UNIVERSITÄT LUZERN

# Analysis of the Well-Being of Part-Time Workers in Switzerland

## Master's Thesis

Faculty of Economics and Management

submitted to:

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**Abstract**

Considering the reasons for part-time work, this study examines how part-time employees differ from their full-time counterparts in terms of their well-being. As representatives for well-being, the variables job satisfaction and health status are used. The Swiss Household Panel (SHP) serves as data basis for this analysis. The part-time workers are clustered into three groups based on their motives: Voluntary, involuntary and mixed part-time employees. With the help of t-tests and regressions, this thesis finds that voluntary part-time workers are significantly more satisfied with their work and tend to have better health than full-time employees. Involuntary part-timers report worse well-being compared to full-time workers. Mixed part-time employees, i.e., individuals who cannot be classified as either involuntary or voluntary part-time workers, indicate higher job satisfaction but rate their health worse than full-timers. This paper extents the existing literature by illustrating that part-time workers are not a homogeneous group, which must be considered when studying part-time employees in comparison with full-time workers.

**Keywords**

Part-Time, Full-Time, Reasons for Part-Time Work, Job Satisfaction, Health Condition

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# 1 Introduction

Along with the Netherlands, Switzerland has one of the highest part-time work rates in Europe which is steadily increasing. In 2017 the rate in the Netherlands was 50.7% and in Switzerland 38.7% (BFS, 2019). Moreover, the average weekly hours worked per employee is slightly decreasing since 2000 (OECD, 2020). Why can we observe such transformation in the Swiss labor market? In a European comparison, the Swiss, together with the Icelanders, perform the highest average working hours per week (42 hours and 24 minutes), considering only full-time employees (BFS, 2020). A long-term study from the Ohio State University shows that working more than 40-hours a week can have a dramatic impact on health, as it increases the risk of cancer, diabetes and arthritis (Dembe & Yao, 2016). Are those working hours simply too high for the employees? More than every seventh employee in Switzerland faces major difficulties finding a healthy work-life balance (Hämmig & Bauer, 2009). For 76% of the Swiss, a good work-life balance is more important than a career, according to the labor market study by Hänggi and Villa (2019). The relation between working hours and work-life balance is mostly justified with the scarcity argument (Lautsch & Scully, 2007). This states that everyone has a finite amount of time, which must be distributed among different areas of life. Time that is spent on work cannot be used for leisure. Long working hours thus create conflicts for employees, which can lead to a preference for shorter working hours. In the European Working Condition Survey (Eurofound, 2015), 32% of the Swiss indicate that they would prefer to work less than they currently do. In addition, every sixth Swiss shows no interest in a full-time job (BFS, 2019).

Given the increasing demand for part-time positions, it is worth to strengthen the research focus on this segment, as there is still resistance to part-time employees in many organizations (Lyonette, 2015). Although employers often have concerns that part-time workers have a negative impact on work organization and productivity (Fagan et al., 2014), part-time employees can make a significant contribution to the company's performance. This study intends to increase the attractiveness of part-time workers and may encourage employers to offer more part-time jobs.

The focus of the present thesis is on the impact of part-time work on individual well-being, compared with the effect of full-time work. Well-being is operationalized by the variables job satisfaction and health status. Other well-being variables are neglected in this work.

Multiple studies investigate the effect of part-time work on job satisfaction and obtain contradictory results. A number uf studies show that part-time workers are more satisfied with their job than their full-time counterparts (Al & Anil, 2016; Gallie et al., 2016). Others find no significant difference (Thorsteinson, 2003) or report the opposite (Giannikis & Mihail, 2011). The relationship between part-time work and self-rated health is not analyzed by many papers. Nevertheless, the literature is not in agreement about the impact of part-time work on health. One reason for these mixed findings could be that the past research examined a wide variety of part-time job positions, in different business sectors and regions. Hence, distinct part-timers tend to adopt different job attitudes. Feldman (1990) is one of the few who deals with this issue and argues that part-time employees are not a homogeneous group. Therefore, one should distinguish between work arrangements across part-time workers. Only little attention is given to that focus in the literature and hardly any study addresses this approach. The present paper takes up this research gap and tries to trace job satisfaction and health condition back to the reasons for part-time work. Thus, this study aims to show how part-time workers with dissimilar motives differ from each other and from full-time workers in terms of job satisfaction and health.

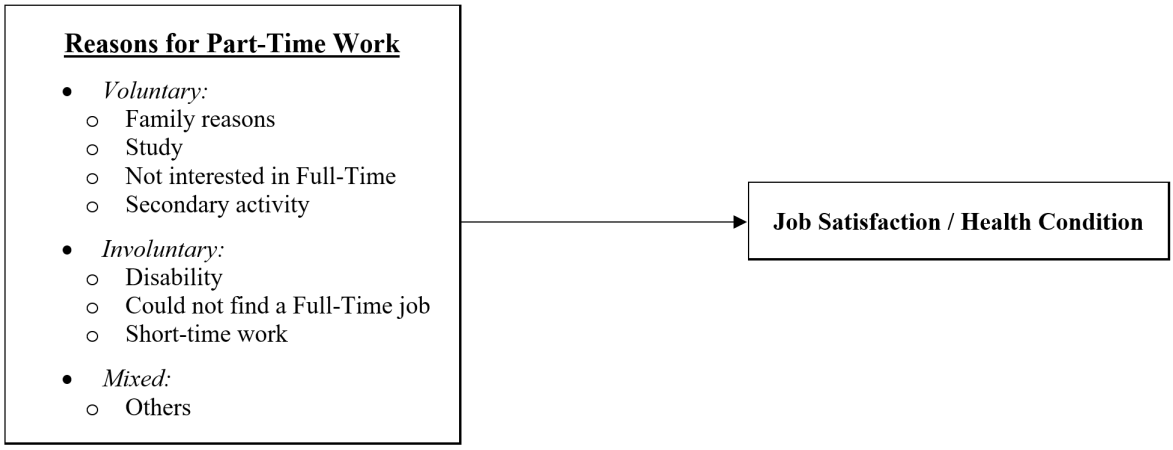



Figure 1.1: Research model

Motives for part-time work are well suited for considering individual differences because people in disparate life situations opt for part-time work due to different motivations. Individuals with similar life circumstances and reasons for working part-time have comparable job expectations and requirements. Therefore, they are expected to evaluate job satisfaction and health status equally and probably differently than people with other motives. In addition, this paper assumes that various motives include people with different sociodemographic characteristics. To give an example, someone who works part-time

because he or she studies at the same time tends to be younger compared to a person who works part-time due to family responsibilities.

The various motives considered in this analysis are listed in Figure 1.1. The reasons are clustered in three groups: People who work part-time on a voluntary, involuntary or mixed basis. The latter represents motives which couldn't be assigned to one of the former. In addition, Figure 1.1 depicts the research model.

To investigate the effect of part-time and full-time work on well-being, 5'405 individuals from the Swiss Household Panel are used as the data basis. The part-time employees are divided into groups based on their reasons for working part-time. Further, a dummy variable is created for each group and two regressions are conducted with job satisfaction and health condition as dependent and the dummy variables as independent variables. Additionally, t-tests are performed to support the regression outcomes. Thereby, the mean values of job satisfaction and health condition of voluntary, involuntary and mixed part-time workers are compared to the means of full-time employees.

This thesis is organized in the following chapters. First, a brief theoretical background will be given. This section is divided in three subsection: In the first subsection part-time work and job satisfaction is discussed. Secondly, part-time work and health effects are evaluated. Mixed results can be obtained in both subchapters. The third subsection discusses a suggestion, why those contradictory outcomes can be found. The next chapter is dedicated to the data and the methodological approach. After that, the results are presented and in the end the findings are discussed and critically evaluated.

# 2 Theoretical Background

## 2.1 Part-Time Work & Job Satisfaction

In the following section theoretical perspectives of the relationship between working status and job satisfaction are presented. Two opposing effects can be found. To comprehend those inconsistent findings, a better understanding of possible contrasts between full- and part-time workers is important.

In the literature a wide variety of reasons which explain the differences between full- and part-time employees can be found. For example, the labor market segmentation theory implies that employers use cheap and easily disposable part-time employees to get over increased workload at peaks and to cover shifts at times of the day or week which are outside usual full-time hours (Tijdens, 2002). Hence, part-time work is associated with poor quality jobs. Giannikis and Mihail (2011) account for this in their paper and analyze whether there are differences in job satisfaction between part- and full-time workers in low-level jobs in the Greek retail industry. They find no significant difference in general job satisfaction, but part-timers are significantly less satisfied with their pay and job security. Opposite results are presented by Gallie et al. (2016) who study the implication of female part-time work for different intrinsic job quality dimensions and job satisfaction across four European countries. They show that females who work part-time are either equally or even more satisfied with their work as female full-timers. This is even true when accounting for the lower intrinsic job quality of part-time work.

Another explanation why part-time and full-time employees differ can be derived by the partial inclusion theory. The theory implies that part-time worker are less present at work and therefore are not to the same extent part of the day-to-day activities of the organization as full-time employees (Clinebell, 1989). Hence, the difference in job attitudes could be due to the lower levels of inclusion (Miller H E, 1979). For example part-time workers are informed less and exposed to fewer problems, so they can't develop negative attitudes towards policies as they don't have sufficient information (Al & Anil, 2016). On the other side, they might be less satisfied, as they feel that they are less part of the company (Miller H E, 1979).

