

# **Corporate & Personal Ethics for Sustainable Development: Experiences, Challenges and Promises of Part-time Teaching in Selected Universities in Kenya**

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## **Introduction**

Ethics in the academia is not new. Ethics is a part of the mission and culture of institutions of higher education, where it is taught, researched and observed. It is in this environment that many students first learn about, and test the realities of moral decision-making that shape the political, social and economic future of many nations' development. However, there is evidence that higher education in Eastern Africa has seen a steady increase in the number of part-time lecturers due to reduced government funding (especially to public universities), and the increasing size and diversity of student enrollment, yet the experiences, challenges and promises that part-time faculty encounter once inducted into teaching continue to hinder sustainable development in different ways.

This paper is based on findings of a study recently conducted among selected universities in Kenya describing experiences, challenges and promises of part-time teaching in institutions of higher learning. It is the author's premise that higher education in Kenya cannot offer quality content and credentials for sustainable development of any given nation if institutions of higher learning do not listen to the experiences and challenges that part-time teaching staff continue to encounter in discharging their duties. For the purpose of this paper, part-time teaching constitutes two major partners; the institution of higher education (herein referred to as the corporate) and the individual lecturer (herein referred to as personal). Consequently, this paper seeks to address both corporate (institution) and personal (part-time lecturer) ethics in seeking to highlight experiences, challenges and promises that part-time teaching presents to institutions of higher learning. In order to ensure quality higher education, strategies would be proposed to universities and policy makers as to how part-time teaching experiences and challenges could be addressed to ensure part-time teaching promises for sustainable development of nations such as Kenya are achieved by maintaining higher standards.

## **Background Overview**

There have been persistent and global calls for the improvement of teaching in higher education. In most cases, institutions of higher learning have responded with the use of

institutional strategies, policies and quality assurance. However, one key aspect (namely, part-timing) has continued to shape learning in higher institutions, and yet, has not been given the attention it deserves. Higher education institutions in the East African region are increasingly making use of part-time faculty to help with the teaching of undergraduate and graduate students. In most cases, the extra income and flexibility of schedule have enticed many experts in their fields to enter the field of higher education for part-timing.

There have been murmurings that part-timing problem is becoming a major obstacle in higher education. However, we only need to be reminded of the conventional wisdom about part-time faculty: They are cheap labour, they get treated poorly by their institutions and they have little contact with the wider university. The argument continues that they have limited contact with students outside class and may or may not hold office hours. They may also be less likely to know institutional policies and programs and thus cannot advise students about them. More challenging is the fact that part-time faculty are the faculty most apt to be teaching an institution's part-time students, as those students tend to take evening and weekend courses, which are most frequently assigned to part-time faculty.

In general, the thinking goes, the growing use of part-timers is destroying much of what once made an academic career special. However, twenty-first century institutions of higher learning are finding it difficult to cope with the three stakeholders, students, faculty and the university who remain key pillars in sustainable development.

From the forgoing, part-time teaching is not necessarily a new phenomenon in higher education. However, it is new in Kenya out of the recent increment of students seeking degree education. For example, in Kenya, most private universities tend to utilize more part-time teaching faculty than public universities. As Mwiria et al. (2007) have argued, "About half of the teaching staff in the private universities are currently part-timers drawn from the public universities. With greater competition for the limited pool of academic staff in areas such as the sciences and ICT, the institutions will have to invest more in staff training if they are to survive" (p.192). Part-time lecturers represent a growing challenge to institutions of higher learning in the areas of quality assurance and developmental processes that are key to any sustainable development.

Part-time teaching in higher education in Kenya has one major irony; that even with the increased number of part-time lecturers, there is still very little institutional or national-level information about their numbers or upon the variety of their employment and contractual

circumstances, let alone about their own views on the nature of their employment. It is difficult to situate any data that details the work of part-time faculty in institutions of higher learning. This confirms the fact that most institutions have not regarded part-time faculty as of any importance.

The prevalence of part-time faculty in institutions of higher learning in Eastern Africa is an undisputable fact of life. There is some sense that some institutions have utilized greater proportions of part-time lecturers over several years in response to shrinking budgets. Job uncertainty in several forms continue to compel individuals to seek part-time teaching in higher education. However, in Kenya, many institutions of higher learning have turned to the recruitment of part-time lecturers in a response to the increased number of students enrolling in institutions of higher learning. Part-time faculty in particular continue to play an especially central role in private universities as they teach courses that make up the institutions' general education programs. In some cases, departments in various institutions of higher learning rely on part-time lecturers for substantial contributions to the teaching.

