

Research Productivity Of Accounting Faculty: An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

This study surveyed 367 accounting faculty members from AACSB accredited Colleges of Business to examine (1) their research productivity and (2) the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to conduct research. Wide differences in research productivity were observed in the faculty associated with doctoral vs. non-doctoral granting programs. There were some common motivators of research for faculty in the two sets of programs; however, some interesting differences were also noted. Of the thirteen rewards studied, receiving or having tenure is the most important reward, while getting a possible administrative position was the least important. There were significant differences in the importance of these rewards between tenured-untenued and between male-female faculty members. Faculty perceives a strong link between research productivity and the attainment of the rewards of tenure and of promotion. However, in the minds of the faculty, the link between publications and salary increases is not strong.

Keywords: Research Productivity, Motivation for Research

INTRODUCTION

There are two streams of research on faculty research productivity. The first stream examines the changes of research publication requirements in faculty tenure and promotion decisions (Cargile and Publitz 1986; Campbell and Morgan 1987; Milne and Vent 1987; Englebrecht et al. 1994; Read et al. 1998). These studies have documented that publication requirements for promotions and tenure have increased over time. The second stream of research has examined individual or institutional factors that most significantly influence the research productivity of faculty members. Certainly, personal characteristics like intelligence, insight, curiosity, and work ethics have an influence; but other observable and systematic traits such as tenure status, rank, number of years in academics, gender, discipline, and percentage of time devoted to research can also be important influencers of scholarly achievement.

The following section provides a review of prior research on the factors that motivate faculty to conduct research. The subsequent sections enunciate this study's research objectives, methodology, and results. The final section discusses the implications of the findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Factors Influencing Research Productivity

Some scholars believe that promotion has a motivating effect on research productivity. For instance, Fox (1985) suggests that higher education institutions can influence faculty research behavior through the manipulation of the reward structure for promotion. Other researchers, however, insist that faculty publish not for external rewards but because they enjoy the process of inquiry (McKeachie 1979). Prior studies identified two categories of personal motivational factors that drive academic research: (1) investment factors or extrinsic rewards (e.g., salary

raises, tenure, and promotion) and (2) consumption factors or intrinsic rewards (e.g., an individual's personal satisfaction from solving research puzzles, contributing to the discipline, and achieving peer recognition).

In addition to personal motivation, other factors also have a substantial influence on faculties' research productivity. One well-established research productivity theory, Life-Cycle theory, suggests that in general the research productivity of a researcher rises sharply in the initial stages of a career, peaks at the time of tenure review, and then begins a decline (Diamond 1986; Goodwin and Sauer 1995; Hu and Gill 2000). Other studies have identified that the following factors influence research productivity: (1) tenure status, (2) the allocation of working time to research activities, (3) length of the tenure probationary period, (4) teaching loads, and (5) financial research support (Buchheit et al. 2001; Cargile and Bublitz 1986; Chow and Harrison 1998; Tien 2000; Levitan and Ray 1992; Hancock et al 1992).

Research Productivity of Accounting Faculty

Little information is available on what is the research productivity of an accounting faculty. How does it vary between doctoral vs. non-doctoral granting business colleges? How does it vary by rank, tenure status or gender? The descriptive data on research productivity is important to set research goals and to benchmark performance.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of the present study is to provide data on research productivity of accounting faculty and to examine what factors motivate faculty to conduct research and their relationship with actual research productivity. Specifically, the first objective is to provide data on research productivity of accounting faculty in doctoral and non-doctoral granting programs by tenure status, by rank, and by gender. Such data will be useful for benchmarking and goal setting purposes.

The second objective is to determine the relative importance accounting faculty place on thirteen potential rewards from research. We then compared the differences of the importance of these factors between the faculty of doctoral granting colleges of business and non-doctoral granting colleges of business. These thirteen rewards tested by this study include six extrinsic, six intrinsic, and one which is difficult to classify. The six *extrinsic* rewards are (1) receiving or having tenure, (2) being full professor or receiving promotion, (3) getting better salary raises, (4) getting an administrative assignment, (5) getting a "chaired professorship", and (6) getting reduced teaching load. The six *intrinsic* rewards are (7) achieving peer recognition, (8) getting respect from students, (9) satisfying personal need to contribute to the field, (10) satisfying personal need for creativity or curiosity, (11) satisfying personal need to collaborate with others, and (12) satisfying one's personal need to stay current in the field. The thirteenth motivator, finding a better job at another university, could be an extrinsic reward in that it could lead to higher pay or a lower teaching load. Even if this is an extrinsic reward, it is different than the other six mentioned above in that, it can not be given as a reward by one's current employer. On the other hand, it could be an intrinsic award if this leads to better peer recognition or respect.

