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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, the official journal of the Academy of Educational Leadership. The AEL is an affiliate of the Allied Academies, Inc., a non profit association of scholars whose purpose is to encourage and support the advancement and exchange of knowledge, understanding and teaching throughout the world. The mission of the *AELJ* is to publish theoretical, empirical, practical or pedagogic manuscripts in education. Its objective is to expand the boundaries of the literature by supporting the exchange of ideas and insights which further the understanding of education.

The articles contained in this volume have been double blind refereed. The acceptance rate for manuscripts in this issue, 25%, conforms to our editorial policies.

We intend to foster a supportive, mentoring effort on the part of the referees which will result in encouraging and supporting writers. We welcome different viewpoints because in differences we find learning; in differences we develop understanding; in differences we gain knowledge and in differences we develop the discipline into a more comprehensive, less esoteric, and dynamic metier.

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STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING IN DUAL ENCOUNTER SITUATIONS

Lori L. Koste, Grand Valley State University

ABSTRACT

Student evaluations of teaching play a significant role in faculty performance evaluations. As such, they have received considerable attention in academic research. While this research has provided valuable insight, the data was limited to observations taken within a single-semester situation; i.e., student-instructor pairings based on a single-semester encounter.

This single-semester focus highlights an obvious omission – what about students that take a second, different, course from an instructor they have previously encountered? Given limited faculty resources in many universities, it is possible that students will have an instructor for more than one class, over multiple semesters. Leading to an obvious question, does the previous student/faculty interaction affect the student evaluations of teaching in the second course?

This study examines this issue, utilizing a survey instrument that addresses the dual encounter scenario between a student and a faculty member. A sample of 135 surveys was collected within a College of Business and the data analyzed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student evaluations of teaching (SETs) play a significant role in faculty performance evaluations, contract renewals, and promotion and tenure decisions. As such, they have received considerable attention in academic research, with efforts to create better evaluation instruments (e.g., Centra 2006; Marsh & Hocevar 1984), understand the pros and cons of their use (e.g., Mason, et al. 2002; Pinto & Mansfield 2010), and identify factors which affect the scores received by instructors (e.g., Parayitam, et al. 2007; Thornton, et al. 2010). Previous factors of interest in student evaluation research include instructor and student gender (Whitworth, et al. 2002), day and time of course offering (Centra 1993), course subject or discipline (Whitworth, et al. 2002), and perceived ease of course (Thornton, et al. 2010), to name a few.

More recently, research has begun to expand beyond the factors typically assessed during student evaluations of teaching (SETs). Of particular interest is a study by Pinto and Mansfield (2010), which seeks to understand the thought processes used by students in approaching and completing SETs. The study explores two distinct approaches taken by students: System One or System Two. A System One approach is typically “hurried, superficial, effortless, and charged with emotions” (Pinto and Mansfield, 2010, p. 55). In contrast, a System Two approach can result in “slower, more deliberate, thoughtful evaluations” (Pinto and Mansfield, 2010, p. 55).

The authors utilized a number of focus groups comprised of undergraduate business students. The students were asked several questions, some of which correspond to typical items

on a SET survey. Overall, they found 59% of the responses were aligned with a System One approach. For several items, such as ‘rate the overall quality of the instructor or course’, the percentages were even higher. Thus, it appears students rely heavily on emotional elements, such as like or dislike of an instructor or dissatisfaction associated with a class or teaching approach. This singular, emotional approach, taken by students in evaluating teaching effectiveness has been posited in other studies of SETs as well (e.g. D Pollonia & Abrami 1997; Trebinski 1985). Glynn, Saver and Wood (2006) discuss this occurrence and note that “people often resort to decision strategies that simplify the task and reduce the amount of cognitive effort required to make the evaluation” (p.52).

Yet another research stream has explored the relationships between instructor trust and teaching related factors. For example, Jaasma & Koper (1999) explore the relationship between instructor trust and out-of-class communication. Trust was found to be positively correlated with both the frequency of informal contact between students and instructor as well as with student satisfaction with the out-of-class communication. Nadler and Nadler (1995) demonstrated a positive correlation between instructor trustworthiness and positive evaluations of the instructor by students.

Given the System One approach that is predominant among student evaluators, one would anticipate that a characteristic such as trust would play a role in dual encounter situations between students and instructor. One might further expect that the development of trust in a first course would positively impact student evaluations in the second course. As in many buyer-supplier relationships, trust may increase over time (Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987; Morgan and Hunt 1994). If this occurs, factoring in the System I approach, we would expect SETs in the second course to be higher than in the first course.

This leads to the following sets of hypotheses:

H_{1o}: Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness do not differ significantly across multiple courses taught by the same instructor.

H_{1a}: Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness do differ significantly across multiple courses taught by the same instructor, with evaluations in the second course being higher than those in the first course.

H_{2o}: Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are not affected by the existence of instructor trust.

H_{2a}: Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are affected by the existence of instructor trust.

The extended interaction between a student and an instructor over two semesters would also result in greater familiarity with the instructor and their teaching style. This familiarity would already exist at the start of the second course, thereby eliminating a source of student uncertainty. This familiarity would likely have a positive impact on the evaluations for the second course. Consequently,

- H_{3o}: Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are not affected by familiarity with the instructor's style or teaching approach.*
- H_{3a}: Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are affected by familiarity with the instructor's style or teaching approach.*

Alternatively, a student may not have enjoyed the first interaction with a given instructor, and may not be anxious to undertake a second encounter. In some situations though, the student may have no choice of the instructor for a particular course. For example, if the course is only offered by one instructor, and the student needs the course to graduate, they would be unable to avoid taking that course. This issue prompts another question: Did the student take a second course with the same instructor by choice or necessity? If it was by choice, given the emotional link to performance evaluations, does this have an impact on the evaluation of the second course? This concern leads to the following hypothesis:

- H_{4o}: Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are not affected by student choice of instructor.*
- H_{4a}: Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are affected by student choice of instructor.*

While the above hypotheses were the primary focus of this study, we also chose to include some previously examined factors of interest in SETs. Factors such as gender, class time, room environment, and the grade received/expected by the student were also included in our survey instrument. The inclusion of these items allowed us to test the relevance of the new factors of trust and familiarity with teaching style against these previously examined variables.

METHODOLOGY

A survey instrument was created to explore the topics associated with this study. There were items to collect basic information regarding course levels for the first and second courses, as well as the business discipline in which the dual courses occurred. Data was also collected on student gender and their respective year within the business program. A single item was used to capture instructor effectiveness within each course. A discussion of the remaining items is provided below. The complete survey is provided in Appendix A.

Previous research exploring trust within student-instructor interactions has always focused on data provided within a single semester encounter. However, given the dual-encounter scenario being investigated here, trust over a longer time period needed to be

recognized. Research regarding interpersonal trust provided a suitable measurement approach. Zaheer, et al. (1998) utilize a modified, previously developed construct, for trust. This construct demonstrated good internal consistency, and was easily adapted for the current study. Five items were used to assess trust. An average of the five items that comprise the construct provides a single score for analysis purposes.

An item was also included to determine whether students took the instructor for both the first and second courses by choice. This item originally had two possible responses: yes and no. However, after review of the instrument by several undergraduate business students, a third response option was added for clarity. This option, “there was only one section”, in essence is equivalent to a no choice response. Consequently, the no and one section only responses were grouped together and treated as the same response.

A survey item was also included to address familiarity with instructor style. Specifically, did familiarity with the teaching style of the instructor play a role in choosing the instructor for the second course? Finally, the survey included items to assess several other factors shown to be relevant in previous research of SETs. Based on prior research (e.g., Pinto and Mansfield 2010), enjoyment of the material in both classes was assessed. Similarly, student understanding of course concepts was assessed for both courses (e.g. Parayitam, et al. 2007; Whitworth, et al. 2002). Items were also included to capture students’ perceptions of class meeting time and the physical room environment. These factors were previously shown to impact SETs in studies (e.g., Centra 1993). Finally, items addressing the grade, or expected grade, in both courses were included. A number of studies, such as Koshland (1991), Thornton, et al. (2010), have shown expected grade to be positively correlated with ratings in SETs.

The surveys were administered to undergraduate students in the College of Business for a public university in the Midwest. Instructors that were likely to be in dual encounter situations were identified and permission was requested to survey the students in their course(s). Students were able to choose any instructor/course pairings that met the dual encounter situation. Surveys were distributed at the end of the semester, allowing a full comparison of the first and second courses. If a student had previously completed the instrument, they were asked to respond regarding another instructor/course pairing, if possible.

