time employees, high job involvement and high commitment led to lower turnover, but for part-time employees, lower turnover was associated with low job involvement and high commitment.

In light of these findings, it is certainly feasible that part-time employees may fall into two groups—one that forms a psychological contract similar to a full-time employee, and one that forms a distinct contract. Job involvement may be a moderator of this distinction. Though not central to the overall decision-making process of each employee's psychological contract, job involvement may further explain why some employees develop contracts that are different than their peers with the same employment status. Employees reporting that their job has a more central role in their life may feel more obligated to their employer, and may feel that their employer was more obligated to them than those for whom their job has a less central role. In light of this, I proposed an interaction between employment status and job involvement. Part-time employees may fall into two distinct groups: those with high job involvement would prioritize the components differently that those with low job involvement. Additional distinctions may be evident for the full-time respondents.[1]

Research Proposition 4a: The interaction of employment status and job involvement will relate to how employees perceive that the employer has fulfilled its obligations. Specifically, part-time employees with low job involvement will not only prioritize the six components similarly to those within their group, but will also prioritize the components differently from those in the other interaction groups (e.g., part-time employees with high job involvement).

Research Proposition 4b: The interaction of employment status and job involvement will relate to how employees will feel obligated to stay with the organization. Specifically, part-time

employees with low job involvement will not only prioritize the six components similarly to those within their group, but will also prioritize the components differently from those in the other interaction groups (e.g., part-time employees with high job involvement).

Method

Sample

Participants for this study were recruited using a snowball sampling technique. A request for participation was posted to several networking sites, including LinkedIn.com and SIOP.org. In addition, an email invitation was sent to my personal and professional network. Respondents were not paid for participation, and could exit the study at any time. Though the instructions did not overtly state that the purpose of the study was to compare the priorities of part-time workers with full-time workers, respondents were told that the research goals were to understand work preferences, and were asked to respond based on how they would actually prioritize various workplace scenarios. The full invitation text is provided in Appendix I.

In total, 216 people responded to the online survey. Not all surveys were kept. Eight respondents indicated that they were not currently employed, which eliminated them from the survey. Data from two respondents were removed due to missing values in the judgment section of the study, as the smart ridge regression macro employs list-wise deletion, and five were excluded because they did not have any variation in their judgment responses (e.g., they provided scores of fives across all of the scenarios).

The final sample consisted of 99 part-time and 102 full-time employees. Descriptive statistics for the sample are provided in Tables 1 and 2. Karren and Barringer (2002) note that, for the policy-capturing portion of the study, the sample size does not affect the power of the

individual analysis (rather, power is determined by the ratio of cues to scenarios, which will be discussed later). The authors go on to say that a sample size of roughly 100 is sufficient to determine adequate clusters in the between-persons analysis, and would satisfy Cohen's (1992) guidelines for a medium effect size with a suggested power of .80.

Cue Development

Because psychological contract measurement has been under steady investigation since Rousseau's initial conception of the construct in 1989, many research studies have focused on constructing an ideal measurement of psychological contracts. To compile a list of contract components, I reviewed the psychological contract literature and found many variations. The two most commonly used lists are by Rousseau (2000) and Herriot and colleagues (1997), however, I found these lists to be incomplete when looking at them individually. A thorough review of the literature resulted in a catalogue of components, which I compiled using many studies (Bellou, 2009; Herriot et al., 1997; Kelley-Patterson & George, 2002; Lester, Claire, & Kickull, 2001; Roehling, 2008; Roehling et al., 2000; Rousseau, 1990, 2000). After comparing the components, a measure of features of the psychological contract was developed for the present study, building upon many previous measures, with specific emphasis on the lists of Rousseau (1990), Herriot and colleagues (1997), and Roehling (2008). These components are (a) Job Security, (b) Career Development, (c) Personal Skill Development, (d) Enriched Work, (e) Work-Life Balance, and (f) Control Over Schedule (see Table 3 for definitions).

To understand the relative importance of each of these components, different levels, or conditions, were created. From the rater's perspective, the component could be fulfilled (e.g., for Personal Skill Development, the employer will provide funding and opportunity to pursue training) or not fulfilled (e.g., all training and development will need to take place outside of

work hours, and will not be funded). How the rater prioritizes those fulfilled versus not fulfilled components reveals the aspects of the contract that are most important to them.

For each component, a high condition (where the component is being fulfilled) and low condition (where the component is not being fulfilled) was created, which were used as the cues in the study. A complete list of each component and the corresponding cues is provided in Table 3.

Creation of Hypothetical Profiles

Once the high and low cues of each component were created, they were arranged into a set of "profiles". In every profile, all six components were provided, with a different combination of high and low cues. For example, Profile #1 might have the high (or fulfilled) condition for Career Development Work-Life Balance, and, Control Over Schedule, and the low (or not fulfilled) condition of Job Security, Enriched Work, and Personal Skill Development (see Appendix II for a screen-shot of what this looked like for the respondent).

To create the hypothetical profiles, one condition for each of the six components was randomly selected without replacement, creating 64 distinct, independent profiles. This creates a cue-to-scenario ratio of 10:1, suggesting sufficient power (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Cooksey, 1996).

Smart Ridge Regression

One of the considerable disadvantages of using a policy capturing technique is the amount of time it requires for respondents to complete. A traditional policy capturing study involves a fully-crossed, orthogonal design (meaning all possible combinations of cues are assessed by each rater), which eliminates multicollinearity among the variables and produces stable, unambiguous regression coefficients (Aiman-Smith et al., 2002). However, a study with

64 profiles, as I designed, will typically take respondents 60 minutes to complete. This amount of time can potentially result in respondent fatigue, and increases the likelihood of incomplete surveys and reduced reliability (Karren & Barringer, 2002).

In response to this dilemma, Holzworth (1996) suggests combining policy capturing with smart ridge regression. Smart ridge regression (Crouse & Holzworth, 1988) combines prior knowledge (e.g., respondent rankings of the cues) with linear regression, resulting in a prediction of what the true value of each cue is. This methodology improves upon traditional ridge regression and ordinary least squares regression by taking into account the rater's intuition, effectively combining the statistical rigor of regression with each rater's perceptions. This technique will be discussed further in the Analysis section.

In a fully-crossed, orthogonal policy capturing design, the judgment of each profile is necessary to determine the importance weight of each cue. By integrating smart ridge regression into the study, I was able to combine the prior information (i.e., intuition) of the respondents with their judgments. As a result, each respondent only needs to judge a *subset* of the 64 profiles. This method—called an incomplete block design—is recommended to reduce respondent fatigue and boredom (Graham & Cable, 2001). Instead of having one group of 200 respondents rating 64 scenarios, two groups of 100 respondents can rate 34 scenarios (there will be some overlap of scenarios between groups to ensure reliability). This significantly reduced the amount of time for each respondent—from 60 minutes to less than 30 minutes. In the resulting two design matrices, the max inter-correlations were less than +/- 0.19.

Procedure

An electronic survey was created and distributed to the respondents online. The survey contained five sections, and took approximately 30 minutes to complete the entire survey. The

first section inquired about the respondents' employment status and preferences. Section two contained the judgment task, with thirty-four profiles (a subset of the total sixty-four, plus two repeated profiles to assess reliability). In this section, a hypothetical scenario was presented, followed by two questions on each page (see Appendix II for a sample screen-shot of what this looked like for the respondents), and this was repeated thirty-three times, each with a different scenario. Following this, a third section asked the respondents to assign relative importance to each of the six components. This captures the raters' intuition, in accordance with smart ridge regression method. The fourth section assessed their level of job involvement, and the final section inquired about the subjects' demographic and background information. The full survey instrument is provided in Appendix III.

Measures

Measures: Cues

For the judgment task, the rater must take into account three things: (1) the psychological contract components, which represent what the employer is willing to provide to the psychological contract; (2) the perceived fulfillment of the employer's obligation, where the rater indicates how completely the scenario addressed what was important to them; and (3) the perceived obligation to the employer, where the rater indicates how obligated they would feel to stay, given what the employer is offering.

Psychological contract components. As described previously, six components were adapted for this survey from several previous studies (Herriot et al., 1997; Roehling, 2008; Rousseau, 1990). Each of these components has a high and low condition (coded as high = 1, low = 0). For example, consider Control Over Schedule:

High condition: As long as your assignments are completed, you can structure your own schedule, and work from any location you choose.

Low condition: You will be expected to work a set schedule, and will not be allowed to give input for when or where you would like to work.

A complete list of the cues and conditions is provided in Table 3.