Higher education in Kenya has undergone rapid change in the past 15 years. Some of the features of that change have been a rapid expansion in student numbers, an establishment of numerous satellite campuses, and lack of human personnel commensurate with student enrollment. Responding to these pressures, institutions of higher learning have contracted a number of part-time lecturers. The present enormous universities' expansion and satellite campuses may now force corporate policy makers and individual lecturers to strike a balance between ensuring that institutional strategies, policies and quality assurance systems to drive development work, and investments in workshops, courses, seminars, and other forms of educational development interventions to enhance part-time teaching. On the other hand, when part-time lecturers devote insufficient time to their involvement or lack adequate information about the courses they teach, the teaching programme suffers disruption and a lack of continuity. This is clearly confirmed by a research conducted by Kilemi Mwiria et al., (2007) among public and private universities in Kenya by observing that,

Public and private universities in Kenya influence and complement each other in several ways. The scheduling of most teaching in self-sponsored academic programmes on weekday evenings and at weekends and holidays was an idea borrowed from the private university sector. Private universities on the other hand,

have benefited from public universities utilizing their academic staff on a part-time basis to supplement their own shortfall (p. 112).

This objective is a true confirmation that most institutions of higher education in Kenya rely heavily on part-time faculty in teaching.

### **The Importance of Corporate & Personal Ethics**

Ethics is a way of living within a world of relationships. In corporate and personal ethics, the institutions cannot do without human beings, and neither can human beings do without the institution in higher learning. Consequently, ethics is regarded as the basis upon which the part-time faculty members are considered as primary stakeholders in all our institutions today since their association is absolutely necessary for a university's (campus) survival. However, there has been concern over corporate and personal ethics in relation to part-timing. The types and causes of ethical misconduct have been topics of wide-ranging discussion. We are continuously learning about the common types of ethics failure in universities and colleges, their level of seriousness, and causes (Kelly and Chang, 2007; Bruhn, 2002; Bruhn et al. 2002). Such ethics failure may include issues related to administration, management, teaching resources, grading, wages, monitoring and evaluation. Ethics failure in these areas continue to hinder sustainable development in any given institution.

In this paper, two key stakeholders are taken into consideration, namely the corporation (university) and the person (lecturer). Both have a collaborative role to play to enhance part-time teaching to ensure sustainable development. The university must provide ethical leadership to mentor and develop part-time lecturers to be able to contribute to their being ethically active as lecturers. On the other hand, the lecturer is responsible for embracing the ethical culture of the university and be committed to its establishment and success. This is the reason why part-timing faculty must be engaged in the institution fully.

Turnover in academic institutions like other organizations and institutions necessitate the recruitment and retention of individuals at all levels. This is the reason why Buchholz and Rosenthal (2006) emphasize the fact that, to develop a moral organization or institution, every individual must hold themselves morally responsible for the jobs they are doing, and they must hold others morally responsible for doing their jobs. In this way, a culture of moral

responsibility can be created where moral conduct is embraced by both corporate and personal.

Institutions of higher learning have specific corporate culture that define and distinguish them from others. This is clearly manifested as a set of values, beliefs, goals, norms and ways to solve problems that members of an organization share. In this way, corporate culture is shared and enhanced through behaviour, patterns, concepts, ceremonies and rituals that take place in an organization. This is the reason why corporate and personal ethics has to be understood as a relationship. This is well articulated by Katzenbach and Smith's (2003) argument that the basic structure of the workplace is the relationship. Each relationship is part of a larger network of relationships. Work gets done through relationships. In academia we attempt to create high performing colleges and universities by assembling a collection of individuals who have the potential of being high performing, and we reward them individually when they succeed. The tendency in Eastern Africa has been that some institutions of higher education have been tempted to reduce commitments to part-time lecturers by treating them as self-employed and to regard their teaching as their own sought service to the institution. This is well argued by Dan Jacoby (2005), that "college administrators themselves do not always have accurate information or coding for their part-time faculty" (p. 138). However, where institutions lack considering relationship as a core object of any work to be done they tend to treat part-time faculty as objects for service delivery.

On personal ethics, it is important to keep in mind that with the recent mushrooming of universities and satellite campuses, a number of part-timers have entered their part-time teaching situations with the intent of becoming full-time, but have gradually become discouraged. Those faculty who prefer their part-time status frequently maintain employment relations with one college for long periods of time. Faculty who persist in part-time employment, but who prefer full-time employment, typically learn to work in the system to secure heavier than average teaching loads.

Personal ethics compel us to rethink those factors that might influence part-time faculty. Such factors include salary, benefits, job security and promotion opportunities. But there is also another concern that seems to suggest that most of those who engage in part-timing work do as non-academic professionals who teach in addition to their primary, full-time position, or academic faculty engaged only in teaching part-time, presumably because of the unavailability of full time teaching positions.