ANALYSIS

A total of 135 survey responses were collected over a one-year period. The data was coded into a spreadsheet, and Microsoft Excel was utilized for the analysis. As a starting point, we explored the basic characteristics captured within the survey responses. As Table 1 shows, the majority of dual encounter situations evaluated were in the Accounting and Management disciplines. It should be noted that the Management Department in our College of Business includes several disciplines, including strategy, operations/supply chain management, and management information systems, among others. Further, the first and second courses were

overwhelmingly required, as opposed to an elective course offering. This is not surprising, as many of the classes targeted for survey distribution were the second course in a known sequence.

The courses evaluated by survey respondents were predominantly taught by female instructors, while the survey respondents were more frequently male. Finally, given the course levels identified for the first and second courses, it is not surprising that responding students were mainly juniors and seniors.

To test the first hypothesis, a paired t-test was conducted to compare the teaching effectiveness in the first course with that of course two. As table 2 shows, there was no significant difference ($P > .05$) between the effectiveness ratings for the two courses. The same analysis was also conducted on subsets of the full data set. Table 2a provides the teaching effectiveness comparison for students that chose to take a course with the instructor for a second time. Table 2b provides a similar analysis for students that did not choose the instructor for the second course. Given these results, the null of the first hypothesis is accepted. SETs are not significantly different across multiple courses taught by the same instructor. While this result was unexpected, it may tie back to the System One approach often used by students. Once the emotional assessment of an instructor is formed, it may not change over time. Thus, the first impression may be “locked in”.

Course Discipline	Number of Respondents (n = 135)		
Accounting	67		
Economics	2		
Finance	3		
Management	54		
Marketing	8		
blank	1		
Course 1			
Required course	131	100-level course	2
Elective course	4	200-level course	70
		300-level course	46
		400-level course	17
Course 2			
Required course	123	100-level course	0
Elective course	12	200-level course	5
		300-level course	103
		400-level course	27
Gender			
Male instructor	27	Male student	90
Female instructor	107	Female student	45
blank	1		
Student Year			
Sophomore	1		
Junior	37		
Senior	97		

	CL1EFFCT	CL2EFFCT
Mean	2.3704	2.3481
Variance	1.2499	1.4973
Observations	135	135
Pearson Correlation	0.7179	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	134	
t Stat	0.2918	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.3855	
t Critical one-tail	1.6563	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.7709	
t Critical two-tail	1.9778	

Further analysis was then conducted to examine the remaining hypotheses. Multiple regression analysis was performed, to see which variables affected the SETs in both the first course and the second course. These regressions were performed separately, to determine if different variables played a role in the two courses. For each course, teaching effectiveness was the dependent variable. The independent variables included instructor gender, required vs. elective course, instructor choice, enjoyment of course material, understanding of course material, class meeting time, physical class environment, and received/expected grade.

	CL1EFFCT	CL2EFFCT
Mean	1.9452	1.7945
Variance	0.6636	0.6377
Observations	73	73
Pearson Correlation	0.4521	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	72	
t Stat	1.5246	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.0659	
t Critical one-tail	1.6663	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.1317	
t Critical two-tail	1.9935	

The results for the first class are provided in Table 3. As the results show, the regression model has an adjusted R-square of .603, indicating that 60% of the variance in teaching effectiveness is explained by the included variables. Further, the regression shows a number of variables were statistically significant. As the results indicate, both instructor gender and the choice of instructor for the first course were significant ($P < .05$). Further, student understanding of course concepts and the physical classroom environment were also significant ($P < .05$).

	CL1EFFCT	CL2EFFCT
Mean	2.8710	3.0000
Variance	1.4913	1.7377
Observations	62	62
Pearson Correlation	0.7434	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	61	
t Stat	-1.1115	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.1354	
t Critical one-tail	1.6702	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.2707	
t Critical two-tail	1.9996	

<i>Regression Statistics</i>						
Multiple R	0.791719748					
R Square	0.626820159					
Adjusted R Square	0.602936649					
Standard Error	0.703105584					
Observations	134					
<i>ANOVA</i>						
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>	
Regression	8	103.794869	12.974358	26.244893	1.99E-23	
Residual	125	61.7946827	0.4943574			
Total	133	165.589552				
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
Intercept	-0.372486	0.292035	-1.275485	0.204503	-0.950460	0.205487
INSTRGEND	0.426930	0.160350	2.662482	0.008777	0.109577	0.744282
CL1CHCGRPD	0.415571	0.133736	3.107404	0.002337	0.150891	0.680250
CL1REQ	-0.128774	0.379287	-0.339516	0.734791	-0.879430	0.621882
CL1MATL	0.110215	0.095430	1.154934	0.250320	-0.078652	0.299083
CL1UNDST	0.734707	0.104962	6.999721	1.388E-10	0.526974	0.942441
CL1TIME	0.040868	0.082112	0.497718	0.619557	-0.121641	0.203377
CL1ROOM	0.265855	0.120026	2.214973	0.028574	0.028308	0.503401
CL1GRD	-0.090120	0.113397	-0.794735	0.428274	-0.314546	0.134306

Three of these variables seem to align with the System One approach to evaluating teaching effectiveness. Instructor gender, choice of instructor and room environment could reflect the student's comfort with the course setting and reflect more superficial concerns in evaluating teaching effectiveness. In contrast, the fourth significant variable, student understanding of course material, likely reflects a less emotional approach, and a thoughtful recognition of achieved learning.

The regression model for the second course included all of the independent variables utilized in the first regression model, along with two additional variables. Familiarity with instructor teaching style and trust were included in the second model, as these were posited to impact the ratings for teaching effectiveness in the second course. As discussed previously, five items comprise the trust construct. This measure demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .79. These items were consequently averaged to provide one variable for regression purposes.

Table 4: Regression Results for Second Course

Table 4: Regression Results for Second Course						
<i>Regression Statistics</i>						
Multiple R	0.82703787					
R Square	0.68399164					
Adjusted R Square	0.65787525					
Standard Error	0.71958117					
Observations	132					
<i>ANOVA</i>						
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>	
Regression	10	135.61171	13.5611707	26.1901265	7.9797E-26	
Residual	121	62.653445	0.51779707			
Total	131	198.26515				
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>
Intercept	-0.559820	0.299648	-1.868256	0.064145	-1.153053	0.033412
CL2REQ	-0.013726	0.234635	-0.058501	0.953445	-0.478249	0.450795
INSTRGEND	0.0495084	0.171898	0.2880097	0.773832	-0.290810	0.389827
CL2CHCGRPD	0.1683367	0.168241	1.0005642	0.319034	-0.164742	0.501415
CL2MATL	-0.002044	0.108632	-0.018823	0.985012	-0.217111	0.213021
CL2UNDST	0.3981000	0.115766	3.4388280	0.000802	0.168910	0.627289
CL2TIME	-0.010426	0.123357	-0.084525	0.932778	-0.254646	0.233792
CL2ROOM	0.1659124	0.110331	1.5037623	0.1352482	-0.052517	0.384343
CL2GRD	-0.043306	0.062681	-0.690895	0.4909544	-0.167400	0.080788
CL2FAML	0.1734144	0.077993	2.2234414	0.0280424	0.019005	0.327823
TRUST	0.6668973	0.132862	5.019453	1.803E-06	0.403860	0.929933

The results for the second course model are provided in Table 4. The adjusted R-square for this model was slightly higher than that of the first model, with a value of .658. Of greater interest, however, are those variables which were shown to be significant in the second model. Both the trust variable and the familiarity with teaching style were significant at $P < .05$, leading to the acceptance of the alternate for the second and third hypotheses. Additionally, student understanding of the material in the second course was significant ($P < .05$). Finally, the

variables which were not significant were also of interest. While instructor gender, choice of instructor, and room environment were relevant for the first course, they were not for the second. Consequently, we accept the null of the fourth hypothesis. Table 5 provides a summary of these hypotheses and conclusions.

Hypotheses:	Result:
H ₁₀ : Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness do not differ significantly across multiple courses taught by the same instructor. H _{1a} : Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness do differ significantly across multiple courses taught by the same instructor, with evaluations in the second course being higher than those in the first course.	H ₁₀ : accepted
H ₂₀ : Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are not affected by the existence of instructor trust. H _{2a} : Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are affected by the existence of instructor trust.	H _{2a} : accepted
H ₃₀ : Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are not affected by familiarity with the instructor's style or teaching approach. H _{3a} : Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are affected by familiarity with the instructor's style or teaching approach.	H _{3a} : accepted
H ₄₀ : Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are not affected by student choice of instructor. H _{4a} : Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a second course taught by the same instructor are affected by student choice of instructor.	H ₄₀ : accepted

These findings indicate that, over time, the focus of student evaluations of teaching shift from more superficial variables such as instructor gender and room environment to more in-depth aspects of faculty-student interactions. Faculty can drive the creation of trust and familiarity with teaching style, while they have no control over variables such as gender or room environment. Trust and familiarity are still emotional in nature, potentially implicating that once the System One approach is adopted by a student for evaluation purposes, it will carry forward through other faculty-student encounters. This may also explain, to some degree, why student evaluations of the second course were not higher than those for the first course. Perhaps that first

impression/evaluation of teaching effectiveness also carries through additional faculty-student encounters.

