**The Impact of Career Development on Employee Commitment of
Part-Time Faculty (PTF) in Hong Kong's Continuing Professional
Development (CPD) Sector**

by

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8 June 2012

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Abstract

Economic crises in recent years have exposed the presence of a large number of poorly educated workers who can barely meet the needs of Hong Kong's knowledge-based economy. In response, in April 2002 the HKSAR Government set up a HK\$5 billion Continuing Education Fund to encourage and subsidize those who want to improve themselves through continuing education. This policy presents unprecedented opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) course providers. To grasp these opportunities, they must act quickly to develop program mixes that match the education needs of potential students and demonstrate excellence in teaching quality by recruiting and retaining well-qualified faculty.

As the majority of the courses are designed for those who seek to improve themselves after work, most of the courses are extramural courses conducted by part-time faculty (PTF). Recruitment of PTF gives course providers the benefit of meeting their teaching needs economically and flexibly but educators have often expressed concern over whether the performance of PTF is in anyway affected by the absence of career development opportunities. This study therefore examined the effects of the perception of the value of career development (VCD) on other commitment components of PTF.

This was a quantitative study which used Wang's (2004) five-component commitment model to test employee commitment of PTF in Hong Kong. An online questionnaire was used to collect sample data from a population of PTF working at the 450 registered CPD course providers in Hong Kong. The data were analyzed and tested by means of Chi-Square tests, factor analysis, correlation tests, multiple regression, and structural equation modeling (SEM).

Based data collected from 270 respondents, the study suggests that Wang's five-component model is better than other models for explaining employee commitment in Hong Kong's CPD industry. Also, perceived VCD was affirmed to have a significantly positive influence on employee commitment, while perception of the availability of

career development opportunities was found to have a moderating effect on the association between perceived VCD and employee commitment. All five components of employee commitment of PTF and demographic variables were concluded to have no association with passive continuance commitment, but have varying levels of influences on different components of employee commitment.

This study has both theoretical and managerial implications. The examination of the complicated relationship between career development and employee commitment of PTF in Hong Kong's CPD industry can serve as a useful reference for both academic researchers and education managers. The findings can help CPD institutes to formulate suitable human resource strategies for attracting and retaining well-qualified practitioners to become PTF.

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