Faculty responses to the above rewards will provide evidence to the debate over whether faculty is primarily extrinsically or intrinsically motivated. We compiled this group of thirteen factors from previous literature, a pilot study which asked the respondents to list "other motivations", and from a focus group of 20 college of business faculty.

The third objective is to examine accounting faculty's perception of the impact of research productivity upon receiving each of the thirteen rewards and whether their perceived impact differs between doctoral granting institutions and non-doctoral granting institutions.

The fourth objective is to examine how individual faculty's self assessment of his or her research productivity differs from his or her employer's expectations and to determine whether these differences vary by

tenure status, faculty rank, or gender.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample Selection

The data for this study was collected via a mailed questionnaire [Appendix 1]. To increase the similarity of research expectations and academic standards, we eliminated accounting faculty from non-AACSB accredited colleges of business from the sample. We also omitted non-tenure-tracked faculty from the sample, since non-tenure-tracked faculty generally do not have a research requirement. The faculty included in the survey were drawn systematically from *Hasselback's Directory*. 929 questionnaires were sent to faculty at 64 doctoral granting Colleges of Businesses and to 541 faculty at 51 non-doctoral granting Colleges of Businesses. 211 usable questionnaires from doctoral granting institutions were returned and 156 from non-doctoral granting institutions were returned, yielding response rates of 22.7% and 28.8% respectively. In total, 1470 questionnaires were mailed and 367 usable questionnaires were returned, yielding a 25% overall response rate.

Design Considerations

What is considered acceptable quality research differs widely between doctoral granting and non-doctoral granting departments. To get a measure of research quality we asked the respondents the number of articles they published or had accepted for publication in the top five accounting journals during their career and in the last 24 months, which we listed as *Journal of Accounting Research*, *Accounting Review*, *Journal of Accounting and Economics*, *Contemporary Accounting Research*, and *Review of Accounting Studies*. As a measure of quantity, we asked them the total number of articles they published or had accepted for publication in all other journals combined.

The questionnaire then asked each faculty member the importance, on a scale of one to five, that he or she places on each of the thirteen research rewards. Next the faculty assesses the likelihood that each of these rewards would result from research productivity. Finally, the questionnaire collected other information, such as the percentage of work time allocated to research, academic rank, and tenure status. Respondent Profile is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondent Profile

	With Ph.D. Programs	Without Ph.D. Programs
Total Sample	211	156
Gender Distribution		
Female	59 (27.6%)	47 (29.7%)
Male	155 (72.4%)	111 (70.3%)
Rank Distribution		
Assistant	54 (25.4%)	32 (19.8%)
Associate	68 (31.9%)	62 (38.3%)
Professor	91 (42.7%)	68 (42%)
Tenure Distribution		
Untenured	58 (27%)	30 (18.6%)
Tenured	157 (73%)	131 (81.4%)
Average Percentage of work-time spent on research in the last 12-months:	45%	25%

RESULTS

Accounting Faculty Research Output

Accounting Faculty in the doctoral granting programs spend about 45% of their time on research, while faculty in non-doctoral granting programs spend 25% of time on research. The additional time spent on research by

faculty in doctoral-granting programs and the research support that faculty gets in these programs is manifest in the quality of their research output, but not in their quantity.

About 86% of accounting faculty in non-doctoral granting programs have never published in top-tier accounting journals during their entire academic careers. This compares to 36% by faculty in doctoral granting programs [Table 2]. Overall, this averages 0.19 articles per year in the top five journals for faculty in doctoral granting programs and a miniscule 0.013 articles per year for faculty in non-doctoral granting programs. The average publication rate is about one article per year in non-top five journals by faculty in both programs.

Examining the publication activities in the last 24 months, the emphasis in doctoral-granting programs is on publishing in the top journals averaging 0.55 articles in the past 24 months in doctoral granting programs vs. 0.01 in non-doctoral granting programs. This difference is significant at 0.00 level. In contrast, faculty in non-doctoral granting programs publish more frequently in non-top journals (3.12 articles in the past 24 months) than do faculty in doctoral granting programs (2.21 articles in the past 24 months). This difference is significant at 0.006 level.