According to Al and Anil (2016), the satisfaction with the job is just a matter of the personal benchmark. The frame of reference theory suggests that people compare themselves within the environment and with other comparable people in their surroundings. If

part-time workers compare themselves to full-time workers, this may lower their job satisfaction, because they typically experience lower pay and fewer benefits (Thorsteinson, 2003).

Thorsteinson (2003) presents studies which suggest that possible distinctions in job attitudes are due to demographic differences, e.g. gender and age. They claim that if researches control for these demographic variables, there would no longer be any attitudinal differences between part-time and full-time workers. This finding of gender difference is supported by the gender identity hypothesis of Akerlof and Kranton (2000). They argue, that societal perceptions about appropriate behaviors could cause men and women to suffer from a loss of identity if they deviate from the code. Therefore, men would be more satisfied with a full-time employment, whereas women should be happier with a part-time job, as both would fulfill the societal custom. Booth and Van Ours (2008, 2009) present results, which are consistent with the gender identity hypothesis. They consider interdependence within the family using data on partnered men and women in England and in Australia. The focus of their study is on the impact of part-time work on satisfaction with working hours, job and life. In England partnered men have the highest hours-of-work satisfaction if they work full-time but neither job nor life satisfaction is affected by the working status. Due to hours and job satisfaction women prefer part-time work. Life satisfaction is also not affected by the working status. Similar results can be found in Australia. Women who work part-time are more satisfied with their working hours and their life satisfaction increases if their partners work full-time. Partnered men's life satisfaction is the highest if they work full-time.

In order to control for the effects of other factors, Al and Anil (2016) use salespeople who work in the same company at the same position with the same job description. They report that people who work part-time have a significant higher job satisfaction and a higher performance level than people who work full-time.

To sum up, the association between part-time work and job satisfaction could go in two opposing directions. Considering the integration perspective, where part-time jobs provide job opportunities for individuals who otherwise would be unemployed, one could expect that part-time employees are very satisfied with their jobs (Booth & Van Ours, 2008). Moreover, part-time work helps to balance work and leisure, which can increase the personal well-being and overall life satisfaction (Gash et al., 2010) and which also improves job satisfaction through its spill-over effect (Spector, 1997). On the other side, part-time jobs are often linked to jobs with poor quality (Tijdens, 2002), this could lead to a lower job satisfaction compared to their full-time colleagues. Both effects are supported by the literature. One possible reason for the two contrasting effects could be that the studies

examine a variety of part-time job positions, different groups of participants, business sectors and regions. Another explanation for these mixed results could be that everyone tries to account for the differences between full-time and part-time workers but no one really considers that even part-timers can differ from each other. This assumption is discussed in Chapter 2.3.

## 2.2 Part-Time Work & Health Effects

Only few literature can be found which attempts to make the link between working condition and health (Llena-Nozal, 2009). Work can effect health either directly or indirectly. Directly, as it can lead to increased physical or mental stress. Indirectly, if more work would mean less time for healthy meals and exercises, it would deteriorate personal fitness (Kleiner & Pavalko, 2010). Overall, contradictory results can be observed in the literature.

Burr et al. (2015) and Kleiner and Pavalko (2010) argue that part-time employees experience worse health outcomes than full-time workers. Part-time work may imply weaker relationship to co-workers, lower engagement with the social structure and less involvement with one's workplace; this leads to greater anomie and dissatisfaction (Durkheim, 2014). As work satisfaction is correlated with employees' health, a lower job satisfaction contributes to e poorer employees' health (Gupta & Kristensen, 2008). Moreover, fewer work hours are linked to a lower socio-economic status, which has an indirect impact on health. Longer working hours lead to a higher income, which gives the employee the opportunity for a better access to health insurance, medical treatment and preventive health care (Kleiner & Pavalko, 2010). Overall, Kleiner and Pavalko (2010) state in their study that health varies depending on work hours and that part-timers report poorer physical and emotional health than full-time employees. The effect is mitigated when controlled for individual, family and job characteristics. In their investigation they focus on Americans at age 40.

In some circumstances, part-time work can also have a positive effect on health and well-being. Working less leads to a higher amount of free-time to pursue leisure activities, for housekeeping, to relax and get enough rest, which may be beneficial for health. Moreover, devoting more time to life beyond work enables people to be more energetic at work and increases the concentration which leads to a higher performance (Altindag & Siller, 2014). Also part-time worker often have lower expectations of their work life due to having less responsibility in their work and this leads to lower stress (Al & Anil, 2016). Garhammer (2002) partially supports this as he finds that full-time workers experience more time

pressure than part-time employees, but the time pressure increases for people with family responsibilities. Benavides et al. (2000) investigate the association of different types of employment with six self reported health indicators, such as job satisfaction, stress and health related absenteeism. This is tested on a sample of 15 European countries. As a result, Benavides et al. (2000) detect that full-time workers report worse health outcomes than part-timers. In a subsequent study Benach et al. (2004), with the data from the Third European Survey on Working Conditions, they come to the same conclusion; part-time employees mostly rate higher levels of health indicators than their full-time counterparts. In addition, the Swiss Health Survey finds a similar effect. Full-time workers are more likely to report that work has a negative impact on their health than part-time workers. Interestingly, however, part-time workers have higher scores for work-related complaints, like headaches, sleep problems, etc., than full-time workers (Krieger et al., 2015). Further papers, for example Rodriguez (2002), find no association between part-time work and health.

A number of researches suggest that the effect of part-time employment on health outcomes or job satisfaction may depend on gender (Bartoll et al., 2014). This can also be supported by the fact that women and men have different reasons for working part-time, which leads to different expectations of the job (Feldman, 1990). Research about US employees present positive health effects of part-time work, especially men benefit from part-time work (Cho, 2018). On the other side, a study in Germany finds that men who work part-time are more likely to have depressive symptoms than those who work full-time. For women, this is especially true for marginal jobs (Burr et al., 2015). Gash et al. (2010) analyze the effect of changing working hours on life satisfaction. For this purpose they study women from Germany and England. As a result they present that the decrease in working-hours improve the well-being for women significantly.

Altogether, positive and negative health outcomes of part-time work find support in the literature. A reason for these opposing effects could be that no one distinguishes between different types of part-time workers. However, part-timers have various motives to not work full-time and thus there can be differences between part-time workers, which could lead to disparities regarding health outcomes. This is also mentioned by Bartoll et al. (2014), who argue that disparities in motivation for part-time work may explain differences in health outcomes. In addition Garhammer (2002) shows that part-time workers with family responsibilities have higher time pressure than other part-time employees. Hence, this argument is addressed in the next chapter.

## 2.3 The Role of Reasons for Part-Time Work

Despite numerous literature in the area of part-time work and well-being, research findings show a number of limitations and shortcomings. Since most of the studies try to analyze the relationship rather specifically for a certain job profile, in a particular country or sector, mixed results can be obtained. In the following paragraph another reason for these contradictory findings is discussed and the hypotheses of this study are derived.

Most of the papers focus on differences between full-time and part-time employees when setting up their research model. Hardly anyone considers the fact that even part-time workers can vary from each other. For example, someone can either work part-time voluntarily or involuntarily. Regarding the theory of work adjustment, the job satisfaction depends on the degree of which the environment fulfills the worker's requirements. If someone works part-time and desires to work part-time, he has a higher satisfaction than another person whose work status doesn't match with his preferred work condition (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Sturman and Walsh (2014) analyze the impact of work-hours misfit on employees job stress, work-family conflict and life satisfaction. A work-hours misfit occurs when the desired work hours do not match the actual work hours. The results show that working less than preferred leads to a higher job stress and lower life satisfaction, whereas working more has an impact on work-family conflicts. Therefore, involuntary and voluntary part-time workers can differ in their well-being. Hence, it is important to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary part-time workers. Thorsteinson (2003) investigates the effect between voluntary and involuntary part-time employees. Whereas voluntary part-time workers are more satisfied than involuntary part-timers, he finds no significant difference in job satisfaction among voluntary part-time workers and full-time workers.

Moreover, part-time people can either be young or old, male or female, single or married and due to distinct sociodemographic characteristics, they report different job attitudes and well-being. Hence, one should differentiate between types of part-time workers when comparing them to full-time employees. Feldman (1990) is one of the few, who does not declare part-timers as a homogeneous group. He develops a theoretical framework with 13 hypotheses and distinguishes between five different work arrangements: (1) organization-hired or agency-hired, (2) permanent or temporary, (3) main job or second job, (4) year-round or seasonal and (5) voluntary or involuntary. Just few studies attempt to validate this approach. Eberhardt and Moser (1995) test some hypotheses and find no significant difference between voluntary and involuntary part-time workers regarding their job satisfaction. On the other side, they report that temporary part-time employees

are significantly less satisfied with their job compared to those who consider themselves as permanently part-time workers.