The one variable that was significant for both regression models was student understanding of course material. This clearly falls outside the System One approach to evaluating teaching effectiveness. An examination of the survey response breakdown may provide some insight into this finding. As mentioned previously, accounting courses were frequently chosen by survey respondents. Among the management survey responses, most were collected during operations management/supply chain management courses. It seems reasonable that these courses would have been referenced by survey respondents. Since accounting and operations/supply chain courses tend to be heavily quantitative, it may reflect the concerns of students to gain a full understanding of the course material.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to gain insight into teaching effectiveness over multiple faculty-student encounters. For the data collected, we found that student evaluations of teaching were not higher in a second encounter situation. Rather, the evaluation of teaching in the first course seems to carry over to the second course. For faculty, this places a heavy emphasis on first impressions, particularly for those instructors that will encounter a given student again.

The study also found that many of the variables that affected teaching effectiveness in the first course did not have a similar impact in the second course. Instead, the emphasis largely shifted to trust and familiarity with teaching style in the second course. Consequently, consistent behavior and teaching approaches across dual-encounter situations seems crucial.

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APPENDIX A



This research is being conducted by faculty within the Seidman College of Business at Grand Valley State University. The study seeks to investigate teaching effectiveness over time, and may provide insight for improving teaching effectiveness.

The following survey is to be completed by a student that took two or more courses taught by the same instructor over two or more semesters. The survey does not apply if you repeated a course with the same instructor or if you took two courses with the same instructor in the same semester. Your participation is completely voluntary and your responses will be completely anonymous. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes. If you have any questions regarding this research effort, you may contact hrrc@gvsu.edu. Thank you for your participation.

Please think about two different courses you completed which were taught by the same instructor or faculty member. For convenience, they are designated as "First Course" and "Second Course" in the items below. Please circle the letter that corresponds with your answer to each question or statement.

1. I took two courses, with the same instructor, in the following discipline within the Seidman College of Business:
a. Accounting b. Economics c. Finance d. Management e. Marketing

2. The instructor for these two courses was:
a. Male b. Female
3. At what course level was the first course you took?
a. 100 level b. 200 level c. 300 level d. 400 level e. 500 or 600 level
4. The first course was:
a. Required b. Elective
5. Was the instructor for this first course your first choice of instructors?
a. Yes b. No c. There was only one section offered
6. I enjoyed the material covered in the first course.
a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neither agree nor disagree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree
7. I gained an understanding of the concepts and principles in the first course.
a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neither agree nor disagree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree
8. I believe the instructor was an effective teacher in the first course.
a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neither agree nor disagree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree
9. I found the meeting date and time for the first course acceptable.
a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neither agree nor disagree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree
10. I found the physical classroom environment for the first course acceptable.
a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neither agree nor disagree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree
11. I received the following grade in the first course:
a. A b. B c. C d. D e. F f. N/A
12. At what course level was the second course you took?
a. 100 level b. 200 level c. 300 level d. 400 level e. 500 or 600 level
13. The second course was:
a. Required b. Elective
14. Was the instructor for this second course your first choice of instructors?
a. Yes b. No c. There was only one section offered
15. I chose the same instructor for a second course since I was familiar with their teaching style.
a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neither agree nor disagree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree
16. The instructor for these courses has always been evenhanded and fair with me.
a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neither agree nor disagree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree
17. I know how the instructor is going to act. S/he can always be counted on to act as I expect.
a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neither agree nor disagree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree
18. The instructor is trustworthy.
a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neither agree nor disagree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

19. I have faith in the instructor to look out for my interests.

- a. *Strongly agree* b. *Agree* c. *Neither agree nor disagree* d. *Disagree* e. *Strongly disagree*

20. I would feel a sense of betrayal if the instructor's teaching performance in the second course was below my expectations.

- a. *Strongly agree* b. *Agree* c. *Neither agree nor disagree* d. *Disagree* e. *Strongly disagree*

21. I enjoyed the material covered in the second course.

- a. *Strongly agree* b. *Agree* c. *Neither agree nor disagree* d. *Disagree* e. *Strongly disagree*

22. I gained an understanding of the concepts and principles in the second course.

- a. *Strongly agree* b. *Agree* c. *Neither agree nor disagree* d. *Disagree* e. *Strongly disagree*

23. I believe the instructor was an effective teacher in the second course.

- a. *Strongly agree* b. *Agree* c. *Neither agree nor disagree* d. *Disagree* e. *Strongly disagree*

24. I found the meeting date and time for the second course acceptable.

- a. *Strongly agree* b. *Agree* c. *Neither agree nor disagree* d. *Disagree* e. *Strongly disagree*

25. I found the physical classroom environment for the second course acceptable.

- a. *Strongly agree* b. *Agree* c. *Neither agree nor disagree* d. *Disagree* e. *Strongly disagree*

26. I received, or expect to receive, the following grade in the second course:

- a. *A* b. *B* c. *C* d. *D* e. *F* f. *N/A*

27. I am currently a:

- a. *Freshman* b. *Sophomore* c. *Junior* d. *Senior* e. *Graduate student*

28. I am:

- a. *Male* b. *Female*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!

BUSINESS STUDENT VERSUS EMPLOYER COURSE DESIGN PREFERENCES: CAN BOTH EDUCATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS BE SATISFIED?

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ABSTRACT

The process of a faculty member designing a course is one that potentially serves many stakeholders in the educational process – students, employers, among others. Each of these groups has a vested interest in the success of the educational process. While having definite, but varying ideas about their “ideal” course, students (as a group) do not always make rational, logical decisions. Students typically have only a limited opportunity (usually through course evaluations) to give their opinions about the courses they take. Meanwhile, potential employers also have certain expectations regarding the quality of the students’ skills, talents, and prior education. Some of these expectations can be reflected in the academic courses that students have taken and the rigor and/or variety of student talents developed during their academic training. One thing these two groups share is a lack of direct input into course design. It is not surprising that faculty generally believe that course design is a task for the faculty - as it should be. However, many academics teach the danger of decisions made in isolation from external factors. The purpose of this paper is to present the preferences of these two groups with respect to controllable course design features resulting from survey data from business students and potential employers. The analysis is intended to provide input for faculty with respect to course design. The utilization of this information has the potential to improve student satisfaction and align courses more closely with employer needs, while maintaining the academic integrity of the course and the academic freedom of the faculty.

Key Words: course design, pedagogy, active learning, course evaluation, value drivers

INTRODUCTION

The concept of the stakeholder has been deeply ingrained in the concepts of total quality management (Fiegenbaum, 1983). In this context students and employers can easily be considered relevant and important stakeholders in the educational process. According to Thomas, Thomas, & Wilson (2012) the most important stakeholders in management education are students and organizations/employers. Input from these stakeholders regarding preferences can be used to explain how they derive value from course design. A traditional business customer helps to establish parameters for acceptable quality and delivery terms, while negotiating a price for the service. This value proposition fosters the search by businesses for value drivers that maximize customer satisfaction (Tracy & Knight, 2005).

Researchers have long debated the view of the student as “customer” or “product”. Some academicians have resisted the concept of students as customers feeling that students do not necessarily act as traditional stakeholders who desire to maximize value in a purely academic sense. For example, students may rejoice when the instructor cancels class (getting less academic value for tuition paid). A traditional customer might behave differently in light of less value for the same expense. This gives some validity to viewing the student as “product”. Snyder (2007) argued that students should never be led to believe that they are customers because faculty members always know what is best for students. Some faculty justifiably feel that students are incapable of deciding what should be taught and how it should be taught as they are not learned in the subject matter, particularly with respect to the future business endeavors they may undertake. Some faculty feel compelled to teach what they personally feel is academically needed, while others feel compelled to teach what they feel business wants based on their own experiences in business and consulting. Some faculty members even claim that these two approaches can be utilized simultaneously. If this perspective always holds true then the student as a “product” of academic exposure is all that matters.

However, how can academicians then explain the substantial marketing of university programs and their design to students as potential “customers”? Swanson & Davis (2000) evaluated academic service failures and how students believe that professors can create satisfaction. Similarly, Hatfield & Taylor (1998) discussed how AACSB’s assurance of learning accreditation standards might best be implemented from a customer-orientation perspective. Clearly there is some room for viewing the student as an important stakeholder in the educational process. It is equally clear that viewing students solely as customers is troublesome.

