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# Empowerment, Job Involvement, and Socio-demographic Characteristics: The Case of Part-Time Faculty Members

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## Abstract

*This paper aims to assess the extent of perceived empowerment and job involvement among part-time faculty members. It also examines the relationship between empowerment and job involvement among part-time faculty members and explores how socio-demographic characteristics influence the relationship between empowerment and job involvement among part-time faculty members. It uses a descriptive and correlational research design to describe the levels of job involvement and empowerment among part-time faculty members and explore the relationships between these variables and socio-demographic characteristics. A scientifically prepared questionnaire is used to collect the primary data by considering various demographic characteristics, job involvement, and empowerment of part-time faculty on 10 constituent campuses. These campuses are selected judgmentally and conveniently. In total, 200 questionnaires are distributed to the part-time faculty members of different fields, and 133 usable questionnaires are returned, thereby yielding a response rate of about 66.50 percent. The results show a very strong positive association between job involvement and empowerment. This suggests that as part-time faculty members feel more empowered, their level of job involvement also increases significantly. High empowerment, which includes having a sense of meaning and competence, self-determination, and impact, is strongly associated with high job involvement. Only marital status and education are the two most important socio-demographic characteristics that have an impact on the association between job involvement and empowerment.*

**Keywords:** Empowerment, faculty members, job involvement, part-time, socio-demographic characteristics

## Introduction

Faculty members or teachers are regarded as the cornerstones of any educational system and as one of society's foundations everywhere. Higher education institutions depend more on part-time faculty members these days. As the role of part-time faculty on campuses, colleges, and universities has evolved and gained prominence, it is increasingly important to gain a deeper understanding of how part-time faculty members empower themselves, their perceptions of job involvement, and the impact of socio-demographic characteristics on this element. In this study, "part-time faculty" refers to supplemental teaching staff who work part-time and are hired by continuing education units (Seo, 2013).

Part-time faculties are increasing in different institutions, departments, and constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University (T.U.). It is because of irregularities in the vacancy announcement by the T.U. Service Commission, the introduction of new programs and subjects by Dean Offices and Departments of the University, and the entry of new graduates in the teaching profession. In light of this increase, it is clear that part-time faculties play a critical role in different institutions, departments, and constituent campuses of T.U., affecting students, permanent faculties, staff, administrators, and the overall culture of the university.

Clery (2001) contended in one study that more than 40% of credit courses are taught by part-time faculty members. A study claims that senior academics teach small classes, and part-time teachers frequently teach subjects, including major lecture courses, that tenured faculty members do not wish to teach (Murphy, 2003). Employing more part-time faculty members who have little job security, low pay, minimal benefits, and no opportunity for professional development or advancement is a common strategy used by colleges and universities to manage budgets and achieve flexibility in course offerings (Jacobs, 1998, cited in Seo, 2013). Consequently, significant differences can arise between full-time and part-time faculty. Many researchers distinguished between these two categories of faculties based on factors such as job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, in addition to factors like income, benefits, working conditions, and opportunities for career advancement (Wotruba, 1990; Steffy & Jones, 1990; Shockey & Mueller, 1994; Sinclair et al., 1999).

The behavior of part-time faculty members is an important aspect of managing them. Such faculty members may have negative job-related attitudes about their jobs. Miller and Terborg (1979) found that part-timers were less happy than full-timers. Additionally, a few studies (Wetzel et al., 1990; Martin & Hafer, 1995;) discovered that part-timers performed fewer work-related activities. This study considers empowerment and job involvement as the key behavioral aspects of such part-time faculty members.

In education, empowerment is the opportunity for all faculty members to have a say in the decisions that will impact them. It is the transfer of authority from administration to faculty, allowing them to decide how their work environment is structured (Soppelsa, 1997). In addition to consolidating efficient communication channels and promoting accountability and autonomy, empowerment also entails establishing a culture of trust and tolerance for

risks and change (Rodríguez-Bonces & Beltrán, 2014). Teachers who are empowered are capable of taking responsibility for their own professional development, finding solutions to issues they face, and making adjustments to their work environment. Along with them, it involves using authority to pursue professional autonomy, advancement in the field, and overall improvements in education (Kreisberg, 1992; Short, 1994; Smith & Lotven, 1994), cited in Rodríguez-Bonces & Beltrán, 2014). Likewise, most people's lives are mostly influenced by their jobs. A worker's level of involvement at work affects them both emotionally and psychologically. Job involvement measures how much people's employment supports their sense of self and meets their basic needs (Ahmadi, 2011). It is an extremely private state (Shrestha, 2016; 2019). It is more concerned with people's current work. Still, having employees who are highly involved in their work may be advantageous to institutions, since people who are motivated to work hard may find it easier to accomplish their tasks (Hackman & Lawler, 1971). Faculty members with higher levels of job involvement are likely to have positive attitudes and behaviors.