Employer's fulfillment of obligations. One item from Tekleab and Taylor's (2003) psychological contract breach measure was adapted and used to capture the respondents' perceptions of the extent to which the employer fulfilled their obligations to the employee (i.e., "How completely would the things that are most important to you about your job be addressed?"). Respondents answered using a seven-point scale from *not at all* (1) to *completely* (7). In the results section, this will be referred to as the "Fulfillment" decision variable.

Perceived obligations to employer. One item from Coyle-Shaprio and Kessler's (2002) employee obligations measure was adapted and used to capture the respondents' perceptions of obligations to the employer (i.e., "If the above scenario were put in place, how motivated would you be to commit to stay at your organization for at least two years?"). Respondents answered using a seven-point scale from *not at all obligated* (1) to *very obligated* (7). In the results section, this will be referred to as the "Commitment" decision variable.

Measures: Group-Level Variables

Employment Status. Employment status was determined by the respondents' answers to several employment questions. Respondents were asked to indicate how many hours they work each week, and to self-identify which work-category they fall under: part-time or full-time. Respondents who worked 35 hours or more each week were considered full-time. Respondents

who worked less than that were considered part-time (this aligns to the definition provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

Job Involvement. To determine the effect of job involvement, respondents answered questions from two scales. First, they answered six questions from the *Job Involvement Questionnaire* (Kanungo, 1982). This set of questions assesses how central their job is to their feeling of accomplishment (example item: "The most important things that happen to me involve my present job"). Respondents answered using a seven-point scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). Next, they were asked to complete five items from the *Work Dedication Scale*, which is a subset of the *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). This scale assesses their emotional engagement with their work (example item: "I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose"). Respondents answered using a seven-point scale from *never* (1) to *always* (7). The eleven items were averaged to create an overall "Job Involvement" score. A median split was then done on the whole sample, to assign respondents into the high (score > 4.10) or low group (score < 4.10).

Measures: Demographic Variables

Employment Information and Preferences. Additional information about the participants' employment was gathered to add context. Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they were working for more than one employer, how long they had been at their current organization, and how long they had worked in their current position. They were also asked to indicate their perceived obligation to stay with their current organization.

To find out more about participants' workplace, they were asked to indicate the proportion of part- to full-time employees in their workplace, ranging from *mostly part-time workers* (1), to *mostly full-time workers* (5). If they were part-time, a series of follow-up

questions were posed. To determine work-status preference, part-time raters were asked whether there were any full-time positions available to pursue, and whether or not they would accept a full-time position if it were offered to them. Finally, part-time raters were asked about a series of caretaker (e.g., "Are you the primary caretaker for a child?") and non-work (e.g., "Are you a student?") scenarios.

Background information. Finally, respondents answered a number of other questions to establish demographic information. These additional measures included gender, ethnicity, and level of education.

Analysis

For this study, I employed multiple analysis techniques. The first set of analyses used a policy-capturing methodology to determine the psychological contract "policy" of each individual respondent. The second set of analyses utilized clustering analyses to determine whether there are discernible psychological contract patterns by employment status, and by employment status in relations to job involvement (Employment Status X Job Involvement).

Smart Ridge Regression

In policy capturing analysis, individual regression equations are calculated for each respondent to assess the linear combination of each of the six psychological contract components for each of the two decision variables. The rating of the decision variable (e.g., the employer's fulfillment of obligations) is regressed onto the six components. The squared multiple correlation indicates a measure of strength of each rater's captured policy. A strong policy indicates that the model components can be used to predict raters' judgments. In Holzworth's (1996) smart ridge regression technique, the judge's intuition is also integrated by factoring in an additional

parameter (the judge's overt assignment of importance or each component) when estimating the captured policies of each individual rater. This parameter adjusts the captured policy through an estimation of agreement between their overt rating and the estimated weight from the regression equation. If the overt rating, or intuition, and the estimated weight are either very similar or very different, then the adjustment parameter will be small, and will not have a large impact on the overall model. However, if the difference between the overt rating and the estimated weight is moderate, then the adjustment parameter will have a stronger impact. The resulting equation should be a more accurate reflection of the component's true importance in the overall decision.

In his 1996 study, Holzworth compared the accuracy of smart ridge regression to other models of judgment analysis, including OLS regression, conventional ridge regression, and subjective weighting of cues. In a series of cross-validation analyses, smart ridge regression consistently outperformed the other approaches. In particular, he argues that in situations where the rater has familiarity (expertise) with the subject matter, smart ridge regression is recommended. He notes that:

> Under conditions in which ridge regression is appropriate, and in which one has some confidence in making judgments concerning cue-criterion relationships, there is something to be gained, and little risk involved, in combining judgments with ridge regression… [B]etter methods of eliciting expert judgments about relative importance of predictor variables will lead to even better estimation and prediction.

Given that the raters in the present study will be prioritizing their own preferences for six work components, their familiarity with the judgment area is high. According to Holzworth, integrating their own intuition can result in higher accuracy and greater prediction of the model by using smart ridge regression.

An SPSS macro has been developed by Holzworth (1999), which incorporates the additional importance parameter into the regression analysis. The macro calculates the value of

the adjustment parameter, and inserts it into the individual-level equation. This macro also provides the output for OLS regression, which was compared to the smart ridge regression results. Using Holzworth's macro, I compiled the standardized smart ridge regression coefficients of each of the six components and averaged the results by group. Findings in alignment with Research Proposition 1 and 2 will be demonstrated if each of the six components receive a significant weight, indicated by the standardized smart ridge regression coefficients. Further, I expected that there would be certain components that are rated as more important than others, especially when examining differences by employment status group.

It should be noted that, because this study proposes a multi-level relationship, Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) was considered as an analysis approach. HLM defines group effects on individual relationships by taking the hierarchical structure of the data into account. The advantage of this methodology is that it addresses the violation of the independence assumption of OLS regression. However, this approach was not employed in this study because the HLM program is not able to accept the smart ridge estimates in raw form. In other words, there is not a way to integrate the intuition weightings. Smart ridge regression holds two advantages: (1) incorporating each rater's intuition to their captured policy, and (2) allowing for the reduction of the total number of questions that were asked of each respondent, reducing fatigue. Intuition cannot be integrated into HLM. Because of these two advantages, smart ridge regression was selected as the analytical approach for this study.

Clustering Analysis

Next, cluster analysis was done for each of the decision variables, which assessed whether the patterns of responses could be grouped (or "clustered") into meaningful categories (see Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). In this phase of the analysis, the raters' prioritization for each of

the six components (indicated by the size of the standardized smart ridge regression coefficients), determined through smart ridge regression, was the input. I performed a K-Means clustering analysis technique. The first set of analyses determined whether the employment status groupings proposed in Research Propositions 3a and 3b (i.e., part-time vs. full-time) create two distinct groups for each of the decision variables. If results are consistent with the propositions, there will be two distinct clusters, with Cluster 1 consisting of mostly part-time raters, and Cluster 2 consisting of primarily full-time raters. The final set of analyses determined whether the employment status groups X job involvement groupings proposed in Research Propositions 4a and 4b would create four distinct groups for both of the decision variables. If results are consistent with the propositions, there will be four distinct clusters, and each cluster will be primarily comprised of respondents in each of the employment status X job involvement groups. For example, part-time raters with low job involvement would primarily fall in Cluster 1, part-time raters with high job involvement would mostly land in Cluster 2, and so on.

Results

Analyses were run for each of the two decision variables: (1) *Fulfillment*, or the extent to which the rater feels the employer is fulfilling their needs, and (2) *Commitment*, or the likelihood that the rater will commit to staying with the organization for at least two years.

Reliability Analysis

To assess reliability, I repeated two random profiles. This allowed me to do a test-retest analysis for reliability for these two scenarios, as suggested by Karren and Barringer (2002). The reliability coefficients for Fulfillment items ranged from 0.62 to 0.80 (average = 0.72), and the

coefficients for Commitment items raged from 0.51 to 0.76 (average = 0.68). All correlations were significant, and indicated sufficient reliability across the respondents.

Captured Policies

A regression equation was created for each rater, and results are summarized in Table 4 (employment status) and Tables 5a and 5b (employment status X job involvement). Results reveal that, while there was variation in the relative importance of each component, all six job components were taken into consideration when rating fulfillment and commitment, which is consistent with Research Propositions 1 and 2.