In order to ascertain the place and role of corporate and personal ethics in part-timing it is important to remember that corporate and personal culture employs two basic dimensions: concern for people (i.e., well being of the individual part-time lecturer) and concern for performance (i.e. institutional productivity). As it has been argued by Ferrel et al. (2009), these two can be used to classify organizational cultures as apathetic (minimal concern for either people or performance); caring (high concern for people but minimal for performance); exacting (little concern for people but a high concern for performance); or integration (combines high concern for people and performance). Indeed, for institutions of higher learning to appreciate part-time faculty and enhance productivity, then integration between the two (corporate and personal) must be inculcated in all policies and systems without fail.

## **KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **Assessing if academic ethics are jeopardized in part- timing**

In order to ensure sustainable development through university education, educational customers (students) were given opportunity to highlight their take on part-time lecturers to ensure concrete observance of academic ethics. So as to assess the students' general view of the part-time lecturers in their dispensation of teaching tasks, the respondents indicated that their parttime lecturers upheld academic ethics as indicated in their responses as indicated in the table is what follows:

To fulfill the purpose of this study, it was necessary to first determine the demographics of the study's respondents. The oldest of the lecturer respondents was 67 years old while the youngest was 26 years old. However, most (28.2%) of the lecturers were in the 41- 45 age group. Table 1 below illustrates these findings:

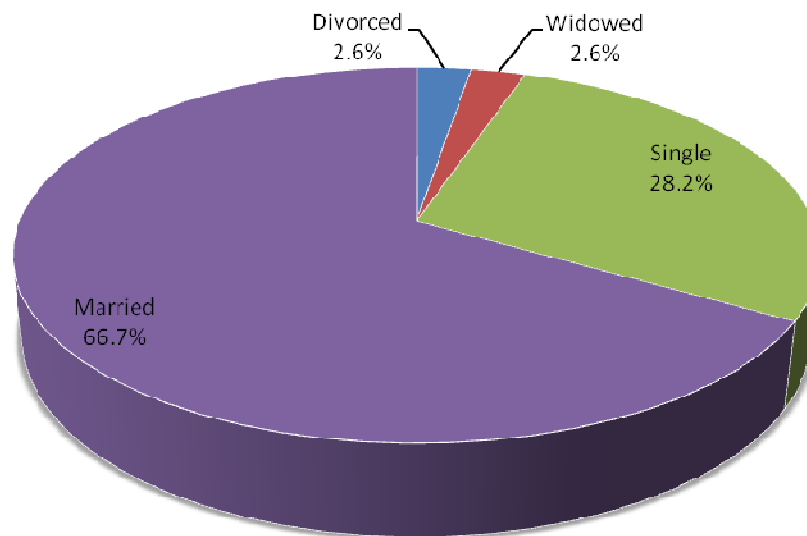
Table 1: Distribution of respondents by age

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>25 – 30</b>	1	<b>2.6</b>
<b>31 – 35</b>	7	<b>17.9</b>

<b>36 – 40</b>	6	<b>15.4</b>
<b>41 – 45</b>	11	<b>28.2</b>
<b>46 – 50</b>	8	<b>20.5</b>
<b>51 – 55</b>	3	<b>7.7</b>
<b>56+</b>	1	<b>2.6</b>
<b>Missing data</b>	2	<b>5.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>

The difference in the lecturers' gender was negligible and did not affect the purpose of this study as the findings indicated that 53.8% were male and 46.2% were female. In addition, majority (66.7%) of the respondents were married while 28.2% were single. The rest were either widowed or divorced, as indicated in Figure 1.

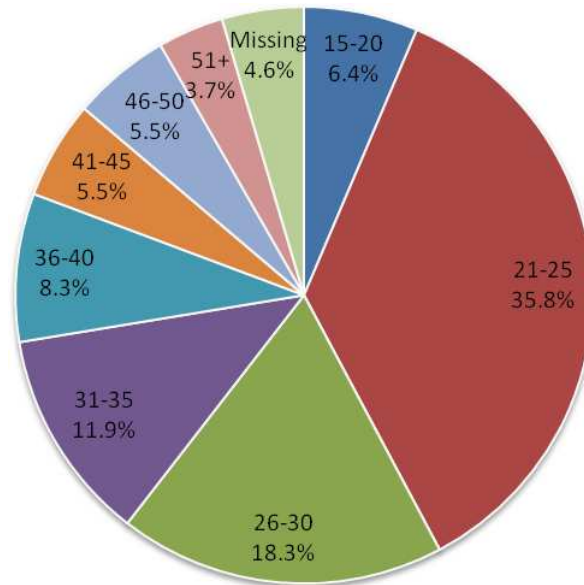
Figure 1: Lecturers' marital status



Of those who were married, 69.2% had children and 56.4% indicated that their spouses were engaged in employment. In terms of the respondents education level, almost two thirds (71.8%) indicated they had master's degrees while 28.2% has doctorate degrees.