One reason some have concerns with the students-as-customer model is that students are not the only financially invested stakeholders (Brennan & Bennington 1999; Scott 1999). Clayson & Haley (2005) held that students were neither customers nor products, but should be seen as partners in the educational experience. Researchers have repeatedly suggested that the educational process has other important stakeholders that also must be considered in the process. It would seem a reasonable conclusion that students’ opinions should be considered, in addition

to those of the businesses that hire students, and the academicians that prepare them for the marketplace.

Regardless of the position taken, the student stakeholder has become an increasingly important participant in the academic experience, given the competitive nature of recruiting a finite supply of students into a system with ample capacity. In an era of increasingly tight budgets, making the university experience “student friendly” has increased in importance as universities vie for the attention of incoming students. Once at the university an ever-increasing array of retention programs are provided while students are then asked to participate in the process of evaluating teaching and course delivery through student evaluations (d’Apollonia & Abrami, 1997; Greenwald & Gillmore, 1997a). Within that context student evaluations of teaching have become commonly utilized to assign performance ratings to instructors (McKeachie, 1997; Theall & Franklin, 1990). Although not the only factor used in faculty performance rating student evaluations of teaching are the most heavily weighted method of evaluation, averaging over 60% of the evaluation weight (Honeycutt, Thelan, & Ford 2010). It is not a surprise that faculty worry about how their students’ perceptions of teaching quality will impact tenure, promotion, and salary policy.

Some faculty members resist the efforts of students and administrators to use student evaluations to improve course performance by ignoring evaluations and/or challenging the suggestion of any scientific relationship between student evaluation and teaching effectiveness for a particular course. There have been countless studies focused on the impact of various factors on student evaluations of teaching. For a solid review of the research literature, please see Davidovitch & Soen (2009). Davidovitch claims that “the topic of staff evaluation is the most widely studied subject in the field of evaluation methods” (p.42). The only consistent finding in this stream of literature is that there is no consistent finding with respect to the link of various factors to teaching evaluations.

The issue of whether student and/or business preferences should dictate course design or whether faculty should make these decisions with or without student and/or business input has areas of compromise. Many convoluting variables and issues make any such predictive model unduly complicated unless the problem can be narrowed by eliminating variables over which the instructor has no control. An intriguing question surfaces when one considers that student course ratings are intertwined with course design variables, instructor personality styles, and course difficulty, in addition to the overall course selection process (Bressler & Bressler, 2007; Babad & Tayeb, 2003). Obviously, some of these course variables are under the direct control of the instructor, while others are relatively uncontrollable elements of the process. Controllable variables might include type of test, number of tests, and grade expectations, while some uncontrollable variables might be assigned course time, classroom location, quantitative or qualitative course nature, and even instructor personality. It may be possible to alter some controllable variables based on student input without sacrificing faculty decisions on course content and rigor, enabling the student stakeholder to find more satisfaction without

compromising faculty academic freedom and course content. Uncontrollable variables are those factors that are difficult to change without extensive work, such as an instructor's propensity for humor, voice quality, and other personal characteristics, such as their physical stature, gender, or age. Identification of prioritized controllable course design features will provide the instructor the knowledge and opportunity to improve stakeholder value (for both students and businesses), while balancing the instructor's academic freedom to present the material for student learning with different stakeholder objectives. The choices ultimately lie with the faculty member, but the choices open a nice variety of options for orienting course design. A perspective that nicely identifies those possibilities is the Orientation Evaluation Matrix (OEM) found in Muncy (2008).

This paper provides additional clarity to the problem by focusing solely on controllable course design variables and providing insight into areas of agreement and disagreement between student and business stakeholders with respect to perceptions of feature importance and implementation preference (Mitchell, Skinner, & White, 2010).

COURSE DESIGN LITERATURE

Many related issues of course desirability from a student perspective have been studied using a variety of methodologies. Each of these studies touches on the research to be conducted in this paper without actually addressing the specific area of interest – the selection of instructor controllable value drivers for optimal course design from the student and business stakeholder perspectives.

Several methodological approaches to investigate the general area have been utilized in the literature. First, many efforts have centered on attempting to develop correlations between students' evaluations, course parameters, and teacher styles, called student rating of teachers. According to one author, some of the principal factors correlating to student rating of teachers included faculty humor, instructor's personality and style, lack of criticism of students, and course interest generated by instructor knowledge and expertise (Babad, Darley, & Kaplowitz, 1999).

Some efforts have explored the measurement of course parameter factors such as course workload on student satisfaction (Greenwald & Gillmore, 1997b) and on how students' demographic characteristics impact student course selection choices and related satisfaction (Martin, 1989). Other efforts have been concerned with the course selection process as it relates to a variety of factors, including learning value, lecturer quality, course difficulty, and others. A variety of methodologies have been utilized in this endeavor including surveys, post-course descriptive analyses, and experimental designs. One such study (Babad, 2001) focused on the course selection process of choosing a five course schedule from potential alternatives. The findings indicated that the sequence of course selection from first to last choice indicated that the first choice was based on prospective intellectual level, quality of teaching, and students' potential learning, while the last course in the sequence normally selected was an "easy" course

used to balance the workload of the student. The results also indicated that first choice alternatives received higher student ratings than last choice selections.

In a subsequent study regarding course selection (Babad & Tayeb, 2003), three primary components of student selection stimuli were used in a 2x2x3 full factorial design to indicate the selection preferences in learning value, lecturer ability, and ease of course. The use of an experimental design compelled respondents into forced selections that identified trade-offs in the selection of hypothetical courses for study. In general, students preferred courses with characteristics of high learning value, entertaining lecturing ability, and relatively easy course work load. Courses avoided were basically opposite in composition.

Meanwhile, other researchers have investigated the concept of attempting to embed employability in the design of a university degree scheme where employers serve on the design team. Horwitz (2010) identified the importance of “soft” versus “hard” skills in transforming today’s business schools to produce attractive graduates for industry. This opinion article mirrors the research done by others earlier. Cox & King (2006) identified two important skill sets that businesses desired in potential employees – termed transferable skills and subject skills. Transferable skills were defined as skills that are applicable throughout a working life, while subject skills were those more relevant to each career choice (for example, accounting, finance, marketing, etc.). Harvey, Moon, & Geall (1997) had previously identified several transferable skills, including communication, teamwork, flexibility, critical and analytical thinking, and process management, that were of long-term value to the student and viewed as important to business. More recently Robles (2012) identified that communication, teamwork, and flexibility were important, as well as “soft” skills related to integrity, courtesy, responsibility, professionalism, and work ethic.

Similar degree non-specific skills and their importance have been emphasized by others. Based on a survey by the Business Council of BC, Stueck (1997) similarly reported that communications skills, including the ability to read, write, and understand what is said, ranked first from among fifteen qualities of importance in hiring, keeping, and promoting workers, while mental capacity ranked eighth. Weisz (2000) found that employers desired increased emphasis on such characteristics as communication, interpersonal skills, teamwork, initiative, and ability to solve problems. In utilizing these “soft” skills for acquiring a job, Orr, Sherony, and Steinhaus (2011) found that it was critically important to teach students to use professionalism to gain a job-seeking advantage, particularly during the job interview. These were the most frequently cited generic skills desired in prospective cooperative students. However, Zhang (2012) highlights difficulties in “teaching” soft skills as opportunities often lie outside of the classroom.

In an effort to determine differences between student and business attitudes toward selected academic and personal skills, Graham & Krueger (1996) surveyed finance students and compared their ranked selections against the ranked survey results from Collier & Wilson (1994) from Fortune 1,000 CFO’s. The analysis indicated that CFO’s ranked ethics, interpersonal skills,

oral and written communications, and decision making as the most important, while students ranked technical skills such as math and computer literacy higher. These results were later confirmed by Andrews & Higson (2008). These results are consistent with the notion that transferable skills are high on employers' lists, while students rank technical competence higher. However, the previous research did not attempt to correlate these assessments of personal attributes back to the preparation and delivery of college courses through the appropriate selection of course design parameters.

One final thread of research has been explored – the importance of skill sets, both subject and transferable, in achieving success obtaining a first job. Bills (1988) found that educational credentials are far more important for gaining the entry level job in an organization rather than promotion. Walters (1995) further found that grade point averages were merely helpful in increasing students' ability to get a job interview, but other factors are also important in the long term employability of the student.

Previous research indicates that businesses are keenly interested in high quality employees, but little research has been reported on how businesses actually identify a priority of skill sets important in defining college graduates as potential employees. Also limited research has been reported by academicians with respect to defining and coordinating the linkage between skill sets and future employee potential. The research fails to identify practical guidelines of how courses could be more fully developed in terms of controllable course parameters that would generate graduates with transferable skill sets appropriate to any major and thereby strengthen the academic-business relationship.