In addition, Feldman (1990) states that it is crucial to understand the role of part-time work within a person's overall life to grasp the relationship between part-timers and their job attitudes. To support this thought, Garhammer (2002) finds that part-time people with family responsibilities have higher time pressure than other part-time workers. Therefore, knowing why someone works part-time could help to comprehend what life situation a person is in and whether the part-time job plays a minor or major role in their life. For people in various life situations, part-time employment could have a different impact on their satisfaction or health. Moreover, the motive for part-time work influences job expectations, which in turn can affect job satisfaction (Feldman, 1990). Furthermore, different demographic groups opt for part-time work due to different motivations (Eberhardt & Moser, 1995). Hence, it is assumed that the various reasons include people with other demographic characteristics. To give an example, a person who works part-time to study is probably rather young, compared to someone who works part-time because of family care. In addition, men and women have different reasons for working part-time (Lyonette, 2015). As there are hardly any other papers who consider motives of part-time work when investigating the effect of work status on well-being, this paper aims to close this research gap. It distinguishes between eight different reasons for part-time work and clusters them into three groups. Voluntary reasons are *family obligations*, *study*, *secondary activity* and *not interested in a full-time job*. *Disability*, *short-time work* and *could not find a full-time job* are treated as involuntary reasons. Further motives which are summarized as *others* are classified in the mixed category, as it is not possible to differentiate if they work part-time voluntarily or involuntarily.

According to the neoclassical labor supply theory, everyone chooses the number of hours they work based on their preferences. As a result, everyone should be equally satisfied with their job because they have made an optimal choice (Booth & Van Ours, 2009). This would mean that people who voluntarily work part-time should be just as satisfied with their job as full-time employees who prefer to work full-time. This is supported by Thorsteinson (2003) who also finds no significant difference between full-time workers and voluntary part-time workers regarding their job satisfaction. But as 32% of the Swiss report to prefer to work less than they currently do (Eurofound, 2015), this work presumes that not everyone who works full-time prefers to work full-time, but they might need to due to their financial situation or because there are no possibilities to reduce working hours. Therefore, voluntary part-time workers should have a higher job satisfaction. Moreover, people who work part-time voluntarily mostly had the choice to

work full-time, but preferred not to. Hence, they should be more satisfied than full-time workers, otherwise they could change to a full-time employment. Although part-time jobs are often associated with low quality jobs (Tijdens, 2002), this paper assumes that people who voluntarily choose to work part-time accept this in order to pursue another activity or to obtain their preferred work-life balance. Hence, the job quality shouldn't have a negative influence on their well-being. Not working 100% can also lead to less stress as having lower expectations of their work life, having less responsibilities at work and maybe spending less time in traffic (Al & Anil, 2016). In addition, part-time work leads to more leisure time in which it is possible to relax and to recover sufficiently. Therefore, this thesis proposes that voluntary part-time workers have a higher job satisfaction and a better health than full-time employees (hypothesis 1). This assumption can be supported by the findings of Al and Anil (2016), Cho (2018), Gallie et al. (2016), Garhammer (2002), and Gash et al. (2010).

**Hypothesis 1:** *Voluntary part-time workers report a (a) higher job satisfaction and (b) better health than full-time employees*

If someone who works part-time would prefer to work full-time but didn't find a full-time job or can't work full-time due to another reason, this person will be less satisfied with their job than a full-time worker. This is supported by the theory of work adjustment, which states that workers well-being depends on whether the work arrangement fulfills his requirements (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), which wouldn't be the case for an involuntary part-time worker. Sturman and Walsh (2014) confirm this by demonstrating that for part-time workers who would like to work full-time, work stress increases and life satisfaction decreases. In addition, Thorsteinson (2003) finds that involuntary part-time employees report a lower work satisfaction. As job satisfaction and workers health correlate (Gupta & Kristensen, 2008), the same results are expected for health outcomes, namely that involuntary part-time workers report worse health than full-time employees. Moreover, involuntary part-time work can also lead to mental stress, since it can be extremely mentally burdensome if you want a full-time job but can't find one. Therefore, the second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

**Hypothesis 2:** *Involuntary part-time employees have a (a) lower job satisfaction and (b) poorer health compared to full-time workers*

It is difficult to derive, if the effect of mixed part-time work on well-being is positive or negative, as it is not possible to tell the exact reason behind the part-time work. Hence, to

evaluate one should think of what other reasons to work part-time could exist. A further reason for part-time work could be phasing out before retirement or people who want to continue working despite having reached retirement age. The response option others could also include people who want to pursue a hobby, but would not classify this under secondary activity or people who have a disease or a burnout and wouldn't categorize this under disability. Some people need to work part-time in order to supplement their household income, if the partner earns too little to finance the whole family. Other reasons could be that people simply want more free time, a better work-life balance, a greater flexibility or less stress. Since most of the above mentioned reasons tend to be voluntary, this paper assumes that mixed part-time workers exhibit the same well-being as voluntary part-time employees. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is phrased in the same way as hypothesis 1.

**Hypothesis 3:** *Mixed part-time workers are (a) more satisfied with their job and (b) healthier than full-time workers*

# 3 Methodology

## 3.1 Data

To examine the relationship between part-time work and well-being, the present study uses the Swiss Household Panel (SHP) as it's data basis. The SHP is based at the Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences Fors. It provides data of representative Swiss households and individuals on an annual basis since 1999. The publicly funded panel covers issues related to various living and working conditions, as well as health aspects. The data are mainly collected through computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). Since 2010 also alternative methods like a face-to-face interview or a web-based version are offered for households that are reluctant to participate. The SHP comprises three samples: The first sample (SHP_I) started 1999 with 5'074 households and 7'799 individuals. A refreshment sample of 2'538 households and 3'654 individuals was added in 2004 (SHP_II). In 2013 another sample (SHP_III) started with 3'989 households and 6'090 individuals as respondents (Tillmann et al., 2016). The survey consists of three types of questionnaires: The household grid questionnaire, which assesses the household composition, the household questionnaire as well as an individual questionnaire. Every person living in the household aged 14 or older is encouraged to answer the individual questionnaire.

This thesis uses the individual questionnaire of wave 20, which was raised between September 2018 - February 2019, as a representative sample. This is the most recent data set available at the time of writing this paper. The selection includes 4'235 individuals from SHP_I, 1'886 respondents from SHP_II and 3'229 persons from SHP_III. For the purpose of this study a subsample (n = 5'405), everyone who works more than zero hours per week, is taken for the further analysis. Additionally, only participants who reported their job satisfaction and health status are included. The exact working hours are collected with the question: "How many hours do you usually work each week for your main job?", with an open response providing the number of working hours per week. People who don't work or didn't answer this question are excluded from this study.

To measure well-being the variables overall job satisfaction and health status are used. Well-being in a broad sense can include any variable that affects life. Some define well-being as happiness; for others, it is the prolonged state of contentment (Tov, 2018). Moreover, welfare is also considered in the assessment of well-being. Since this paper

investigates the effect of working status, the overall job satisfaction seems to be a good representative for life satisfaction and well-being. Furthermore, Spector (1997) shows that job satisfaction has spill-over effects on life satisfaction. According to Edwards and Klemmack (1973) the perceived health status is one of the best predictors for life satisfaction. Therefore, this paper chooses to operationalize well-being by the variables job satisfaction and health condition.

Job satisfaction is measured with a 10-point Likert scale. The participants are asked: "On a scale from 0 "not at all satisfied" to 10 "completely satisfied" can you indicate your degree of satisfaction for your job in general?". As self-rated health is a good predictor for a physiological state of a person (Jylhä et al., 2006), the question "how do you feel right now?" is used as a measure for health condition. The question is a 5-point Likert scaled item and has as answer choice: (1) very well, (2) well, (3) so, so (average), (4) not very well, (5) not well at all. The well-being variables are treated as cardinal variables, as Ferrer-i-Carbonell and Frijters (2004) provide evidence that the assumption of cardinality or ordinality leads to identical results.

Reasons for part-time work are chosen for clustering part-time employees because they capture a person's life situation. Individuals with the same life circumstances have similar job expectations and requirements. Therefore, they are assumed to evaluate their well-being the same way and differently than individuals with other reasons for part-time work. To collect the reasons for part-time work the question "Why do you work part-time?" is asked. The following answers are available for selection: (1) for family reason/ caring for children or relatives, (2) in order to be able to study at the same time, (3) because of disability or illness, (4) because you could not find a full-time job, (5) because you are not interested in working full-time, (6) because you have a secondary activity, (7) for other reasons, (8) short-time working. This thesis separates the reasons in three groups: Voluntary part-time, involuntary part-time and mixed part-time. This classification is additionally made because the reasons within these groups are assumed to have similar well-being outcomes. People who are not interested in working full-time, have family responsibilities, pursue a secondary activity or study belong in the category voluntary part-time. It is a free decision to have a second activity. Therefore, people who have a second activity are assumed to work part-time on a voluntary basis. Similarly, going to university is voluntary. Hence, most students choose to work part-time in order to study at the same time. On the other hand, they could also work full-time instead of studying. In this paper, individuals with family responsibilities are also assessed as voluntary part-time workers. This is justified by the fact that in Switzerland it is usually a free choice to found a family. Moreover, there are other options, such as daycare if someone would

like to work full-time. Therefore, this paper assumes that this is a conscious decision to work part-time. People with a disability, who didn't find a full-time job or work short-time are considered to be involuntarily employed part-time, as persons with a disability or short-time work mostly can't help it. Short-time work is given when the employer reduces the working hours for employees due to a poor economic situation in order to preserve jobs. The employees mostly still receive 80% or sometimes even 100% of their wages. Part-timers who didn't report a reason or stated others as reason are combined in the mixed category, since they cannot be assigned to either to the voluntary or involuntary part-time workers.

## 3.2 Estimation Method

Numerous studies already investigate the connection between part-time work and well-being. Many state that the relationship depends on demographic variables. Others claim that the effect is influenced by the quality of work. Most try to account for the difference between full-time and part-time workers, but few consider that part-time workers differ from one another. Therefore, this paper splits the part-timers according to their reasons why they work part-time and compares each of the group with full-time employees. As this thesis focuses on employees in Switzerland it will not control for poor quality jobs, as in Switzerland, part-time work is not necessarily linked to low-skilled jobs (Kuhn & Ravazzini, 2017).