On the other hand, majority of the student respondents were within the 21-25 age group. These findings are illustrated in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Student respondents by age



In addition, 61.5% of the students were single while 37.6% were married. This can be explained by the fact that majority of the students were in the 21-25 years age group meaning they were still single. In regard to gender, the findings indicated that 52.3% were male students while 46.8% were female. Majority (63.3%) of the students were undergraduate students while 36.7% were undertaking their master's degrees. Most of the students were studying in the evening parallel programs as illustrated in figure 3:

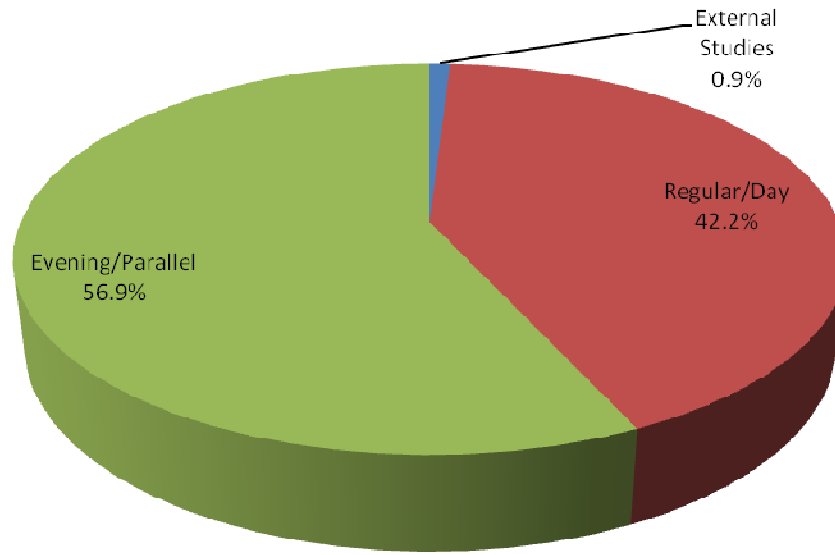


Figure 3: Students' mode of study

### RESPONSE RATE

In total, 109 students' questionnaires and 39 lecturers' questionnaires were analyzed.

Lecturers' rate of respondents per institution was as follows:

Table 2: Lecturer respondents by institution

Institution	No of respondents
Africa Nazarene	5
Daystar University	8
Kenyatta University	5
Moi University	2
Other Institutions/Corporations	9
University of Nairobi	6
United States International University	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

Kenyatta University had the highest number (15.4%) of lecturers on full time employment. Daystar University and University of Nairobi followed with 12.8% each. Majority of the lecturers reported that they were moonlighting at Daystar University. Other institutions of part-timing included Catholic University of East Africa, University of Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta

University of Agriculture & Technology, African Nazarene University, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Kenya Methodist University, St. Pauls University and other colleges such as Cooperative College of Kenya and Tangaza College.

Table 3: Students' respondents by institution

<b>Institution</b>	<b>No of respondents</b>
Africa Nazarene	18
Daystar University	17
Kenyatta University	18
Moi University	13
Kenya Methodist University	20
University of Nairobi	7
United States International University	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>

It is also necessary to note that more than half (50.4%) of the student respondents indicated that 60% - 80% of their classes were taught by part-time lecturers. If these findings are representative in any way, it can be argued that part-time lecturers face challenges such as problems with management and administration, role conflict (between your fulltime employer and your part-time job), lack of resources, lack of direction, and perhaps most painfully, the feeling of being an outsider; and having less and restricted contacts with other university staff, may hinder sustainable development in all ways.

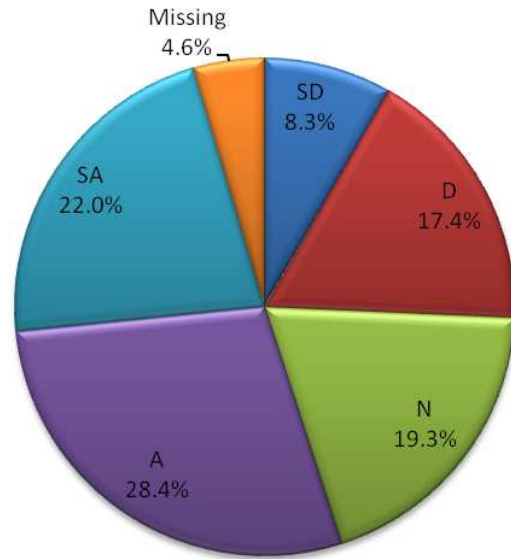
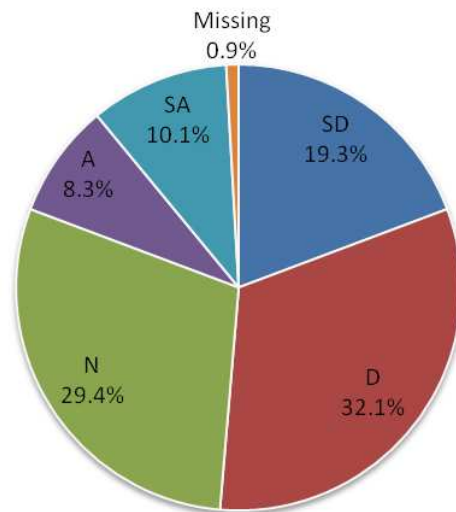