Policy Capturing Results: Employment Status

Interestingly, differences were evident by employment statistics. Part-time respondents tended to give much greater weight to Control Over Schedule (Fulfillment β PT = 0.55, FT = 0.29; Commitment β PT = 0.54, FT = 0.29) and Work-Life Balance than the full-time respondents (Fulfillment β PT = 0.42, FT = 0.20; Commitment β PT = 0.43, FT = 0.20). Full-time respondents gave greater weight to Enriched Work (Fulfillment β PT = 0.05, FT = 0.19; Commitment β PT = 0.04, FT = 0.74), as well as—to a lesser degree—Career Development (Fulfillment β PT = 0.08, FT = 0.17; Commitment β PT = 0.08, FT = 0.17).

Policy Capturing Results: Employment Status X Job Involvement

There were also differences by employment status X job involvement group. Notably, part-time respondents who had high job involvement weighted the importance of Job Security much lower than any of the other three groups (Fulfillment β = 0.16 to 0.19 lower than other groups, Commitment β = 0.16 to 0.18 lower than other groups). Part-time respondents with low job involvement gave much lower importance weightings to Career Development than any of the other groups (Fulfillment β = 0.06 to 0.17 lower than other groups, Commitment β = 0.08 to 0.18

lower than other groups). Additionally, full-time respondents with high job involvement tended to give much greater weightings to Enriched Work (Fulfillment β = 0.13 to 0.21 higher than other groups, Commitment β = 0.11 – 0.18 higher than other groups), and Career Development (Fulfillment β = 0.09 to 0.17 higher than other groups, Commitment β = 0.08 to 0.19 higher than other groups).

K-Means Cluster Analysis

To determine whether raters could be grouped together on the basis of relative importance obtained from the within-subjects regression equations, a series of K-Means cluster analyses were performed. Analyses were run by forcing two to eight clusters, and the resulting cluster formations were examined for interpretability and cluster size.

Main Effects: Employment Status

First, cluster analyses were evaluated for the main effect of employment status. For both Fulfillment and Commitment, the two-cluster solution produced the most distinct and interpretable clusters, classifying each rater into one of two groups. Standardized smart ridge regression coefficients were averaged for each cluster, the results of which are shown in Table 6. An examination of the clusters revealed marked differences in the relative importance of the six components. That said, the biggest influences of cluster membership were Job Security and Control Over Schedule. Cluster 1 contained raters who prioritized Job Security above any of the other six clusters. This cluster was mostly made up of full-time respondents—roughly 70% of full-time respondents fell into Cluster 1, while only 25% of part-time respondents fell into this cluster. In contrast, Cluster 2 was made up of raters who prioritized Control Over Schedule above any other component. This group is composed of mostly part-time respondents—nearly three-quarters of part-time respondents fell into Cluster 2, while less than one-third of full-time

respondents were in this group. These results are consistent with Research Propositions 3a and 3b—there were two distinct and meaningful clusters, whose membership was largely dominated by one of the employment status groups.

Interactive Effects: Employment Status X Job Involvement

Next, cluster analyses were run to evaluate the interactive effect of employment status and job involvement. For both Fulfillment and Commitment, the five-cluster solution produced the most distinct and interpretable clusters, classifying each rater into one of five groups. Standardized smart ridge regression coefficients were averaged for each cluster, the results of which are shown in Table 7. An examination of the clusters revealed marked differences in the relative importance of the six components. Cluster 1 contained raters who gave very strong ratings to Control over Schedule, but little weight to any of the other components. Cluster 2 consisted of raters who prioritized both Work-Life Balance *and* Control Over Schedule, and did not give large weights to the other four components. Cluster 3 contained raters who gave the most weight to Job Security, and very little weight to any of the other components. Cluster 4 was comprised of raters who gave strong ratings to Job Security, but also gave moderate ratings for both Career and Personal Skill Development, as well as Enriched Work. Finally Cluster 5 was the smallest for both Fulfillment and Commitment (N = 13 and 16, respectively), and raters in this group did not give strong ratings to any of the six components.

Observations about Employment Status. These clusters reveal interesting patterns, and add further explanation to the expectation of part-time and full-time raters in the sample. Specifically, part-time raters were most likely to fall in Cluster 2 (high priority on Control Over Schedule and Work-Life Balance) than any other cluster—56% of part-time respondents were members of Cluster 2 for the Fulfillment results, and 59% were in Cluster 2 for the Commitment

results. Additionally, 26% of part-timers fell into Cluster 3 (prioritized only Job Security) for the Fulfillment results (29% for Commitment). Interestingly, virtually no part-time respondents belonged to Clusters 4 (prioritizing Job Security, along with Career and Personal Skill Development) and 5 (no strong prioritization across any of the components). Lastly, full-time respondents were most likely to belong to Cluster 4 (Job Security is the highest priority, but Career and Personal Skill Development were also important) —36% of full-time respondents fell in this cluster for the Fulfillment results, and 31% for the Commitment results. After this, the next most-likely cluster for full-time respondents was Cluster 3 (prioritized only Job Security), with 25% of respondents falling into this cluster for Fulfillment and 28% for Commitment. Clearly, Job Security was a very influential component for the full-time raters in this sample.

Observations about Employment Status X Job Involvement. The five-cluster solution also showed interesting patterns for the interaction between employment status and job involvement, especially for the full-time respondents. For example, most full-time respondents with high involvement fell in Cluster 4 (Job Security is the highest priority, but Career and Personal Skill Development were also relevant) —52% of the full-time raters with high job involvement in this sample were members of this cluster for the Fulfillment results, and 44% for the Commitment results. In contrast, respondents who worked a full-time schedule and had low job involvement did not tend to prioritize components related to development and interesting work. Roughly one-third (31%) fell into Cluster 3 (prioritized only Job Security) for the Fulfillment results (31% for Commitment), and 25% fell into Cluster 1 (prioritized only Control Over Schedule) for Fulfillment (27% for Commitment).

While results tended to be consistent for Fulfillment and Commitment (e.g., 56% of part-timers fell in Cluster 2 for the Fulfillment results, and 59% of part-timers fell in Cluster 1 for the

Commitment results), one group did show an interesting break in this pattern. Part-time raters with high job involvement were most likely to fall in Cluster 2 (high priority on Control Over Schedule and Work-Life Balance) for both Fulfillment and Commitment, but the proportions are quite different: 54% fell in Cluster 2 for Fulfillment, while 69% fell into Cluster 2 for Commitment (a 15% difference). This impacted the membership of Cluster 1 (prioritized only Control Over Schedule). For the Fulfillment results, 23% of part-timers with high job involvement fell into this cluster. In contrast, on 5% of these respondents fell into Cluster 1 for the Commitment results.

While the results produced distinct and meaningful clusters, they do not align with Research Propositions 4a and 4b. Cluster membership was influenced by work preferences, but did not neatly divide into distinct employment status X job involvement groups.

Discussion

The main goal of this study was to address two gaps in the psychological contract literature: (1) determining how psychological contracts are formed at an individual level, using a method that is new to the psychological contracts literature, and (2) understanding whether a group-level variable—specifically, employment status—moderates those individual-level contracts. Results revealed some exciting new findings that can further both research and practice in this area.

Strengths of Policy Capturing Methodology

A key strength of the study was the methodological approach. Until now, few studies had applied an experimental policy capturing approach to psychological contract research. Rousseau and Anton (1991) used a policy capturing technique to examine the role that several factors,

including performance, time in job, and employability, play in the judgment of termination fairness and employer obligations. However, no studies to date have used policy capturing to determine how employees prioritize components of the contract, and the between-subjects methodologies employed by other studies have not been able to determine an inherent order of the components. When simply asked to rate the importance of the components in prior studies, employees were unable to distinguish what was most important – all of the components seem desirable when rated in isolation. Consequently, researchers have noted that determining an order of importance for components of the psychological contract is difficult (see Roehling, 2008). As can be seen by the results, and their alignment with Research Proposals 1 and 2, all of the six components were important to the decision-making process, reinforcing the findings of these prior studies. However, this study extended the literature by addressing the aforementioned issue of prioritization of the components by employing a policy capturing methodology.

The policy capturing approach forced employees to make choices about what they would be willing to give up, and where they were unwilling to bend. As a result, the study uncovered a few key components that stand out above the rest; specifically, job security for full-time employees, and Control Over Schedule and Work-Life Balance for part-time employees. Additionally, there were a few components that, while still important, were not highly prioritized by either group; namely Career Development, Skill Development, and Enriched Work. The practical implications of this finding will be discussed below, but the discovery of an inherent order of psychological contract components is critical, given this gap in the literature. Applying this method to future studies could provide additional clarity for researchers seeking to understand the relative importance of the components of the psychological contract, and is a recommended approach to consider. For example, due to the finding that job security and

flexibility are the most crucial components of the psychological contract, future studies could use a policy capturing approach to unpack these components further. What aspects of *flexibility* are most critical (or feasible) to different segments of the workforce? Creating a judgment study that identifies different applications of flexibility, such as working from home, working flexible hours, onsite childcare, or even unlimited vacation time could give valuable insight to organizations about how flexibility can be utilized in their workplace. It may be that prioritization might vary by industry, job type, and organization complexity, so segmenting the results by these factors may reveal fascinating insights about employees and organizations. Studies like this can help researchers learn more about what motivates employees, and how to improve their overall working experiences.

