

# Self-Perceptions of Adjunct Faculty About Their Roles at a Select Community College System

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*This phenomenological study aimed to explore adjunct faculty roles and emphasis at a community college system. Twelve adjunct faculty members participated in interviews, revealing themes like background experiences, challenges, and institutional culture. Meta-themes included employment fatigue, student care, service provision, role appreciation, and career aspects. Findings could help administrators support adjunct faculty for success and enhance understanding of their experiences. The study contributes to the knowledge base on adjunct faculty in community colleges, suggesting future research directions in this area. The qualitative analysis methods employed included constant comparison, content analysis, correspondence analysis, and nonverbal behavior analysis to delve into adjunct faculty members' perspectives and experiences within the community college system. Recommendations derived from the study aim to provide insights for improving support and addressing the diverse needs of adjunct faculty in community college settings.*

*Keywords: adjunct faculty, contingent faculty, part-time faculty, community colleges, faculty support, higher education*

## INTRODUCTION

As the world continues to adjust and to readjust to the changing environment of higher education due to a global pandemic, the question of adjunct faculty in higher education remains important. Although some recent datasets have revealed that the number of adjunct faculty in overall higher education has dropped, when analyzed, we see that the populations of contingent faculty at 4-year public and private colleges have grown from 2015 to 2018 and that community colleges still have a disproportionately large number of adjuncts, with 67% of the faculty being classified as part-time (Lederman, 2019). Further, as the COVID-19 pandemic aftershocks continue to make educational funding levels unreliable (due to enrollment and state funding uncertainty), past trends assure us that the use of adjunct faculty likely will serve as a means to cut costs (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Smith, 2010).

From 1981 to 1999, adjunct faculty increased by 79% at both 2-year and 4-year college campuses in the United States (Walsh, 2002). In contrast, full-time faculty employment increased only by 23.4%, from 1989 to 2009 (National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 2010). This continuing and dramatic rise in part-time instructors has caused much concern (e.g., Kezim et al., 2005;

Shuetz, 2002; Smith, 2010) about the quality of education provided to students. Several authors have defended the role of adjuncts, explaining that the hiring of part-time instructors allows colleges to bring in industry experts to provide real-world knowledge to students (Phillippe, 2000), to respond quickly to changing curricula needs (Jacobs, 1998), to offer the necessary number of course sections required to meet the needs of a growing population of students (Wallin, 2004), and to provide an economical benefit to the college (Wallin, 2004). Even with these stated benefits that adjunct faculty offer, other researchers have pointed out drawbacks to the increasing role of adjunct instructors, including less use of collaborative learning techniques in the classroom (Shuetz, 2002), increasing rates of grade inflation (Kezim et al., 2005), and lowered retention rates for first-time, full-time students (Smith, 2010). In addition, adjunct faculty members are less likely to serve on committees, to participate in faculty governance, to attend conferences, and to engage in research (American Association of University Professors, 1997). However, although adjunct faculty members' class loads and responsibilities may be less than the loads of full-time faculty members, they are still required to teach their assigned courses, to maintain office hours, and to interact and to communicate with students, other faculty, and administrators (Kezar, 2012). Further, although they occasionally might be required to attend in-service meetings, they are normally excluded from all campus meetings geared towards full-time educators and excluded from requirements to serve on committees, thereby rarely interacting with colleagues and campus leadership (Kezar, 2012).

Although much debate has occurred regarding the effect of the increased numbers of adjunct faculty at colleges and universities, a lack of research exists in which researchers have examined how adjunct faculty members themselves perceive their roles, responsibilities, and impact (Thirolf, 2012). Due to the increase in this particular faculty population, it is important to understand better the situation that institutions, students, and faculty themselves are experiencing. Although adjunct faculty often are lumped together in terminology and treatment, they constitute a very diverse group of individuals. Appa and Leslie (1993) developed a typology of the motivations and experiences of part-time faculty, identifying four distinct types of non-tenure-track faculty: (a) career-enders, (b) specialists/experts/professionals, (c) aspiring academics, and (d) freelancers.

With such a large number of part-time faculty proliferating campuses (Lederman, 2007), especially on community college campuses (AFT Higher Education, 2009), understanding their perceived strengths, weaknesses, and needs would be integral to campus improvement and success. Therefore, the purpose of this phenomenological study was twofold: (a) to understand better adjunct faculty instructors' self-perceived roles within their positions at a select community college system and (b) to understand better the emphasis that these adjunct faculty members place on different aspects of these roles in terms of their levels of performance and effectiveness.

### **Qualitative Research Questions**

The following qualitative research questions were addressed in this study:

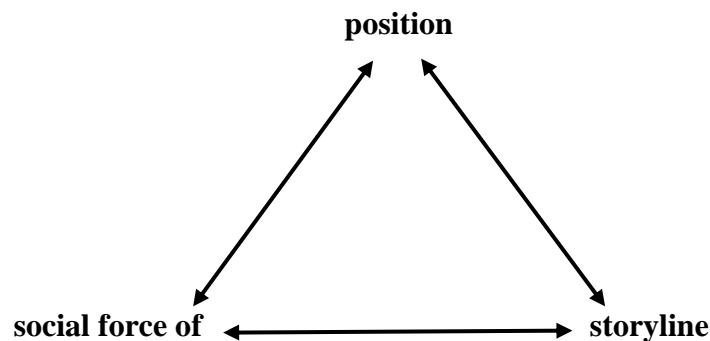
1. How do select community college adjunct professors perceive their roles and responsibilities at their campuses?
2. What do select community college adjunct professors perceive as their strengths and weaknesses in their positions?
3. What, if any, actions do select community college adjunct professors think will improve their performance levels and effectiveness in their self-perceived roles?

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

As our focus was on how adjunct faculty members generate and form their professional identities with regard to their institution, both positioning theory guided this qualitative study to inform our interpretation of the data (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) and the *claim-affirmation model of modalities of emergent identity* (Holmes, 2013) to extend our understanding of the participants' identity formation. Harré and van Langenhove (1999) defined positioning as "the assignment of fluid 'parts' or 'roles' to speakers in the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively

determinate as social acts” (p. 17). This definition means that, during a conversation, individuals can position themselves and others through speech. The interaction of position, social force, and storyline creates the basic component of positioning theory, a mutually determining triad. Figure 1 illustrates this triad. For the current study, our interest was in how the adjunct faculty instructors position themselves and others at the institution (e.g., students, other faculty, staff) about themselves when describing their employment experiences. The relevance of utilizing positioning theory for this study is twofold: (a) it allowed for the constant change and shifts that adjuncts experience within their employment in terms of position and interactions with others, and (b) it took into account both how the individual positioned himself or herself in addition to how the individual is positioned in different contexts.

**FIGURE 1  
MUTUALLY DETERMINING TRIAD**



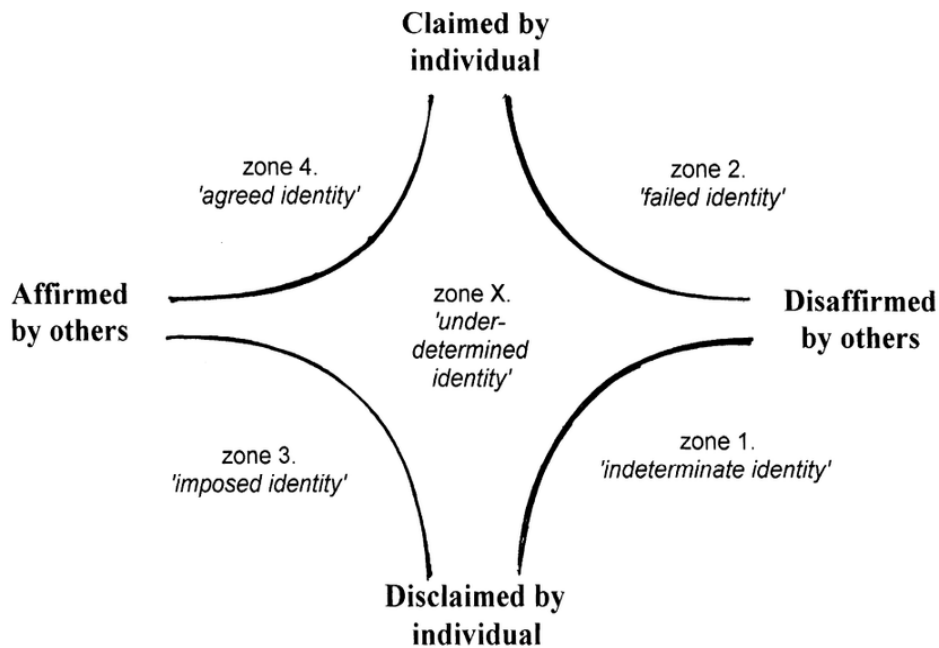
Reprinted With Permission From Positioning Theory by R. Harré and L. Van Langenhove, 1999, P. 18]

Adjunct faculty members experience constant instability in their positions. The type of course they teach, the number of sections they teach, the locations at which they teach, the individuals to whom they report, and with whom they interact professionally might change drastically from semester to semester. There is little consistency. As such, a theoretical framework was needed to let us view their unique situation flexibly. By utilizing positioning theory, we were better able to describe how adjunct faculty view themselves in terms of their perceptions and their ever-changing contexts in the community college system.

In addition to the theoretical framework of positioning theory, we applied the claim-affirmation model of modalities of emergent identity (Holmes, 2013). Specifically, this model emphasizes how identity emerges in and through social interaction and individuals’ positions within the social world. Identity is not formed from an external, objective source. Instead, identity comes from ongoing positioning (Hollway, 1984; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) by oneself and by others within usual social contexts.

Emergent identity also describes how individuals can attempt to create or to claim an identity; however, others can disaffirm or affirm this created identity. In turn, the individual can accept or resist these affirmations or disaffirmations. Emergent identity is a process of social negotiations, leading to several possible intermediate positions in identity formation. Figure 2 illustrates this process. This was significant for this research because it allowed us to understand the participants’ identity formation in terms of their interactions with fellow faculty, students, staff, and other important social relationships.