Finally, studies exploring classroom-based student skill set development beneficial to potential employers have been limited. However, recent studies seem to point to some developing interest in that direction. Neumann & Banghart (2001) asserted that the relationship between industry and academia was a "gap to be bridged" – thus pointing out need for developing mutual agreement on factors of importance and methods to be used in the education process to close that gap. Hamilton & Klebba (2011) identify a course design process for experiential learning by focusing on the course objectives, the experiential format, and the instructional process. However, this approach remains at an overview level as opposed to the actual selection of course design factors for implementing experiential learning.

A compromise between the instructor's desire for academic freedom in selecting topics and methodology, the student's desire for user-friendly course design, and businesses concern for academically qualified graduates seems possible, practical, and necessary. Course design features could and should be developed and implemented to increase student satisfaction in learning, as well as to increase student skills needed for business employability and success. Such will be the research focus of this paper. The intent of this research is to prioritize controllable course design factors that could be optimally chosen to increase student and employer value, while allowing a high degree of faculty academic freedom in choosing among the factors leading to success for all stakeholders.

RESEARCH DIRECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The research attempts to determine controllable course design features that students and employers rank similarly (or differently) in terms of perceived importance. In addition to an importance ranking of these features the research also seeks to identify with design intensity levels (different methods of implementation) for each feature, and whether those intensity levels are similar or different. The effort is directed toward finding areas of mutual agreement between business professionals and business students in terms of course design parameters and suggest to academicians that the consideration and/or implementation of these choices will improve the students' perception of value in their educational experience, in addition to improving the perceived business value of the educational skills gained by students as potential employees.

The research methodology was multi-staged. First, a review of the relevant literature was utilized to develop a list of controllable course design parameters. The original list included more than twenty course design factors deemed relevant to students and employers. Next, a pilot study of student rankings of course features was conducted to allow for additional student input on potential course parameters. The list was narrowed from twenty course design factors to the fourteen used in the study based on overall importance. The six factors eliminated were consistently viewed as unimportant. Then a ranking instrument of course design parameters was administered to students and employers alike in light of research relating to parameters that were found to be significant within the overall course selection process (similar to Babad & Tayeb, 2003). The rankings of course design features were then further refined by requiring students and employers to select the intensity level (implementation preference) for each course design feature.

A survey instrument was developed and pilot tested in the authors' courses. The student survey is provided in Appendix 1. The results indicated students had little trouble correctly understanding how to complete the survey. The main study was conducted in the southeast United States with business student subjects from a moderate-sized public university and business subjects from local, regional, and national firms known to recruit business students from that and other regional competing universities. Demographic variables were included in the survey specific to each stakeholder group. The participants were asked to rank-order the faculty-controllable course design features listed and then to identify the preferred intensity level for implementing each feature. The students were asked to rank their preference for design features based on what they felt should be considered important when a course was designed for their major course of study. Employers were asked to rank-order the course design features based on what they felt should be considered important when a course was designed to produce attractive business graduates (future employees).

The survey was administered to 718 undergraduate business students during core business classes at a moderate-sized university in the southeastern United States. Thirty-two improperly completed surveys were rejected for a response rate of 95.5 percent. The sample of

686 provided a representative proportion of business students in each grade classification. Five hundred surveys were mailed to managers of businesses in the service area associated with universities that potentially hire business graduates. The sample population for the employer survey was determined from the placement office employer lists from competing universities in the service area. A total of 118 business professionals returned the survey representing over 100 unique employers. There was some duplication of firms with multiple regional locations. None were rejected for a response rate of 23.6 percent.

DATA SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

A summary table of the course design features and intensity levels, along with average rankings, priority rankings, and average intensity levels of both groups, are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Students and Employer Survey Data Summary

Item No./Description	Intensity Level	Student Avg	Student Std Dev	Employer Avg	Employer Std Dev	Student Priority	Employer Priority	Student Intensity %	Employer Intensity %
1 – Topics/test	2-4 vs. 5-7 per test	5.66	9.28	4	11	0.95	0.81		
2 – Delivery style	Lecture/variety	4.72	5.25	1	3	0.14	0.03		
3 – Attendance	Required/optional	8.03	5.83	9	4	0.33	0.86		
4 – Test format	Objective/subjective	5.19	8.69	3	9	0.86	0.30		
5 – Research paper	Required/not required	9.64	8.06	12	8	0.09	0.72		
6 – Out of class work	<0.5 hr. vs. 2 hrs./class	7.29	5.86	6	5	0.87	0.37		
7 – Grade expectations	A or B	5.79	9.03	5	10	0.85	0.53		
8 – Use of technology	Frequent/seldom	8.64	6.96	11	7	0.76	0.91		
9 – Material/test relationship	Repetition/analytical	5.12	5.18	2	2	0.91	0.31		
10 – Class participation	Voluntary/compulsory	7.99	4.21	8	1	0.87	0.37		
11 – Final exam coverage	Comp./non-comp.	7.35	9.59	7	12	0.23	0.78		
12 Grade weight - final exam	40% or 10%	8.36	10.34	10	14	0.21	0.41		
13 – Group projects	Required/not required	10.39	6.88	13	6	0.33	0.81		
14 – Grade weight group projects	40% or 10%	10.75	9.82	14	13	0.24	0.42		

The average ranking for each feature was calculated from the survey responses. Associated with each average rank is the designation of a ranking group. While statistical analysis of ranked data can be troublesome, the research was designed to foster a thorough statistical analysis. For a large number of ranks ($k > 11$) with a large sample ($n > 30$), asymptotic distributions of rank statistics are approximately normal by the central limit theorem (Kim & Balakrishnan, 2005). For our study the student sample had $k = 14$ and $n = 686$, and the employer sample had $k = 14$ and $n = 118$, so standard statistical analysis is appropriate. A standard ANOVA for the student sample was completed revealing an $R^2 = 22.4\%$, indicating that the collective explanatory power of variation between features is weak, implying at least some statistical independence among the features. Similar results were found in the employer sample with an $R^2 = 22.5\%$. Simultaneous confidence intervals were calculated for each sample with a

95% family confidence level. The confidence levels for individual comparisons resulted in 99.92% confidence intervals for pair-wise comparisons of features.

Student and employer intensity level preferences were tested to determine if intensity level choices represented a clear majority (statistically different than 50%). As a basis for quantifying that intensity, one sample proportion tests were made with 95% confidence intervals for each proportion.

Business Student Data

The ranking groups in Table 2 reflect four groups whose average rankings were statistically different from other groups based on the aforementioned confidence intervals.

Rank	Feature Number/ Description	Ranking Group	Preferred Intensity Level	p-value
1	2 – Delivery style	1a	Prefer variety of activities	<0.001
2	9 – Class material/test relationship	1b	Prefer tests to repeat material	<0.001
3	4 – Test format	1b	Prefer objective tests	<0.001
4	1 – Topics per test	1c	Prefer 2-4 chapters/test	<0.001
5	7 – Grade expectations	1c	Prefer A	<0.001
6	6 – Out of class work	2a	Prefer <0.5 hrs./class	<0.001
7	11 – Final exam coverage	2a	Prefer non-comprehensive	<0.001
8	10 – Class discussion/participation	2b	Prefer voluntary	<0.001
9	3 – Attendance Policy	2b	Prefer optional	<0.001
10	12 – Grade weight on final exam	2b	Prefer 10%	<0.001
11	8 – Use of technology	2c	Prefer frequent	<0.001
12	5 – Research paper	3	Prefer not required	<0.001
13	13 – Group projects	4	Prefer not required	<0.001
14	14 – Grade weight on group projects	4	Prefer 10%	<0.001

Group 1 consisted of five features labeled 1a, 1b, and 1c. Although confidence intervals did overlap within the group (1a with 1b, and 1b with 1c), as a group the mean rankings are statistically significantly lower than those from any other group. Within group 1, confidence intervals indicated that subgroup 1a average rankings were statistically lower than those of subgroup 1c. Similar analysis was done within group 2 for subgroups 2a, 2b, and 2c. Confidence intervals elicited four major statistical groups from the fourteen design features. It is a reasonable inference that those features in group 1 are statistically more important to the students than those in any other group. From the students' perspective the groups are ranked 1-4 in order of most importance. As a way of categorizing the student rankings, we will refer to the design feature groups as follows: group 1 as “very important features”; group 2 as “somewhat important features”; and groups 3 and 4 as “not very important features”. For the preferred intensity level a p-value from the proportion test is given.

Employer Data

The ranking groups in Table 3 reflect three groups whose average rankings were statistically different from other groups based on the aforementioned confidence intervals.