Contributions to the Psychological Contract Literature

In addition to the identification of an order of prioritization of components of the psychological contract discussed above, this study contributes to the psychological contract literature through the exploration of employment status. One of the main inspirations for this study was Rousseau's (1989) postulations about the psychological contracts of part-time employees. Specifically, she indicated that part-time employees represent many distinct employment relationships (e.g., short-term work for students, bridge-employment for post-retirees, parents with young children, etc.), and these differences make it impossible to study the psychological contracts of part-time employees overall; each sub-group of part-time employees should be studied individually. This study offers evidence that, though there are likely underlying differences, there is an underlying contract that part-time employees share, and it is different than that of full-time employees.

Research Proposals 3a and 3b posed that there would be a discernable difference between the components that part-time employees prioritized and their full-time peers, and results were consistent with these proposals. Specifically, part-time employees prioritize Control Over Schedule and Work-Life Balance over any other component in the psychological contract. This makes intuitive sense; regardless of *why* the employee is working a part-time schedule, the ability to control his or her schedule and have support for non-work activities influences *how* his or her are able to conduct their work. A student working part-time needs to have flexibility from his or her employer so they can schedule work around classes, while a part-time parent may require the ability to work from home to accommodate childcare. On the other hand, someone who would prefer full-time work but cannot find it may still need to work multiple part-time jobs, so being able to set his or her own schedule is important. Rousseau is correct, the differences in the nature of and reason for part-time work is varied; but this study strongly suggests that these differences all share a common desire for control and flexibility. As such, the psychological contract of part-time employees can be studied together. This not only has implications for research, but practice, as well.

Considerations for Practice

Employers have seen a large influx of part-time employees in recent years. As stated in the introduction of this study, though the economy is recovering from the 2008 down-turn and overall employment is nearing pre-recession levels, the composition of employment has changed, as can be seen in Figure 1. Additionally, it has been established that part-time workers who perceive that their psychological contracts are being fulfilled contribute equally to their organization as their full-time peers; productivity, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors are all equivalent to those of full-time employees (e.g., Shore & Tetrick, 1994; Zhang

& Agarwal, 2009). Now, more than ever, it is important to fully understand what part-time employees are looking for so that organizations can learn how to accommodate their priorities and preferences. This study revealed that these preferences are likely different from full-time priorities. Organizations can no longer assume that what works for one segment will satisfy another.

Results showed that part-time employees value Control Over Schedule and Work-Life Balance above all other components of the psychological contract. To that end, organizations that can offer flexibility around when, where, and how people work will have an advantage over more companies that adhere to more traditional work structures. However, it should be noted that flexibility in organizational policies is still a rare thing. A nationally representative employer-based study revealed that 67% of employers do not allow most employees to change their starting and quitting times, 61% do not allow employees to control which shifts they work, and 79% do not allow employees to move from full-time to part-time (and back again) while remaining in the same position (Galinsky, Bond & Hill, 2004). In spite of this, roughly 80% of employees in their study indicated that they would like to have more flexible work options. With this in mind, the results from this dissertation can help determine a way to design part-time work that align more to the priorities of part-time workers.

As stated previously, the concept of *flexibility* leaves room for interpretation; that which is deemed as a flexible work arrangement in one setting may not satisfy part-time workers in another. For example, part-time workers in the technology sector might define *flexible* as being able to accomplish their work at any time, rather than being restricted to a traditional nine-to-five framework. In contrast, part-time workers in a call center might define *flexible* as having two days off from work in a row. In education, *flexibility* may indicate being able to choose which

days to be on campus. How workers perceive flexibility is based largely on the type of work and industry. In other words, the amount of flexibility that is available in comparable jobs is what is important.

Practitioners looking to increase flexibility for their part-time workers can take several approaches. First, examine current practices. Are there relics ingrained in these practices that can be changed? For example, consider the call center that only allows one day off from work at a time. Is there a way to update scheduling practices to allow for two days off, allowing employees to obtain better work-life balance? Next, examine the flexibility practices of other companies. What can be learned for what they do well, and what can be improved? Finally, talk to employees. Gathering input from current employees about how to improve the flexibility of the workplace allows the organization to make improvements that are most meaningful and most impactful.

Organizations that have solicited feedback from employees in this manner have seen successful results. In 2008, PepsiCo implemented a program called “One Simple Thing”, in which employees identify something they believe will help them achieve greater work-life balance (Stredwick, 2014). Examples may include committing to leave work on time to be home for dinner with the family, working from home one day each week, or blocking time each day to exercise. Employees share their “one simple thing” with their managers, and if approved, it is placed on the employee’s yearly performance plan, alongside their business objectives. The program began in the corporate office, and now is implemented across much of the organization, including the manufacturing and distribution sectors. PepsiCo deems this program to be a success, based on an increase in scores on the annual employee survey, particularly on the item, “My company supports my efforts to balance my work and personal life”.

This program aligns well with the results of this dissertation. It allows each employee to provide input, and receive a tailored contribution to the component of the psychological contract that matters most to them. The implementation of a program of this nature would not necessarily require a grand-sweeping change of all policies. It would merely allow employees to provide input into their own psychological contract. Part-time employees, who may not receive many of the benefits of employment that their full-time peers receive, such as health benefits, retirement contributions, and paid vacation, can still participate in a program like "One Simple Thing", which can help fulfill their psychological contract.

Real-World Applications of Flexible Work Environments

The above recommendation allows for a customized application of flexibility to increasing the experiences of employees. While this is a recommended approach, other organizations have seen success by implementing other kinds of flexible work programs. The Georgetown University Law Center has had a particular interest in this subject, and compiled a series of case studies of companies that had implemented some form of flexibility into their corporate policies, and the impact this had on the organization (Flatley McGuire & Brashler, 2006). While the study did not focus on part-time employees specifically, several of the policies had impacts for part-time workers.

For example, Eastman Kodak (an "info imaging" company) had difficulties meeting employee desires for work-life balance. As a result, they implemented a program for their U.S. workforce that allowed all employees, including part-time, to request flexible work arrangements regardless of position or location, including flextime – the ability to control the hours worked – and flex-place – the ability to control the location of the work. According to the organization, the

program is successful and they have not seen any negative impacts to their business operations, and they will continue to offer it in the future.

First Tennessee Bank (a financial institution) was challenged with high costs and customer complaints associated with employee turnover. As a solution, in 1992 they implemented several flexibility options to their employees, including allowing part-time employees more control over their hours. By 1997, more than 60% of their employees used some sort of flexibility, and the bank reported saving over $3 million in turnover costs, and customer retention was 96%. The bank estimates that the initiative has saved 85% of employees who would have otherwise left the bank. The program is still in place today.

Finally, a case study of MITRE (a non-profit research center) was described in a whitepaper on aging and work, conducted by Boston College's Sloan Center on Aging & Work (2012). To address an aging workforce that would soon be transitioning into retirement, MITRE changed organizational policies for employees aged 59 and above, allowing them to transition to part-time work, with control over the number of hours they worked, while still maintaining benefits. This program enabled employees who chose to participate to slowly transition to retire in a phased approach (full-time → part-time with more hours → part-time with fewer hours → retirement). The result of this program is a reduction in turnover, currently less than 5%, and MITRE consistently appears on "best place to work" lists. Employee survey results also reveal that work-life balance is one of the main reasons employees join and stay with the company. In a company where innovation and institutional knowledge are critical, allowing mature employees to have more control over their transition to retirement has also resulted in better knowledge-transfer and increased mentoring.

These case studies, and others like them, show that offering flexible organizational practices built around the components in this study can be successful and beneficial to the participating organization. With these kinds of policies in place, the organization can receive positive outcomes such as decreased turnover (and the costs associated with this), increased customer loyalty, and increased quality. However, the exciting thing to realize is that the reason these organizational outcomes improve may be because the employee is receiving what they need from the employer – the organizations do not indicate non-employee interventions as the cause of the increased business outcomes, such as the implementation of improved equipment or marketing techniques or changes in suppliers. Rather, the benefits to the company come from the employees' reactions to flexible programs that meet their needs. In other words, their psychological contracts are being fulfilled. As a result, the employees respond in kind by committing to stay with the organization, having better interactions with the customer, and producing better products. These case studies are suggestive of the importance of the psychological contract, and why employers and practitioners should heed the research from this dissertation. Understanding what is truly important to employees and creating policies based on those findings—like the ones in this study—may impact how they view their employers, and that can make a difference in what they are willing to give back to them.