**FIGURE 2**  
**CLAIM-AFFIRMATION MODEL OF MODALITIES OF EMERGENT IDENTITY**



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## **METHOD**

To understand the experiences of the select community college adjunct professors, the lead author conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 adjunct faculty participants (Table 1) based on the finding that data saturation can occur within the analysis of 12 interviews (Guest et al., 2006). Adjunct faculty members were selected via both a criterion sampling scheme and a convenience sampling scheme (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007, 2014, 2017; Hahs & Onwuegbuzie, 2006). For this study, participants were adjunct faculty instructors from a select community college system who had taught at least one semester and were currently teaching at one of the six main campuses of the select community college system.

**TABLE 1**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

Alias	Gender	Race	Age	Subject Area	Years as Adjunct at Select Institution	Total Years as Adjunct Overall	Current Employment Situation	Primary Adjunct Classification
Adam	Male	African-American	N/A	Chemistry	4	9	Self-employed; Adjunct (two institutions)	Specialist/expert/professional
Angela	Female	Mexican-American	38	Education (student success)	3	3	Adjunct	Aspiring academics
Anne	Female	White	36	Geography	11	11	Adjunct (two institutions)	Aspiring academics
Ellen	Female	White	51	Sociology	4	28	Adjunct (two institutions)	Aspiring academics
Irene	Female	White	68	Government	10	10	Retired; Adjunct	Career-ender
Karl	Male	Black	40	Education (student success)	1	1	Self-employed; Adjunct	Aspiring academics
Laura	Female	White	35	Psychology	4	4	Full-time professor; Adjunct (two institutions)	Specialist/expert/professional
Matthew	Male	White	40	Speech	3.5	20	Full-time paramedic; Adjunct; Graduate student	Aspiring academics
Nathaniel	Male	White	78	Math	17	17	Retired; Adjunct	Career-ender
Neil	Male	White	78	Math	10	10	Retired; Adjunct	Career-ender
Noah	Male	White	35	Math	2	2	Full-time high school teacher; Adjunct	Specialist/expert/professional
Sandra	Female	White	“Senior”	Math	10	20	Retired; Adjunct	Career-ender

*Note.* All demographic information was self-reported by participants.

A set of interview questions representing various categories, including basic descriptive, experience/example, and comparison/contrast (Janesick, 2004) was developed and piloted before the study to present to participants. Structured interview questions included: (a) How do you perceive your role at this community college?; (b) What responsibilities do you have at this community college?; (c) What strengths, if any, do you bring to the campus as an adjunct instructor?; (d) What weaknesses, if any, do you associate with your adjunct position?; (e) What difficulties/challenges do you encounter in your adjunct position?; (f) What support do you encounter in your adjunct position?; From what source?; (g) How satisfied are you in your adjunct position?; (h) What are your ultimate goals at this institution?; and (i) What improvements could the institution make to directly improve your success in your role? By asking pre-formulated, open-ended questions, we hoped to receive rich, long responses from the participants to allow them to tell their stories fully (Kvale, 1996). By conducting interviews face-to-face, the lead author was able to clarify meanings, to verify interpretations, and to ask relevant follow-up questions while also recording any nonverbal behaviors (Kvale, 1996).

### Nonverbal Behavior Data

Interviews were conducted face-to-face and video-recorded so that the interviewer could note any nonverbal communication displayed by the participants. As the participants related their experiences, attention was directed to any nonverbal communication cues that indicate emotions (e.g., amusement, anger, contempt, contentment, disgust, embarrassment, excitement, fear, guilt, pride in achievement, relief, sadness/distress, satisfaction, sensory pleasure, or shame) relating to the self-described experiences (Ekman, 1999). The interpretation of these emotions came from the analysis of paralinguistic changes and the observation of innate facial expressions (Ekman, 1999).

Further, we sought to observe any nonverbal behavior that could provide more insight into the participants' personal experiences and emotions. To accomplish this, Gorden's (1980) four basic nonverbal modes of communication were incorporated into the analysis: (a) proxemics, (b) chronemic, (c) kinesic, and (d) paralinguistic. Attention also was directed towards any use of McNeill's (1992) five types of gestures, which comprised (a) iconic, (b) metaphoric, (c) beats, (d) deictic, and (e) emblems. After each interview, the lead researcher completed the matrix (see Table 2) developed by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2010) that assessed nonverbal communication using Ekman's (1999) expanded list of basic emotions and McNeill's (1992) classification of gestures. These measures (e.g., Ekman, 1999; Gorden, 1980; McNeill, 1992) also were utilized in analyzing the lead researcher's nonverbal communication during the interviews.

**TABLE 2**  
**MATRIX FOR ASSESSING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION USING MCNEILL'S (1992)**  
**CLASSIFICATION OF GESTURE AND EKMAN'S (1999) EXPANDED LIST OF**  
**BASIC EMOTIONS**

Emotion	Iconics	Metaphorics	Beats	Deictics	Emblems
Amusement					
Anger					
Contempt					
Contentment					
Disgust					
Embarrassment					
Excitement					

Emotion	Iconics	Metaphorics	Beats	Deictics	Emblems
Fear					
Guilt					
Pride in achievement					
Relief					
Sadness/distress					
Satisfaction					
Sensory pleasure					
Shame					

*Note.* From *Toward a broader understanding of stress and coping: Mixed methods approaches* (pp. 243-285), by Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010, Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. Copyright 2010 by Information Age Publishing. Adapted with permission.

To aid in collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting these nonverbal data, we followed the framework established by Onwuegbuzie and Byers (2014). This article delineates a 13-step nonverbal communication process that serves as a conceptual framework in building a nonverbal communication way of thinking. These steps are (a) determine the goal of using nonverbal communication data, (b) determine the objective of using nonverbal communication data, (c) explore the rationale for using nonverbal communication data, (d) explore the purpose for using nonverbal communication data, (e) determine the nonverbal communication research questions, (f) select the nonverbal communication sampling design, (g) select the nonverbal communication design, (h) collect nonverbal communication data, (i) analyze nonverbal communication data, (j) legitimize nonverbal communication data, (k) interpret nonverbal communication data, (l) report nonverbal communication findings, and (m) reformulate nonverbal communication research questions (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014).

QDA Miner Version 5.0.24 (Provalis Research, 2016) was used to code the open-ended responses during the interview process. Three qualitative analyses were performed on the data collected. Firstly, an exploratory analysis was conducted via constant comparison analysis (Glaser, 1965) in which the lead researcher employed Glaser and Strauss's (1967) three stages of constant comparison analysis (i.e., open coding, axial coding, and selective coding). Once this coding procedure had been completed, a classical content analysis was conducted to discover how frequently the determined codes were found throughout the data (Berelson, 1952). Then, to avoid the qualitative bias of superficial reporting of themes, as warned by Bazeley (2009), the data were analyzed further by subjecting the themes determined in the constant comparison analysis to a correspondence analysis. Using this technique allowed the researchers to view associations in two dimensions (Michailidis, 2007) between the participants and the determined themes, among the participants, and among the themes.

## RESULTS

### Results of Constant Comparison Analysis

Using QDA Miner Version 5.0.24 (Provalis Research, 2016), the following seven major themes were extracted from the interview data: (a) Background Experiences, (b) Motivation and Rationale, (c) Position Description, (d) Strengths of Adjuncts, (e) Challenges Experienced by Adjuncts, (f) Culture of the

Institution, and (g) Overall Cares and Concerns. The organization of the codes into these themes can be viewed in Table 3. A discussion of each theme is provided in what follows.

**TABLE 3**  
**CONSTANT COMPARISON ANALYSIS: THEMES AND THEIR CODES**

Theme	Codes Used
Background experiences	Education, hiring process experience, work experience
Motivation and rationale	Boredom, wanting to give back, enjoyment/interest, sense of purpose, care about students, sense of pride/accomplishment, to help/provide a public service, financial supplement/job, jumping off point
Position description	Student descriptions, use of adjuncts, responsibilities, communication, sources of support
Strengths of adjuncts	Dedication, experiences, innovation, self-reflection, demeanor
Challenges experienced by adjuncts	Student challenges, compensation and recognition, social interaction, time, location/distance, job security/advancement, physical space, lack of consistency, having a voice, learning new skills/information, frustrations, limitations, balancing family, burnout, safety, descriptions of other adjuncts, insecurities
Culture of the institution	Treatment of adjuncts, relationships/sense of connection, focus of institution, opportunities offered, opportunities declined, autonomy/freedom, overall culture
Overall cares and concerns	Aspirations/goals, feeling valued, satisfaction level, feeling supported, overall concerns, suggested improvements, training/structure/support

*Note.* Information obtained using QDA Miner Version 5.0.24.

Theme 1, *Background Experiences*, consisted of all the codes associated with participants' previous education and work experiences and their experience with the adjunct hiring process at the select community college institution. Except Anne and Ellen, who had worked only as adjuncts, each participant spoke with pride about the accomplishments of their past or co-occurring current employment. Irene, a former teacher, said that she had written "the [specific school district's] AP curriculum for government," and Adam, a dedicated industrial scientific researcher, remarked, "I've got, like, 50 U.S. patents and I've got 100 some [international] patents." These anecdotes demonstrated each participant's overall drive and dedication to excellence. However, these accomplishments did not seem to contribute to their hiring by the institution. Several participants mentioned that they received no response to their initial online application until they would have an acquaintance affiliated with the institution bring it to the attention of someone in charge. Sandra explained:

You apply online. Nobody sees you. Nobody talks to you. So, after not hearing anything for like a semester, I began to ask around with new people I had just met if anyone they knew was, had a connection to [institution]. And one of the members of our church used to be [a] President here. And I gave him my résumé and said, "Please read this, and if you feel like I'm worthy of your time and effort to present this to somebody, then, you know, let me know. If not, then I'll understand." So, I got a call from the department head not long after.