It is assumed that faculty members' status of empowerment and job involvement may impact students' academic achievement, participation in extracurricular activities, and classroom learning. Faculty members' low job involvement can affect the quality of instruction, the learning environment, faculty-student communication, and the positive feedback that faculty members provide to students. The only way to improve students' learning outcomes is for faculty members to be involved in excellent work. The degree to which faculty members value their employment is positively associated with their job involvement and teaching accomplishments. If teachers place a higher value on their profession, they will be more engaged in their roles and achieve more success in the classroom (Lakshmanan et al., 2011). So, this research concerns the empowerment and job involvement of part-time faculties. It also examines the relationship between empowerment and job involvement among part-time faculty members and explores how socio-demographic characteristics influence the relationship between empowerment and job involvement among part-time faculty members at T.U.

## Literature Review

### *Conceptualization of Empowerment*

Human resources are currently the most valuable asset and the source of an organization's long-term competitive advantage (Shrestha & Prajapati, 2023, 2024; Pradhan & Shrestha, 2022; Shrestha, 2022). The current interest in empowerment is driven by this emphasis on employees as the organization's key components of human capital management (Dahou & Hacini, 2018). Empowerment is a crucial behavioral and attitude factor related to human resources in the workplace. It is a subjective state of mind when employees feel they are effectively influencing meaningful work and sharing authority (Hollander & Offermann, 1990; Potterfield, 1999). This psychological component is made up of several prerequisites for intrinsic motivation (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

Empowerment is the process of strengthening a person's sense of control at work (Kanter, 1983). People hold the power, drive, and aptitude to manage tasks (Saeed, 2016). This fosters a sense of accountability and ownership for the company. Empowerment is making an employee feel accountable and in charge of decisions (Apostolou, 2000). It also involves a process of recognizing each employee's unique qualities and giving them the ability and resources to advance their work (Saeed, 2016). Empowerment establishes the conditions necessary to support innovation, growth, and progress for all university entities (Richardson et al., 1995). An efficient information flow in a trusting environment, a well-constructed empowerment initiative, and a participative mindset communicated through cooperation are required for empowerment in higher education.

Empowerment is viewed from two distinct viewpoints (Dee et al., 2003). The first is structural, referring to the division of authority between superiors and subordinates (Mainiero, 1986). The second is psychological, which emphasizes the intrinsic motivation of employees (Spreitzer, 1995). According to Spreitzer (1995), empowerment includes four dimensions - meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact - that reflect the cognitive abilities of part-time faculty members. However, this study breaks down empowerment into three categories: meaning and competence, self-determination, and impact. Meaning and competence are united into a single variable. Meaning describes how well people's ideals align with the worth of their jobs. It is the value that each person assigns to the work. Competence is one's feeling of self-efficacy. Self-determination is people's conviction that they can use judgment (or choice) in the workplace, and impact involves the power of employees to influence job results (Seo, 2013).

### ***Conceptualization of Job Involvement***

Job involvement is the degree of psychological identification that individuals have with their work (Kanungo, 1982a). It is a belief that characterizes one's current job and is typically a function of how much the job can meet one's current requirements (Ojo, 2009, cited in Akintayo & Ayodele, 2012). It is the internalization of work values or the personal assessment of the significance of work. It also refers to the belief about people's current position that depends on how much they can get out of it in terms of fulfilling their desires (Shrestha & Prajapati, 2022; Shrestha, 2019). People who are involved in their jobs integrate their jobs into their personal identity. In addition, those who are very involved in their job devote the majority of their attention to it (Hackett et al., 2001).