Rank	Feature Number/ Description	Ranking Group	Preferred Intensity Level	p-value
1	10 – Class discussion/participation	1a	Prefer compulsory participation	0.007
2	9 – Class material/test relationship	1b	Prefer analytical thinking	<0.001
3	2 – Delivery style	1b	Prefer a variety of activities	<0.001
4	3 – Attendance policy	1c	Prefer required attendance	<0.001
5	6 – Out of class work	1c	Prefer > 2 hrs./class	<0.001
6	13 – Group projects	2	Prefer required	<0.001
7	8 – Use of technology	2	Prefer frequent use	<0.001
8	5 – Research paper	3a	Prefer required	<0.001
9	4 – Test format	3a	Prefer subjective tests	<0.001
10	7 – Grade expectations	3b	No clear preference indicated	<0.645
11	1 – Topics per test	3b	Prefer 2-4 chapters/test	<0.001
12	11 – Final exam coverage	3c	Prefer comprehensive	<0.001
13	14 – Grade weight on group projects	3c	Prefer 10%	<0.117
14	12 – Grade weight on final exam	3d	Prefer 10%	<0.053

Group 1 consisted of five features labeled 1a, 1b, and 1c. Although confidence intervals did overlap within the group (1a with 1b, and 1b with 1c), as a group the mean rankings are statistically significantly lower than those from any other group. Within group 1, confidence intervals indicated that subgroup 1a average rankings were statistically lower than those of subgroup 1c. Similarly, confidence intervals indicated that group 3 could be partitioned into four subgroups 3a, 3b, 3c, and 3d. Again adjacent subgroups did have overlapping confidence intervals, but nonadjacent subgroups were statistically different within the group. Confidence intervals elicited three major statistical groups from the fourteen design features. It is a reasonable inference that those features in group 1 are statistically more important to employers than those in any other group. From an employer perspective the groups are ranked 1-3 in order of most importance. As a way of categorizing the employer rankings, we will refer to the design feature groups as follows: group 1 as “very important features”; group 2 as “somewhat important features”; and group 3 as “not very important features”. For the preferred intensity level a p-value from the proportion test is given.

Comparison of Student and Employer Data

Student intensity levels were tested using one sample proportion tests. The p-values for all 14 intensity levels were less than 0.001, which indicates that students have a definitive and

repeatable feature intensity preference. For example, students have a clear preference for optional attendance (as opposed to compulsory attendance) with an estimate of only 33% feeling that attendance should be required. For employers, p-values were less than 0.001, with exceptions for grade expectations (p-value = .645), group project percentage (p-value = .117) and final exam percentage (p-value = .053), indicating no clear preference for those design feature intensities.

When tests on the differences in proportions were conducted, the p-values for the differences in proportions of students and employers were less than 0.001, indicating students and employers statistically differ on all of the intensity level. However, given the large sample size from students, the sampling error is naturally quite low and significant differences would be expected to occur even with small absolute differences in percentages between student and employer preference. Thus, the practical issue is whether or not there is relative agreement on intensity level direction. For example, if both the students and employers agree that delivery style (factor 2) should have a “variety of activities,” such as lecture, discussion, guest speakers, experiential exercises, etc. (intensity percentages of 3% for students and 11% for employers preferring a lecture only format), then both parties agree and meeting the expectations of both groups is simple. On the other extreme, the results for class discussion/class participation (factor 10) indicate that students desire voluntary participation (87%) while employers feel that class discussion/ participation should be mandatory (33% wanting voluntary participation). For this course design factor, not only are the preferences for students and employers clear (statistically significantly different than 0.5) and statistically different from each other (p-value < .001), but also practically different since opposite preferences are being indicated (i.e. voluntary vs. mandatory).

The rankings were also examined statistically. In addition to assigning them into ranking groups within each sample, the average rankings were tested for differences between business students and employers. Two types of analysis were performed. First, the difference between the means of each sample for each design factor was tested. The results are found in Table 4.

There were statistical differences between sample means for 12 of the 14 design factors. The exceptions included the class/material relationship (p-value = .862) and delivery style (p-value = .182) where no significant differences were found. Although statistical differences exist, the differences are not always practical. For example, the grade weight on group projects was statistically ranked differently, but both were in the bottom ranking group within the samples (14th for students; 13th for employers).

Second, the difference between means of each sample for the identically ranked items was tested. For example, delivery style (mean = 4.72) was ranked 1st among business students, while class discussion/participation (mean = 4.21) was ranked 1st among employers. The means for these identically ranked features were not statistically different (p-value = .097). That is the case for all 14 pairs of identically ranked design factors (all p-values > .05). The design factor numbers, means, and p-values are given in Table 5. Identical ordinal rankings are statistically

consistent, validating the idea of comparing relative importance by ordinal ranking group in the discussion below.

Table 4: Average Rankings by Design Factor

Factor Number/Description	Student Rank Avg.	Employer Rank Avg.	Abs. Diff.	p-value
1 – Topics per test	5.66	9.31	3.65	0.000
2 - Delivery style	4.72	5.28	0.56	0.182
3 - Attendance policy	8.02	5.8	2.22	0.000
4 - Test format	5.18	8.73	3.55	0.000
5 - Research paper	9.64	8.06	1.58	0.000
6 - Out of class work	7.29	5.88	1.41	0.000
7 - Grade expectations	5.79	9.02	3.23	0.000
8 - Use of technology	8.64	6.93	1.71	0.000
9 - Class material/test relationship	5.11	5.16	0.05	0.862
10 - Class discussion/participation	7.99	4.21	3.78	0.000
11 - Final exam coverage	7.35	9.6	2.25	0.000
12 - Grade weight on final exam	8.36	10.31	1.95	0.000
13 - Group projects	10.39	6.84	3.55	0.000
14 - Grade weight on group projects	10.75	9.78	0.97	0.008

Table 5: Average Rankings by Identical Ranking

Student Rank (Factor Number)	Student Rank Avg.	Employer Rank (Factor Number)	Employer Rank Avg.	Abs. Diff.	p-value
1 (2)	4.72	1 (10)	4.21	0.51	0.0970
2 (9)	5.11	2 (9)	5.16	0.05	0.8620
3 (4)	5.18	3 (2)	5.28	0.10	0.8860
4 (1)	5.66	4 (3)	5.8	0.14	0.6660
5 (7)	5.79	5 (6)	5.88	0.09	0.8600
6 (6)	7.29	6 (13)	6.84	0.45	0.2820
7 (11)	7.35	7 (8)	6.93	0.42	0.3050
8 (10)	7.99	8 (5)	8.06	0.07	0.7780
9 (3)	8.02	9 (4)	8.73	0.71	0.0590
10 (12)	8.36	10 (7)	9.02	0.66	0.0630
11 (8)	8.64	11 (1)	9.31	0.67	0.1020
12 (5)	9.64	12 (11)	9.6	0.04	0.8790
13 (13)	10.39	13 (14)	9.78	0.61	0.1060
14 (14)	10.75	14 (12)	10.31	0.44	0.1620

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In order to develop a thorough understanding of the course design implications, concern is focused first on the characteristics of each group separately. Understanding the importance rankings and intensity level preferences of each group will provide insight into the design of courses so as to meet each group's objectives. For example, should a course be strictly designed to meet student stakeholder preferences? Should courses be designed solely to cater to the business employer clientele and wishes? Should course design features and intensity levels be selected based on an understanding of the various trade-offs, where these selections might seek to benefit both parties simultaneously to the greatest extent possible? What are the implications of ignoring the preferences of either or both stakeholders?

Satisfying Business Students

A course design corresponding to all of the student-preferred intensity levels would likely enhance student course satisfaction with respect to the faculty-controllable design features. Any intensity level choice different from those indicated would likely lower student satisfaction relative to the students' importance ranking of that feature. For example, changing delivery style (highest ranked factor) from a variety of activities (preferred intensity) to lecture only (non-preferred intensity) could lower student satisfaction more than requiring a research paper (ranked 12th and non-preferred intensity) rather than requiring no research paper (preferred intensity).

In general, the most important student concerns involve a delivery style (factor 2) that features active learning where the relationship of what is taught in class is closely correlated to the evaluation format and thus grades (factors 9, 4, 1, 7, 6, and 11). Other design features regarding class discussion, attendance, research and/or group projects, etc. are ranked of less importance. They may also be considered more specific methodologies within the delivery style/testing and grading relationship format (factors 10, 3, 12, 8, 5, 13 and 14). In terms of feature intensity levels, students clearly prefer involvement rather than passiveness in the classroom with a variety of activities being preferred. The data imply that students want to improve their interrelationship within the classroom. This stands in contrast to their decisions on most of the other thirteen intensity levels which would traditionally be considered as decisions to reduce the time needed for the class. For example, students would opt for multiple choice tests that mimic the class material over small segments of class work where little outside work is required, but high grades are achieved, etc. The fact that 67% of students surveyed work an average of 21.86 hours/week may imply that for some students the rankings indicate the desire for learning with effectiveness and efficiency in the classroom, while recognizing that students experience increasing demands on their time from outside employment and/or extracurricular activities. For other students it may simply be indicative of a search for an "easy" class, reinforcing the findings from Babad (2001).