And once someone did receive their résumé, it did not guarantee that the résumé was even vetted. Adam's hiring process is an example:



I applied and I didn't get hired. I kept applying and applying. And I knew somebody working here in a certain department, and I says, "Well I sent in my résumé, applied online, but I could never get any response. But I knew somebody here and they walked my resumé in. And I still didn't get hired. And I basically called somebody up and they said, "Oh, I didn't see anything." I said, "Man, you guys must be a really kind of very dysfunctional unit. You know, you lose stuff." And then he got to be department head, so he said, "Send your résumé to me again." So, I sent it to him again. He looked at it and then he says, "Can you teach Intro[duction] to Chemistry?" It was kind of funny to me because, he obviously didn't look at my résumé. But I said, "Yeah, of course." And then he said, "OK, I might have a spot for you." Uh, this was Thursday, he called me up there Friday. He says, "Can you teach General Chem[istry] 2?? I said, "Yeah." He said, "Come to Saturday to the campus. We're going to have the adjunct orientation." So, at orientation, I met him. We talked 10 minutes. He said, "You know what, you're a smart guy, you're hired." So, I went straight to orientation. Then, he says, "Here, here's this book, here's this book. See you on Monday."

These depictions of the adjunct hiring process were concerning because little to no consideration of the applicants' teaching experience or ability seemed to be taken. Not fully vetting an applicant for a position for the institution could result in subpar teaching and lower overall student success. For the applicant, such a quick hiring process deprives the potential adjunct faculty member of the opportunity to ask questions, to prepare for a course, and to familiarize themselves with an institution.

However, the relaxed hiring process did not deter the participants, many of whom jumped at the chance of receiving the position offer. The second theme, Motivation and Rationale, explain this. This theme is composed of the codes associated with *why* each participant decided to pursue an adjunct position. These motivations and rationales were greatly influenced by the adjunct categories with which the participants were associated. The career-enders were influenced by the boredom they felt in retirement and want[ing] to give back to a younger generation. It gave them a sense of purpose. Neil explained, "After I retired, I went home, but after all my years of activity, I got VERY bored."

Although several of the participants classified as aspiring academics did mention that adjuncting gave them a sense of purpose as well, most of them referenced becoming an adjunct to jump off point into a full-time career in academia. Angela viewed her position as "a stepping stone to furthering my career in higher ed[ucation]." Karl discussed that he, "...would want to get a full-time position. I see that as very, very tough to do, it seems. But I've been making the right connections and things like that." Adjuncts classified as specialists/experts/professionals and/or freelancers spoke mostly of the desire to help, to provide a public service, or to gain a financial supplement. Noah shared his motivation, "I am, my, my main role in this college is public service," and that, "As long as my time allows, I'll continue to teach a couple classes per semester and enjoy my service to the community." Laura shared that, "I used the [community college institution] class to supplement me [financially]."

Interestingly, two codes from the theme of Motivation and Rationale were shared across all 12 cases, regardless of adjunct classification type. These codes demonstrated that all participants cared *about students* and had a *sense of pride/accomplishment* about their positions.

*Position Description* was the third theme that emerged from the constant comparison analysis. This theme consisted of how the participants defined the institution's use of adjuncts, the responsibilities of adjuncts, and the student descriptions of their classroom composition. In terms of the use of adjuncts, there was a distinct split in how the participants defined the institution's hiring of adjuncts. As Nathaniel explained, the career-enders felt valued and necessary: "They don't have enough full-time teachers, so they need the adjuncts." In contrast, the other categories of adjuncts believed that the reason for having so many adjunct faculty members at the institution was financial reasons. Anne stated, "And hiring more adjuncts and treating them like they do; well, it fits their bottom line and that's what matters." Matthew disputed the concept that the institution does not have enough full-time faculty, remarking that the institution did not *want* any additional full-time faculty members. He related about applying for the one full-time position

posted in his field, commenting, “In the 3 1/2 years I’ve been here, I’ve seen one opening one time but I applied and they never filled it. So, they canceled the position before filling it. Yup, that’s right.” Then, he confirmed that the workload that would have gone to a full-time faculty member was distributed out to more adjuncts.

Despite their part-time status and contact-hour-based pay, the adjuncts’ responsibilities were numerous. In addition to being prepared for teaching and instruction, the participants discussed further such responsibilities as creating lesson plans, updating class materials, developing graded material (i.e., quizzes, tests, projects, papers), developing grading rubrics, grading material, advertising their classes, staying up-to-date on material, maintaining a good classroom environment (both in online and in face-to-face classes), communicating with students and the institution, attending HR trainings, using the early alert system, tutoring, meeting with students, and being evaluated every three years. To aid with these responsibilities, they were asked if professional development training was required. It was discovered that, although offered, it was not mandatory and only one of the adjuncts interviewed had participated. The only mandatory item considered professional development was an adjunct in-service held at the beginning of each semester. However, even this was a point of some contention over its effectiveness when Irene dismissed it:

Nothing’s required as part of the college, except for going to a staff development once a semester, which is a joke. It’s usually a joke. “How to teach.” Which half the time, and this is my problem, I have a hard time listening to somebody 25, who uses poor grammar, and is trying to tell me how to teach when they don’t know [how].

Further, it was discovered that these responsibilities, often, were made more complex due to the range of student ages, experiences, abilities, and temperaments that composed the adjuncts’ classrooms. The age range of students noted was from 16 to more than 70 years of age. This means that the adjuncts have to be prepared to teach (a) high schoolers doing dual credit classes, (b) adults with families and full-time jobs working on advancing their careers, and (c) retirees looking to keep their minds active. It can be difficult to navigate such a wide population of students, especially without a teaching background and/or without mandatory professional development.

Participants then were asked about the sources of support they experienced in their position and the communication methods utilized. Overall, the strongest area of support referenced was each participant’s department chair. However, a beneficial experience with one’s chair was not universal amongst the participants. Although the chairperson often was referenced as a source of support, it was not mentioned equally across all cases. The tone of the department seemed to be set by the chairperson; therefore, if someone did not have a good chairperson, they did not feel as supported and had to look for support in other ways. Other mentions of support included, but were not limited to, the workers within the Office Services center, which is a centrally located office with two long-time employees who have a strong knowledge of the overall functions of the institution; the Testing Center, the Library, and, the Technology Assistance Center, and the Campus Police. By referencing primarily the overall institutional support offices instead of specific people, one could begin to feel the isolation and lack of human connection the participants had faced.

One of the reasons contributing to this lack of specific support could be the methods of communication experienced by the adjuncts. Email was the standard communication route from the institution to the adjuncts and from the adjuncts to the institution. Noah stated that some of that was born of necessity: “The majority of [communication] is email because I am very rarely on this campus, especially during day hours.” However, Anne complained about the dangers of relying on just emails for communication:

They inundate us with emails to the point where I don’t know what they’re telling us anymore. I get five lunch menus a day. I don’t care anymore. Like there’s breakfast menus, lunch menus, dinner menus from multiple campuses within the district and I’m just like [put hands in the air in frustration]. There’s a lot of condolence e-mails and this and that. So, when you’re looking at your email, you’re trying to sift through the data. It’s wasted

information overload and there's nothing in there of a lot of use because by the time you get to the things that are of use you're so tired of reading all these pointless emails.

Based on these perspectives, there might be opportunities to look at improved communication with adjuncts, leading to a better support network.

The fourth theme was *Strength of Adjuncts*. This described the participants' self-identified as the strengths they brought to their position and the institution. These strengths included dedication, experience, innovation, self-reflection, and demeanor.

Their dedication to their position was evident in everything they did. Nathaniel described that his ultimate goal motivated all of his actions:

And I try to really give my best effort to get these students through the class. My goal is to get them all to pass that class. They don't all pass though, but that's my absolute goal is to get them through.

An example of this dedication can be seen in Angela's diligence in being available to her students. Although the adjuncts did have an office space, it was small and located in a maze of hallways, which was not convenient for many instructors or students to use or to find. Angela took it upon herself to find a solution:

And so what I ended up doing for office hours is I just held them in the common area. And so I just set up shop, I got a table and I spread myself out [laughs], had my planner set up and like, and I would see [my students]. One semester I did this down the commons, they don't have it anymore, but they had the cafeteria there in the large circle area. Right where advising is and financial aid [is] and so I would see them getting food and I'd be like, "Come here. You didn't turn this in," and they'd be like, "oh no." And that worked. And it was open and it was out there and I felt that because of that, that made me more accessible as opposed to, because they're first year, they don't feel comfortable finding their way to their own classrooms [let alone to a hidden away office area]!

Angela's words also illustrate how adjuncts have to create and to develop solutions when lacking support systems, professional development, and peer interactions. Many of the participants talked about how they were continually working to improve their courses and teaching. With limited resources and compensation, it is commendable how often adjunct professors devised their own innovations to aid in the success of their classes. They also worked hard to connect with the students and to have a good relationship with them. However, even with these strengths, the adjuncts did not feel that they were perfect. They continually used methods of self-reflection to gauge their techniques in order to improve, such as incorporating student feedback throughout the semester.

Even with this multitude of strengths, each of the participants experienced a variety of challenges in their positions. In fact, *Challenges Experienced by Adjuncts*, the fifth theme, was the most dominant theme based on the amount of data coded to that theme. Although the challenges of lack of *social interaction*, lack of *compensation and recognition*, and concerns about *time* were the most frequent codes in this theme, which was expected based on the review of the previous literature, there were several challenges mentioned that were not expected. One of these was the challenge of *safety*. The majority of the participants described the sexual harassment training videos that they were required to view as part of their employment requirements. Anne elaborated on how these videos made her feel:

And then, of course, the harassment videos, at which point I always ask, "Why is there nothing in here about students sexually harassing instructors?" and they tell me that that's not really what harassment is and that's not what, let me rephrase that, that's not how they view harassment, because it's always supposed to be from the top down and I was like,

“No, harassment’s about trying to usurp power and make someone feel smaller or less than. And just because someone’s in a place of power doesn’t mean they can’t be harassed.” You look at harassment and we look at the MeToo movement and we look at everything else, but we don’t really go the full distance. We don’t acknowledge all the issues that are happening and we just expect everybody to be happy about it. And, “no that’s not a big issue because it’s not, it’s one in a million” and I’m like, “It’s happened to me. Twice. In less than 10 years.” I gained over 60 pounds because it happened to me twice. I’m losing that weight now. I’m very conservative on how I dress because I’m afraid it’s going to happen again. I tell my students upfront I am not into people touching me, as a barrier to certain types of behavior. I back up when they get too close. It probably comes off as distant and rude, but we all have our baggage.