Study Limitations

This study did contain limitations. The sample was not representative of the U.S. Respondents were mostly women (65%), Caucasian (75%), and highly educated (75% had completed college). In comparison, full-time U.S. workers are 43% female, 79% Caucasian, and 65% have completed at least some college. Part-time U.S. workers are 63% female, 80% Caucasian, and 59% have completed at least some college (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

Because this study had a highly exploratory focus, the representativeness of the sample was not a critical issue. However, follow-up studies should be conducted with additional samples to ensure that results reflect the larger population.

Additionally, this study did not use hierarchical linear modeling as part of the analysis of group-level relationships. This is because HLM is not compatible with smart ridge regression. Again, the advantage of smart ridge regression over other methods like OLS is that it incorporates a judge's intuition by combining their judgments with their ranking of inherent importance of each component. In this study, clustering analyses indicated that captured policies can be segmented by employment status, but, as shown in Table 8, smart ridge regression was not particularly more accurate than OLS regression for this sample. Given this finding, HLM could have been used to analyze the results[2]. Future studies may benefit from employing both analysis methods, and comparing across multiple samples to see if one approach yields difference results than the other.

Conclusions

To summarize, the findings of this study can be used to inform both science and practice. Research can benefit from the application of policy capturing to the psychological contract; this study revealed that there is an order to the components of the contract, which had not been shown before. Additionally, part-time employees in this study displayed a common psychological contract, which upends the prevailing notion that the contracts of part-time employees are too different to be studied together. Practitioners can use these findings to help create a better work experience, especially for part-time workers. Designing policies that emphasize flexibility and balance will aid in the fulfillment of part-time employees'

psychological contracts, which research has shown leads to positive employee and organizational outcomes.

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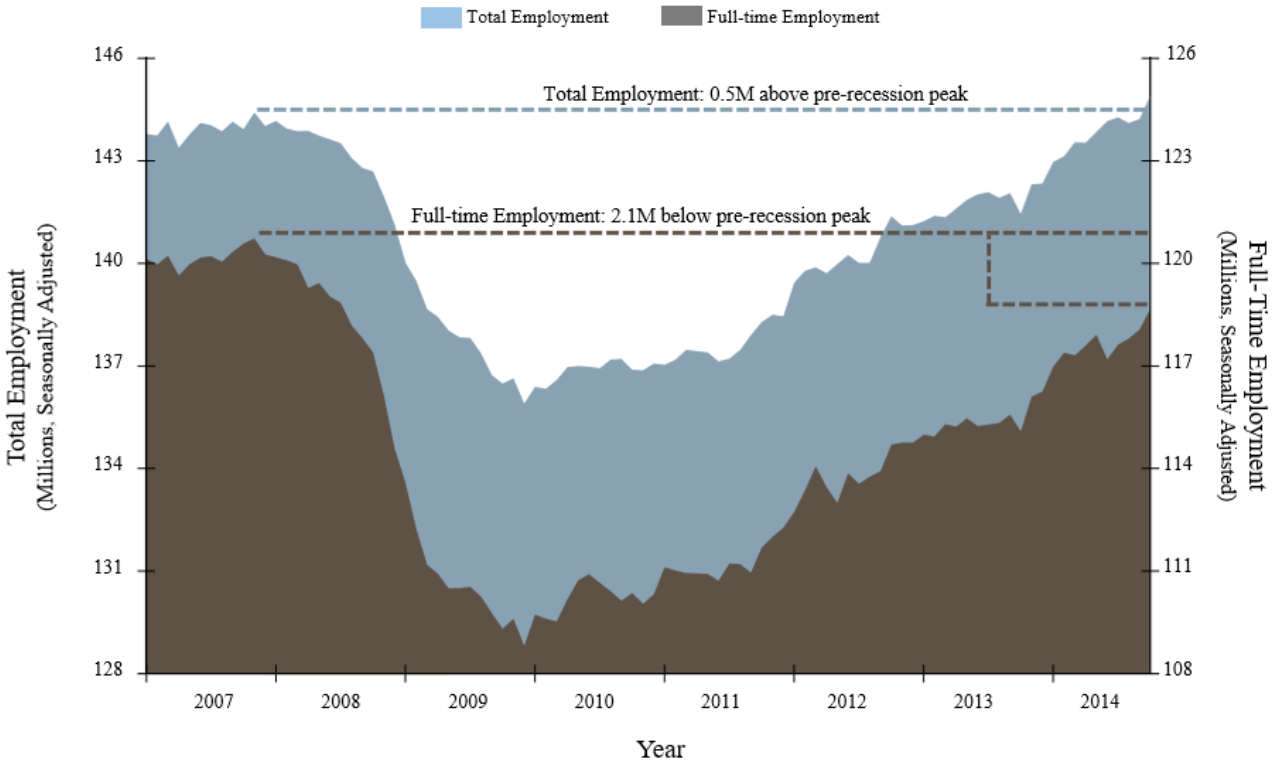
Footnotes

1. Main effects for job involvement as a group-level variable will also be tested. However, because the main focus for this study is the role of employment status, and job involvement is of interest only as a moderator, I have not included hypotheses for the main effects of job involvement.
2. To ensure due diligence, the data from this study were analyzed using HLM, in addition to smart ridge regression. Results yielded similar findings to the smart ridge approach.

Figure 1. Full-time vs. total employment, 2007 – 2014.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor (2014).

Table 1: Descriptive summary of study respondents.

	Part-time	Full-time
Total	99	102
Gender		
Male	33	36
Female	66	65
Ethnicity		
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	6	8
Black, African, or African American	17	3
Hispanic or Hispanic American	6	2
Middle Eastern, Arab, or Arab American	4	0
Native American or Alaskan Native	1	1
White, European, or European American	64	85
Other	1	0
Age		
Less than 20 years old	4	0
20 – 29 years old	21	17
30 – 39 years old	32	44
40 – 49 years old	22	15
50 – 59 years old	6	18
60 – 69 years old	13	6
70 years old or older	1	1
Education Level		
High school or GED equivalent	0	0
Some college	47	5
Completed college degree	35	34
Graduate school	15	58
Other	2	4
Working for more than one employer	3	11
Organization tenure		
Min	1	0.3
Average	5.3	7.3
Max	20	36
Hours per week		
Min	5	35
Average	26.6	43.6
Max	35	70

(Table 1 continued on next page.)

Table 1 (continued): Descriptive summary of study respondents.

	Part-time	Full-time
Total	99	102
Proportion of part-time workers		
Mostly part-time workers	26	3
Half part-time workers and half full-time workers	37	5
Mostly full-time workers	35	64
Entirely full-time worker	0	26
Not sure	1	4
How long they intend to stay with employer		
Less than 1 year	2	8
1 – 3 years	58	27
4 – 6 years	27	28
More than 6 years	12	38

Table 2: Summary of part-time follow-up questions.

	N
Total	99
Full-time positions currently available?	
Yes	42
No	57
Would you accept a full-time position?	
Yes	10
No	89
Ideal work schedule?	
Full-time	19
Part-time	81
Which of these describe you?	
I am currently a student.	21
I am currently retired.	8
I am a parent.	53
I am the primary caregiver for a child or children.	33
I am a caregiver for an adult (e.g., parents).	2
None of these are true about me	22

Table 3: Cues for policy-capturing study (Components of the psychological contract).

Cue	Definition	Level	Value	Scenario
Job Security/ Guaranteed Hours	Employer's obligations to provide employment with a long-term perspective	High	1	[*Full-time*] Job security – Your role is critical and will not eliminated, despite upcoming organizational changes. [*Part-time*] A guaranteed number of hours – You will be able to work at least 30 hours each week. You may choose to work less, but 30 will be available to you, if you want them.
		Low	0	[*Full-time*] Job security – In a few months, we will be re-evaluating the positions in your department, and several jobs will be eliminated. [*Part-time*] A guaranteed number of hours – In the next year, there will be times where you will only be scheduled to work a few hours each week, or not at all.
Career Development	Employer's obligations to provide a clear career path to progress within the organization	High	1	Career planning – Your leader will be required to have annual conversations with you about your career goals, and a yearly plan will be put in place to help you achieve those goals.
		Low	0	Career planning – Due to upcoming organizational changes, we have not set up a clear plan about how to advance in your department, which may affect progress toward your career goals.
Personal Skill Development	Employer's obligations to provide training and development opportunities for personal development	High	1	Support for training and professional development – You will be given resources (time off, funding, etc.) to pursue skill enhancement and professional development opportunities.
		Low	0	Support for training and professional development – You will be responsible your own skill enhancement and professional development. We will not provide resources (time off, funding, etc.) for these activities.