Table 2: Publications

	With Ph.D. Programs	Without Ph.D. Programs
Articles in the Top Accounting Journals in Career		
No Article	36%	85.6%
Average per year in career	0.19	0.013
Articles in Other Than Top Accounting Journals in Career		
No Article	9%	0%
Average per year in career	0.97	1.07
Articles in the Top Accounting Journals in the last 24 months		
No Article	67%	99%
Average	0.55	0.01
Articles in the Other Than Top Accounting Journals in the last 24 months		
No Article	30%	19%
Average	2.21	3.12

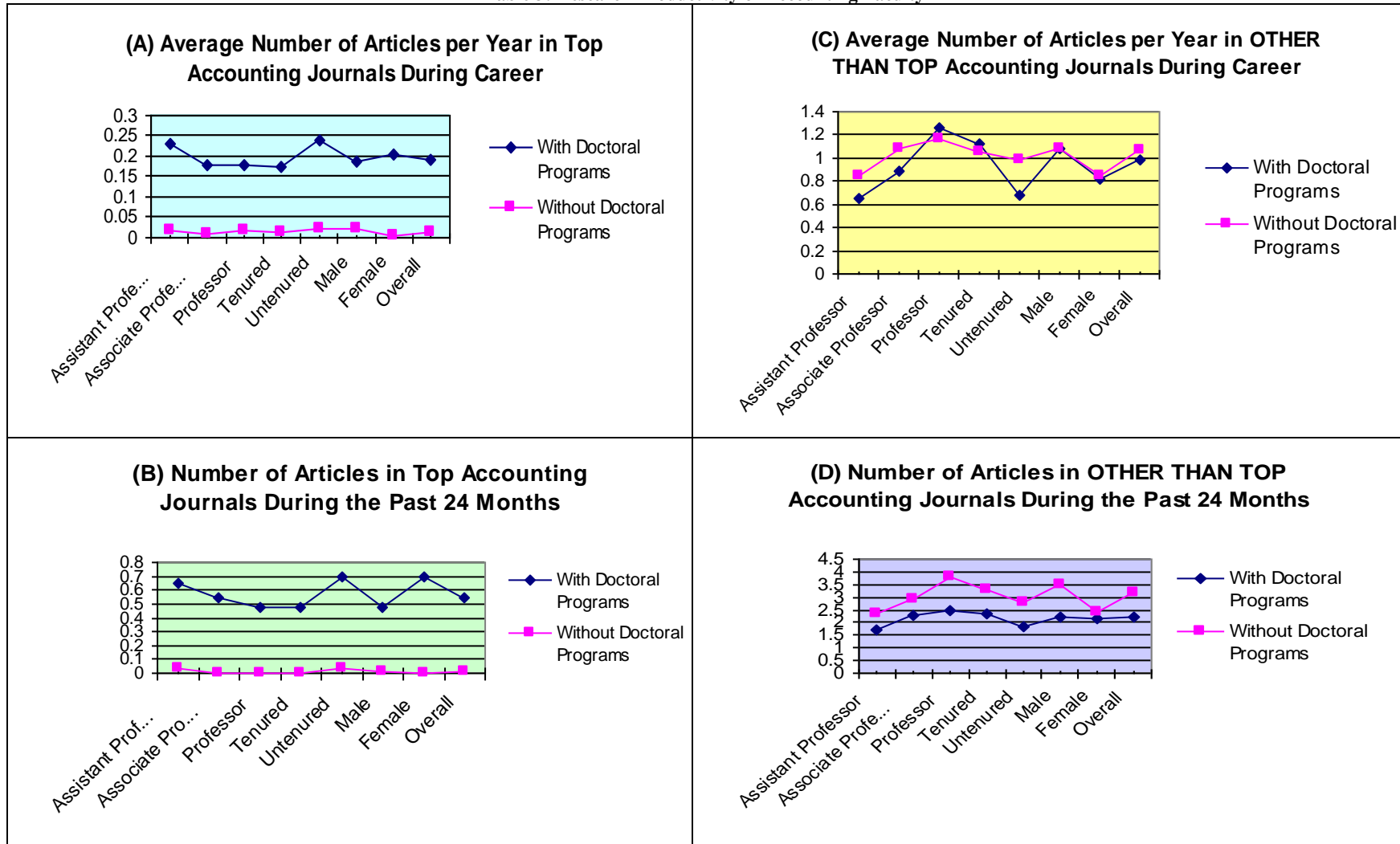
Table 3 graphs the research output of accounting faculty in doctoral granting programs versus accounting faculty in non-doctoral granting programs by faculty rank, tenure status, and gender. Graph 3A shows that average number of articles per year during a faculty’s entire career that are published in the top five journals. Graph 3B shows the number of articles published, on average, in the top five journals during the past 24 months. Graphs 3C and 3D show analogous data for articles published in journals other than the top five.