In relating her experience, Anne told me that she brought the issue to the administration. Offending students were removed from her classes, but the harassment did not end because of simply moving the student. When Anne attempted further action, she felt unsupported:

I looked into it and they told me that if a student is not currently on the campus there is nothing they can or will do. So, if they harass you via social media, it doesn’t matter. If they are not currently in your class, it doesn’t matter.

Although Anne was the only participant to bring this issue to light, it is unlikely that she was the only adjunct faculty member to face this situation. Further, because of lacking areas of compensation associated with these part-time adjunct positions, whereby participants described lack of compensation as not only lack of fair payment, but also lack of opportunities for affordable health benefits, adjuncts experiencing these issues might not have access to counseling services following such an experience.

Being employed as an adjunct faculty member in the state of Texas means that you are employed at-will (i.e., employment in a contractual relationship in which an employee can be dismissed by an employer for any reason, without warning, as long as that reason is not illegal, such as terminating a contract based on an employee’s race). Because of this contractual tenant, Anne was not comfortable pursuing the matter of sexual harassment further for fear of losing her position and her income. Her fears associated with the challenge of safety were compounded by the challenge of *job security and advancement*, which was a topic mentioned by several participants. Ellen detailed how difficult it can be attempting to plan around the uncertainty of each semester:

There’s that possibility that, if a full-timer doesn’t get all of their classes that they can take one or two classes away from me. There’s not anything I can do. And I’m not compensated for any prep[aration] work I’ve already put into the class. I had it happen at [other community college institution] once, it was an online class but I had already set up everything and I had already emailed the students because I emailed them like, 2 or 3 days before classes start. Classes were starting on a Monday. I emailed them [the students] on Friday. You know, welcome to class, this is what’s expected. Sunday, they pulled the class from me. Yes, they pulled the online class from me and gave it to somebody else. I was not happy. I deleted everything I had done because I was like, “I did all this work.” I should, I probably shouldn’t be thinking this, but I was like, I did all this work, I don’t want her just going in and taking over everything I had already put in.

In a system where you are limited to only being able to teach three classes a semester at a community college institution, losing even one of those classes can significantly impact your income and planned budget. In an attempt to expand her skillset and give herself more options should she be compelled to forfeit a class, Angela applied for an opening to teach a different class. Unfortunately, she believed that her previous good work prevented her from advancing at the institution, as she was prevented from taking on

the additional class because her team leader had already made the schedule for the spring and wouldn't reschedule Angela's class time to allow for the additional class. Angela explained, "I felt that I did almost too good of a job, and they didn't want to find somebody else [to teach the student success course] because that would make it more cumbersome for them."

This, and many of the other challenges mentioned, were influenced by the *Culture of the Institution*, the sixth theme identified. Generally speaking, the adjuncts believed that the institution's culture was positive, especially when concerning the students. The *overall culture* seemed to be directly tied to the *focus of the institution*: the students. Nathaniel described the following account:

The culture here, I can't explain it any better than they're dedicated to the student. The culture here is, everything is dedicated to the student. I mean I've graduated colleges where they were more or less dedicated to research and the student, well, you gotta teach. Not always true, there were great teachers that I had in the other colleges that I've been. But the culture tends to be to do research, a little more heavier [than] here. I don't see that, I see dedication to the students. One hundred percent.

Adam, however, worried that the institution was more focused on giving the students a good experience, as opposed to preparing them for what was to come. He stated:

So, that's a big, that's one thing the college needs to stop acting like you get you're going to get in [to a 4-year university]. No, it's not like that. You know how many people are trying to get in [nearby university's], um, medical school? You've got people from [community college institution], [other community college system], here, then you got people from San Antonio, you have people from Dallas, you have people from Corpus Christi. You've also got all those people, not to mention the freshmen coming straight from high school in AP classes that's got this super duper GPA or whatever SAT score. Then, you got those individuals at [nearby university] who went in as undeclared and now they're declared and they're trying to get in. Now, who you think they are going to look first? Gotta think about the competition. The college needs to be more realistic with the students because I've heard students complaining, "I can't get into medical school, I can't get into graduate school," from this college. You know, some of them only apply for one college. "I just want to be an [one school's mascot]," or "I just want to be a [another school's mascot]." Maybe you want to be a [a third school's mascot], might want to be a [a fourth school's mascot]. You better look at the bigger picture.

In terms of how the culture of the institution specifically affected adjuncts, it was observed that the treatment of adjuncts reinforced their isolation and a lack of relationships/sense of connection. Part-time status meant that adjuncts were not invited to meetings and were not receiving the same information full-time professors were, making adjuncts feel unconnected and like an "afterthought." Karl discussed how the lack of a proper office space both isolated him and affected his relationship with his students:

So, I don't have, and I don't have an actual office to be around anyone or meet with anybody either. So, it's either you know, wherever we can meet. I don't have an actual place to meet with students. So, it's usually, you just, you know, come to the library or tables that are close to the class or I usually just meet with them individually in the class, so that it don't appear to them that I don't have an office. We have an adjunct, it's an area, but is more like a workstation, like computers if we need to go and do something in between classes.

Another result of this lack of interaction and oversight was that adjuncts enjoyed significant freedom and autonomy to design and to implement their courses as they pleased. However, this same freedom led

to many opportunities offered to them, in terms of training and professional development, to be opportunities declined due to lack of interest, recognition of importance, requirement, time, and compensation. Even though the culture of the institution seemed to be focused on the successful experience of the students, it did not seem to consider the importance of how investment in the development of the adjunct faculty members could contribute to increasing the positive impact on the student experience.

The seventh and final theme consisted of the participants' *Cares and Concerns* about themselves and the institution as a whole. This theme saw a split of opinion based on the participants' adjunct grouping classification. Predominantly, the career-enders and specialists/experts/professionals felt valued, felt satisfied, felt that the trainings and supports offered were adequate, had few overall concerns, and desired only to stay in their current role. The aspiring academics, in contrast, did not feel valued by the institution nor satisfied in their current position. They desired more structure and consistency, more offerings of relevant and compensated trainings, more support, and aspired to advance in their academic careers. However, suggested improvements from all groups did demonstrate the overall desire for more connection and social interaction. Neil, a career-ender, mentioned that, "If we had an office here and we were on campus for scheduled time, then sure we might as well get students in and work with them, rather than sit there and twiddle our thumbs." Ellen, an aspiring academic, suggested:

If they could have a [campus-wide] mentoring program or something to, where you work with a seasoned full-time person maybe, or maybe even a seasoned adjunct person, to kind of show you around...that would be one thing that would probably be helpful. Then, you'd not be left holding everything on your own but you'd have a built-in social connection.

### Results of Classical Content Analysis

Following the constant comparison analysis, a classical content analysis was conducted. Based on coding frequency, the participants emphasized the codes *social interaction, relationships and sense of connection, concerns about training/structure/support, compensation and recognition, time, sources of support, and treatment of adjuncts*. The 53 codes were assigned to approximately 2,864 different chunks of data within the 12 transcribed interviews. Overall, the codes associated with the theme *Challenges Experienced* occurred most frequently compared to codes associated with other themes. Table 4 displays the frequency for the code determined to be the most prominent within each theme.

**TABLE 4**  
**CLASSICAL CONTENT ANALYSIS: PROMINENT THEME CODES AND THEIR FREQUENCIES**

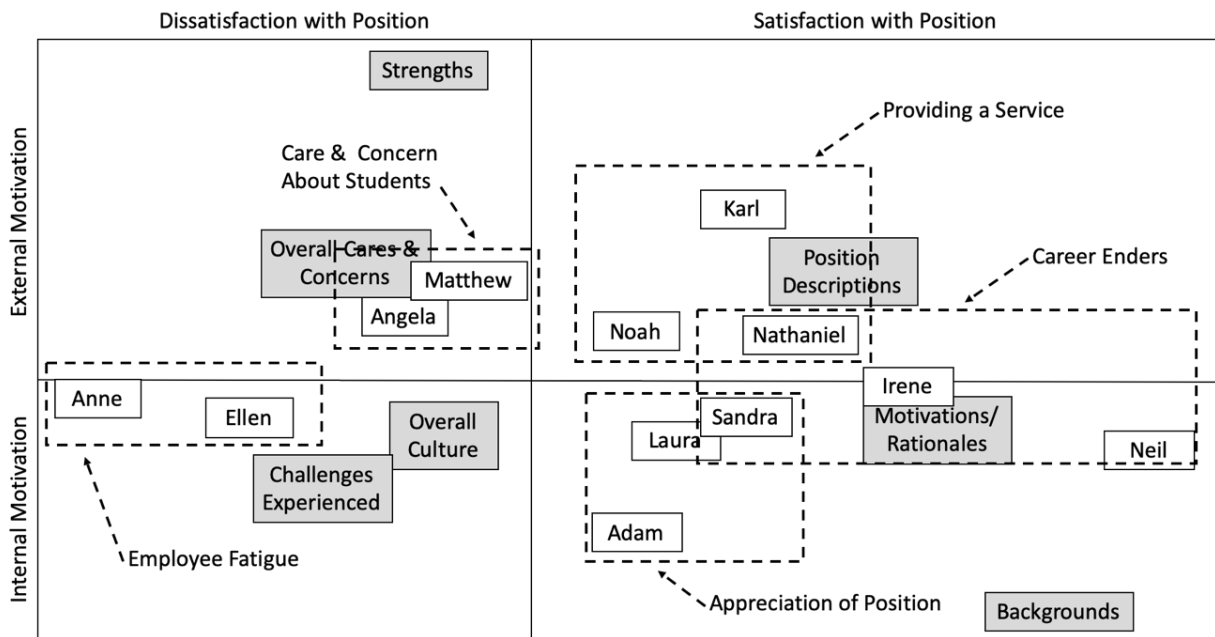
Prominent Code	Category/Theme	Frequency of Code	Frequency of All Codes Within Respective Theme	% Code Used Within Theme
Work experiences	Background experiences	99	159	62.26
Care about students	Motivation and rationale	77	165	46.67
Responsibilities	Position description	181	534	33.90
Innovation	Strengths of adjuncts	24	67	35.82
Social interaction	Challenges experienced by adjuncts	182	978	18.61
Relationships/sense of connection	Culture of the institution	189	509	37.13
Training/structure/support	Overall cares and concerns	175	452	38.72

*Note.* Information obtained using QDA Miner Version 5.0.24.