Satisfying Employers

Selecting the employer-preferred intensity level of each course design feature would likely enhance alignment with employer preferences for course design. Selecting any non-preferred intensity level would likely affect overall employer satisfaction based on the rank-ordered importance of the factors.

In general, employers ranked course design features with great emphasis on compulsory participation and attendance with classes having a variety of activities that included analytical thinking and problem solving on tests. Additionally, they preferred more outside of class work and preferred more group effort. In terms of course design employers placed far less emphasis on technical matters such as testing styles and grading scales. This finding is consistent with the existing literature, as it implies that employers are more interested in transferable and subject skills than in the mechanics of course and grade administration.

Simultaneously Satisfying Business Students and Employers

Figure 1 is a flow chart paradigm for selecting course design features and intensity levels that would attempt to enhance the preference selections (and thus satisfaction) of both student and employer stakeholders. This paradigm is not intended to replace academic freedom and pedagogical choice, but rather to serve as additional information on which to base pedagogical decisions. While student learning and the academic freedom of pedagogical choice are strongly important, this additional information about the student and employer stakeholders will help to make an informed decision.

Factors with Intensity Agreement

Basically, when both the students and employers choose the same intensity level (regardless of course design factor ranking), then the course design factor with the preferred intensity level can be implemented with positive results expected in terms of satisfaction and perceived value added by both parties. These included six out of fourteen course design features. However, added refinement comes when the average rank of each feature in this group is also considered. Note that delivery style is clearly important to both parties and both prefer variety in the lectures. This improvement feature when implemented will likely have significantly positive effects on both student and employer satisfaction. Thus, proportionally greater instructor improvement emphasis would be placed on implementing delivery style using a variety of activities. Similarly, proportionally less emphasis and improvement effort would be placed on the relative weight of the final exam (students' rank was 10th and employers' rank was 14th) and on percent of grade based on group projects (students' rank was 14th and employers' rank was 13th). Using the average rank criteria for these six factors with the same intensity level direction,

improvement and implementation effort would consider the following ranked features in priority order: variety of delivery methods (factor 2), fewer topics/test (factor 1), higher grades (factor 5), frequent use of technology (factor 8), less weight on the final exam (factor 12), and less weight on group projects (factor 14).

Factors with Intensity Disagreement

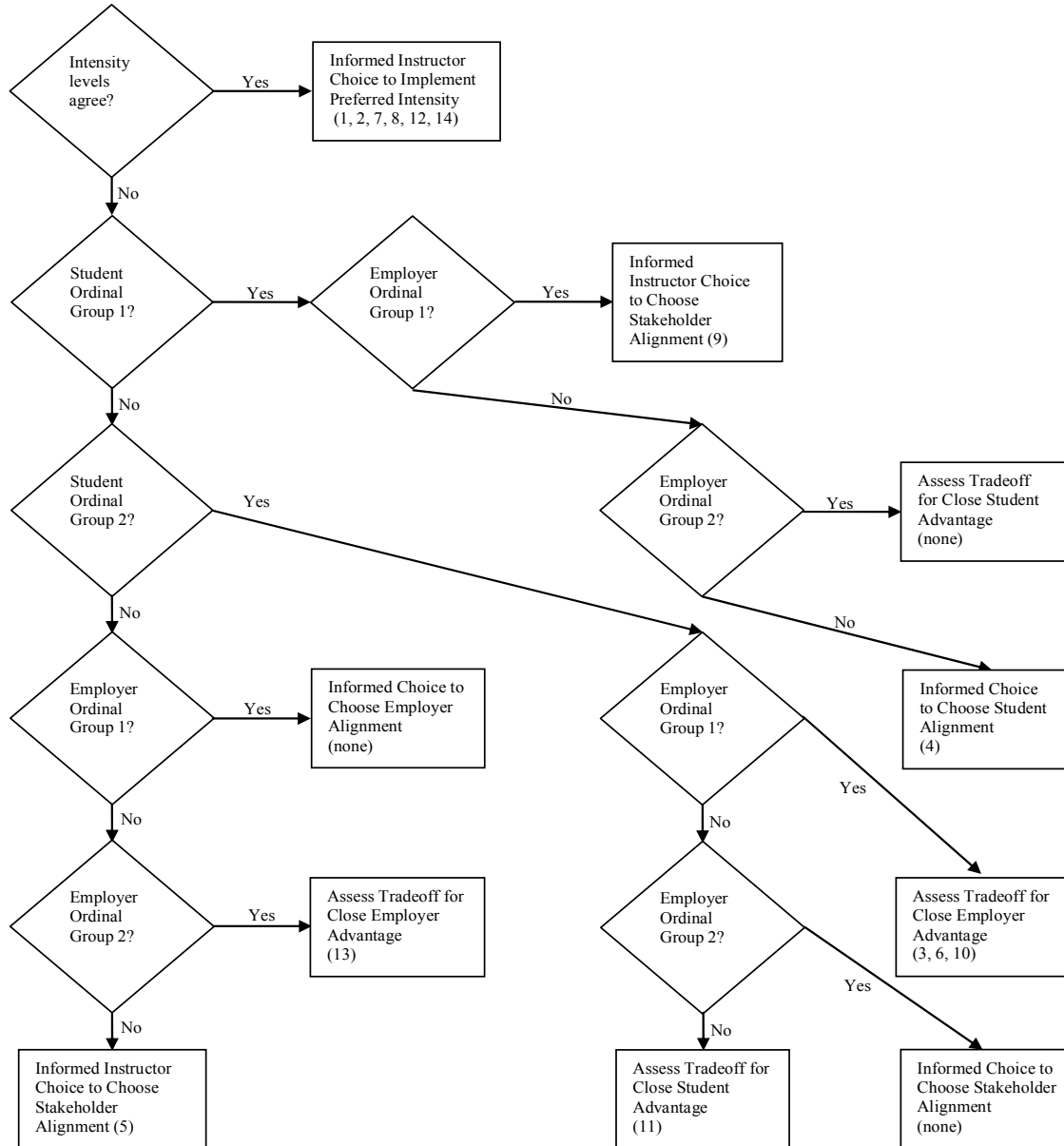
Course design features may be ranked within the same importance ranking groups, but vastly different in preferences. In this case both agree that the design factor is important, but disagree in preferences for implementation. For this study two factors fell into this category.

In both stakeholder groups, agreement exists that the relationship between the class material and the test (factor 9) is important (both in ordinal ranking group 1). The relationship was the second highest ranked factor for both business students and employers. Students prefer material that comes directly from the class material with little need to apply new logic or analytical thinking to respond to an answer (91%). Business professionals meanwhile prefer to require tests to have an element of reasoning, logic, and the additional ability to construct answers to slightly new scenarios (69%).

Research papers (factor 5) are considered relatively unimportant by both stakeholder groups with students ranking this design factor 12th and employers ranking the criterion 8th (both from ordinal ranking group 3). However, there is wide disagreement on the need for a research paper with 91% of students desiring no research paper, while 72% of business respondents recognized the need for independent research and study for eventual success in the business world. None of the design factors with intensity disagreement both came from ordinal ranking group 2.

Some course design features may show moderate differences in both the ordinal ranking group and the intensity preference. These course design features demonstrate that business student preferences and employer preferences are in moderate conflict. The professor designing a course will have to analyze the possible tradeoffs in deciding which stakeholder to satisfy. First, the decision to follow the student desires may likely improve student satisfaction. To the degree that the student evaluations of teaching remain influential in tenure, raises, and promotion, then the research indicates which course design features that may provide the instructor with increased student ratings. For those professors that decide to follow the best advice of employers improving the students' future employability, the potential cost may be in terms of lower teaching evaluations. That professor may have more difficulty with tenure, receive lower raises, and have difficulty with promotion. This analysis is not intended to provide specific recommendations on what should be done. Rather, each professor must evaluate the situation faced at their college and make personal decisions as to the relevant costs and benefits of taking the student stakeholder perspective or the employer stakeholder perspective.

Figure 1: Paradigm for Maximizing Student and Employer Satisfaction



In this study several design factors fall into this category. Four factors favor implementing employer preferences as the ordinal ranking group is slightly higher in terms of employer-determined importance. Following the employer preferences in these cases would mean having required attendance, more out of class work, mandatory class

discussion/participation, and required group projects. Each of these design factors was one ordinal ranking group higher for employers (one lower for students).