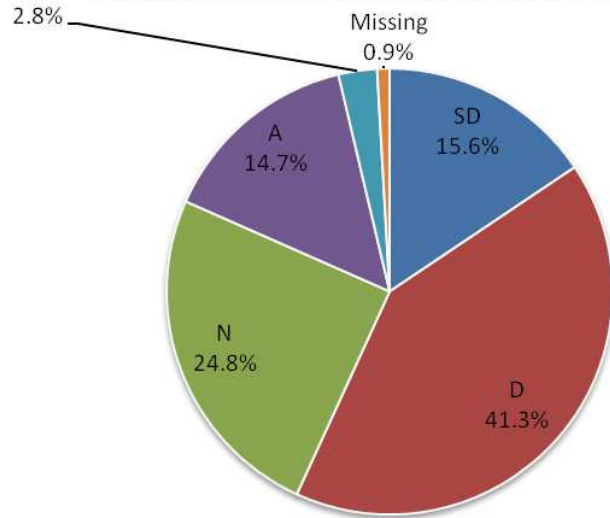
Figure 4: Attend classes taught by parttime lecturers

In assessing students' general view of the part-time lecturers in their dispensation of teaching tasks, the respondents indicated that their part-time lecturers upheld academic ethics as indicated in their responses below:

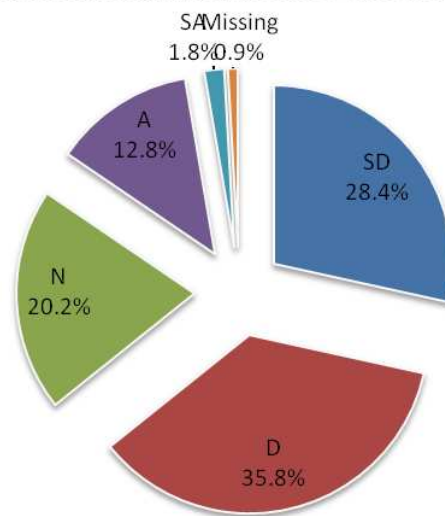
**Part-time lecturers do not keep time in starting classes**



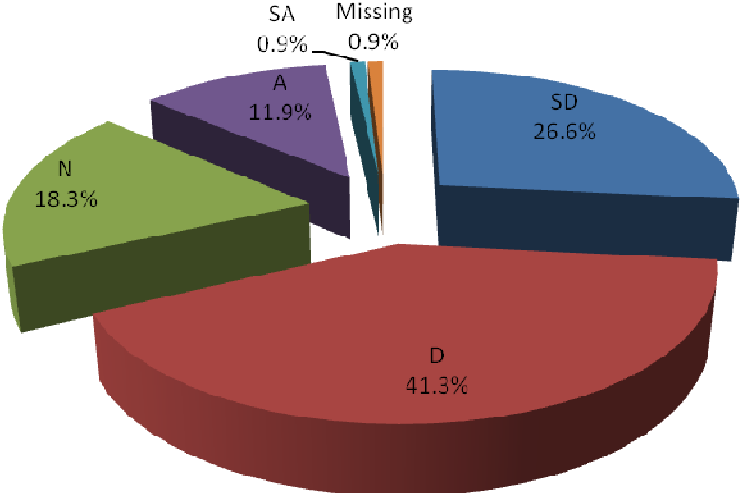
**Part-time lecturers end their classes before time**



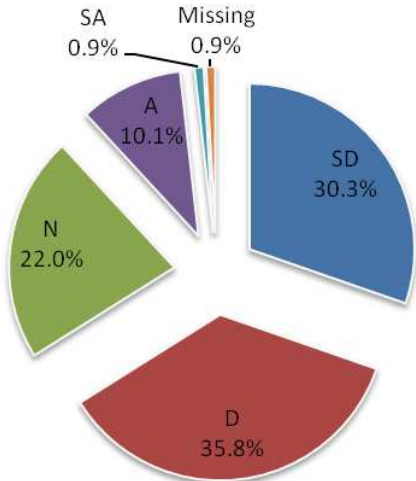
**Part-time lecturers not fully prepared for classes assigned to them**