The analysis is performed with the statistical software R. First of all, some additional variable are created. The OECD defines part-time work as everything lower than 30 hours per week in their statistics (OECD, 2020). In order to make the results of the present paper internationally comparable, this thesis follows the definition of the OECD and assumes that part-time employment refers to individuals who work less than 30 hours per week. Hence, a dummy variable is derived based on the working hours of the participants. Individuals who work 30 hours or less are assigned a 1 (part-time). All other participants are classified with a 0 (full-time). Also the opposite, a full-time dummy (1: full-time, 0: part-time), is created. Overall, the sample consists of 1'867 part-time workers and 3'538 full-time employees, whereas 439 males and 1428 females work part-time and 1271 women and 2267 men have a full-time position. The part-timers are than split up based on their reasons for working part-time. Since reasons for part-time work is a nominal scaled variable, it is recoded into dummy variables for the regression analysis. Thus, a dummy variable is generated for each motive. 698 participants work part-time due to family reasons. There are 224 students and 369 people who are not interested in a full-time

employment. 83 people are disabled or have a secondary activity. The sample consists of 77 individuals who couldn't find a full-time job and 8 people who are on short-time work. In addition, 55 persons indicated no reason and 270 reported others.

To investigate the effect of part-time work on well-being, linear regressions are performed. First, a regression is run with the reason dummies as independent variables and the job satisfaction as the dependent variable. The full-time dummy is omitted as the reference category in the regression. Second, the same regression is conducted but with the self-rated health as the dependent variable. In summary, the regression model looks as follows:

$$Well - being = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Family + \beta_2 Study + \beta_3 NotinterestedFT + \beta_4 SecondActivity$$
$$+\beta_5 Disability + \beta_6 FoundnoFT + \beta_7 ShorttimeWork + \beta_8 Others + \beta_9 NoReason + \mu$$

The variable NoReason in the equation above stands for people who work part-time but have not indicated a reason for doing so. Well-being represents the dependent variable, which is either job satisfaction or health status. The error term $\mu$ captures the part of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables that cannot be explained by the explanatory variables. The unstandardized beta coefficient, standard errors, R-squared and the significance level from the regressions are reported in Chapter 4. In addition to the regression analyses, Welch's t-tests are conducted to assist in the hypothesis testing. Welch's t-test is used as there is evidence in the literature that it should always be used prior to Student's t-test (Rasch et al., 2011; Ruxton, 2006). For this purpose, the mean of job satisfaction and health status of full-time employees are compared with the mean of voluntary, involuntary, and mixed part-time workers. The results of the t-tests are also presented in the next chapter.

# 4 Results

## 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.1 shows means, standard deviations and correlations among the key variables which are used in this thesis.

Table 4.1: Means, standard deviations and correlations

| Variable | *M* | *SD* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Job Satisfaction | 7.88 | 1.44 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Health Status | 1.89 | 0.61 | -.16** | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Family | 0.13 | 0.34 | 0.03 | -0.01 | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Study | 0.04 | 0.2 | -0.02 | -.06** | -.08** | | | | | | | |
| 5. Not interested FT[1)] | 0.07 | 0.25 | .08** | 0 | -.10** | -.06** | | | | | | |
| 6. SecondActivity | 0.02 | 0.12 | -0.01 | -0.01 | -.05** | -0.03 | -.03* | | | | | |
| 7. Disability | 0.02 | 0.12 | -.04** | .14** | -.05** | -0.03 | -.03* | -0.02 | | | | |
| 8. Found no FT[1)] | 0.01 | 0.12 | -0.03 | .03* | -.05** | -0.02 | -.03* | -0.02 | -0.02 | | | |
| 9. Short-time Work | 0 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0 | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.01 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| 10. Others | 0.05 | 0.22 | .07** | .03* | -.09** | -.05** | -.06** | -.03* | -.03* | -.03* | -0.01 | |
| 11. NoReason | 0.01 | 0.1 | 0.02 | 0.02 | -.04** | -0.02 | -.03* | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.01 | 0 | -0.02 |

[1)] FT = Full-Time

Note. M and SD are used to represent means and standard deviations, respectively. Job satisfaction can take a value from 0 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied) and health status from 1 (very well) to 5 (not well at all). The variables 3 to 11 are dummy variables which take either the value 0 (if the reason is not applicable) or 1 (if the reason is applicable).

* indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$

Table 4.2 illustrates the distribution of part-time workers by their reasons. Overall, the most mentioned reason is family obligations, which is stated by 37.39%. The second most cited reason is no interest in a full-time employment. Almost every fifth part-timer is not interested in working full-time. For 14.46% the reason is not listed and therefore they chose others. 12% of the participants are students. The remaining reasons are mentioned by less than 4.5%. This table also shows the demographic distribution among the reasons. Three-quarters of the part-time workers are women and almost every second woman (47%) indicates to work part-time due to family care. After family obligations, not interested in a full-time position, others and study are mentioned as reasons. Secondary activity, disability and didn't find a full-time job are each selected by 4% of the women. Nearly no women choose short-time work or no reason as answer. For men, the most important reason doesn't seem to be listed, which is why 24.8% choose the answer others. In second place the reason study appears, closely followed by no interest in a full-time position, which is mentioned by every fifth man. 7% of the men state no reason and disability is chosen by 29 (6.6%) men. Around 6% cite either secondary activity or family care as

their motive to work part-time. Less than 5% couldn't find a full-time position or are on short-time work.

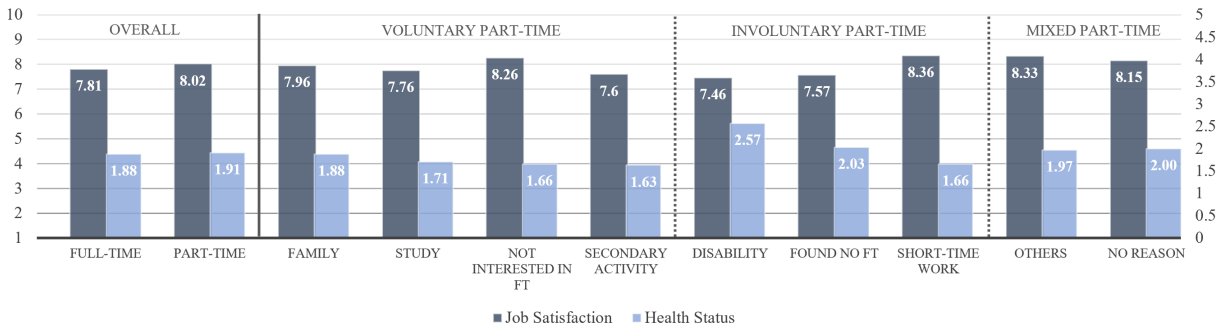
Table 4.2: Demographics

| | | | Gender | | Age | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Quantity | Percentage | Male | Female | Min | Max | Mean |
| **Full-Time** | 3538 | 100% | 2267 (64.08%) | 1271 (35.92%) | 15 | 86 | 42.6 |
| Family | 698 | 37.39% | 27 (3.87%) | 671 (96.13%) | 20 | 82 | 44.54 |
| Study | 224 | 12.00% | 101 (45.09%) | 123 (54.91%) | 14 | 60 | 22.91 |
| Not interested in FT[1)] | 369 | 19.76% | 90 (24.39%) | 279 (75.61%) | 21 | 88 | 58.41 |
| Secondary Activity | 83 | 4.44% | 28 (33.73%) | 55 (66.27%) | 18 | 72 | 44.94 |
| Disability | 83 | 4.44% | 29 (34.94%) | 54 (65.06%) | 21 | 71 | 52.45 |
| Found no FT[1)] | 77 | 4.12% | 20 (25.97%) | 57 (74.03%) | 18 | 70 | 45.53 |
| Short-time Work | 8 | 0.43% | 4 (50.00%) | 4 (50.00%) | 20 | 68 | 53.88 |
| Others | 270 | 14.46% | 109 (40.37%) | 161 (59.63%) | 15 | 85 | 58.82 |
| No Reason | 55 | 2.96% | 31 (56.36%) | 24 (43.64%) | 15 | 78 | 41.24 |
| **Total Part-Time** | 1867 | 100% | 439 (23.51%) | 1428 (76.49%) | 14 | 88 | 47.10 |

[1)] FT = Full-Time

Table 4.2 also implies that certain reasons are mentioned more frequently depending on the age. The lowest average age is found for the answer study (22.91). The highest average age is shown by people who are not interested in full-time work (58.41) or state other reasons (58.82). The average age for the remaining reasons lies between 41.24 and 53.88. Full-time employees tend to be in the younger range, with an average age of 42.6.

Figure 4.1: Means of job satisfaction and health status




Job satisfaction is based on the left-hand scale and health status can be determined using the right-hand scale.