### Results of Correspondence Analysis

Using a correspondence analysis, we were able to map the 12 participants onto a space that displays the seven emergent themes (i.e., background experiences, motivation, and rationale, position description, strengths of adjuncts, challenges experienced by adjuncts, the culture of the institution, and overall cares and concerns). Figure 3 illustrates how the participants related to each other about each of these themes. In the top right quadrant, it can be seen that Karl, Noah, and Nathaniel are positioned surrounding the theme of position description. In the top left quadrant, Angela and Matthew are clustered around the theme of overall cares and concerns while also being the participants nearest to the theme of strengths. In the bottom right quadrant, Ellen and Anne are closest to the theme of challenges experienced. Laura, Sandra, and Adam are clustered close together within the vicinity of the motivations and rationales theme, with Irene straddling the axis between the upper and lower right quadrants and being the nearest to the theme of motivations and rationales. Finally, in the lower right quadrant, it can be seen that Neil was by himself close to the theme of backgrounds.

**FIGURE 3**  
CORRESPONDENCE PLOT SHOWING HOW THE PARTICIPANTS RELATED TO EACH OTHER WITH REGARD TO EACH OF THE THEMES



After conducting the correspondence analysis in QDA Miner Version 5.0.24 (Provalis Research, 2016), we studied the correspondence plot to find similarities among participants clustered by the difference themes. Following an examination of the data, we were able to identify common characteristics that led to the emergence of five meta-themes: (a) Employment Fatigue, (b) Concern and Care for Student Growth, (c) Providing a Service, (d) Appreciation of Position, and (e) Career-Enders. Additionally, it was noted that the participants were divided by the y-axis in terms of their overall satisfaction level with their position, with those left of the origin communicating the least satisfaction overall and those to the right of the origin communicating the most satisfaction overall. Further, participants were divided by the x-axis in terms of their overall motivation to work as an adjunct faculty member, with those above the x-axis referencing an external motivation (e.g., caring about students, offering a public service) and those below the x-axis referencing an internal motivation (e.g., self-fulfillment of a goal, personal financial security, relief from boredom).

### *Meta-Theme 1: Employment Fatigue*

The first meta-theme observed was Employment Fatigue, which we defined as an expressed state of physical or emotional exhaustion by participants in which they reported a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity. Of all the participants, Anne and Ellen, both classified as aspiring academics, expressed the most dissatisfaction with their status as an adjunct faculty member. However, it should be noted that their dissatisfaction stemmed from their treatment by the institution. In terms of satisfaction with working with students, both expressed continued enjoyment of being in the classroom, with Anne mentioning, "I love what I do, but I'm not very satisfied. I come alive in the classroom; it is the only place I have ever felt that way. It's home." Ellen confirmed, "I'm there for the students, and I want to teach the students. And, um, I have a lot of experience teaching and working with the students and enjoy working with them." They had both also been working the longest as adjunct faculty members with that position being their sole occupation in comparison to the other participants, who either had other employment positions or were retired. However, even with their experience and passion, both Anne and Ellen felt little hope that their initial primary objective for starting in an adjunct role would ever be fulfilled, namely, gaining a full-time position. Anne discussed the overall difficult process for her field:

I was told when I first started within about a couple years, there would be possible options to being full-time. That was before the 2008 recession and I understand that that changed things. But you think you're working towards becoming full-time. And in certain disciplines, I think that's true. I need to believe that is true because, the alternative is too depressing. However, I don't believe it's true in mine. If you're English, if you're history, if you're government, those required by state courses, you will get there. Maybe not in this city, but you can get there, which gets its own portion of resentment by adjuncts. Administrations hire new full timers who didn't work at "your" campus and these adjuncts are thinking, "I've worked here for 10 years and they hired them? My classes always make, the students love me. And yet you hire someone from outside our system?" And often times the reason for that is because in order to make money as an adjunct you, you must teach 24/7 but to be hired you must publish. What adjunct has time to publish? And when you're in one of the smaller disciplines, it's hard to get there, to get to the full-time position. And in order, you think that in order to have accreditation, they have to have one person in your discipline as a full-time employee? They found ways to skirt that. So, you know, that whole 'one for the entire district' isn't even true.

Upon realizing that their plans of obtaining a full-time position were slim, both participants had to re-evaluate their roles within the institution. Do they stay to do what they love? And if they do stay, why? Both believed that compensation, recognition, and appreciation were in short supply and it was changing how they viewed their calling. Ellen explained:

But there are many times I don't feel very appreciated and here, and I don't even want to say this, but here it feels more like a job. But I'm here for the students too so I can't really say it feels more like a job. But, I show up and teach and interact with students and that's really all there is for me. And I think a lot of adjuncts feel that way too.

Anne's belief here was consistent:

And then I realized towards, you know, working for full time and building that case, over time I realized that I'm just a cog. One that can get rusty. And easily be replaced. That personally there is no value in me. There's just value if the students see it and it, things change. So, you know you think you're doing something, you think you're helping, but they just don't really, you're an afterthought. Yes, you pay us a decent hourly wage, but that hourly wage is only for when we're in the classroom. And then you ask us to do all



these other things that can't be done in the classroom and you work out the math, we're making less than minimum wage. So, I don't understand this, like, how they can just be like, "Oh you know, come back, come back, come back, we're not going to pay you anymore, we're not going to acknowledge the fact that you've worked here and been loyal to us and done everything you were supposed to for all of these years. We're just gonna continue to pay you the same starting salary," whereas the full-time faculty are constantly complaining about living wages and living wage increases. But yet when it comes to fighting for the adjuncts, they're like, "We didn't get one last year why should they get one?" And you're sitting there like, "Well, we haven't gotten one in over 10 years. You've gotten at least two within that time frame and you think that's OK?"

All of this information led to the realization that Anne and Ellen might be on their way to experiencing burnout in their positions. This justifies why they were the farthest two participants on the dissatisfaction continuum and were closest to the theme of challenges experienced. Ellen's dissatisfaction might be mitigated slightly because she was married with a family and not the sole financial provider. Anne, in contrast, felt guilt and shame over her career stagnation and how it affected her family and her future, pushing her farther into dissatisfaction:

I am not married. This is my income. I've been living with my parents and almost off of my parents as a result of this. My dad is getting ready to retire. I've come to the realization he's probably not retiring partially because of me. That's not right. I think when you're married with kids that are school age-ish, this is not a bad job, especially if you're going to the one down the street. But when you're trying to do this as a full-time job and you get to your 30s, something has to give and that something is doing it. As much as I enjoy working with college students, as much as I don't want to go into the high school system, I can't continue to stay here and expect to have a future in which [I have some financial security]. I can't afford anything, really. I can't afford to go anywhere.

This dissatisfaction was felt keenly because both participants, based on their location on the correspondence plot, have an internal motivation for continuing to work as an adjunct faculty member; namely, fulfilling their individual career goals in academia.

#### *Meta-Theme 2: Concern and Care for Student Growth*

The other two adjuncts on the dissatisfaction end of the continuum were Angela and Matthew, aspiring academics who both desired full-time employment as well. Still, they had not been in an adjunct role for the same length of time as had Anne and Ellen. The meta-theme that emerged from Angela and Matthew's placement was a distinct Care and Concern for Student Growth, meaning that, although they were concerned about students' academic achievement, their real focus was on connecting with their students and helping them grow and succeed as individuals. This was supported by their placement on the top half of the correspondence plot, corresponding with an external motivation to working as an adjunct faculty member. Both of them discussed how some students might need more support in order to reach their goals. Angela explained:

Because I work with freshmen, a lot of them are not only first year students here at the school but they're also first-generation college students; so, they don't have a toolkit at home that they can tap into in order to ask questions about financial aid or the steps and processes to reserve a room here the library to study. And so I feel like I'm on the front lines in, not only answering those quick little questions but also just kind of guiding their path as they are literally putting their feet to the ground and starting this experience for themselves.

Matthew felt similarly, stating that many of his students were in their first semester and had additional needs that the institution might not realize. Because of his concerns for his students, he often reached out to them if he was worried they were experiencing trouble.

So I'll call them after about two classes missed and see what's going on. And usually it's things going on in their life and they just need assurance and, you know, it has usually to do with them being overwhelmed and if I can just make them not feel overwhelmed, then they can stick with a lot of times.

Both Angela and Matthew believed that their roles were important in helping students achieve success; however, they were also concerned that not all instructors were well-versed enough in pedagogy or did not have enough experience teaching in order to provide these same levels of support to students. Matthew was upset over the fact that many adjunct faculty were hired with minimal qualifications:

Eighteen hours or more in that degree and have a degree, that's it! Because I'm highly suspicious that we have faculty that are only vetted by the degrees because the degree is so important. It's an absolute requirement. So, if they can't teach, oh well, they have the qualifications. So, I don't know how much of that's done but, yeah, I'm concerned that it's done because, otherwise, I wouldn't hear about interpersonal problems with other instructors or how the students don't like them because they're not hard but you know boring or difficult to understand or you know whatever the problem is.

Angela, who was assigned to mentor two new adjunct faculty members (without receiving any compensation for mentoring), had consistent observations to Matthew:

They've never taught. EVER. One of them came from the role of writing and publishing and never been in front of a group, or in a classroom and maintaining a grade book and what it is to have objectives and have this tied to the class, and so everything has been like, it's almost too much. Like she needs more structure to get from week to week to week. And the same for my other mentee is just a very overwhelming experience because there is not enough support system there to catch them. And that's not just the curriculum aspect, but even things like, how do I enter grades in the grade book or how do I . . . ?