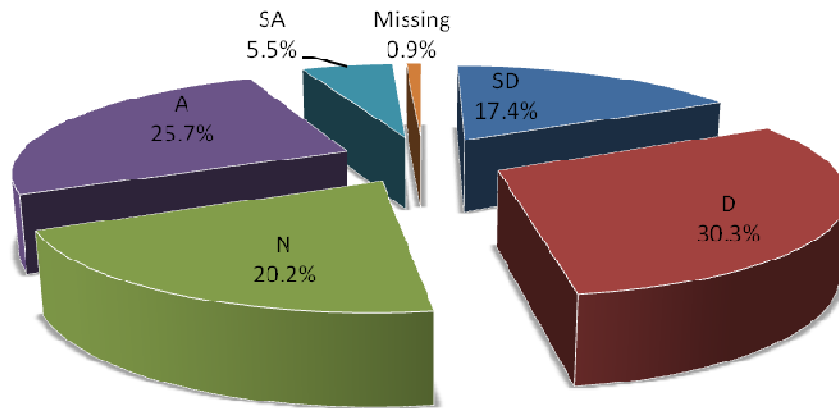
**Part-time lecturers do not take assigned teaching tasks seriously**



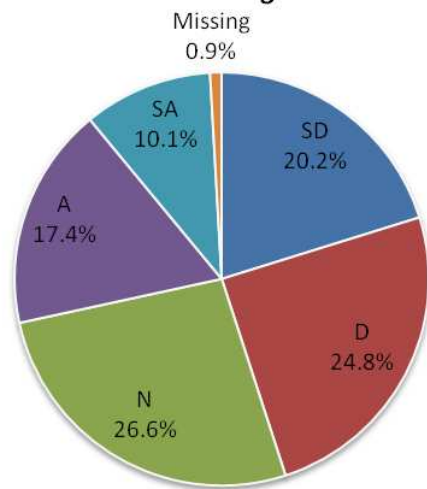
**Part-time lecturers often lack current research in their teaching tasks**



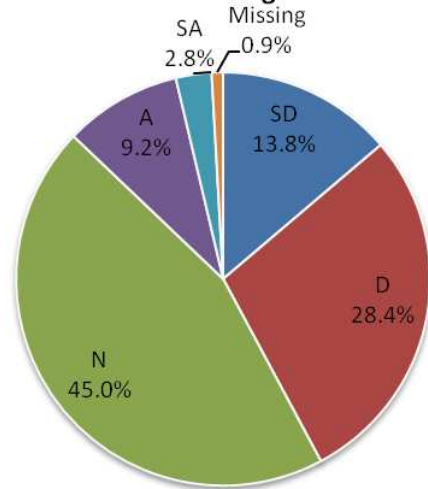
**Most part-time lecturers often seem tired or overwhelmed in class**



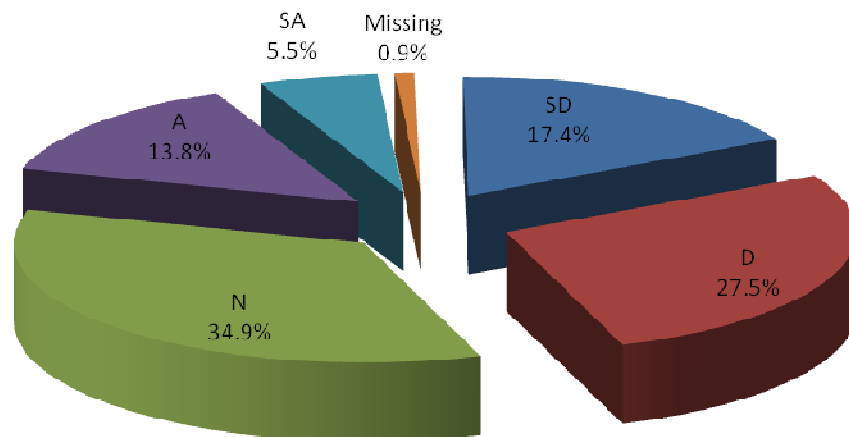
**Full-time lecturers are better than their part-time colleagues in teaching**



**Part-time lecturers are better than their full-time colleagues in teaching**



**I prefer part-time to full-time lecturers because their assessment styles are not as mean as those of full-time lecturers**



In addition, more than half (57.8%) of the students reported that most part-time lecturers were difficult to access for course advising which is an important aspect of academics.

As mentioned earlier, more than half (50.4%) of the student respondents indicated that 60% - 80% of their classes were taught by part-time lecturers. From the findings above, it can be concluded that most of the student respondents did not perceive their academic ethics as being jeopardized by part-time lecturers or the students did not regard academic practice and the determining academic standards as interrelated. However, 70.7% of the students also

contradicted the above findings by indicating that their university must develop a policy on part-time lecturers to curb the deteriorating academic standards in the university.

