



Research Brief

Pharmacists' wages and salaries: The part-time versus full-time dichotomy

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Abstract

Background: Recent years have seen significant growth in part-time work among pharmacy personnel. If preferences and outlooks of part-time and full-time workers differ, job-related incentives may not have the same effect on both groups; different management practices may be necessary to cope with rapidly evolving workforces.

Objective: To compare wage-and-salary responses to the number of hours worked, human-capital stock, and job-related preferences between full-time and part-time pharmacists. The analysis focused on the pharmacist workforce because, unlike other professions, remuneration is fairly linear with respect to the amount of time worked.

Methods: Data were collected from a self-reported survey of licensed pharmacists in southern Florida (U.S. State). The sample consisted of 979 full-time and 254 part-time respondents. Using ordinary least squares, a model estimated, separately for full-time and part-time pharmacists, annual wage-and-salary earnings as functions of average workweek, human-capital stock, and job-related preferences.

Results: Practitioners working less than 36 h/week were driven almost exclusively by pay, whereas practitioners working 36 h or more exhibited a more comprehensive approach to their work experience that included variables beyond monetary remuneration.

Conclusion: Managing part-time pharmacists calls for emphasis on wage-and-salary issues. Job-security and gender- and children-related concerns, such as flexibility, should be oriented toward full-time practitioners.
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Keywords: Human-capital; Job-related preferences; Part-time employment; Pharmacist workforce

Introduction

Recently there has been unprecedented growth in part-time employment in the United States^{1–3} and other countries.^{4,5} Coincidentally with rising female labor force participation, this trend is particularly noticeable in health-related professions.^{6–9} Yet, despite its growth and findings

suggesting dissimilarities between part-time and full-time workers' labor orientation,¹⁰ little is known about this workforce segment. If preferences and outlooks differ, job-related incentives may not have the same effect in both groups.

This study sought to compare wage-and-salary responses to the number of hours worked, human-capital stock, and job-related preferences between

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full-time and part-time pharmacists. (The cutoff was made at 36 h/week.) Disparities in response were considered indicators of how practitioners in both types of employment status differed in conditions under which they were paid for professional services. The analysis is especially suitable to the pharmacist workforce because, unlike other professions, remuneration is fairly linear with respect to work input; specifically, Goldin & Katz¹¹ have found no penalty for working shorter hours. In pharmacy the demand for health care services is strong; the bulk of part-time employment is expected to be voluntary, that is, driven by higher opportunity costs of non-work activities. Consequently, variability within part-time workers was discarded from the analysis.

Decisions to work part-time, opting for flexibility and work-family balance rather than earnings, may result in forgone career opportunities, fewer promotions, and perceptions of limited commitment.^{12–14} At different stages of their life cycle, individuals make career choices, including working part-time, depending on the importance of non-work activities in their lives. The more important these activities are, the greater the willingness to pay for them in terms of accepting lower earnings, fewer promotions, etc. Thus, one would expect that in a function depicting wage-and-salary earnings configured by number of hours worked, human-capital stock, and job-related preferences, the relative importance of the determinants would be dissimilar for part-time and full-time workers.

Methods

This study employed the use of data acquired from a self-report survey. Two employment-status groups were identified: full-time pharmacists, working an average of at least 36 h/week, and part-time pharmacists, working fewer than 36 h/week. The cutoff was one of several options in the literature.

Data

The survey was conducted in southern Florida during 2006–2007. It was assessed for face validity and reliability using a pilot sample of 32 South Florida pharmacists.

Statistical model

Using ordinary least squares, the model estimated, separately for full-time and part-time pharmacists, wages and salaries as functions of

workweek, human-capital stock, and job-related preferences as follows:

$$\ln E_{ij} = \alpha_i + H_{ij}\beta_i + X_{ijk}\lambda_{ki} + Z_{ijk}\theta_{ki} + u_{ij}$$

where

E_{ij} was a vector of the natural logarithm values of annual wage-and-salary earnings, in dollars, reported by the j th pharmacist of the i th employment-status group;

H_{ij} was a vector of values of the average number of hours worked per week reported by the j th pharmacist of the i th employment-status group;

X_{ijk} was a matrix of values of human-capital characteristics ($k = 3$) including age, gender, and number of children reported by the j th pharmacist of the i th employment-status group;

Z_{ijk} was a matrix of values of job-related characteristics ($k = 2$) including main role as practitioner and perceived job-security rating reported by the j th pharmacist of the i th employment-status group;

u_{ij} was a vector of normally and independently distributed stochastic disturbance terms, with mean zero and variance σ_i^2 , pertaining to the j th pharmacist of the i th employment-status group;

α_i was the least-squares constant term estimated for the i th employment-status group;

β_i was the least-squares coefficient for number of hours worked estimated for the i th employment-status group;

λ_{ki} and θ_{ki} were vectors of k parameters, one parameter per covariate within each vector's respective group, estimated for the i th employment-status group; and where

$i = 1$ for full-time pharmacists and $i = 2$ for part-time pharmacists;

$j = 1, \dots, n_i$; and

n_i was the number of pharmacists in the i th employment-status group ($n_1 = 979$ and $n_2 = 254$).

Both equations contained identical covariates to compare the direction, magnitude, and statistical significance of their influence on earnings in the presence of all other covariates. Pharmacists' earnings were logged to reduce the impact of outliers and allow interpretation of relative differences rather than absolute amounts.^{15,16} The least-squares coefficients in this semilog earnings determination model denoted exponential values.

Average workweek is relevant in explaining variation in pharmacists' earnings.^{17–19} More hours worked were expected to increase earnings. This covariate appeared in the model without a

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