These graphs illustrate, dramatically, the differences in research output and presumably research requirements at doctoral granting and non-doctoral granting programs. Graphs 3A and 3B show that faculty at non-doctoral granting programs, on average, regardless of rank, tenure status or gender have few publications in the top five journals, while faculty at doctoral granting programs have a significantly greater number of articles published in the top five journals. All differences are statistically significant at significance level of 0.000. Graph 3C shows that, overall, the number of articles published per year in non-top five journals, over a faculty member’s career, are about the same for doctoral granting and non-doctoral granting programs, .97 and 1.07, respectively. The only significant difference (level of significance 0.05) is in the number of non-top journal articles published by untenured faculty in doctoral granting (0.67) vs. non-doctoral granting (1.01) schools. Graph 3D shows that the number of articles published in non-top five journals during the past 24 months by faculty at non-doctoral granting programs exceeds the number published by faculty at doctoral granting programs, 3.12 articles and 2.21 articles, respectively. This difference is significant at 0.006 level. These results show that faculty at doctoral granting programs have a higher quality, but lower quantity, of research output than their counterparts at non-doctoral granting programs.

As stated previously, faculty at doctoral granting programs report that they spend 45% of their work time on research, while faculty at non-doctoral granting programs report spending 25% of their work time on research. The

extra time spent on research at doctoral granting schools is reflected in higher quality of publications, but not in greater quantity of research publications, as measured over the past 24 months and as average number of articles per year during one's career.

Table 3: Research Productivity of Accounting Faculty



Differences in Importance of Rewards

Table 4 shows the importance that faculty place on each of these 13 reward factors or outcomes and their belief of how research output will impact each of these 13 outcomes. The three most important outcomes, in order of importance, for accounting faculty at doctoral granting programs are receiving tenure, being promoted, and getting pay raises. The three important outcomes for accounting faculty at non-doctoral granting programs, in order, are receiving tenure, staying current in the field, and getting better pay increases. Faculty at non-doctoral granting programs rank being promoted as their number four preferred outcome. There was no significant difference in the importance of tenure, pay raises, and staying current between the faculty at doctoral granting and non-doctoral granting programs. Surprisingly, faculty at doctoral granting programs place significantly more importance on being promoted. Faculty at doctoral granting programs also place significantly greater importance on getting a reduced teaching load, satisfying needs for creativity/curiosity, having satisfying collaborations with others, finding a better job at another university.

Although faculty at both types of programs agree that research output has the greatest impact on tenure and promotion, faculty at doctoral granting programs perceive research output to have a significantly greater impact on tenure and promotion. In fact, faculty at doctoral granting programs perceive that research output has a significantly greater impact on nine of the thirteen outcomes studied. There is no difference in the perceived impact of research output on the other four outcomes,

