Part-time policing

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1.1 Introduction

The Equal Pay Act 1972, Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987, Human Rights Act 1993 and associated legislation to protect the rights of working women, combined with social pressures, encourage the women of today to pursue careers at the same time as raising a family.

The overall purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between parenthood, part-time work and careers for women within the context of the New Zealand Police. This research poses the following questions:

I. Why do policewomen choose part-time work?
II. What is the return for the individual on investments made in terms of training, education and experience for working mothers?
III. Are policewomen working part-time concentrated in specific areas of work? And are there any reasons for this?
IV. Are part-time workers and women who have worked part-time proportionately represented at all levels and in all areas of the organisation?

Researching literature on the impact of absences from work caused by childbirth followed by a return to work on a part-time basis exposes a vast array of material. To limit the scope of this review each major topic had been identified and the research examined and assessed. The following theoretical background focuses firstly on career literature, looking at historical foundations of career theory through to contemporary discourse. Secondly, research on working mothers, including the absences caused by childbirth, will be examined. Following on from this, the
The consequences of part-time work on career involvement are examined in light of historical and contemporary research. Human capital theory provides a lens to view the careers of part-time workers and an overview of literature is presented.

The review of literature uncovers some data on the effects of absences caused by childbirth and part-time work. This dissertation examines the effects of part-time work on women’s careers within the contextual framework of police. New Zealand Police has a closed labour market with a rigid promotional structure and hierarchy. As such the organisation fits with the traditional objective approach to career in a society where contemporary career discourse is dominated by alternative ways of looking at careers. The New Zealand Police utilises an internal labour market and this makes the issue of part-time work quite different from most organisations. It is the combination of these factors that makes finding the answers to the questions posed by this study a challenging discovery.

The research journey that is contained in this dissertation commences with a discussion about what the concept of career means. The development of career theory is traced before looking at the role of women as members of the workforce, particularly in relation to part-time work. Following the review of literature in this area, an overview of human capital theory is given as this is used later in this work as a means of analysing the return on investment of a part-time worker for the individual and employer. The New Zealand Police is the context for this research and to allow an appreciation of the research issues an overview of the organisation has been provided in chapter two. Chapter three provides details of the research methodology used, including the rationale for this approach. The data collected from the research was substantial and an overview of the results obtained forms chapter four. The research data has been analysed and chapter five provides this analysis linked to the research questions posed at the beginning of this work. Finally the journey ends with a number of conclusions that result from the analysis and discussion phases of the research. This is presented in chapter six.
References