### **The main causes of part-timing in universities in Kenya**

Part-time lecturers identified various causes behind their engagement in part-time teaching. Financial gain (48.7%) was ranked top-most reason why lecturers engaged in part-timing. Other reasons for part-timing include: enhancing professional experience, love teaching profession, university understaffing and academic advancement. Although 13 lecturer respondents indicated they earned a monthly income of over Kshs. 100,000 and 8 of them indicated they earn a permanent salary of between 50 – 100,000 per month, when asked to give three top-most reasons for engaging in part-timing, financial gain was one of the reasons given by each of the lecturer respondents. These findings were supported by 48.7% of the lecturers who responded with a “yes” when asked if the low salary by their employer was the main reason for engaging in moonlighting. Only 25.6% responded “no” while the rest did not respond to the question.

About 20 out of 39 lecturer respondents indicated they engaged in part-timing for academic advancement, 10 indicated they love teaching and 5 did part-timing because of understaffing in their institutions of permanent employment. The fact that financial gain stood out as the main cause for part-timing among lecturers with 48.7% of the lecturers who responded raises ethical issues in regard to university lecturer remuneration and commitment driven by financial gain. Since part-time faculty members constitute a good percentage in our eastern Africa institutions, the reasons for being hired need to be briefly described. The primary reason is their low-cost and thus the cost savings to the institution, compared with full-time faculty members. Not only are they paid on a course-by-course basis but moreover few receive benefits such as hospitality (tea or coffee), transport, medical insurance, sick leave or have the opportunity to apply for full-time work.

It is also important to note that part-time faculty members also provide staffing and curricular flexibility as institutions seek approvals to offer various programmes or introduce courses that are in tandem with market needs. Because enrollments in particular courses and programs tend to wax and wane over time, it is cost-effective to hire part-time faculty to teach many of the heavily subscribed courses, as these faculty do not need to be retained if enrollments drop. Additionally, from educational perspective, part-time faculty members employed in the area

where they teach are valuable because they bring real-world experience to the classroom and provide contacts in the local labour marketlighting. Only 25.6% responded “no” while the rest did not respond to the question. Consequently, there is also evidence from elsewhere that most part-time faculty are concerned about their employment security (Jacoby, 2005).

It is the author’s premise that professional formation (in higher education) is evoked by engagement with other colleagues, and the ‘lived’ workplace environment. Consequently, it is important that universities and departments recognize the important role that part-time lecturers play. While terms and conditions of service often need attention, it is plausible to say that these lecturers feel appreciated for their enthusiasm, experience and insights. It is important that all part-time faculty should receive the same pay and benefits, and are subject to the same institutional policies. For example, the remuneration for part-time lecturers should be consumerate with the same level of program teaching. If a lecturer teaches undergraduates while another teaches graduates, pay and benefits should be the same.

In regard to impact, lecturer respondents indicated the social impact of part-timing on their lives as illustrated in the table below:

Table 4: Social impact of moonlighting

Social Impact	Frequency	Percentage
Limited time for socialization	19	49.4%
Enlarged social network with other academicians	11	28.6%
Stress	2	5.2%
Balanced life	2	5.2%
Missing data	5	13.0%

Sustainable development calls for socialized lives positively, yet it has a challenge from the above findings.

When asked to cite the academic impact of part-time on their academic professionalism, most of the respondents indicated that moonlighting enriched their academic professionalism. These findings are indicated in the table below.

Academic impact of moonlighting on academic professionalism

Academic Impact	Frequency	Percentage
Enriched academic professionalism	16	41%
Compromises academic quality	8	20.5%
No time for research and publication	5	12.8%
More experience	2	5.2%
None	1	2.6%
Missing data	7	17.9%

When asked whether part-timing has negatively impacted on academic values, lecturer respondents responded as illustrated in Table 6 below:

Academic Value	Yes		No		Missing data	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lecturer preparedness	1	2.6%	36	92.3%	1	2.6%
Engaging in Research	16	41.0%	21	53.8%	2	5.1%
Conference Attendance & Presentation	17	43.6%	17	43.6%	5	12.8%
Grading style (Reading	8	20.5%	29	74.4%	2	5.1%

students' assignments fully						
Family socialization	22	56.4%	14	35.9%	3	7.7%

From the findings it was evident that though most lecturers indicated that academic values were not negatively impacted, their family socialization was. With 41% of lecturers indicating that their engagement in research was also affected, this raises a red flag for academic institutions of higher learning where research is a major core value. This could be interpreted to mean that since financial gain was their driving force as indicated earlier, the lecturers were under pressure to perform at the expense of research and family socialization.