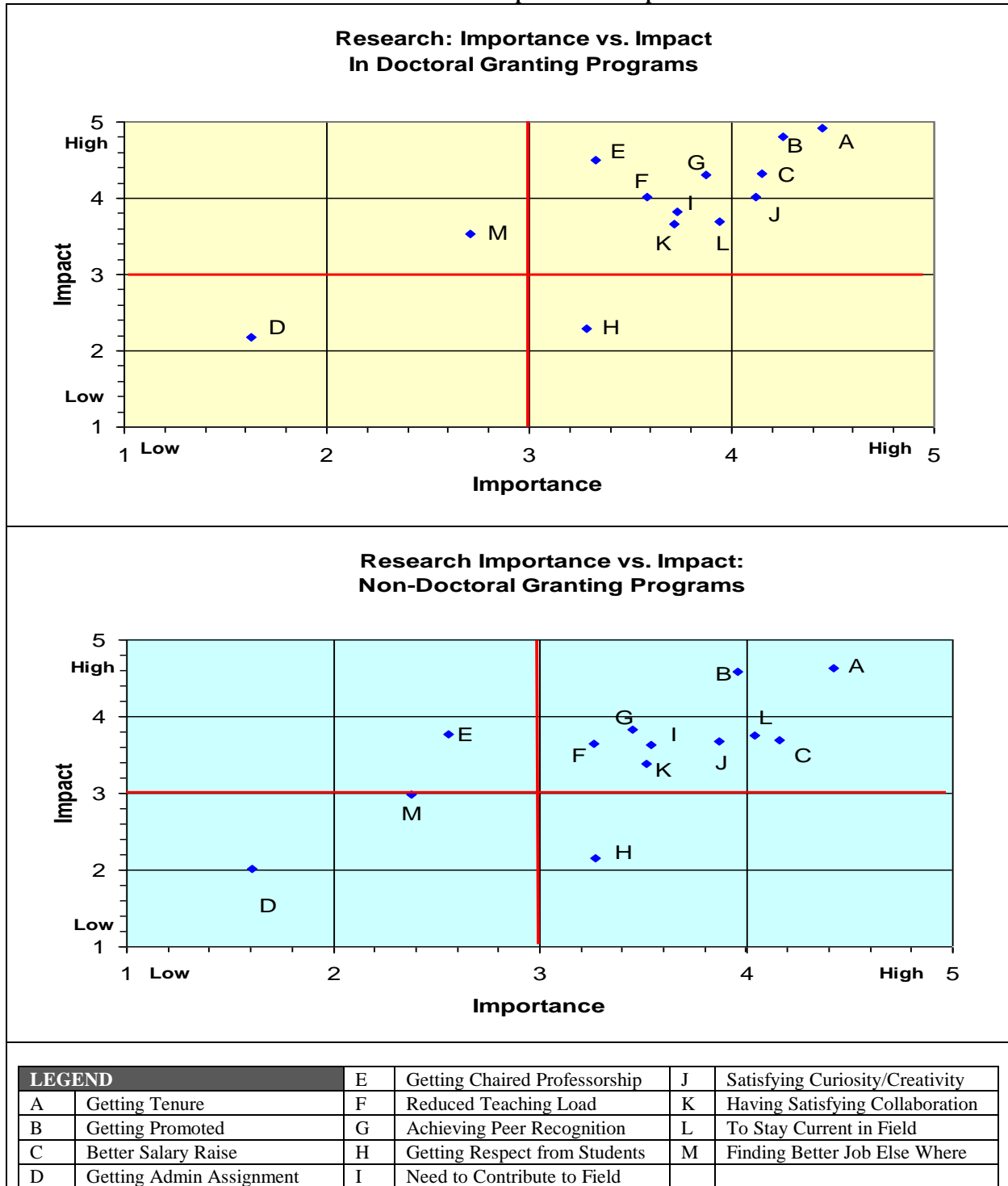
Table 4: Research Importance vs. Impact

Outcomes		On a 1=Low to 5=High Scale					
		Importance of Outcomes			Impact of Research on Achieving the Outcomes		
		With Ph.D. Programs	Without Ph.D. Programs	Sig of Diff.	With Ph.D. Programs	Without Ph.D. Programs	Sig of Diff.
A	Receiving or having tenure	4.45	4.42	ns	4.92	4.63	0
B	Being full professor or receiving promotion	4.25	3.96	.03	4.81	4.59	0
C	Getting better salary raises	4.15	4.16	ns	4.32	3.70	0
D	Getting an administrative assignment	1.63	1.61	ns	2.18	2.01	ns
E	Getting a “Chaired Professorship”	3.33	2.56	0	4.5	3.77	0
F	Getting reduced teaching load	3.58	3.26	.02	4.01	3.65	0
G	Achieving peer recognition	3.87	3.45	0	4.3	3.83	0
H	Getting respect from students	3.28	3.27	ns	2.29	2.15	ns
I	Satisfying my need to contribute to the field	3.73	3.54	ns	3.82	3.63	ns
J	Satisfying my need for creativity / curiosity	4.12	3.87	.02	4.01	3.67	0
K	Having satisfying collaborations with others	3.72	3.52	.05	3.66	3.39	.02
L	Satisfying my need to stay current in the field	3.94	4.04	ns	3.7	3.75	ns
M	Finding a better job at another University	2.71	2.38	.02	3.54	2.98	0

ns = Difference is Not Significant at 0.05 level

Table 5 graphs the importance of the outcomes versus the impact of these outcomes for both types of programs. Data points that appear in the upper right quadrant and the lower left quadrant display a type of goal congruence. That is, outcomes that are both desired by the faculty and strongly impacted through research output appear in the upper right quadrant, while outcome of low importance to faculty which are not highly impacted by research output appear in the lower left quadrant. Conversely, data points that appear in the upper left and lower right quadrants show a disconnect between the importance of an outcome and its obtainment through research output. For both types of programs, only two of the 13 data points fall into these disconnect quadrants. So overall, there is a strong relationship between the importance of these outcomes and the impact that research output will have on obtaining these outcomes.