Table 3 continued on next page.

Table 3 (continued).

Cue	Definition	Level	Value	Scenario
Enriched Work	Employer's obligations to provide work that is meaningful and challenging	High	1	Opportunity for "stretch" assignments – If you choose, we can arrange for you to be assigned to projects that are beyond your basic job duties, to give you more experience and stimulation.
		Low	0	Work beyond your basic job duties – Higher-level responsibilities will be limited to key leaders in your department.
Work-Life Balance	Employer's obligations to make an effort to accommodate the employee's non-work life	High	1	[*Full-time*] Flexibility for non-work activities – You will not need to use vacation time for small personal activities, such as doctor appointments, errands, or children's school events. [*Part-time*] Flexibility for non-work activities – We will allow time off from work to participate in personal activities that are important to you.
		Low	0	[*Full-time*] Flexibility for non-work activities – Vacation hours must be used for all time off of work, including doctor appointments, personal errands, and children's school events. [*Part-time*] Flexibility for non-work activities – We will not provide approval for time off from work to participate in personal activities, except in extreme cases.
Control Over Schedule	Employer's obligations to allow flexibility in employee's work schedule	High	1	The ability to control the hours and location of your work – As long as your assignments are completed, you can structure your own schedule, and work from any location you choose.
		Low	0	The ability to control the hours and location of your work – You will be expected to work a set schedule, and will not be allowed to give input for when or where you would like to work.

Table 4: Means, Range of Standardized Smart Ridge Regression Coefficients, and Squared Multiple Correlations by Employment Status Group.

	Fulfillment		*Commitment*	
Variable	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time
Job Security/Control				
Mean	0.37	0.41	0.37	0.42
Standard Deviation	0.26	0.22	0.27	0.24
Range	-0.09 - 0.83	-0.04 - 1.00	-0.09 - 0.88	-0.16 - 0.95
Career Development				
Mean	0.08	0.17	0.08	0.17
Standard Deviation	0.11	0.017	0.11	0.17
Range	-0.07 - 0.41	-0.13 - 0.58	-0.13 - 0.41	-0.13 - 0.59
Skill Development				
Mean	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.17
Standard Deviation	0.12	0.14	0.12	0.13
Range	-0.10 - 0.47	-0.15 - 0.47	-0.11 - 0.47	-0.11 - 0.57
Enriched Work				
Mean	0.05	0.19	0.06	0.17
Standard Deviation	0.08	0.16	0.09	0.16
Range	-0.09 - 0.31	-0.24 - 0.65	-0.09 - 0.30	-0.25 - 0.56
Work-Life Balance				
Mean	0.42	0.20	0.41	0.20
Standard Deviation	0.19	0.16	0.19	0.16
Range	-0.00 - 0.76	-0.15 - 0.62	0.00 - 0.76	-0.06 - 0.67
Control Over Schedule				
Mean	0.55	0.29	0.54	0.29
Standard Deviation	0.17	0.25	0.16	0.26
Range	-0.00 - 0.87	-0.12 - 0.95	-0.01 - 0.87	-0.08 - 0.95
Overall Sq. Multiple Correlation				
Mean	0.86	0.73	0.85	0.74
Standard Deviation	0.10	0.16	0.09	0.15
Range	0.10 - 0.98	0.22 - 0.99	0.48 - 0.98	0.14 - 0.97
N	99	100	99	100

Table 5a: Means, Range of Standardized Smart Ridge Regression Coefficients, and Squared Multiple Correlations by Employment Status X Job Involvement Group—Fulfillment Results.

	Fulfillment			
Variable	PT X Low	PT X High	FT X Low	FT X High
Job Security/Control				
Mean	0.44	0.25	0.41	0.41
Standard Deviation	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.21
Range	-0.09 - 0.83	-0.06 - 0.75	0.06 - 1.00	-0.04 - 0.80
Career Development				
Mean	0.05	0.13	0.12	0.22
Standard Deviation	0.08	0.11	0.13	0.18
Range	-0.07 - 0.28	-0.07 - 0.41	-0.15 - 0.41	-0.09 - 0.58
Skill Development				
Mean	0.15	0.15	0.12	0.20
Standard Deviation	0.12	0.12	0.13	0.14
Range	-0.08 - 0.47	-0.10 - 0.47	-0.15 - 0.39	-.0.06 - 0.24
Enriched Work				
Mean	0.04	0.07	0.12	0.25
Standard Deviation	0.08	0.09	0.13	0.16
Range	-0.09 - 0.31	-0.04 - 0.26	-0.25 - 0.40	-0.06 - 0.62
Work-Life Balance				
Mean	0.42	0.42	0.20	0.20
Standard Deviation	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.16
Range	0.00 - 0.76	0.00 - 0.76	-0.15 - 0.56	-0.06 - 0.62
Control Over Schedule				
Mean	0.54	0.57	0.31	0.21
Standard Deviation	0.16	0.17	0.26	0.22
Range	0.00 - 0.87	0.00 - 0.77	-0.01 - 0.95	-0.12 - 0.62
Overall Sq. Multiple Correlation				
Mean	0.88	0.83	0.71	0.75
Standard Deviation	0.08	0.14	0.19	0.13
Range	0.56 - 0.96	0.10 - 0.98	0.22 - 0.99	0.32 - 0.93
N	60	39	48	52

Table 5b: Means, Range of Standardized Smart Ridge Regression Coefficients, and Squared Multiple Correlations by Employment Status X Job Involvement Group—Commitment Results.

	Commitment			
Variable	PT X Low	PT X High	FT X Low	FT X High
Job Security/Control				
Mean	0.44	0.26	0.43	0.42
Standard Deviation	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24
Range	-0.09 - 0.88	-0.04 - 0.75	0.04 - 0.95	-0.16 - 0.79
Career Development				
Mean	0.04	0.14	0.12	0.22
Standard Deviation	0.09	0.11	0.13	0.18
Range	-0.13 - 0.27	-0.04 - 0.41	-0.11 - 0.41	-0.13 - 0.59
Skill Development				
Mean	0.14	0.16	0.13	0.20
Standard Deviation	0.12	0.11	0.12	0.13
Range	-0.11 - 0.46	-0.07 - 0.47	-0.11 - 0.37	0.03 - 0.57
Enriched Work				
Mean	0.04	0.08	0.11	0.22
Standard Deviation	0.09	0.10	0.14	0.16
Range	-0.09 - 0.30	-0.08 - 0.26	-0.25 - 0.46	-0.16 - 0.56
Work-Life Balance				
Mean	0.41	0.42	0.22	0.19
Standard Deviation	0.19	0.18	0.17	0.15
Range	0.00 - 0.73	0.00 - 0.76	-0.05 - 0.67	-0.06 - 0.64
Control Over Schedule				
Mean	0.52	0.56	0.39	0.20
Standard Deviation	0.17	0.16	0.27	0.21
Range	0.01 - 0.87	0.14 - 0.76	-0.02 - 0.95	-0.08 - 0.75
Overall Sq. Multiple Correlation				
Mean	0.86	0.83	0.74	0.73
Standard Deviation	0.09	0.09	0.16	0.15
Range	0.58 - 0.95	0.48 - 0.98	0.14 - 0.97	0.16 - 0.96
N	60	39	48	52

Table 6: Results of K-Means Cluster Analysis by Employment Status Group.

	Cluster 1		*Cluster 2*	
	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time
Fulfillment				
Job Security	0.71	0.53	0.27	0.22
Career Development	0.11	0.21	0.07	0.08
Skill Development	0.20	0.17	0.14	0.16
Enriched Work	0.01	0.18	0.04	0.11
Work-Life Balance	0.26	0.15	0.50	0.34
Control Over Schedule	0.40	0.18	0.61	0.60
Avg Distance from Centroid	0.40	0.45	0.34	0.40
N	25	69	74	31
Commitment				
Job Security	0.71	0.56	0.26	0.21
Career Development	0.10	0.21	0.08	0.08
Skill Development	0.19	0.18	0.14	0.15
Enriched Work	0.10	0.16	0.05	0.08
Work-Life Balance	0.25	0.16	0.50	0.31
Control Over Schedule	0.35	0.18	0.61	0.61
Avg Distance from Centroid	0.38	0.45	0.33	0.43
N	28	69	71	31

Note: For the first six rows in each section, each row represents the average weight on the component for each group of raters within each cluster.