Angela believed that the problem could be mitigated with more and better professional development and support:

I feel that the lack of any kind of education practices or strategies across the system and the implementation of those is probably the biggest [problem], because . . . you know, I'm sitting next to this person who's like, who's won awards for psychology and, you know, has her PhD in psychology; didn't know the difference between the fact that there's more than one kind of assessment. Yeah, so, you know, an essay's not the only way or you know, multiple-choice tests your moral choices is not the only way. You're like, checking for understanding? What are you talking about?

However, she was concerned that even if the institution added more and better professional development, adjuncts would not take full advantage of it due to a lack of time and compensation.

Both instructors shared a deep concern for their students' welfare and that their students' needs were not fully being met due to lack of experience of other instructors. This care and concern for their students demonstrated their passion for excellence and the need for more professional development and checkpoints for instructors. However, these suggestions would only be helpful if adjunct faculty members' time and fiscal compensation were considered when developing any seminars.

### *Meta-Theme 3: Providing a Service*

Similar to the motivations of Angela and Matthew, the third meta-theme, *Providing a Service*, explained the rationales of Karl, Noah, and Nathaniel in terms of their adjunct roles. These individuals were clustered around the theme of *position descriptions* and in the top half of their correspondence plot. Each of these participants was satisfied overall with their roles, although it should be noted that Nathaniel was a career-ender, Noah was a specialist/expert/professional with a full-time occupation outside of his adjunct role, and Karl was an aspiring academic, but with the least experience of any of the participants in the role, having only been in his adjunct position for one year.

All three participants mentioned that one of the main motivators behind becoming adjunct instructors was to provide a service, whether to the community, the institution, or the students. Noah explained his thought-process:

A public service. My main role in this college is public service. And that's why I choose to continue to do so. It's my opportunity to be out in the community outside of my commitment to my ministry at my high school and serve the public at large rather than just my private school entity. So, first and foremost, public services. That's how I view it.

Nathaniel based his rationale also in a desire to help, but his motivation came in the form of helping out the institution:

I think they rely on adjuncts a lot to fill the gaps. The teachers, full-time, they'll be teaching five courses maybe, and that's a heavy load for them; so, if we can come in and teach two courses a week, it doesn't overburden them to teach them seven courses a week. You know what I mean?

Karl also viewed his role similarly as did Nathaniel, about supporting the institution. Still, he expanded his rationale to include helping the students, not just with the subject matter, but with understanding life. He explained:

I see it as supporting the overall system's goal and vision. And I know that they can't have someone doing it full time all the time. So, this is basically supporting, the goal and vision of the college and also is using my experience to help guide the students who have not experienced the things that I've already experienced as a student and as a working professional.

He was not necessarily overly concerned for the students, but justified his experience because he had the opportunity to impart wisdom to his classes:

I'll say, it just makes me feel good to know that I'm sharing some wisdom that I've experienced. I see a lot of students that, you know, I see a lot of myself in something and in a lot of students. So, just being able to provide them with a source of wisdom on things to do and not do, so that I didn't know, that I wished I would have when I was in college.

It was interesting to note how each of these participants described her/his position in terms of being based in service, especially because each of these individuals was classified under a different category of adjunct (i.e., career-ender, specialist/expert/professional, & aspiring academic).

### *Meta-Theme 4: Appreciation of Position*

The fourth meta-theme, *Appreciation of Position*, involved Laura, Sandra, and Adam. These were adjunct instructors whom, in their interviews, expressed a strong appreciation for their positions, which corresponds to them being overall satisfied in their roles, as indicated by their position right of the origin

on the correspondence analysis map. Both Adam and Laura were classified as specialists/experts/professionals with regard to their adjunct position and Sandra was a career-ender.

For Adam, his appreciation was based on the financial security that being an adjunct gave him during an economic downturn:

This is more, without sounding so abrasive, this is more just to make money in academia 'cause really I'm a business person now. But the economy kind of had a bad term from 2009 to 2012. So, that's kind of how I got forced back into academia.

He continued with his adjunct position past the economic downturn because he recognized that it gave him both a steady income and a flexible enough schedule that he could continue his true interests. He explained:

Things are picking up really well and a lot of success. So, what it does is allow me to be a researcher, which is my true desire. Yeah, my passion is to research different avenues. So, but here wouldn't change that. This is, I'd just be here doing, you know, whatever. Teaching. And I'll still be able to do my research.

Laura also was appreciative of the additional income. Even though she had actually obtained a full-time position in academia at another institution, she retained her adjunct status at the current institution because it helped her navigate student loan debt:

And even though I do have a full-time position at [other community college institution] and I have benefits and things like that, it's still not quite enough. So, until I can get to that point with [other community college institution], then I'll have to make a decision. You know, if I ever get to that point with [other community college institution], then I will look at either [current community college institution] or [virtual university] and kinda decide, OK, what am I doing here? What's really going to be the best?

However, she did make note of the challenges that so many adjuncts faced, that of employment and financial insecurity:

And I guess, part of me too, is, for the sake of full disclosure, there's always that fear in the back of your mind, especially when you've been adjunct for so long, and you've worked for company that went bankrupt, and you got fired. Like, is this for real? Like am I really, am I really OK? So, I guess a part of me is still holding on to it as well for security. You know even though there's, I haven't received any negative feedback from [other community college institution] and, you know, I have a great rapport with my assistant dean and my dean and my fellow department, I mean everything is fine. But I guess my own perfectionist nature, there's still that little bit of, because I did go from part-time to Department Head. It's like, I know that there are things that I'm missing. And I guess there's a little bit of fear that it's going to go away. And I don't want to go back to [financial insecurity]. So I want to, I don't know. I guess it's my own insecurities that also keep me here.

Even with her full-time position, having been a long-term adjunct previously left Laura feeling insecure enough to maintain a part-time workload in addition to her full-time workload responsibilities.

In the case of Sandra, this appreciation was rooted in being able to continue to contribute something to students and the community during her retirement. Sandra also was located very closely to the cluster in the meta-theme *Providing a Service*, as exemplified by her statement, "Well, I feel like I'm presenting a service of some sort. I mean that there is a need obviously that I'm fulfilling," but her high levels of expressed appreciation for her position was her dominant characteristic. She explained her continued

interest in teaching by stating, “This is something I enjoy. My friends wonder why I’m still doing this. I enjoy it.” Due to her retirement, Sandra admitted to having extra time that she could be spending with friends, but she still believed that she had something to contribute and she appreciated that opportunity:

Well, if I feel like, and this is one of the reasons I am still doing this, but I feel like I can help a student get through a difficult class, because algebra is difficult for a number of students, and get their life on a better track from getting an associate degree from this institution or maybe going to [another university] and getting your degree and they’re making a better life for themselves, I feel like my little part, it’s like a little puzzle. I filled in that little piece that helps them get the whole puzzle done.

All three of these participants were located in the bottom one half of the correspondence plot. This fitted within the internal motivation distinction based on Adam’s, Laura’s, and Sandra’s responses regarding the reasons for their appreciation (e.g., financial security, personal fulfillment). Overall, the adjunct position primarily satisfied something personal for each of them.

#### *Meta-Theme 5: Career-Enders*

The fifth and final meta-theme, *Career-Enders*, involved Sandra, Nathaniel, Irene, and Neil. These participants represented the four career-ender adjuncts in the sample. All of these career-ender adjuncts were clustered nearest to the theme of motivations/rationales, except Neil, who was the closest of participants to the theme of backgrounds. We hypothesized that Neil was pulled away from the other career-enders on the correspondence analysis plot due to his educational level because he was the only participant without a Master’s degree or graduate hours in his field.

Overall, the career-enders were fairly uniform in their desire to work as adjunct faculty members. Many of them complained about boredom in their retirement and believed they still had something to give, even if they were no longer employed full-time in their respective fields. Of the career-enders, both Sandra and Irene were former teachers. Nathaniel was a former engineer and Neil worked in computer technologies. All had led long, active, and fascinating careers; therefore, it was understandable that they had become bored post-retirement. Neil explained simply, “After about a few years, I got bored and had to do something, so that’s when I started. And that’s it.” Nathaniel expanded on this thought by stating:

And I retired from [company of previous employment] and I needed something to do, ‘cause I wasn’t, I still have something to give. And I thought, well, I know I could teach math so I came here, I think that was 2001.

Irene, however, was an interesting case. As previously mentioned, she straddled the x-axis, meaning that her motivations within her position were both equally externally and internally motivated. Not only was she motivated by keeping herself active, she felt a responsibility to her students as well:

I see my role as a teacher. As one who is to help these kids get prepared for the real world. To really learn their subject. To understand the news, understand what’s going on. To learn to speak after they’ve researched and not just give some general BS opinion that they know nothing about.

Overall, all the participants in this meta-theme were satisfied in their role and did not experience as many challenges as did the other adjunct instructors interviewed had. This was mostly due to their established financial security and a lack of desire for advancement. Irene, who admitted that she had worked and saved to establish herself financially so that she could travel during her retirement years, was the only career-ender who spoke to the challenges of other adjuncts, stating:

Think of it, I teach three classes. That's six thousand, not even six thousand after taxes, a semester. What does that pay for? It doesn't even pay for one of my trips. It pays for part of the trip. So, obviously I'm not in it for the money, but I think of all the young teachers who are good, who have to get out of it because of the money or lack thereof.

The meta-theme of *Career-Enders* is important because it established that some adjuncts' needs do not represent the needs of all. Because the career-enders were clustered together, we can see they are a very specific adjunct faculty with similar motivations, concerns, and needs. There were many differences between the career-enders and the other adjunct participants, many of which had to do with the lack of challenges faced due to the aforementioned financial security and satisfaction with position. However, this career-enders group also had an overall lack of desire or motivation for professional development, especially in the area of technology. They are secure in their past experience being enough to continue on with their teaching. Sandra explained, "You know after you've taught as many years as I have, I have certain things that I know have been successful for years and I just tend to use those again." When asked if she was aware of any professional development offerings, Irene responded, "They do to those who need it, not to be rude. I don't need it." Even Nathaniel, who specifically mentioned wanting to learn more about the online support platform, admitted, "There are courses that they do have for professional development. I generally, I don't do those, I generally don't do those." As this correspondence analysis demonstrates, it is important to separate accurately the practices and needs of the different adjuncts' different categories to understand the adjunct experience.