Thus, involvement is the act of taking part in something. It means participation, attention to, or care about a thing (Shrestha, 2019). Relating to this study, it means that our faculty members should be job-oriented (i.e. being job-involved). Job involvement means being an active, or effective faculty member. It is the degree to which one is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in, and concerned with one's present job (Paullay et al., 1994). It involves the internalization of values about the goodness of work or the importance of work in the worth of the individual. As such, individuals who display high involvement in their jobs consider their work to be a very important part of their lives, and whether or not they feel good about

themselves is closely related to how they perform on their jobs. For highly involved individuals, performing well on the job is important for their self-esteem (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965). Because the people who are high in job involvement genuinely care for and are concerned about their work (Kanungo, 1982b). Job involvement is an employee's significant job-related behavior. It shows the degree to which an individual is personally involved with his job. Individual with high involvement consider their work to be a very important part of their lives and their happiness depends on how they perform in their jobs (Sethi & Mittal, 2016). Organizational members' job involvement enhances innovative behavior (Wang & Hou, 2023).

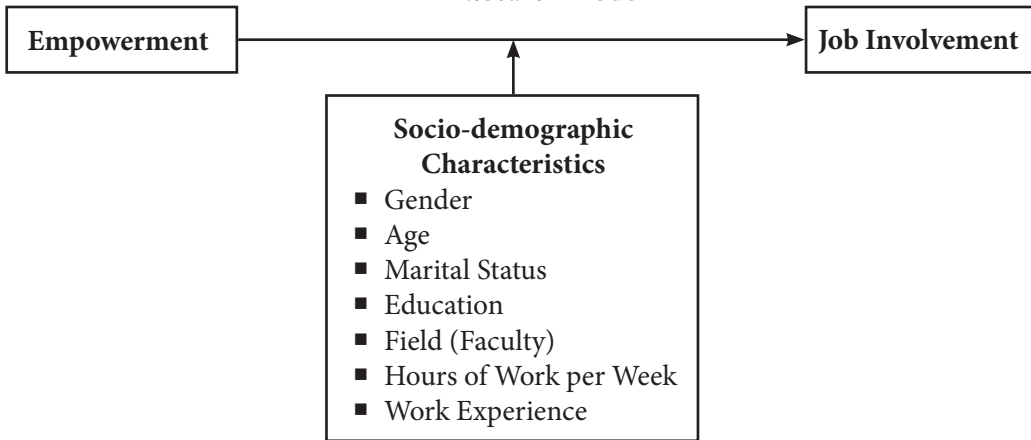
### ***Relationship between Empowerment and Job Involvement***

Ashforth (1989) found that when individuals feel that they do not have a choice in initiating and regulating action and cannot influence work outcomes, they become lethargic and might not want to be involved in the job. Hamed (2010) and Holden (2001) found that team members who experienced an empowering work environment reported higher levels of job involvement. Thus, the empowerment of individuals appears to be important in terms of their job involvement. Empowering work environments may increase the levels of job involvement of employees by enabling engagement in inconsequential action.

Seo (2013) argues that empowerment is a significant predictor of part-time faculty levels of job involvement. There is a positive relationship between empowerment and job involvement. Part-time faculty who experiences higher levels of empowerment show higher levels of job involvement. Kalaimani (2018) also suggests that employee empowerment is sharing responsibility and power equally at all levels of an organization, enabling them to innovate, take initiative, and make independent decisions to satisfy their needs and wants, thus reaching desired goals and objectives.

Therefore, in this study, it is believed that empowerment is one of the predictors of job involvement. It is also assumed that there is a positive relationship between empowerment and job involvement among part-time faculty members at T.U. Hence, the following model of the study has been proposed (Figure 1):

**Figure 1**  
**Research Model**



Based on this model, this study explores the following hypotheses:

H1: *There is a positive relationship between perceived empowerment and job involvement among part-time faculty members.*

H2: *The relationship between job involvement and empowerment is influenced by the socio-demographic characteristics of part-time faculty members.*

## Research Methods

This study uses a descriptive and correlational research design to describe the levels of job involvement and empowerment among part-time faculty members and explore the relationships between these variables and socio-demographic characteristics.