Table 7: Results of K-Means Cluster Analysis by Employment Status X Job Involvement Group.

	Cluster 1				*Cluster 2*			
	PT X Low	PT X High	FT X Low	FT X High	PT X Low	PT X High	FT X Low	FT X High
Fulfillment								
Job Security	0.07	0.09	0.26	0.23	0.38	0.20	0.24	0.23
Career Development	0.12	0.14	0.08	0.14	0.03	0.12	0.10	0.09
Skill Development	0.20	0.15	0.08	0.24	0.13	0.15	0.15	0.27
Enriched Work	0.12	0.17	0.09	0.11	0.02	0.02	-0.01	0.04
Work-Life Balance	0.22	0.38	0.19	0.27	0.56	0.56	0.55	0.55
Control Over Schedule	0.75	0.66	0.75	0.61	0.58	0.63	0.56	0.47
Avg Distance from Centroid	0.37	0.33	0.33	0.35	0.27	0.29	0.29	0.38
N	6	9	12	4	34	21	8	3
Commitment								
Job Security	0.09	0.15	0.27	0.35	0.36	0.18	0.29	0.24
Career Development	0.07	0.18	0.05	0.19	0.03	0.13	0.11	0.11
Skill Development	0.14	-0.04	0.06	0.19	0.13	0.16	0.15	0.22
Enriched Work	0.07	0.08	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.08	0.00	0.15
Work-Life Balance	0.25	0.28	0.15	0.24	0.56	0.53	0.52	0.47
Control Over Schedule	0.79	0.76	0.79	0.68	0.59	0.61	0.53	0.44
Avg Distance from Centroid	0.38	0.34	0.29	0.31	0.27	0.30	0.31	0.39
N	4	2	13	3	31	27	9	3

Note: For the first six rows in each section, each row represents the average weight on the component for each group of raters within each cluster.

(Table 7 continued on next page.)

Table 7 (continued): Results of K-Means Cluster Analysis by Employment Status X Job Involvement Group.

	Cluster 3				*Cluster 4*			
	PT X Low	PT X High	FT X Low	FT X High	PT X Low	PT X High	FT X Low	FT X High
Fulfillment								
Job Security	0.70	0.70	0.71	0.64	0.76	0.53	0.47	0.49
Career Development	0.05	0.15	0.08	0.12	0.31	0.38	0.31	0.32
Skill Development	0.15	0.17	0.06	0.11	0.44	0.48	0.24	0.27
Enriched Work	-0.01	0.02	-0.02	0.05	0.19	0.05	0.27	0.26
Work-Life Balance	0.29	0.28	0.07	0.19	0.03	0.11	0.14	0.18
Control Over Schedule	0.44	0.40	0.28	0.43	0.00	0.39	0.13	0.02
Avg Distance from Centroid	0.28	0.31	0.39	0.38	0.35	0.45	0.31	0.34
N	19	7	15	10	1	1	9	27
Commitment								
Job Security	0.71	0.68	0.73	0.70	0.75	0.60	0.49	0.49
Career Development	0.03	0.17	0.09	0.04	0.31	0.29	0.32	0.36
Skill Development	0.13	0.19	0.08	0.09	0.42	0.30	0.22	0.27
Enriched Work	-0.01	0.00	0.01	0.05	0.19	0.11	0.28	0.23
Work-Life Balance	0.28	0.29	0.12	0.21	0.04	0.17	0.11	0.16
Control Over Schedule	0.41	0.38	0.22	0.29	0.03	0.24	0.12	0.03
Avg Distance from Centroid	0.29	0.34	0.39	0.38	0.32	0.36	0.30	0.35
N	22	7	15	13	1	2	8	23

Note: Note: For the first six rows in each section, each row represents the average weight on the component for each group of raters within each cluster.

(Table 7 continued on next page.)

Table 7 (continued): Results of K-Means Cluster Analysis by Employment Status X Job Involvement Group.

	Cluster 5			
	PT X Low	PT X High	FT X Low	FT X High
Fulfillment				
Job Security	---	-0.13	0.26	0.16
Career Development	---	-0.15	0.00	0.07
Skill Development	---	-0.15	0.09	0.12
Enriched Work	---	-0.01	0.37	0.41
Work-Life Balance	---	0.18	0.23	0.15
Control Over Schedule	---	0.07	0.25	0.32
Avg Distance from Centroid	---	0.60	0.31	0.35
N	0	1	4	8
Commitment				
Job Security	0.03	-0.10	0.24	0.10
Career Development	0.16	-0.08	0.03	0.08
Skill Development	0.35	0.14	0.09	0.17
Enriched Work	0.23	0.32	0.35	0.37
Work-Life Balance	0.15	0.03	0.23	0.10
Control Over Schedule	0.56	0.65	0.24	0.27
Avg Distance from Centroid	0.35	0.42	0.32	0.43
N	2	1	3	10

Note: Note: For the first six rows in each section, each row represents the average weight on the component for each group of raters within each cluster.

Table 8: Comparison of Means, Range of Standardized Regression Coefficients, and Squared Multiple Correlations for Part-Time Respondents—Smart Ridge, OLS and Subjective Weights.

	Fulfillment			*Commitment*		
Variable	Sm. Ridge	OLS	S. Weights	Sm. Ridge	OLS	S. Weights
Job Security/Control						
Mean	0.37	0.38	0.35	0.37	0.39	0.34
Standard Deviation	0.26	0.26	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27
Range	-0.09 - 0.83	-0.13 - 0.84	-0.02 - 0.88	-0.09 - 0.88	-0.13 - 0.92	0.00 - 0.89
Career Development						
Mean	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.09
Standard Deviation	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.12	0.11
Range	-0.07 - 0.41	-0.16 - 0.38	-0.01 - 0.45	-0.13 - 0.41	-0.17 - 0.38	0.00 - 0.45
Skill Development						
Mean	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15
Standard Deviation	0.12	0.13	0.11	0.12	0.13	0.11
Range	-0.10 - 0.47	-0.16 - 0.48	-0.01 - 0.48	-0.11 - 0.47	-0.15 - 0.48	0.00 - 0.47
Enriched Work						
Mean	0.05	0.04	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.07
Standard Deviation	0.08	0.10	0.11	0.09	0.11	0.11
Range	-0.09 - 0.31	-0.19 - 0.33	-0.01 - 0.36	-0.09 - 0.30	-0.19 - 0.32	0.00 - 0.35
Work-Life Balance						
Mean	0.42	0.44	0.39	0.41	0.43	0.39
Standard Deviation	0.19	0.19	0.20	0.19	0.19	0.19
Range	-0.00 - 0.76	-0.01 - 0.80	-0.02 - 0.73	0.00 - 0.76	-0.01 - 0.77	0.00 - 0.73
Control Over Schedule						
Mean	0.55	0.55	0.53	0.54	0.54	0.53
Standard Deviation	0.17	0.17	0.19	0.16	0.17	0.18
Range	-0.00 - 0.87	-0.00 - 0.90	-0.20 - 0.83	-0.01 - 0.87	-0.03 - 0.91	0.00 - 0.80
Sq. Multiple Correlation						
Mean	0.86	0.87	0.81	0.85	0.86	0.79
Standard Deviation	0.10	0.1	0.14	0.09	0.08	0.12
Range	0.10 - 0.98	0.11 - .98	0.00 - 0.97	0.48 - 0.98	0.50 - 0.98	0.44 - 0.97
N	99	99	99	99	99	99

Appendix I — Participant Recruitment

TEMPLATE FOR E-MAIL INVITATION

From: leslie.golay@uconn.edu
To:
Subject: Request for Assistance with Univ. of Connecticut Research Project

Hello:
I am writing to invite you to participate in a web-based survey on work preferences. This survey is part of a study I am doing for my dissertation. The survey will take you approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential and only aggregated results will be reported in any published scientific study. Follow this link to participate: [SURVEY LINK]

Please feel free to forward this link to anyone who you think would be willing to participate. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at any time. If you have any questions you may contact me, the principle investigator, Leslie Golay:

Leslie M. Golay
Department of Psychology
University of Connecticut
Leslie.Golay@uconn.edu

Thank you in advance for your consideration in completing this important project!