### **Results of Nonverbal Communication Analysis**

As part of our data analysis, we analyzed the interviews with respect to the nonverbal communication behaviors exhibited by participants using the previously mentioned 13-step nonverbal communication process (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014) as our conceptual framework in this analysis. Denham and Onwuegbuzie (2013) identified the following purposes for incorporating nonverbal communication data: clarification, juxtaposition, discovery, confirmation, emphasis, illustration, elaboration, complementarity, effect, and corroboration/verification. Recording and analyzing nonverbal communication data permitted us to explore and to understand better ideas and issues related to the participants, as well as to provide more accurate and richer descriptions regarding the nature of the participants' experiences.

Because the nonverbal communication data helped us to understand better the verbal data we collected, we focused on the following questions: (a) To what extent are the nonverbal communication data consistent with the verbal data? (b) To what extent are the contradictions between the nonverbal communication data and the verbal data? (c) To what extent do the nonverbal communication data help to clarify the verbal data? and (d) To what extent do the nonverbal data distinguish my participants from one another? These questions helped us directly integrate the verbal and nonverbal data. Following each interview, the lead researcher completed the previously discussed matrix assessing nonverbal communication using Ekman's (1999) expanded list of basic emotions and McNeill's (1992) classification of gesture, as developed by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2010). A description of the nonverbal modes of communication observed and recorded at listed in Table 5.

**TABLE 5**  
**DESCRIPTION OF NONVERBAL MODES OF COMMUNICATION**

Mode	Description
Iconics	Gestures that simulate movements or depict movements or objects.
Metaphorics	Gestures that are visual in nature and portray abstract ideas or thoughts.
Beats	Gestures that represent abstract ideas and distinguish words or phrases from other words or phrases.
Deictics	Gestures that involve an abstract level of pointing, such as a pointing to ideas portrayed in a metaphorical space.
Emblems	Gestures that have specific linguistic labels and represent the traditional notion of gestures that have specific cultural meaning.

*Note:* Adapted from McNeill's (1992) classification scheme of gestures.

Of Ekman's (1999) 15 fundamental emotions, the participants exhibited between 10 (Angela, Irene, Matthew, Nathaniel, and Noah) and all 15 (Anne) of these emotions throughout their interviews. The three most dominant emotions displayed were pride in achievement, with an 18.30% prevalence rate; sadness/distress, with a 14.30% prevalence rate; and contempt, with a 14.05% prevalence rate. All participants displayed seven emotions; these were amusement, contempt, contentment, excitement, pride in achievement, sadness/distress, and satisfaction. Only one participant, Anne, displayed shame. Each of the adjunct professors interviewed expressed enjoyment in their work with their students, and their nonverbal language confirmed their satisfaction. More information on the emotions exhibited by the participants can be viewed in Table 6.

Anne, Irene, and Angela were the three most expressive of the participants. They were also the participants most likely to show dissatisfaction with their position regarding how they were treated and compensated. They spoke the most passionately about the work that they do and its importance. Still, they were also adamant that the institution only recognized their importance in name, but not in any meaningful way. Each participant started their interviews more reserved, but built up into a fervor once we had established a rapport. More information on each participant's use of the different modes of communication examined can be found in Table 7.

Overall, each adjunct vocalized pride in their achievement and felt their work was worthwhile, supported by their eyes lighting up, enthusiastic gesturing, and smiling. Anne had the most distinct turnaround in her nonverbal demeanor of all the participants. Although smiling and happy when talking about her subject matter and commitment to students, she immediately turned dour when asked about her satisfaction level. She would look away, look down, sigh, and several times approached tears as she exhibited nonverbal communicators of disgust, contempt, anger, sadness/distress, guilt, and shame. There was a great deal of regret and defeat in her posturing. More details regarding our observations of the other participants can be found in Table 8.

**TABLE 6**  
**NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION DATA: EMOTION X PARTICIPANT**

Emotion	Angela	Anne	Irene	Karl	Laura	Matthew	Nathaniel	Neil	Noah	Sandra	Total
Amusement	28	14	28	28	32	37	24	36	27	37	291
Anger	18	61	43	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	127
Contempt	72	128	75	17	7	23	6	2	4	3	337
Contentment	29	4	24	17	40	22	41	24	23	29	253
Disgust	0	28	17	0	0	0	10	2	0	0	57
Embarrassment	1	2	0	8	0	1	1	4	0	1	18
Excitement	16	5	18	3	8	11	20	4	26	17	128
Fear	0	11	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	19
Guilt	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	2	2	9	18
Pride	in	46	16	36	49	32	34	44	42	48	439
achievement											
Relief	6	2	0	7	34	1	3	0	2	7	62
Sadness/distress	49	132	3	34	28	26	15	8	31	12	338
Satisfaction	30	10	38	18	39	32	39	26	29	31	292
Sensory pleasure	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	8	3	3	19
Shame	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	295	416	342	175	246	186	193	160	189	197	2399
Prevalence rate of participant	12.30	17.34	14.26	7.29	10.25	7.75	8.05	6.67	7.88	8.21	



**TABLE 7**  
**NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION: MODE OF COMMUNICATION X PARTICIPANT**

Mode	Angela	Anne	Irene	Karl	Laura	Matthew	Nathaniel	Neil	Noah	Sandra	Total
Iconics	53	8	14	3	12	4	15	23	11	9	152
Metaphorics	91	149	110	24	76	23	55	37	42	23	630
Beats	42	11	24	8	16	4	35	22	6	7	175
Deictics	3	0	8	0	0	1	4	0	0	3	19
Emblems	106	248	186	140	142	154	84	78	130	155	1423
Total	295	416	342	175	246	186	193	160	189	197	2399
Prevalence rate of participant	12.30	17.34	14.26	7.29	10.25	7.75	8.05	6.67	7.88	8.21	

**TABLE 8**  
**PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS**

Participant	Brief Description of Nonverbal Communication	Most Prevalent Emotion	Prevalence Rate (%)
Angela	She appeared very nervous at first and kept her hands folded on the table in front of her, occasionally taking a drink of water when feeling especially nervous or unsure how to answer. Once she had felt comfortable, the conversation flowed more freely. An increase in vocal volume and pace occurred when speaking about what she enjoyed about her work and when speaking about what distressed or angered her about her position. She banged down her cup at one point in emphasis of area of contention. She also demonstrated excitement about being able to talk about her concerns by leaning in and smiling.	Contempt	24.41%
Anne	She had downcast eyes most of the time and her vocal expressions were continually tinged with distress, contempt, and anger. She drank from her cup or used her lip balm when feeling nervous or overwhelmed. She only smiled or showed enjoyment when discussing interacting with her students, but also demonstrated fear and embarrassment when discussing difficult students. She seemed wistful and full of regret.	Sadness/distress	31.73%
Irene	She began with her hand on her knee, but eventually began using gestures as the interview progressed. She sat back in her chair, but leaned forward when giving more detail in her answers. Speech was emphatic and quick when delivering her viewpoints, although pauses also were used to denote importance. She demonstrated confidence in her abilities and much contempt for how the institution treated adjunct faculty.	Pride in Achievement	26.90%

Karl	He held his hands clasped in front of him on his lap throughout the interview, but occasionally made gestures. His voice and rocking motion in his chair conveyed some nervousness. Overall, he was very hopeful.	Pride in Achievement	20.57%
Laura	She had very animated features and her voice was strong and positive when discussing her position, only wavering when she discussed the insecurity she still felt with regard to her employment. She used frequent hand gestures to emphasis her responses.	Pride in Achievement	19.92%
Matthew	He was very reserved at first, but opened up as interview continued. He kept his hands in his lap or nearly the entire interview, but communicated nonverbally with head movement, facial expression, and paralinguistic changes. He showed a significant amount of care and concern for his students and joy in their accomplishments.	Amusements	19.17%
Nathaniel	He sat with his hands in his lap and was more reserved, but lit up when talking about working with his students. His speech pace, which began slow and measured, would increase with excitement and pride when talking about the students, along with an increase in smiling and laughing.	Contentment	21.24%
Neil	He kept his left hand on the back of the chair next to him for the majority of the interview. He made good eye contact, smiled, and nodded his head frequently and was overall very pleasant and agreeable.	Pride in Achievement	27.50%

Noah	He began the interview with hands down to his side. He utilized head nodding as his main nonverbal communication at the start of the interview but progressed to more gestures with his hands as the interview progressed. He shifted in his seat throughout the interview, but remained very matter of fact in his responses. His words were slow and deliberate to show the deep thought he put into answering the interview questions. He felt very satisfied in being called to teach as a public service but showed distress when talking about students “giving up” and his desire to reach them.	Pride in Achievement	22.22%
Sandra	She had a cough from a dry throat from teaching, but still managed to convey her satisfaction and enjoyment with her position through laughter, smiles, and gestures. She had a great appreciation for her position.	Pride in Achievement	24.37%

The frequencies of the modes of communication according to the different emotions displayed by the participants can be viewed in Table 9. This table allowed us to determine which emotion was exhibited the most frequently by each mode of communication. An example would be that iconics denote pride in achievement more than any other emotion. Further, emblems were the most utilized mode of communication across all emotional categories.