Figure 4.1 presents the means of job satisfaction and health status among the participants in different groups. Comparing all part-timers with full-timers reveals that, on

average, part-time workers have a higher job satisfaction than full-time employees. On the other hand, full-time workers rate their health slightly better than part-timers. Looking at voluntary part-time employees the results are mixed. People who are not interested in a full-time job and individuals who work part-time due to family care report a higher level of job satisfaction. Whereas students and individuals with a secondary activity indicate a lower job satisfaction than full-time employees. According to their self-assessment, the health of part-time volunteers is on average at least as good, if not better than the health of full-time employees. Involuntary part-timers have a lower job satisfaction than full-timers, except individuals who are on short-time work. The mean scores in self-rated health are higher for disabled people and individuals who couldn't find a full-time position compared to full-time workers. This implies that they report a poorer health. Persons on short-time work rate their health on average better than full-timers do. Individuals who indicated others as their reason to work part-time or didn't report a reason at all, have on average a higher job satisfaction and a worse health status than full-time employees.

## 4.2 Hypothesis Testing

The information presented in Table 4.3 displays the result of the regression analysis which is conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference between part-time and full-time employees in terms of well-being. In order to make the outcomes more visible Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.2 are created. These plots directly illustrate the divergence of the different part-time groups relative to full-time workers. Additionally, t-tests are conducted to examine the effects of voluntary, involuntary and mixed part-time workers on job satisfaction and health condition compared to full-time employees. The findings of this t-tests are shown in Table 4.4. With the help of these outcomes the hypotheses are tested. Before testing the hypotheses for health status, it is important to notice that a higher self-rated health score stands for a poorer health condition. This means the lower the number, the better the health.

The intercept for job satisfaction shows a value of 7.808 and is significant at the 0.001 significance level. People who work part-time due to family reasons are 0.1693 times more satisfied with their job than full-time workers. This result is significant at the 0.01 significance level. Individuals who are not interested in a full-time job report significantly higher levels of job satisfaction. Students are 0.0489 times and persons with a secondary activity are 0.0126 times less satisfied with their work compared to full-time employees. Both values are insignificant ($p>0.1$). Disabled people show a 0.35 lower satisfaction, which is significant at the 0.05 significance level. People on short-time work are 0.5672

Table 4.3: Regression output

| | Job Satisfaction | | Health Status | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Independent Variables | Coefficient | Std [2)] | Coefficient | Std [2)] |
| **Full-Time** | | | | |
| Intercept | 7.808*** | 0.0240 | 1.8764*** | 0.0102 |
| **Voluntary Part-Time** | | | | |
| Family | 0.1693** | 0.0592 | 0.0003 | 0.0251 |
| Study | -0.0489 | 0.0984 | -0.1667*** | 0.0416 |
| Not interested in FT[1)] | 0.4768*** | 0.0782 | 0.0070 | 0.0332 |
| Secondary Activity | -0.0126 | 0.1587 | -0.0452 | 0.0674 |
| **Involuntary Part-Time** | | | | |
| Disability | -0.3500* | 0.1587 | 0.6898*** | 0.0674 |
| Found no FT[1)] | -0.2364 | 0.1646 | 0.1495* | 0.0699 |
| Short-time Work | 0.5672 | 0.5057 | -0.0015 | 0.2147 |
| **Mixed Part-Time** | | | | |
| Others | 0.5181*** | 0.0902 | 0.0902* | 0.0363 |
| No Reason | 0.3377(*) | 0.1941 | 0.1235 | 0.0824 |
| $R^2$ | 0.015 | | 0.025 | |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.014 | | 0.023 | |
| Residual Standard Error | 1.429 (df [3)] = 5395) | | 0.607 (df [3)] = 5395) | |
| F Statistics | 9.305*** (df [3)] = 9; 5395) | | 15.06*** (df [3)] = 9; 5395) | |
| Significance code: | *** 0.001 | ** 0.01 | * 0.05 | (*) 0.1 |

[1)] FT = Full-Time
[2)] Std = Standard error
[3)] df = degrees of freedom

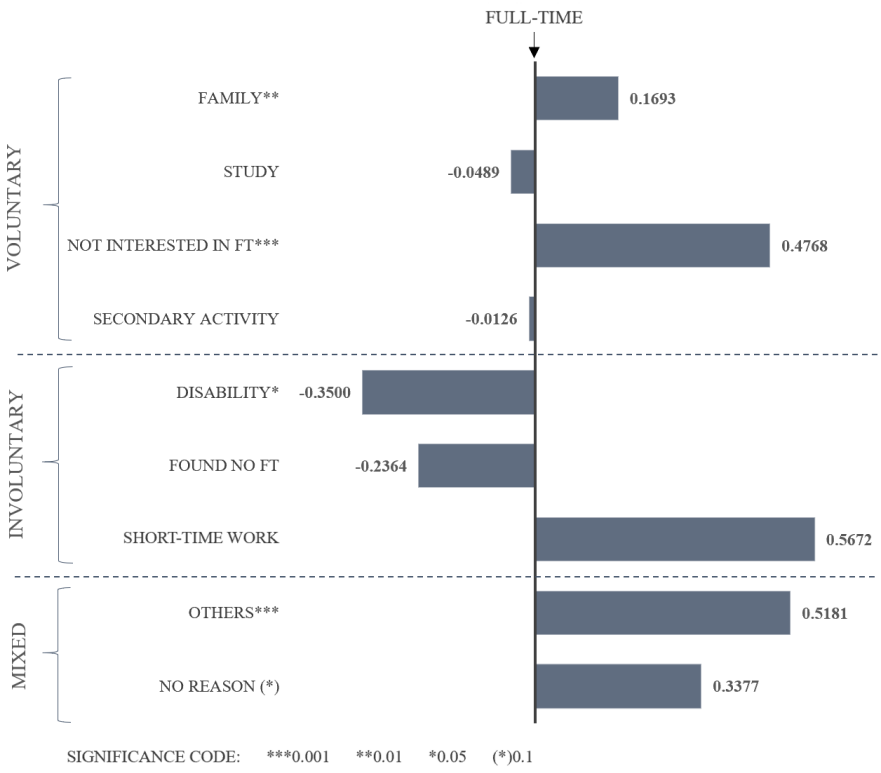
times more and persons who couldn't find a full-time position are 0.2364 times less satisfied with their job than full-timers. Both coefficients are not significant (p>0.1). Individuals who didn't indicate a reason for part-time work or stated others show a significantly higher satisfaction. The former are 0.3377 times and the latter are 0.5181 more satisfied compared to their full-time counterparts.

The regression on health status has an intercept of 1.8764, which is significant at the 0.001 significance level. The only significant value for voluntary part-time workers for the regression on health status is found for students, who report a 0.1667 better health than full-time workers. This value is significant at the 0.001 significance level. Individuals with a secondary activity rate a 0.0452 times better health. People who are not interested in a full-time position show a 0.0070 times and persons with family responsibilities a 0.0003

times worse health outcome. Disabled persons (0.6898) and people who couldn't find a full-time job (0.0699) assess their health significantly worse compared to full-timers. According to the coefficient of people on short-time work, they rate a 0.0015 better health than full-time workers, but the value is insignificant (p>0.1). Mixed part-timers showed a poorer health than full-timers. Whereas the effect for people who stated others (0.0902) is significant (p<0.05), the coefficient for individuals who not mentioned any reason (0.1235) is insignificant (p>0.1).

The $R^2$ and the adjusted $R^2$ of the regression analysis's are also shown in Table 4.3. The regression on job satisfaction yields a $R^2$-value of 0.015 (adjusted 0.014). In the regression with the health status as dependent variable the $R^2$ is 0.025 (adjusted 0.023).

Figure 4.2: Deviations of the job satisfaction regression coefficients compared to the reference category (full-time)

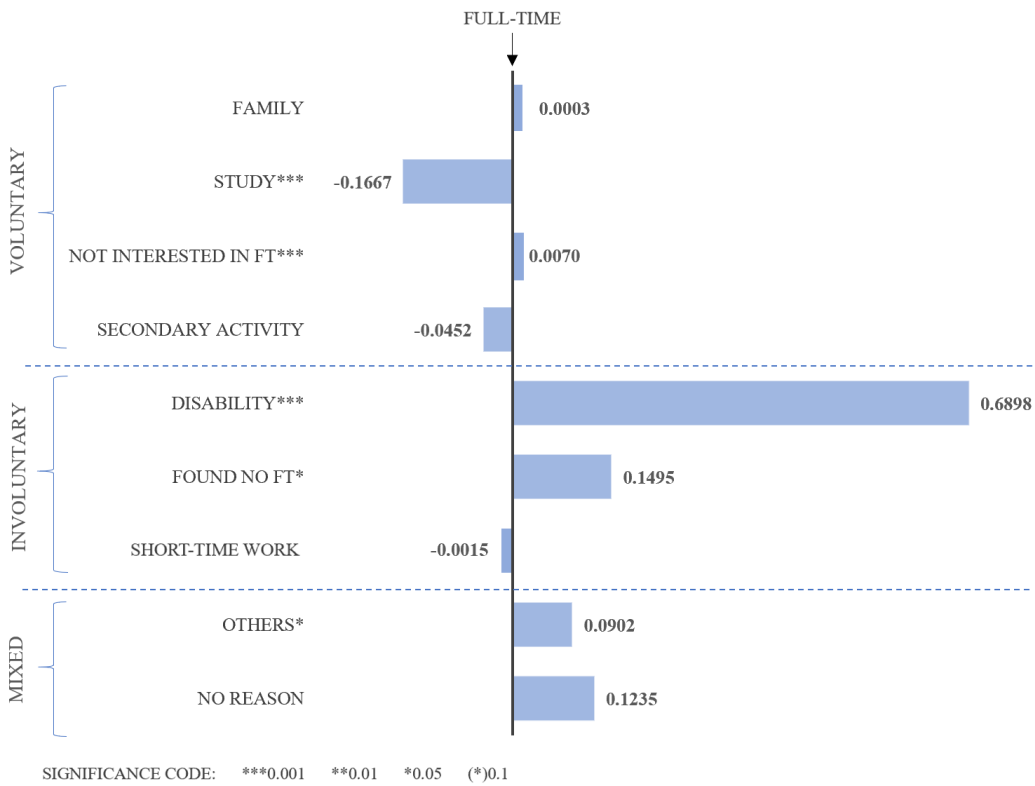



Hypothesis 1a is supported by the data. Looking at the t-tests, voluntary part-time workers are significantly more satisfied than full-time employees (p<0.001). Splitting voluntary part-time workers according to their reasons, the results are no longer obvious. People who work part-time due to family care (p<0.01) and individuals who are not interested in working full-time (p<0.001) are significantly more satisfied with their job. Students and individuals with a secondary activity are slightly less satisfied than full-time

workers, but not significantly.