Table 5: Research Importance vs. Impact

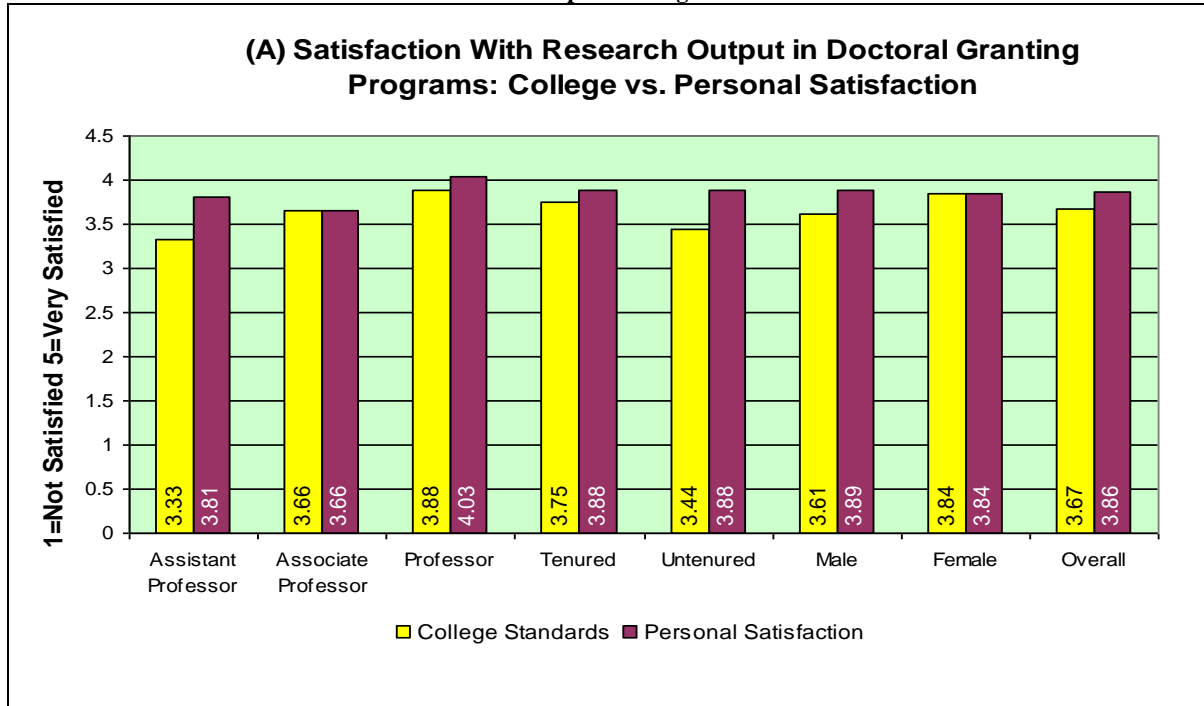


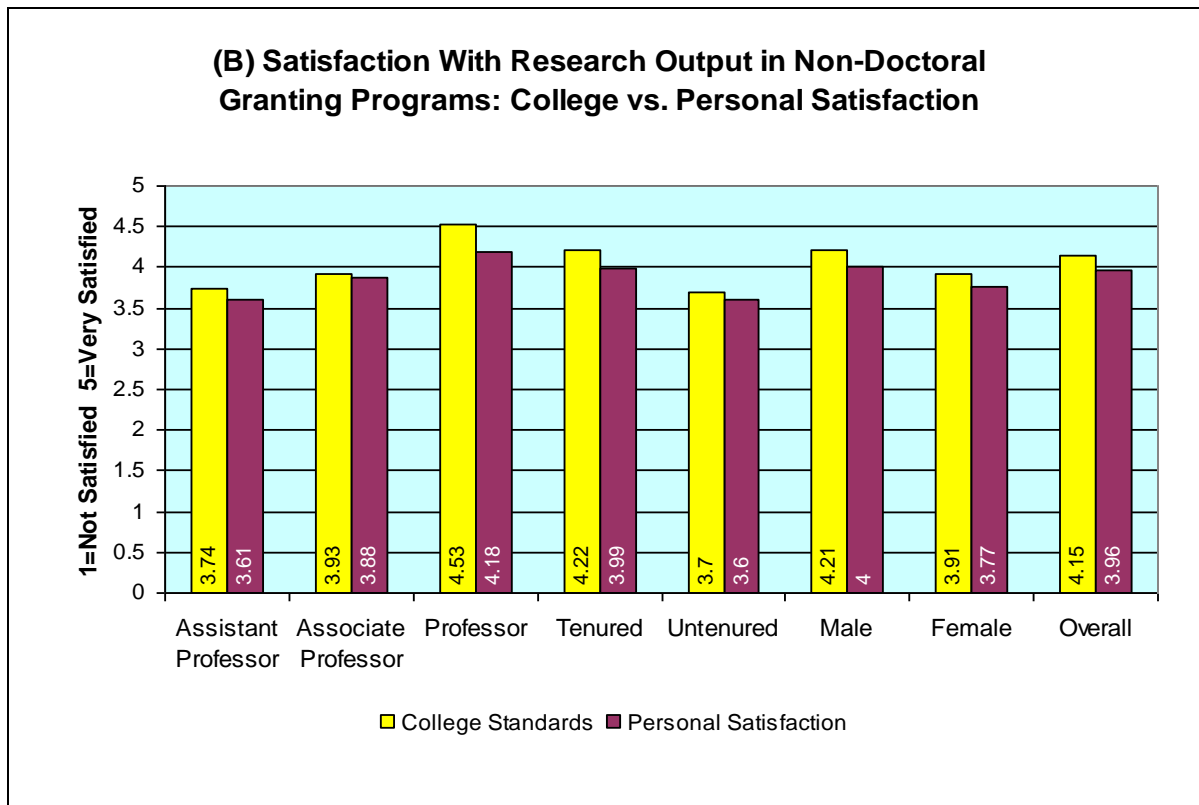
Personal Satisfaction with Research Productivity vs. College’s Standard