#### **Universities' engagement in addressing part-time issues**

To determine the students' general view of their university's commitment to maintaining academic ethics in the midst of polarized educational sector, almost half (49.5%) of the students indicated that their universities did not take academic serious hence their unwillingness to employ full-time lecturers. This was confirmed by 44% of the students who agreed that the universities did not fully equip part-timers in performing teaching tasks, which may confirm concerns even among education professionals, including part-timers, who worry that the quality of education is being affected by the increasing numbers of part-time faculty. The argument is developed further that most part-time lecturers in our institutions of higher learning have less opportunity for involvement in curriculum planning and professional development, have weaker support and networking systems, receive little protection from pressure to inflate grades or to offer less-challenging assignments, and can spend less time with students outside of class.

Also, 42.2% of the students respondents agreed that their universities totally lacked a clear mechanism of ensuring that part-time lecturers maintain high standard of performance.

## **Strategies for universities and policy makers to address part-timing for sustainable development**

Although 45.8% of students agreed that part-timing was beneficial to the university's academic aims, more than 50.4% of the students recommended that their universities must seek ways to lower the incidence of part-timing. More than two thirds of the lecturers respondents also evaluated the impact of part-timing on the university as beneficial. In addition, over half (51.3%) of the respondents indicated 'not recommended' when asked whether they would recommend that their universities lower the incidence of part-timing. These findings are illustrated in the table below:

	Frequency	Percentage
Highly recommended	6	15.4%
Somehow recommended	8	20.5%
Not recommended	20	51.3%
Missing data	5	12.8%

Almost two-thirds (61.5%) of the lecturer respondents also evaluated the impact of moonlighting on students as beneficial. Benefits cited included lack of bias and interaction of students with a variety of scholars. This finding was supported by 45.9% of student respondents who agreed that part-timing was beneficial to them. Another 33% of the students were neutral on this point meaning they probably did not know the difference between their part-time lecturers and the full time ones.

When the respondents were asked whether they would recommend that universities develop and implement a part-time policy, 71.8% responded in the affirmative and 17.9% in the negative. This was affirmed by 77% of students who agreed that their universities must urgently embark on developing a policy on moonlighting. More than half (51.3%) of the lecturers declined that lecturers should not provide full disclosure of their teaching status.

Asked to make recommendations to the administration in their part-timing institutions, respondents recommended the following;

- Increase payment - In regard to pay, there were about 18 responses that focused on improving the pay
- Pay promptly - prompt payment and inclusion in terms of benefits.
- Provide facilities- the need for part-timers to be provided with facilities and office space. Part-time faculty in some institutions also do not routinely participate in other instructional activities such as choosing textbooks and other learning resources and developing course and programmatic curricula
- Create reward or recognition system- About 25 responses indicated the need for recognition in terms of appreciation.

### **Key challenges related to part-timing**

Although most of the lecturer respondents perceived part-timing as beneficial, majority of the lecturers indicated that moonlighting had challenges. Twenty five of the lecturer respondents indicated fatigue as a main challenge of moonlighting. Reasons given for the fatigue were that the lecturers had to commute between the campuses of part-timing, they had too much workload in different universities, and demanding (time-consuming) schedules. The other challenge indicated was on academic value. About 17 out of 39 lecturers indicated they lacked enough time to prepare for their classes. Seven of the lecturers said part-timing was unpredictable as they were not certain they would have teaching vacancies all semesters. Stigmatization was another challenge indicated by five lecturers who indicated that they were not appreciated but were viewed as simply being after money. Other challenges indicated were lack of time for socialization with family, and lack of salary benefits like full-time lecturers.

### **Conclusion**

The thrust of this paper has been that part-time lecturers taught and that institutions must compensate them equitably. For sure, anyone working a successful career as a part-timer must love to teach; otherwise, they would be miserable and would not have the necessary drive and energy to build their teaching business. Corporate and personal ethics can become a major

problem in our search for ways to enhance part-time teaching in higher education, especially in those institutions where it is difficult for part-time members to meet their needs and realize their goals, and where the institutions of higher learning provide little or no support, or inconsistent support, to assist a part-time faculty member in realizing their goals. In this case then, both the corporate and personal ethics can be realized if there is good institution-faculty relationship that ensures career goals for each faculty member and institutional norms are synchronized.

We have argued so far that part-time lecturers are a significant resource in higher education, and an important part of the any national sustainable development. Their professional formation as lecturers often receives less attention from institutions than it merits. Institutions should spend more time in dealing with each of the proposed strategies above to be able enhance part-time teaching with less hindrances. The satisfaction of part-time faculty must remain a concern for the institutions of higher learning, for the work of such a faculty is as important as that of a full-time faculty member. Consequently, only when universities are willing to listen to the challenges and promises of part-timing model of labour and stop viewing part-time faculty as merely a way of reducing costs and nurture such an individual within amicable environment and resources to deliver to his/her full potential, shall sustainable development be attained.

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