Voluntary part-time workers report almost equal or better health situations than full-time employees. Students rate their health significantly better than those who work full-time ($p<0.001$). For participants with a second activity the effect goes in the same direction, but is not significant ($p>0.1$). Individuals who are not interested in a full-time job and persons with family obligations show almost the same self-rated health score as full-time workers. Overall, voluntary part-time workers rate their health better than full-time employees but not significantly. Thus, hypothesis 1b can be partially supported.

Figure 4.3: Deviations of the health status regression coefficients compared to the reference category (full-time)




The second hypothesis receives support from the t-tests. Involuntary part-time workers have a significant lower job satisfaction then full-time employees ($p<0.1$), which provides evidence for hypothesis 2a. In addition, hypothesis 2b finds also support, because involuntary part-timers rate their health significantly worse than full-timers ($p<0.001$). However, the outcomes for the individual groups of involuntary part-time workers are mixed. People with a disability are significantly less satisfied than full-timers ($p<0.05$). The same applies to persons who did not find a full-time job, though the result is not statistically significant. On the other side, short-time workers are more satisfied with their job than

full-time employees. Regarding the health condition, persons who didn't find a full-time job ($p<0.05$) and people with a disability ($p<0.001$) report a significantly poorer health than full-time employees. Short-time workers rate a slightly better health than full-timers.

Part-timers who didn't indicate a reason for part-time work ($p<0.1$) and people who chose others as reason ($p<0.001$) are significantly more satisfied with their work than their full-time counterparts. Therefore, hypothesis 3a can be supported. This is also demonstrated by the result of the t-test, according to which mixed part-time employees show significantly higher job satisfaction than full-time employees ($p<0.001$).

The data provides no evidence for hypothesis 3b. The opposite effect can be found. Both subgroups of mixed part-timers report worse health outcomes than full-time workers. For individuals who answered the questionnaire with others as a reason, the result is statistically significant ($p<0.05$). On the other hand, the effect is insignificant for individuals who did not provide a reason for part-time work ($p>0.1$). Overall, the self-rated health is significantly worse for mixed part-time employees than full-time workers ($p<0.01$).

Table 4.4: Results of the t-tests

| | | **Mean** | **Mean Diff** | **t-Value** | **df** [1)] | **p-Value** | **95% Confidence Interval Lower** | **Upper** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Job Satisfaction** | Voluntary Part-Time<br>Full-Time | 8.0131<br>7.8078 | 0.2053 | -4.6999 | 2641.5 | 2.74e-06 | -0.2910 | -0.1196 |
| | Involuntary Part-Time<br>Full-Time | 7.5536<br>7.8078 | -0.2542 | 1.7272 | 176.32 | 0.0859 | -0.0362 | 0.5447 |
| | Mixed Part-Time<br>Full-Time | 8.2954<br>7.8078 | 0.4876 | -5.7287 | 382.69 | 2.05e-08 | -0.6549 | -0.3202 |
| **Health Status** | Voluntary Part-Time<br>Full-Time | 1.8486<br>1.8765 | -0.0279 | 1.4523 | 2466.7 | 0.1466 | -0.0098 | 0.0655 |
| | Involuntary Part-Time<br>Full-Time | 2.2857<br>1.8765 | 0.4092 | -6.5028 | 175.83 | 7.89e-10 | -0.5334 | -0.285 |
| | Mixed Part-Time<br>Full-Time | 1.9723<br>1.8765 | 0.0958 | -2.597 | 377.65 | 0.0098 | -0.1684 | -0.0233 |

[1)] df = degrees of freedom

# 5 Discussion

## 5.1 Theoretical Implications

This thesis analyzes the relationship between working status and well-being. Part-time employees are divided according to their reasons and each group is compared with full-timers. The motives to work part-time are summarized in three categories; people who work part-time voluntarily or involuntarily or participants who couldn't be assigned to one of the former groups are defined as mixed part-timers. The focus of the present paper is to investigate the effect of the different reasons. Hence, the effect of external factors such as age or gender are neglected in the regression analysis. However, they are discussed in the following section based on the descriptive statistics.

Nearly three-quarter (73.59%) of part-time employees work part-time voluntarily. Since this is the largest group, it can be assumed that part-time work is mostly driven by own choice. Hence, most of the part-timers are more satisfied with their job than full-timers and tend to have a better health. Overall, the most mentioned reason is family responsibilities, followed by no interest in a full-time position. As family care is the number one reason for women, but not for men, this simultaneously shows that still more women are practicing part-time work (76.49% of the part-time employees are women). Almost every second woman (47%) indicates to work part-time due to family care. Men mostly work part-time due to other reasons, which could be retirement or due to studies. Similar results are presented by the Federal Office of Statistics of Switzerland in 2019 (BFS, 2019). 39.1% indicate family obligations as the most important reason for part-time work. Every sixth Swiss shows no interest in a full-time job and 10.4% combine their work with education. If we differentiate between men and women, the most frequently named reason for men next to others is not being interested in a full-time position. For women, it is childcare (BFS, 2019). Thus it can be concluded that the classic distribution of roles still remain valid. Men work part-time, especially at younger age (alongside their studies) or at advanced age (retirement). Women, on the other hand, mostly work part-time at their middle age, while they are looking after the family. Thus this would also go hand in hand with Akerlof's gender identity hypothesis, which states that people follow societal expectations in order to not lose their identity (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000). Therefore, in order to fulfill societal customs, men should work full-time and women part-time.

Overall, it is important to notice that the satisfaction level of Swiss employees is already

quite high. Whether full-time or part-time, the average job satisfaction value for all participants is 7.88 on a scale from 0-10, see Table 4.1. This can be confirmed by the Swiss HR Barometer, which states that 82% of the Swiss are rather to fully satisfied with their work (Pfrombeck et al., 2020). Due to an already high job satisfaction level, the potential for improvement is limited. This could explain why there are no enormous differences between the average values.

Hypothesis 1 proposes that voluntary part-time workers have a better well-being than full-time workers. Whereas Thorsteinson (2003) presents no significant difference regarding job satisfaction between voluntary part-time workers and full-time workers, this study finds partial support for the suggested hypothesis. While the hypothesis referred to job satisfaction is significantly applicable, the effect for health status is going in the suggested direction, but not significantly. People who are not interested in a full-time job and people who work part-time due to family responsibilities are significantly more satisfied with their job than full-time workers, but both groups rate a slightly poorer health than full-time workers. On the other side, for students and individuals with a secondary activity, the effect is exactly the other way around. They report a slightly poorer satisfaction, but a better health. An explanation why mixed results within the group of voluntary part-time workers can be found, could be due to the different demographic compositions. Since, for example, students are more likely to be young, people with family responsibilities are intermediate; and as the Table 4.2 shows, the age of participants with no interest in a full-time employment is rather high. Hence, all of these groups stand at a different point in their life and while evaluating their well-being, they weigh the various facets of part-time work differently (Feldman, 1990). Whereas pensions and social security benefits do not provide an incentive to work more than 20 hours for older people, students need to work to pay for their studies and life alongside them. Therefore, the financial aspect might be more important for students than for older people. Since part-time jobs are often paid poorly, this could be an explanation why students might be less satisfied with their jobs. Additionally, an older person who is slowly reducing his workload and heading towards retirement probably has a job that suits his preference, since he might has been working in the same company for several years. In the case of students, the job rarely matches their preferences because it is difficult to find a job in the desired field.

Among those who justified their part-time work with family obligations, over 96% are women. An explanation why they are more satisfied than full-time workers could be given considering the integration perspective (Booth & Van Ours, 2008). They may just be happy that part-time jobs offer them the opportunity to work at all. Furthermore, the work can also be a good break from everyday family life. The findings can be supported

by Booth and Van Ours (2008, 2009) who report that Australian and English women have a higher work and life satisfaction if they work part-time. These two studies analyze the effect on partnered women, which have a partner who works and adds to the budget account. Thus, a disadvantage of part-time work, lower wages, will often be less of a factor when evaluating job satisfaction. Moreover, the results of Myrskylä and Margolis (2014) show that having up to two children increases the happiness. This means, that having family responsibilities makes a person happier, which probably leads to a higher life satisfaction and this again increases the job satisfaction through its spill-over effect (Spector, 1997). On the other hand, it is often the case that if only one family member reduces their workload to look after the children, this person is automatically responsible for the housekeeping. Combining childcare, housekeeping and a part-time job can lead to increased stress. This assertion can be supported by the study of Garhammer (2002). He reports that people with a family are more stressed than people without family responsibilities. Moreover, working part-time due to family reasons doesn't mean that these people need to have a partner. There are also countless single parents, who have to go to work in order to earn money and at the same time take care of the children on their own. This can also lead to increased stress, having to juggle between household and work. This situation can also lead to psychological pressure if not enough money is earned to finance the family. Family care however, does not only include childcare, it may also be that relatives need to be looked after. In this case, it can also be mentally onerous if a close relative is ill and therefore needs long-term care. This all could be an explanation for the worse health outcome of individuals with family commitments.