TEMPLATE FOR INVITATION POSTED ON WEBSITES (E.G., LINKEDIN.COM)

Subject: Participants Needed for Univ. of Connecticut Research Project

Participants needed for a web-based survey on work preferences. This survey is part of a study I am doing for my dissertation. The survey will take you approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential and only aggregated results will be reported in any published scientific study. Follow this link to participate: [SURVEY LINK]

Please feel free to forward this link to anyone who you think would be willing to participate. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at any time. If you have any questions you may contact me, the principle investigator, Leslie Golay:

Leslie M. Golay
Department of Psychology
University of Connecticut
Leslie.Golay@uconn.edu

Thank you in advance for your consideration in completing this important project!

Appendix II — Screen-shot of Survey Instrument

UCONN

Date: December 2014
From: Department of Human Resources
Subject: **Upcoming HR policy changes – High Importance**

Dear Employee,
Due to an upcoming organizational restructure, our current HR policies must be updated. Beginning in March 2015, our full-time employees will experience changes that may affect your employment experience. As such, we would like to inform you of these adjustments in advance.

We are excited to inform you that, under the new policy, we will be able to guarantee the following:
Career planning – Your leader will be required to have annual conversations with you about your career goals, and a yearly plan will be put in place to help you achieve those goals.
Flexibility for non-work activities – You will not need to use vacation time for small personal activities, such as doctor appointments, errands, or children's school events.
The ability to control the hours and location of your work – As long as your assignments are completed, you can structure your own schedule, and work from any location you choose.

However, we will **not** be able to provide the following:
Job security – In a few months, we will be re-evaluating the positions in your department, and several jobs will be eliminated.
Support for training and professional development – You will be responsible for your own skill enhancement and professional development. We will not provide resources (time off, funding, etc.) for these activities.
Work beyond your basic job duties – Higher-level responsibilities will be limited to key leaders in your department.

We appreciate your understanding as we make these changes. Thank you for your continued service.

Sincerely,
Dorothy Jones
Human Resources Executive

Think about what your job would be like under these changes. In particular, think about the things that are most important to you about your job. Now, please rate the proposal above on the following criteria:

How completely would the things that are most important to you be addressed?

Not at all (1)	2	3	4	5	6	Completely (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

If the scenario above was put into place, how motivated would you be to commit to stay with your organization for at least 2 years?

Not at all motivated (1)	2	3	4	5	6	Very motivated (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

>>

Appendix III — Survey Instrument

Section 1 – Employment Status and Preferences

1. Please describe your employment status:
   - *Never been employed**
   - *Not currently employed, but have been employed in the past**
   - *Employed part-time*
   - *Employed full-time*

*[*Note: If the respondent chooses either of these options, they were not invited to participate in the rest of the study.]*

2. Are you currently working for more than one employer?
   - *No*
   - *Yes*

3. How long have you been working for your organization?
   _____ *years*

4. How many hours do you work per week?
   _____ *hours*

5. At your current workplace, what is the proportion of full-time workers vs. part-time workers?
   - *Mostly part-time workers*
   - *Roughly half part-time workers and half full-time workers*
   - *Mostly full-time workers*
   - *Entirely full-time worker*
   - *Not sure*

6. How long do you intend to stay with your current organization?
   - *Less than 1 year*
   - *1 – 3 years*
   - *4 – 6 years*
   - *More than 6 years*

7. At your current organization, are there any full-time positions that you could pursue at this time? [*Note: This question was asked only to part-time raters.*]
   - *No*
   - *Yes*
   - *Not sure*

8. If you were offered a full-time position by your current employer, would you accept it? [*Note: This question was asked only to part-time raters.*]
   - *No*
   - *Yes*
   - *Not sure*

9. In your ideal work situation, would you choose to work a full-time schedule, or part-time schedule? [*Note: This question was asked only to part-time raters*]
   - *Full-time*
   - *Part-time*

10. Please briefly explain your response to the previous question.
    [Open text box]

Section 2 – Judgment Task

In this section, you will be presented with a series of scenarios. Each scenario will be a memo from your Human Resources (HR) department, describing upcoming changes to the HR policies at your company. After reading the new plan, you will be asked to rate each one on:

- How completely the new plan addresses the work-related things that are important to you.
- How likely you would be to commit to staying with the company for at least 2 years.

[NOTE: For this section of the study respondents were shown a series of "memos". The memos looked like emails, sent from the Human Resources department of a company. Each memo described that organizational changes were going to be put in place at the start of the new year (2015). The memos were modeled after real corporate emails in an attempt to look as real as possible, to simulate an actual business environment. Each respondent saw 34 scenarios, and were asked to rate each one before seeing the next. An example of one of these memos is presented on the next page. A screen-shot of what the memo looked like on-screen is shown in Appendix II. A full list of the cues are listed in Appendix I.]

Date: December 2014
From: Department of Human Resources
Subject: **Upcoming HR policy changes – High Importance**

Dear Employee,

Due to an upcoming organizational restructure, our current HR policies must be updated. Beginning in January 2015, our full-time employees will experience changes that may affect your employment experience. As such, we would like to inform you of these adjustments in advance.

We are excited to inform you that, under the new policy, we will be able to guarantee the following:

- **Job security** – Your role is critical and will not eliminated, despite upcoming organizational changes.
- **Opportunity for "stretch" assignments** – If you choose, we can arrange for you to be assigned to projects that are beyond your basic job duties, to give you more experience and stimulation.
- **Flexibility for non-work activities**. Vacation hours do not need to be used for small personal activities, such as doctor appointments or children's school events.

However, we will **not** be able to provide the following:

- **Career planning** – Due to upcoming organizational changes, we have not set up a clear plan about how to advance in your department, which may affect progress toward your career goals.
- **Support for training and professional development** – You will be responsible your own skill enhancement and professional development. We will not provide resources (time off, funding, etc.) for these activities.
- **The ability to control the hours and location of your work** – You will be expected to work a set schedule, and will not be allowed to give input for when or where you would like to work.

We appreciate your understanding as we make these changes. Thank you for your continued service.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Jones
Human Resources Executive

[*NOTE: This said "part-time" if the respondent indicates as such in the qualifying question*.]

Think about what your job would be like under these changes. In particular, think about the things that are most important to you about your job. Now, please rate the proposal above on the following criteria:

How completely would the things that are most important to you about your job be addressed?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						Completely

If the above scenario were put in place, how motivated would you be to commit to stay at your organization for at least two years?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all motivated						Very motivated

Section 3 – Assigning Relative Importance

Directions

Please distribute 100 points among the six work attributes listed below, according to their relative importance to you. If you believe each attribute was equally important, each should receive about 17 points. If an attribute was relatively more important, it should receive more points. If an attribute was relatively less important, it should receive fewer points. Total points should add up to 100.

	Relative Importance
- Job security [*Full-time only*]	_____
- Guaranteed number of hours [*Part-time only*]	_____
- Career development	_____
- Personal skill development	_____
- Challenging and meaningful work	_____
- Balance between work and non-work activities	_____
- Flexibility over schedule and location of work	_____
TOTAL:	100

Section 4 – Job Involvement & Engagement

Shortened Job Involvement Questionnaire (Kanungo, 1982) – Rated on a 7-point scale from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*

- The most important things that happen to me involve my present job.
- I live, eat, and breathe my job.
- Most of my interests are centered around my job.
- Most of my personal life goals are job-oriented.
- I consider my job to be very central to my existence.
- I like to be absorbed in my job most of the time.

Work Dedication Scale (from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma, & Bakker, 2002) – Rated on a 7-point scale from *Never* to *Always*

- I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.
- I am enthusiastic about my job.
- My job inspires me.
- I am proud of the work that I do.
- To me, my job is challenging.

Section 5 – Background and Demographic Information

What is your gender?

- *Male*
- *Female*

What is the ethnic group that you most closely identify with?

- *Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander*
- *Black, African, or African American*
- *Hispanic or Hispanic American*
- *Middle Eastern, Arab, or Arab American*
- *Native American or Alaskan Native*
- *White, European, or European American*
- *Other*

What is your age?

- *Less than 20 years old*
- *20 – 29 years old*
- *30 – 39 years old*
- *40 – 49 years old*
- *50 – 59 years old*
- *60 – 69 years old*
- *70 years old or older*

What is your highest education level?

- *High school or GED equivalent*
- *Some college*
- *Completed college degree*
- *Graduate school*
- *Other (please specify):* _____

How many of the following are true about you? You may select more than one.

- ☐ *I am currently a student.*
- ☐ *I am currently retired.*
- ☐ *I am a parent.*
- ☐ *I am the primary caregiver for a child or children.*
- ☐ *I am a caregiver for an adult (e.g., my parents, a relative, etc.).*