Table 6 addresses the issue of whether the faculty member is satisfied with his or her research output and

whether the research output meets his or her institution’s standard. Graph 6A presents a comparison of these two issues for faculty members at doctoral granting institutions by gender, tenure status, and ranks. Graph 6B makes the same comparisons for faculty at non-doctoral granting programs.

Table 6: Satisfaction With Research Output: College Standards vs. Personal Satisfaction





These graphs illustrate several interesting situations. The first of these is that faculty at doctoral granting programs are less successful at meeting their programs' research output requirement than are their counterparts in non-doctoral granting programs. The graphs show this result across tenure status, gender, and academic rank. We presume that this is because the standard for research output at doctoral granting is considerably higher than the standard at non-doctoral granting programs and consequently, it is more difficult to meet. A second result is that personal satisfaction with their research of faculty at doctoral granting institutions output is higher, across the board, than their programs' satisfaction with their research output (3.86 vs. 3.67). This difference is significant at the 0.003 level. Put another way, these faculty are meeting their own standards better than their programs' standards for research output. Again the result may reflect the fact that doctoral granting programs have higher expectations for research output and accordingly, any given individual is less likely to meet it.

The exact opposite occurs at non-doctoral granting programs. The faculty's personal satisfaction with their research output at non-doctoral granting programs is lower than their program's satisfaction of their research output (3.96 vs. 4.15). The difference is significant at the 0.019 level. Again, this result holds across gender, tenure status, and faculty rank. This result does not occur because non-doctoral program faculty are less satisfied with their research output than their counterparts in doctoral granting programs. In fact, there is no significant difference in the personal satisfaction with their research outputs between the two groups of faculty (3.86 for non-doctoral faculty vs. 3.96 for doctoral faculty).

Another way of looking at this situation is that the difference between the faculty's personal satisfaction with research output and their program's satisfaction with research output is due to the lower research expectations of non-doctoral granting programs, relative to the expectation at doctoral granting programs. The faculty at non-doctoral granting programs are as satisfied with the research output as their doctoral-granting program faculty counterparts. However, they are more likely to meet their program's research standards (4.15 vs. 3.67), than are the faculty at doctoral granting programs. This difference is significant at the 0.000 level. Typically, non-doctoral granting programs have lower expectations (or standards) for faculty to publish in the top five journals and are more accepting of non-top five journals articles. Note from Table 2, that faculty in non-doctoral granting programs have

as many publications per year in non-top five journals as do faculty in doctoral granting programs. In fact, they have more publications in these journals during the past 24 months than do their counterparts in doctoral granting programs. Consequently, we conclude that faculty at non-doctoral granting programs, who published extensively in non-top five journals, are as personally satisfied with their research output as their doctoral granting counterparts, who publish in the top five journals. They are also more likely to meet their programs' research standards.

CONCLUSION

Effective Use of Rewards

There are two aspects to the motivational strength of any reward. They are the value of the reward to the individual and the probability that the reward will occur if the individual is successful in achieving the goal to which the reward is attached. Of the thirteen motivations examined in this study, faculty ranked tenure as their most valued reward. They also believe that tenure is the highest impacted outcome from research output. The value of the outcome of tenure and faculty's perception that research output will contribute highly to the attainment of tenure, combine to make "having or receiving tenure" the highest motivational factor. By making the link between research productivity and the rewards of tenure and promotion so clear in the minds of faculty, universities are using this reward very effectively to motivate research productivity.