People who are not interested in a full-time job and work part-time are satisfied with their job because they have chosen their working status according to their preference. This is also suggested by the neoclassical labor supply theory (Booth & Van Ours, 2009). A reason why the satisfaction is higher than for full-time employees could be that not everyone who works full-time prefers to do so. It can also be that some people have no choice and need to work full-time in order to earn enough. Additionally, it could be that there are no possibilities to work part-time in the specific job profile. Part-timers also have more time to pursue non-work activities. As a result, it is easier for them to balance their work and personal life, which could lead to greater life satisfaction. Looking at the average age of people who are not interested in a full-time employment shows that it is rather high. This suggests that there are many people in this group who are heading towards retirement and have already reduced their workload. These people probably have worked full-time the whole life but are now looking forward to more free time and their pension and this also increases their life satisfaction. Furthermore, the advanced age could

be an explanation for the minimally worse rated health status of the people who are not interested in working full-time. For younger people who are not interested in a full-time employment, the lower salary due to part-time work can be a mental burden depending on their life situation. Hence, unconscious stress could also be a reason for the slightly poorer health score.

The motivation for students to work is to finance their studies, their life or to gain experience. Student jobs are often associated with low quality jobs or work which is not related to their studies. This is also because these jobs are available on a casual basis and at times which fits the university schedule (Hall, 2010). Therefore, it is not surprising that students are less satisfied with their job, as they are mostly overqualified and also do not practice their preferred work. The proportion of men in this group is rather high and this could also have an impact on job satisfaction, as Akerlof's gender identity hypothesis states that men would prefer a full-time job because this is more in line with societal expectations. The average age of the students who participated in the Swiss Household Panel is just under 23. The full-time employees are about 43 years old. The age difference of 20 years might explain why students reported a significantly better health. In addition, students often have more free time and therefore time to exercise, eat healthy, etc. which also contributes to better health.

People who have a secondary activity are slightly less satisfied with their job compared to full-time employees. Health status is rated somewhat better. The differences might not be that big because people with multiple activities may also work full-time in total. The only difference is that they may work part-time in different companies or for different organizations. Therefore, according to the partial inclusion theory (Clinebell, 1989), they might feel less included in each of the companies and have a lower sense of belonging, which again could lead to a lower satisfaction. In return, as they are less part of the day-to-day activities and are less informed, they are exposed to fewer problems. This can lead to a lower stress level and hence, would explain the better health outcome. Furthermore, they can pursue two completely contrasting activities, creating the perfect balance.

The second hypothesis suggests that involuntary part-time people are less satisfied and have a worse health status than full-time employees. This is supported by the t-tests. Divergent results are only observed for the group containing individuals who are on short-time work. According to the results of this study, people who are on short-time work have a higher job satisfaction and a better health than full-timers. This could be because they suddenly have more free time and can pursue a hobby that they might had to neglect while working full-time. At the same time, they still earn a large part of their usual wage. Since short-time work is usually only for a limited time it doesn't become a habit and

hence, it could lead to a temporary increase in job satisfaction. Since short-time work often is due to a poor economic situation of the company, this can also lead to layoffs in the worst cases. Interestingly, however, fear of dismissal is not evident in the results of this work. To be fair, it must be emphasized that only eight people took part in this study who are on short-time work. Thus, the result in this case may not be representative.

People who would like to work full-time but didn't find a full-time position are less satisfied than full-time workers. This can be supported with the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), which states that the level of satisfaction depends on whether the working condition fulfills the worker's requirements. This is not the case, as they would prefer to work full-time. A similar result is demonstrated by the study of Sturman and Walsh (2014). They show that employees who are working less than they would prefer have a higher job stress and a lower life satisfaction. Hence, the higher job stress can be an explanation for the worse rated health of the participants who would like to work full-time. Additionally, if you financially rely on a full-time job, it can be psychologically very stressful if you don't find the employment you want, respectively you need. Moreover, looking for a job in the hope of finding a full-time position and not being able to find a suitable one or receiving many rejections, it can be utterly depressing. This affects the health as well as the satisfaction.

Individuals with a disability report a significantly poorer health than full-time workers. This makes sense as they have health restrictions which "normal" full-time workers don't have. Therefore, this makes it not really comparable as the working status is not decisive for the health condition in this case. The disabled part-time workers also present a lower job satisfaction. This may be since handicapped people are perceived to have a lower life satisfaction. Lin and Cheng (2019) find that disabled people who work have even a worse life satisfaction than those who have never worked. As life satisfaction has a spill-over effect on job satisfaction (Spector, 1997) this could be an explanation why persons with a disability are less satisfied with their jobs than full-time workers.

Hypothesis 3 states that mixed part-timers have a higher job satisfaction and a better health than full-time workers. This is partially supported, as they are more satisfied but rated their health worse than full-timers did. It is difficult to explain this result as the exact reason for part-time work is not known. Other reasons could also be because of retirement, having a better work-life-balance, increased flexibility, more leisure time, less stress, illness, burnout, extra household income, etc. Looking at the enumerated reasons, most of them are driven by voluntary motives. Thus, the higher satisfaction could be explained by the fact that people are more satisfied when they can perform their preferred work. In this sample, the most mentioned reasons by men to work part-time

is others. Additionally, the average age for this group is with 58.82 the highest. This suggests that mainly people who are about to retire have chosen this answer. Therefore, the explanation for this findings could be the same as for people who are not interested in a full-time employment. People who are looking forward to the retirement are probably happier and have a better life satisfaction. Compared to the average age of the full-timers (43 years), the advanced age could have an impact on health, which could explain the poorer rated health of this group. Moreover, if this group contains persons with burnout who want to slowly reintegrate into the labor market, this could also be an explanation for the poorer health score of this group.

There are 55 participants who didn't indicate any reason for working part-time. Overall, they report a higher satisfaction but a poorer health compared to full-time workers. According to the average age and gender distribution this group is similar to full-time workers. Generally part-time work gives people a higher flexibility. For example, if one needs to go to the post office, to the municipality or to the bank, it is more convenient for part-time workers as this services mostly are only open during traditional office hours. A full-time employee always needs to take a day off in order to do his business in one of the mentioned places. Additionally, part-timers have more time to enjoy their leisure time and pursue a hobby or catch up with friends. This balance contributes to greater life satisfaction, which could result in higher job satisfaction. On the other hand, having many activities besides work could increase the stress when trying to reconcile everything. Moreover, a big disadvantage of part-time work is the social security system. People with a lower workload usually earn less and therefore can pay less into the pension scheme. As a result, the old-age pension is lower for part-time employees. Additionally, depending on the number of hours worked per week, one may not be insured against non-occupational accidents. Hence, those factors could explain the poorer health outcome of part-timers.

## 5.2 Practical Implications

According to the labor market study by Hänggi and Villa (2019), 76% of the Swiss prefer a good work-life balance to a career. Moreover, eight out of ten Swiss employees would like to have flexible working hours (JobCloud, 2021). Hence, flexible working models are becoming more important. Such models are already established in Switzerland but the willingness of employers to adopt them could still be increased. The results of this study could favor part-time employment by suggesting that voluntary part-time employees are generally more satisfied with their job compared to full-time workers. Since Davidescu et al. (2020) find that employees with a higher job satisfaction tend to be more motivated

and have a higher productivity, this could make part-time workers more attractive to employers. Therefore, employers should offer the opportunity to work part-time if there is a demand. This way, companies would benefit from more motivated workers. Since 32% of the Swiss would prefer to work less (Eurofound, 2015), the desire for more part-time jobs is definitely given. To generate more part-time jobs, companies could divide full-time jobs and offer two or more part-time jobs instead, e.g. job-sharing or job-splitting. Job-splitting is the classic form of part-time work in which two or more employees are assigned a separate work area with hardly any touch points. In a job-sharing model employees share all tasks and responsibilities, which also allows them to enjoy benefits of a full-time position, such as career opportunities or management positions (Dixon et al., 2020).

On the other hand, the present analysis demonstrates that involuntary part-time workers report lower well-being compared to full-time employees. Knowing that involuntary part-timers have a lower job satisfaction could encourage employer to offer them other working conditions in order to increase their work satisfaction. Companies could help people who couldn't find a full-time job by looking for opportunities to increase their workload within the company. Another option is to evaluate the reasons why this person did not find a full-time position. If it is skill related, the firm could support the employee in doing a retraining. To increase the job satisfaction of people with a disability, companies should integrate them into the daily work routine like other employees while allowing them flexibility for their medical appointments. In addition, the infrastructure in the office could be adapted to the person's disability to facilitate their daily work as much as possible.