Primary data are used in this study. A scientifically prepared questionnaire is used to collect the primary data by considering various demographic characteristics, job involvement, and empowerment of part-time faculty. The target population for this study is the part-time faculty members who are currently working on the constituent campuses of T.U. There are 62 constituent campuses in operation. These campuses are the population for this study. Out of them, only part-time faculty members of 10 constituent campuses were selected as the sample for this study. These campuses are selected judgmentally and conveniently.

In total, 200 questionnaires (20 on each campus) are distributed to the part-time faculty members of different fields. Respondents are also asked about their demographic profile. A total of 133 usable questionnaires are returned, thereby yielding a response rate of about 66.50 percent. Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants.

**Table 1**  
**Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Participants**

Particulars	N	%	Particulars	N	%
<b>Name of Campus</b>			<b>Education</b>		
Bhaktapur Multiple Campus, Bhaktapur	11	55	Master's	116	87.2
Padma Kanya Multiple Campus, Kathmandu	15	75	M.Phil	13	9.8
Patan Multiple Campus, Lalitpur	14	70	Ph. D.	4	3
<b>Prithivi Narayan Multiple Campus, Pokhara</b>			<b>Field (Faculty) Categories</b>		
Public Youth Campus, Kathmandu	10	50	Humanities	35	26.3
Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, Kathmandu	15	75	Management	32	24.1
Sanothimi Campus, Bhaktapur	12	60	Science	23	17.3
Saraswoti Multiple Campus, Kathmandu	12	60	Education	16	12
Shanker Dev Campus, Kathmandu	17	85	Law	27	20.3
<b>Trichandra Multiple Campus, Kathmandu</b>			<b>Hours of Work Categories</b>		
<b>Gender</b>			6 hours	74	55.6
Male	102	77	12 hours	44	33.1
Female	31	23	18 hours	15	11.3
Others (third sex)	0	0	24 hours	0	0
<b>Marital Status</b>			30 hours	0	0
Married	106	79.7	<b>Service/Experience Categories</b>		
Unmarried	27	20.3	1-5 years	11	8.27
<b>Age Categories</b>			6-10 years	113	85
25 - 34 years	83	62.4	11-15 years	9	6.77
35 -44 years	31	23.3	16-20 years	0	0
44 - 55 years	19	14.3	21-25 years	0	0
56 + years	0	0	26 years and above	0	0

To assess the degree of empowerment among part-time faculty members, this study uses three sub-scales: meaning and competence, self-determination, and impact (Spreitzer, 1995). A 10-item scale is used to measure employees’ perceptions of their level of job involvement (1982a). A five-point Likert scale ranging from “disagree totally (1)” to “agree totally (5)” is used to rate each item.

## Results and Analysis

### *Descriptive Analysis and Correlation Results*

Based on the empirical results, the levels of empowerment and job involvement as perceived by part-time faculty members and the correlation results are presented below:

**Table 2**  
**Descriptive Analysis and Correlation Results**

Variables	Mean	SD	JI	Em	MC	Sel	Im	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Involvement (JI)	3.62	0.49	1					0.89
Empowerment (Em)	3.31	0.36	0.91**	1				0.90
Meaning and Competence (MC)	3.33	0.31	0.89**	0.68**	1			0.89
Self-determination (Sel)	3.06	0.13	0.89**	0.56**	0.49**	1		0.91
Impact (Im)	3.51	0.55	0.70**	0.47**	0.51**	0.42**	1	0.81

The results show that the part-time faculty members perceive moderate levels of job involvement and empowerment. They feel reasonably engaged and involved in their jobs, perceiving their roles as meaningful and themselves as competent. They also feel they have a moderate degree of self-determination and believe they can make a meaningful impact within their roles.

The results show a very strong positive association between job involvement and empowerment. This suggests that as part-time faculty members feel more empowered, their level of job involvement also increases significantly. High empowerment, which includes having a sense of meaning and competence, self-determination, and impact, is strongly associated with high job involvement.

### *Regression Analysis*

This section presents the results of the regression analysis. In model I, the significant and large empowerment beta coefficient shows a strong association between increasing degrees of empowerment and job involvement. This strong significance implies that job involvement and empowerment have a strong association. It also implies that empowerment is a key element in raising faculty members' involvement in their jobs. Hence, hypothesis 1 (H1) is supported.