The graphs on Table 5 show that, generally, outcomes that are valued by faculty are highly impacted by research output. The extrinsic rewards of promotion, pay raises, and reduced teaching load are highly valued by faculty at both doctoral granting and non-doctoral granting programs. All of these outcomes are also highly impacted by research output. At doctoral granting programs, faculty also highly value getting a chaired professorship. This outcome is also highly impacted by research output at doctoral granting programs. As with the reward of tenure, universities have been successful at linking the activity of research output with the rewards that faculty value. Based on this, we conclude that universities are making very effective use of this reward system to motivate faculty research productivity.

Research Output

It is generally understood that faculty at doctoral granting programs have higher research requirements than faculty at non-doctoral granting programs. This survey reveals that faculty at doctoral granting programs have a significantly higher quantity of publications in the top five accounting journals as compared to faculty at non-doctoral granting programs. There is no significant difference in the number of articles published per year in non-top accounting journals by the two groups of faculty. However, faculty at non-doctoral granting programs published a significantly greater number of articles in non-top five journals during the past 24 months. The research output data presented here can be used to benchmark faculty research productivity in the two programs.

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APPENDIX 1: FACULTY MOTIVATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This brief questionnaire is designed to understand faculty motivation to conduct research. We greatly appreciate your taking time to provide meaningful input. Your responses will be kept confidential. Your name will not be revealed in any of our reports or articles.

- Please evaluate the importance of the following to YOU using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “Very Important” and 1 being “Not Important At All.”

Importance of the following to me:		Not Important Very At All Important				
		1	2	3	4	5
a.	Receiving or having tenure	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Being full professor or receiving promotion	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Getting better salary raises	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Getting an administrative assignment	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Getting a “Chaired Professorship”	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Getting reduced teaching load	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Achieving peer recognition	1	2	3	4	5
h.	Getting respect from students	1	2	3	4	5
i.	Satisfying my need to contribute to the field	1	2	3	4	5
j.	Satisfying my need for creativity / curiosity	1	2	3	4	5
k.	Having satisfying collaborations with others	1	2	3	4	5
l.	Satisfying my need to stay current in the field	1	2	3	4	5
m.	Finding a better job at another University	1	2	3	4	5

- Based on your experience and expectations of your College’s environment, please evaluate the impact of faculty research productivity on achieving the following using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “Strongly Agree” and 1 being “Strongly Disagree.”

At my College / School, faculty research productivity has a high impact on:		Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly				
		1	2	3	4	5
a.	Receiving tenure	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Receiving promotion	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Getting better salary raises	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Getting an administrative assignment	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Getting a “Chaired Professorship”	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Getting reduced teaching load	1	2	3	4	5

- Based on your perception, please evaluate the impact of your research productivity on achieving the following using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “Strongly Agree” and 1 being “Strongly Disagree.”

My research productivity has a high impact on:		Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly				
		1	2	3	4	5
g.	Achieving peer recognition	1	2	3	4	5
h.	Getting respect from students	1	2	3	4	5
i.	Satisfying my need to contribute to the field	1	2	3	4	5
j.	Satisfying my need for creativity / curiosity	1	2	3	4	5
k.	Having satisfying collaborations with others	1	2	3	4	5
l.	Satisfying my need to stay current in the field	1	2	3	4	5
m.	Finding a better job at another University	1	2	3	4	5

4. **Demographic Profile:**

Does your School/College offer?		Does it currently have AACSB's Accounting Accreditation?		
Doctoral Program in Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
MBA with concentration in Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
Masters of Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know

Gender: Male Female

Year in which you started your first tenure-track faculty position: _____

Current Academic Rank: Assistant Prof. Associate Prof. Full Prof.

As applicable, please provide the year in which you were promoted from:

Assistant to Associate Professor Rank: _____

Associate to Full Professor Rank: _____

Tenure Status: Tenured Untenured but on Tenure Track Non-Tenure Track

Please indicate the percentage of work-time

you spent on research in the last 12 months: _____ %

5. **Number of Journal Articles Published or Accepted for Publication**

In	During your entire academic career	During the past 24 months
Journal of Accounting Research		
Accounting Review		
Journal of Accounting and Economics		
Contemporary Accounting Research		
Review of Accounting Studies		
All Other Journals Combined		

6. **To what extent do you believe that your efforts will achieve / have achieved research output that is:**

		Not to a Great Extent			To a Great Extent	
		1	2	3	4	5
a.	Acceptable to your college's standard	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Acceptable to your own satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for your cooperation.

NOTES