**TABLE 9**  
**NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION: MODE OF COMMUNICATION X EMOTION**

Mode	Amusement	Anger	Contempt	Contentment	Disgust	Embarrassment	Excitement	Fear	Guilt	Pride in achievement	Relief	Sadness/distress	Satisfaction	Sensory pleasure	Shame	Total	Prevalence rate of mode
Iconics	7	6	15	14	2	0	12	0	0	40	2	19	32	3	0	152	6.34
Metaphorics	34	43	116	62	20	3	31	5	3	117	18	107	67	3	0	629	26.22
Beats	18	2	21	21	3	3	12	2	3	43	6	20	21	0	0	175	7.29
Deictics	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	5	0	0	19	0.79
Emblems	231	74	181	156	37	13	73	12	12	231	36	197	167	3	1	1424	59.36
Total	290	127	337	253	62	19	128	19	18	439	62	343	292	9	1	2399	
Prevalence rate of emotion	12.09	5.29	14.05	10.55	2.58	0.79	5.34	0.79	0.75	18.30	2.58	14.30	12.17	0.38	0.04		

## DISCUSSION

This research study regarding the adjuncts' identity development was guided by Harré and van Langenhove's (1999) positioning theory, which posits that individuals use words and other discourse to locate themselves and others in an environment. We expanded on this concept by utilizing Holmes's (2013) claim-affirmation model of emergent identity, which also explores how identity emerges based on the social interaction between the individual and significant others in a particular setting. The implications of both of these frameworks were supported additionally by using phenomenology as the qualitative research approach. This phenomenological research approach supported the researchers' desire to focus on the participants' lived experiences as they experienced the phenomenon of being an adjunct faculty member at the select community college institution (Creswell, 2013). It also permitted us to apply a descriptive and reflective approach to reveal the implicit meanings in these lived experiences.

In reference to Harré and van Langenhove's (1999) mutually determining triad, we were able to view the adjunct's ever-shifting experience of identity as they interacted with others. In all cases, adjuncts could position themselves as an expert and a successful figure when interacting with their students. The change in identities occurred when individuals from the different categories of adjuncts began to relate their experiences with their respective institutions. Overall, the career-enders and specialists/experts/professionals utilized their language to assert their satisfaction in their roles and still believed themselves to be valued members of the institution. The majority of aspiring academics, however, did not believe that the institutions valued them or realized the importance of their work. When examined through Holmes's (2001) claim-affirmation model of emergent identity, it can be determined that, in terms of their relationship with the institution, many of adjuncts within the aspiring academic category have a *failed identity*, in which they have claimed an identity of being a successful and valued educator but use their language to indicate that this identity is disaffirmed by others (i.e., the institution). In contrast, the career-enders' and specialists/experts/professionals' language indicated they had an *agreed identity*, in which they have claimed the identity of being a successful and valued educator and believe that the institution, through its actions, affirms this identity. However, all categories of adjuncts denoted an *agreed identity* as a successful and valued educator concerning their interactions with their students.

### Implications for Adjunct Instructors

There are very different implications for adjunct instructors based on the category of part-time instructors with which they identify. For those classifying themselves as career-enders or specialists/experts/professionals, the current situation for adjuncts appears to be acceptable. For those classified as aspiring academics, the issue is more complex. Although they tended to indicate satisfaction with their position and work with students, they are ultimately dissatisfied with their treatment by the institution and the lack of advancement opportunities offered. These findings were not surprising. As the adjunct population changes, the more recent literature highlights the large proportion of part-time faculty members interested in academia as a long-term career (Coalition on the Academic Workforce [CAW], 2012). Aspiring academics are teaching as adjunct faculty largely because they have difficulty finding and securing tenure-track opportunities. Those classified as aspiring academics should be aware of these challenges as they head into the workforce. Then, they must continue to advocate for career-related support and implementing policies and practices that foster inclusion of adjunct faculty in the institution's culture.

### Implications for Students of Adjunct Instructors

This research indicated that it is difficult, if not impossible, to group all adjunct instructors regarding their quality and dedication. Most of the adjunct faculty members interviewed for this study are experts in their fields and expressed a sincere love of their position and significant levels of commitment and engagement. They did not consider themselves any less of an instructor due to their part-time status, as Laura confirmed, "I don't see my role as being any less valuable or, or less important for the students and quite frankly the students don't care either. They want somebody that's going to teach them." Therefore, a student should not automatically assume that assignment to a class taught by an adjunct instructor will be

of a lesser quality than a class taught by a full-time instructor. However, when assigned an adjunct instructor, students might have an instructor who receives less support and has less time and opportunities for professional development, innovation, and student interaction. Because student success should be the primary goal of any academic institution, students should feel empowered to bring any concerns about their instructors to administrators and to utilize or to develop student-nominated faculty recognition platforms to acknowledge exemplary educators.

### **Implications for Institutions**

Because the use of community college institutions continues to expand and these student populations grow, institutions must seriously consider the use of adjunct faculty as a core group of instructors. As identified from the correspondence analysis, the 2 x 2 (i.e., satisfaction level x motivation) representation for characterizing adjuncts is an important descriptor when considering adjunct faculty members. Department chairs and other administrators responsible for hiring and developing adjuncts should be aware of which quadrant in the 2 x 2 representation each adjunct resides and in which category of adjunct a potential instructor would be classified. Knowing this information would allow the administrators to reflect on the level and type of professional development and assistance needed for the individual instructor (e.g., mentoring for aspiring academics, technology instruction for career-enders). Further, the institution should retroactively review how many of each type of adjunct it currently employs and where each of those instructors fits into the 2 x 2 representation. Previous research has indicated that there is currently a disproportionately large group of aspiring academics (CAW, 2012) and if this turns out to be true, the institution should be prepared to assist those instructors with their specific needs to maintain a highly satisfied, highly qualified faculty population.

Once the administrators have a better understanding of their adjunct population and the needs of that population, they must consider implementing policies and practices that support both the adjunct faculty members and, as a by-product, the students' success. Examples of these policies and practices indicated by our participants included (a) opportunities for relevant and accessible professional development, (b) more access to academic information about their students, (c) timely information about curriculum and the opportunity to help shape it, (d) opportunities for interaction with other faculty and staff, (e) better compensation and recognition, (f) affordable health benefits, (g) a dedicated office space that meets the needs of the instructors, (h) job security, and (i) opportunities for advancement. Additionally, the participants mentioned several times that they did not "have a voice" that was recognized on campus. Solutions for this issue include allowing adjunct representatives to have space on faculty councils and creating an adjunct advocacy office on campus. Space on the faculty council would allow adjuncts to participate in governance and curriculum, and an adjunct advocacy office would allow for more consistent support for adjuncts, whose institutional support levels differ from department to department and from chairperson to chairperson.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Several research study opportunities exist that could expand the findings of this research. For the current research, we focused on documenting the qualitative experience of 12 part-time adjunct faculty members at a select community college system in Texas. This study provided a basis for examining the experiences of select faculty members as groups within a larger group of faculty members. This method could be expanded to study other contingent faculty groups (i.e., full-time, non-tenure track faculty) at other institutions (i.e., 4-year universities). Further, this method also could be utilized to examine the experiences of full-time faculty to compare the perspectives of full-time and part-time faculty members to discern any similarities or differences within their experiences.

Second, another research study could use a mixed methods research lens. A study of this nature could include quantitative surveys of those impacted by adjunct faculty members (e.g., the adjunct faculty members themselves, students, administrators, and full-time faculty members) for the quantitative research phase, in addition to interviews of select members of these same populations for the qualitative phase. Such

a study would provide more depth into the perceptions of and attitudes towards adjunct faculty from different stakeholders in the academic institution.

A third study could focus on the four different classifications of adjunct faculty. For example, a researcher could determine the prevalence rate of adjuncts belonging to each of the four profiles at an institution and then compare these four adjunct types concerning outcome measures (i.e., performance and effectiveness measures) such as teacher evaluations and grade distributions. This would permit administrators to determine whether there are any key performance differences among the adjunct subtypes.

This method also could be applied in a fourth possible study, in which the researchers determine the prevalence rate of adjunct faculty members belonging to each of the four profiles, as determined by the four quadrants, in the 2 x 2 representation for characterizing adjuncts. The researchers then could compare these four sets of adjuncts concerning the previously mentioned outcome measures. This would give further insight into any significant differences among the adjunct profiles.

Participants in this study all taught at least one face-to-face class, with some participants also teaching hybrid and online courses. A fifth study could explore the experiences of adjuncts who teach one of the three different class format types: face-to-face, online, and hybrid. This would allow the researcher to compare the differences in needs and supports experienced by each of these instructors among these distinct class types.

Finally, researchers could examine the effects of implementing several of the recommendations (e.g., better compensation or recognition, increased opportunities for social interaction) emanating from this study on an adjunct faculty population. A researcher could follow a similar method to this study and interview adjuncts before any institutional changes benefitting the adjuncts and then conduct follow-up interviews after such an institutional change. Additionally, interviews could be conducted with adjunct faculty members at institutions that have already implemented such changes. Then their experiences could be compared with adjunct faculty members at institutions that have not implemented such changes, thereby yielding important information about the actual impact of such practices on adjunct retention, success, satisfaction, and identity.

## CONCLUSION

The expansion of community college systems is giving students of all ages and experience levels an opportunity for meaningful education and career advancement. However, the diversity and number of courses offered at different times and in different formats, in conjunction with budget concerns, has resulted in the hiring of large numbers of adjunct professors to meet the needs of the growing student population. This increase in contingent faculty hirings has shifted the traditional image of the adjunct role as being full-time professionals looking for part-time employment to part-time academics hoping to gain full-time stature. It has also raised concerns about the quality of adjunct instructors and the quality of education that students receive from them.

Much of the existing literature on adjunct faculty highlights the disparate treatment and unfavorable working conditions (Curtis, 2014; Curtis & Jacobe, 2006) that they experience. The rise of contingent faculty in higher education also has been associated with several negative educational outcomes, including lower graduation rates (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005). However, very few studies highlighted the voice of the adjunct faculty themselves. This study investigated the adjunct faculty instructors' self-perceived roles within their positions at a select community college system and the emphasis that these adjunct faculty members place on different aspects of these roles in terms of their levels of performance and effectiveness. The findings of this study indicated that adjunct faculty perceived themselves as being competent and committed in their roles as educators. Furthermore, the category (i.e., career-enders, specialists/experts/professionals, aspiring academics, and freelancers) in which each adjunct was classified directly impacted their satisfaction and motivation within their position, as well as their perceived needs. As such, these results have added to the knowledge base about the use of adjunct faculty in the community college setting and provided future research areas to explore.



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