In addition, the results of this work suggest that voluntary part-time workers rate their health equal to or better than full-time employees, while involuntary part-time workers generally report poorer health. Since Lange (2019) claims that a company can only be successful in the long term with healthy employees, this would again favor voluntary part-time employees and motivate employers to offer more part-time positions if desired. However, it would be beneficial for a company to have healthy employees in general. To promote employees health, a company could pay for a gym membership, offer sports programs for employees during their lunch break or provide healthy snacks or lunch menus. Another option would be to hire a person who is responsible for the well-being of the employees. Besides organizing healthy activities and meals, she or he could also help people manage with stress and time pressure to improve their health.

Moreover, the findings of this paper indicate that part-time workers differ from each other, as different outcomes can be observed depending on the motives for working part-

time. Hence, companies could develop an awareness of the needs of the various employee groups and think of appropriate Human Resource (HR) policies that fit the type of part-time worker. People with family responsibilities might appreciate if the company offers childcare opportunities or the possibility to work from home. Students probably don't need childcare but might be interested in career opportunities after graduation or that the company finances their studies. Individuals with a secondary activity may prefer to have the flexibility to change work days spontaneously depending on their agenda. Aligning HR policies with the needs of different employee groups can increase job satisfaction as well as health (e.g. through less stress). A more satisfied employee not only performs better but is also assumed to be less likely to leave the company. Hence, this could lead to a lower turnover rate for the firm. In addition, a satisfied employee talks about the good working conditions in the company, which in turn could attract new potential employees.

## 5.3 Limitations and Future Research

There are limitations of this thesis, which should be kept in mind when interpreting the results. All variables used in the studies are self-reported by the participants. It does not allow for definitive causal conclusions and may be susceptible to the common method bias. Although the results are largely consistent with the hypothesis assumed in this work, opposing significant relationships receive support from the literature (Burr et al., 2015; Giannikis & Mihail, 2011; Kleiner & Pavalko, 2010). Furthermore, the study is conducted with Swiss people, which implies that the results cannot be generalized.

Using the reasons for part-time work to cluster part-time employees helps to capture a person's life situation. On the basis of this, it is possible to identify what other factors could have an impact on job satisfaction and health. As mentioned in the discussion, students may be healthier on average than full-time workers because of their younger age. However, this study only examines the effect of reasons for part-time work on well-being and does not take into account factors such as gender or age. Hence, it is difficult to disentangle the effect of gender and age from the effect of the motives. Future research could address this limitation and include factors such as gender and age in their analysis.

Defining part-time work as working under 30 hours might not adequately capture the differences between full-time and part-time workers. As in Switzerland the average working hours for full-time is around 42 hours (BFS, 2020), an 80% pensum, for example, would therefore be a little bit more than 33 hours. These people working between 30 and 33 hours a week, although working part-time, are classified as full-time workers in this study, what could distort the result. Moreover, employees working less than 10 hours

may perform different tasks and have other responsibilities than workers with a job with more than 20 hours. Therefore, the part-time workload might also have an impact on well-being. Part-time workers, who do not work much less than full-timers, may be more similar to full-time workers regarding their well-being than to other part-time employees. On the other hand, part-timers with a low workload may be happier because it is easier for them to balance non-work obligations. Therefore, future studies could additionally subdivide part-time workers according to their working hours and thus assess the effect of the different part-time workloads even more precisely.

Moreover, characterizing part-time work by the various reasons or by their workload may still not be enough to get an overall picture. Part-time jobs differ, for example in terms of their quality, payment, skill requirements, career opportunities, etc. and these aspects can also have a significant impact on an employees health and satisfaction. Therefore, in order to have the isolated effect of work status on well-being, considering these aspects could lead to a more appropriate outcome.

This paper assesses well-being with the variables job satisfaction and health status. However, these two parameters are not the only ones that influence the general well-being of a person. Furthermore, overall life satisfaction, happiness, prosperity and welfare play a significant role in defining well-being. Hence, the results regarding job satisfaction and health status cannot be used to draw definitive conclusions about well-being, but a tendency of the effect of work status on well-being is recognizable.

In addition, overall job satisfaction also consists of several facets. Factors such as satisfaction with pay, with the team, with working conditions, with career opportunities, etc., are all included in the assessment of overall job satisfaction. It is possible that full-time and part-time workers weight these various aspects differently, which could lead to a divergent evaluation of the overall job satisfaction. There are already some studies that have examined how part-time and full-time workers differ on these various aspects of satisfaction. It might be interesting to see how the different part-time employees weight, respectively evaluate the individual satisfaction components. This knowledge could help employers to get an idea of what is important to different part-time employees and create customized job offers. A student might care about the prospect of a career opportunity and is willing to accept a lower salary in return. On the other hand, someone with family obligations might prefers to have very flexible working hours and would accept less salary or fewer career opportunities in return.

Some studies suggest that more satisfied people are more motivated, which leads to a better performance. As this paper just focuses on job satisfaction and not performance, it could be interesting for future research to evaluate whether voluntary part-time workers

perform better than their full-time colleagues. This should be the case because voluntary part-time workers are more satisfied. Knowing that voluntary part-time worker bring a better performance could lead to a completely new view on part-time work.

The evaluation of the health variable should also be viewed critically. Although Jylhä et al. (2006) find that self-rated health is a good predictor for a physiological state of a person, it may not be entirely accurate and comparable. For example, people who are disabled have a different relation to the evaluation of their health because for them the standard health status is at a different level. They may rate a good day with the same health score like non-disabled persons would rate a bad day. Therefore, using health status to measure well-being is rather less appropriate for comparing people with a disability to healthy individuals. The results show that people with a disability have a significantly worse health, which is probably accurate. However, there should not be given too much attention to the absolute health difference between disabled part-time workers and full-time employees.

From a statistical point of view, a limitation would be the distribution, respectively the number of people in the separate groups, which needs to be judged rather critically. Of course, it also emphasizes the most important reasons for working part-time, but for the validity of the result an equal distribution would be more desirable. Having the same amount of people in each group would increase the power of the findings and make them more precise. The fact that there are only eight people in the group of short-time workers does not lead to a representative outcome for this group.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Switzerland has one of the highest part-time rates in Europe (BFS, 2019) and at the same time the highest average working hours per week, when only full-time employees are considered (BFS, 2020). This paper investigates the difference between Swiss part-time and full-time workers regarding their well-being. To operationalize well-being, the variables job satisfaction and health status are used. Various studies already analyzed the effect of working status on job satisfaction as well as health condition and came up with opposing results. As hardly any literature considers the fact that part-time workers differ from each other, this thesis accounts for that by dividing part-timers into groups according to their reasons for working part-time. Furthermore, these reasons are separated into three main groups: Voluntary, involuntary and mixed part-time workers.

This work observes that working part-time due to family care is the most mentioned reason for females, whereas others, followed by studies are the most frequently cited

motives for males. Hence, the classical gender role still exists. Men work part-time while they are young or old, women mostly at their middle age. Moreover, every fifth part-timer is not interested in a full-time employment and 4.12% couldn't find a full-time job. Almost three-quarters of all part-time employees work part-time because they like to do so. The results of this study indicate that voluntary part-time employees are more satisfied with their job than full-time workers, whereas the opposite is true for involuntary part-timers. Regarding their health, voluntary part-time workers show a slightly better health than full-time employees, but not significantly. Involuntary part-timers rate their health worse than full-timers do. Individuals who specified others as a reason to work part-time or who haven't mentioned any reason are significantly more satisfied with their job and have a poorer health compared to full-time workers. Within the categories voluntary and involuntary part-time employees the findings are mixed. Students and people with a secondary activity rate their health better than full-timers, but show a slightly lower satisfaction. Persons with family obligations and no interests in a full-time employment have a significantly higher satisfaction but a minimal poorer health than full-time workers. Disabled people and individuals who couldn't find a full-time job rate a worse health and a lower satisfaction compared to full-time employees. On the other hand, people on short-time work report a higher satisfaction and a better health.

The findings of the present thesis suggest that employers should offer part-time work if requested by the employees. Voluntary part-time workers are more satisfied with their job than full-time employees and are therefore more motivated, which leads to a better performance. Hence, this makes part-time employees more attractive to employers. The fact that 32% of the Swiss would like to work less than they currently do indicates that the need for more part-time work is given (Eurofound, 2015). To create more part-time positions, companies could think about job-sharing or job-splitting options. Additionally, employers could adapt their HR policies to the characteristics of their employees. Since part-time workers differ from each other, they have different needs and therefore have other requirements for their working conditions. Implementing employee-specific HR policies could lead to higher employee satisfaction, which in turn could lead to better performance, lower turnover rate and attract more potential employees.

To conclude, this work supports the fact of Feldman (1990) that part-time employees are not a homogeneous group. Therefore, in order to examine the relationship between part-time work and their well-being, respectively to compare part-time workers with full-time employees, it is not sufficient to consider all part-timers together. This study demonstrates the different effects depending on the reason why someone works part-time. Reasons however, are not the only possibilities to cluster part-time workers. Moreover,

part-time work could be divided in several subgroups according to working hours or different aspects of part-time work, such as job quality, career opportunities, payment, etc. In addition, different demographic characteristics should be considered. The integration of these aspects could help to explain the effect of working status on well-being more precisely. This thesis does not elaborate the effect of voluntary part-time work on performance. However, the investigation of this relationship could be interesting for future research. Furthermore, future studies could apply this approach in other countries in order to enhance generalizability.

# 6 Declaration of Independence

I hereby declare that I have written this thesis independently and I have not used any sources or aids other than those indicated, and that the thesis has not already been submitted elsewhere. I also declare that the digital version of the thesis corresponds to the printed copies.

Lucerne, May 22, 2021

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