The regression results for Model II highlight the importance of empowerment, marital status, and education in predicting job involvement. Empowerment has the strongest positive influence, followed by marital status and education. The insignificance of other variables like gender, age, field, hours worked, and work experience suggests that they do not play a substantial role in determining job involvement when the effects of empowerment, marital



status, and education are accounted for. Hence, hypothesis 2 (H2) is partially supported.

**Table 3**  
**Regression Analysis Results**

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables					
	Model I			Model II		
	Job Involvement			Job Involvement		
	Unstandardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Unstandardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Beta			Beta			
(Constant)	18.564	0.764	0.00**	18.564	11.79	0.00**
Empowerment	0.558	0.023	0.00**	0.897	22.813	0.00**
Gender				0.027	0.676	0.50
Age				-0.017	-0.432	0.666
Marital status				0.153	1.356	0.017*
Education				0.126	0.612	0.042*
Field (Faculty)				0.017	0.406	0.685
Hours of Work per Week				0.053	1.202	0.232
Work experience (in years)				-0.03	-0.741	0.46

*Note.* \*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01  
 Model I: R = 0.905, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.818, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.817, F-Value = 589.793  
 Model II: R = 0.909, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.826, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.814, F-Value = 73.654

## Discussions and Conclusion

The teaching faculty members on campus and at universities are the most precious resources. This is because the skills, expertise, and proactive dispositions of faculty members are critical to the long-term viability and effectiveness of these institutions. These faculty members' perceptions regarding empowerment and job involvement matter a lot for the effectiveness of the teaching and learning environment in universities and campuses. So, our universities and campuses need to focus on enhancing the job involvement of teaching faculties.

There is a significant effect of empowerment on job involvement. It implies that empowerment is an important predictor of the job involvement of part-time faculty members (Seo, 2013). The results of this study seem to be consistent with the findings of Hamed (2010) and Holden (2001). It indicates that empowered work environments are thought to increase employee job involvement levels by promoting involvement in both significant and minor acts. Moreover, it suggests universities looking to increase job involvement should think about ways to improve faculty members' empowerment. This can entail giving them more freedom, facilitating chances for career advancement, and including them in decision-making procedures. The results also show that faculty members are more likely to be active in their work when they

believe their work has meaning and they are competent. Improving job involvement is mostly dependent on perceived competence and a sense of meaning in one's work. In fact, job involvement is higher among faculty members who perceive that they have authority and control over their work. Increased job involvement is a direct result of self-determination. Faculty members also tend to be more invested in their work when they believe they can have a big influence at work.

In conclusion, part-time faculty members' sense of meaning and competence, self-determination, and impact, and empowerment are all closely associated with their level of job involvement. The interconnectedness of empowerment's components suggests that enhancing one will have a favorable impact on others and overall job involvement. Therefore, increasing the empowerment of part-time faculty members can result in increased job involvement, which is advantageous for the higher education institutions as a whole as well as for the faculty members.

## Implications

Our universities and campuses are benefiting from cost savings as well as more staffing flexibility by employing part-time faculty members. They are becoming more and more important to campuses, departments and institutions. Since they bear a major portion of the burden of teaching at many institutions, understanding part-time faculty members and their behavior is crucial to current studies in higher education. However, Monroe and Denman (1991) contended that an increase in part-time faculty members could have both positive and negative effects on institutions. These realities must be taken into consideration by the university and campus administration.

We recommend and suggest the following practical implications of this study for workplace planning and policy in light of these discussions:

- This study's findings could be very helpful to teaching faculty management in understanding the relationship between empowerment, job involvement, and socio-demographic characteristics and how these factors may impact faculty members' behavior.
- T.U. authorities and campus administrations must comprehend, motivate, and excite faculty members' ideas in order to enhance job involvement. They must also create a favorable work atmosphere.
- T.U. officials and campus administrations need to look into the status of the faculty members they now employ as well as how to keep them happy and healthy.
- University authorities and campus administrations must develop policies and procedures that empower faculty members. Such policies and procedures will also increase their job involvement levels at universities and campuses.
- A full-time university teaching position is typically seen as a respectable one. But part-timers find it unappealing. So, they occasionally want to be employed as contract full-time instructors. In such a case, TU officials should examine such demands in order to enhance their status.

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