An attendance policy (ordinal ranking group 1) ranked 4th in importance for employers, while it ranked in ordinal ranking group 2 for students (ranked 9th). Employers strongly preferred a required attendance policy (86%) and business students strongly preferred an optional one (67%). Out of class work is a moderately important consideration in both stakeholder groups ranking 5th for employers (ordinal ranking group 1) and 6th for students (ordinal ranking group 2). However, the student stakeholder groups leans more to less than ½ hour of work outside of class (87%), while the business professional evidently recognizes the need to invest more in outside work (63%). Class discussion/participation was more important to employers as their importance ranking was again in ordinal group 1 and ranked 1st overall. For students this was less important (ordinal ranking group 2) ranking discussion/participation 8th. Employers heavily favored mandatory discussion/participation with a proportion of 63%, while 87% of students favored voluntary participation. Both stakeholders expressed less importance placed on group projects, but employers placed more importance on this factor than students. It was in ordinal ranking group 2 for employers (ranked 6th overall), and in ranking group 4 for students (ranked 13 overall). 81% of employers favored requiring group projects, while 67% of students preferred no having group projects.

One course design factor was slightly more important to students - final exam coverage. It was ranked 7th by students in ordinal ranking group 2, while it was ranked 12th by employers in ordinal ranking group 3. Students strongly preferred a non-comprehensive final exam (79%), and employers strongly preferred a comprehensive final (78%).

Some course design features may show large differences in both the ordinal ranking group and the intensity preference. These course design features demonstrate that business student preferences and employer preferences are in less conflict making the decision to align the course design with a particular stakeholder group a little easier. Business students ranked test format much higher (ranked 3rd in ordinal ranking group 1) than employers (ranked 9th in ordinal ranking group 3). Thus, having an objective test (preferred by 86% of students) is much more important to students than it is for the employer preference (70%) of having subjective tests like essay exams. In this study there were no design factors that were ranked much higher in importance by employers in this category.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Students

The survey responses were also analyzed by examining demographic variables. Gender and class level were partitioned by the survey design. The employment data was partitioned into two groups; 1) those working 10 or fewer hours per week, and 2) those working more than 10

hours per week. Age was partitioned into traditional college students (age 23 or younger) and non-traditional (age 24 or older). Grade point average was partitioned into low achievers (GPA < 2.5), average achievers (GPA 2.5-3.2), and high achievers (GPA > 3.2).

The design feature rankings showed no statistical differences in average rankings as compared to the entire sample. We conclude that the importance level of each ranking group does not vary with gender, class level, working status, age, or GPA.

A partitioned analysis of the intensity levels yielded similar results. A standard ANOVA with Tukey's 95% simultaneous confidence intervals was used for each category of demographic data. No significant differences were found between any of the partitions with respect to the preferred intensity level. However, several statistical differences were noted in the magnitude of those preferences. Analysis by gender indicated that males more strongly preferred variety in delivery style (p-value = 0.011), voluntary participation (p-value = 0.013), and a non-comprehensive final exam (p-value < 0.001). Females more strongly preferred less out of class work (p-value = 0.003). When partitioned by class levels several differences were found. Juniors (third year students) and seniors (fourth year students) more strongly prefer optional attendance (p-value = 0.005) and non-comprehensive final exams (p-value < 0.001) as compared to freshmen (first year students) and sophomores (second year students). Sophomores and juniors more strongly prefer objective tests than seniors (p-value < 0.001). Juniors and seniors have a stronger preference for less out of class work than freshmen (p-value = 0.006). Seniors have a stronger preference for higher grades than freshmen (p-value = 0.003). Age-partitioned analysis yielded five significant differences in intensity level magnitudes. Non-traditional students felt more strongly about having fewer chapters per test (p-value < 0.001), greater use of technology (p-value = 0.006), and the exclusion of group projects (p-value = 0.023). Traditional students have a stronger preference for optional attendance (p-value = 0.002) and a stronger relationship between the test and the material (p-value = 0.02). Partitioning based on GPA demonstrated a stronger preference by high-achieving students for not requiring research papers (p-value 0.026), higher grades (p-value < 0.001), and a lower percentage of grades based on the final exam (p-value = 0.009). Partitioning by working status yielded no significant differences.

While some of the partitioned results show statistically significant differences, they do not change the practical application of intensity levels in course design. Students generally agree on the preferred intensity levels. The only practical conclusion of these results is that the indicated preferences for intensity levels are common to all students, but critical to some. Faculty choices with respect to the intensity levels become even more important if the composition of the student body is skewed toward a particular demographic partition where stronger preferences exist.

Employers

Survey respondents were asked to provide information regarding several demographic variables, including gender, current position, education, and department type. Data identifying years of experience was partitioned into four groups: 1) those with less than 10 years; 2) those with 10-19 years; 3) those with 20-29 years; and 4) those with over 30 years. Data regarding the number of subordinates was partitioned into three groups: 1) those with less than 10 employees; 2) those with 10-99 employees; and 3) those with 100 or more employees.

A thorough analysis of the rankings was also completed by partitioning the sample by the demographic characteristics. The survey instrument allowed for the identification of eighteen possible demographic segments for each of the fourteen design features. This analysis resulted in statistically insignificant differences in average design feature rankings as compared to the entire sample.

Similar to the overall rankings, the sample was partitioned based on the demographic data. A standard ANOVA with Tukey's 95% simultaneous confidence intervals was used for each category of demographic data. Employers generally agree on the preferred intensity levels.

No differences were found based on gender or the functional orientation of the employers (all p-values > 0.05). Only two course design features showed statistical differences in intensity levels preferences. Compulsory participation was statistically more preferred by those employers with ten or more years of experience, while those with less than ten years of experience were indifferent (p-value =0.049). The other feature that exhibited demographically based statistical differences was the amount of out of class work (all p-values < 0.001). More out of class work was preferred by those with more than 30 years of experience, a graduate degree, or an executive position. Less out of class work was preferred by those with less than twenty years of experience. Employers were indifferent when their backgrounds included 20-29 years of experience, no graduate degree, or an entry/middle level position.

While some of the partitioned results show statistically significant differences, they do not change the practical application of intensity levels in course design. The only practical conclusion of these results is that the indicated preferences for intensity levels are common for all employers, but critical to some.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

While the results are not meant to be prescriptive, the implications of the research are extensive. First, some course design features should be considered for adoption by teachers based on the strong agreement of business student and employer stakeholders as to importance and preference. Second, colleges and universities need to develop an instructor rating system for teaching that is clear in regards to the stakeholders that need to be considered. For those universities that fail to recognize the clear and distinct differences between student and employer stakeholder needs, the reward system for teaching will reward those instructors that blindly follow the dictates of students while punishing those that teach a less "student-friendly" regimen

designed to meet the needs of the business stakeholder. Third, the needs of the student stakeholder must be addressed as a possible disconnect between professors (who more likely attended college without having to be substantially employed) and today's students (who may have substantial work demands on their time). Thus, the implication is that classroom time may need to be designed to be more effective and efficient (while avoiding straight lecture material) so as to maximize the student's ability to meet competing time demands.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to explore the views of two key stakeholders in business education. The intent is not to sacrifice academic freedom, but rather to foster the informed exercise of it. Course design features can be effectively managed to enhance overall value to employers and students while continuing to foster significant learning. Factors such as variety in classroom presentation/activities can be enhanced consistent with today's active learning environment. Keeping the number of topics per test low, increasing the use of technology in the classroom, and providing reasonable (but earned) grades may be increasingly important to both students and employers. While less important to these stakeholders, a reasonable emphasis on final exam and group project grades could be fostered.

The remaining course design factors require not only a balance between academic freedom and stakeholder preference/opinion, but they also required an examination of the tradeoffs between student and employer stakeholders. Making judicious choices on these design factors has the potential to enhance both student satisfaction and student employability. This paper should provide some insights (maybe even guidelines) for academia in terms of designing the controllable features of courses. A more informed course design will result in better satisfaction of the students, business professionals, and the college professor.

While this study focused on examining course design with respect to business courses, there is great academic research potential in examining course design across the college campus. Future study should include examination of other academic units and related course design issues, such as assessed learning, learning styles, etc.

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APPENDIX 1 STUDENT SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS: Review the 14 course design features and then rank them in order of preference with 1 being the item most important to you when choosing a course within your major. Mark a 2 by your 2nd choice, a 3 by the third choice, and finally a 14 by the item least important to you in a course design feature. Once the ranking has been completed, mark a checkmark in the box to indicate your desired preference for each design feature preference.

Item No.	COURSE DESIGN FEATURE	RANK	Design Feature Preferences			
			Indicate your preference by checking one of the boxes for each course design feature.			
1	Number of topics /chapters per test		2- to 4 chapters /test	<input type="checkbox"/>	5-7 chapters/test	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Delivery style		Lecture only	<input type="checkbox"/>	Variety of methods	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Attendance policy		Attendance required	<input type="checkbox"/>	Optional attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Test format		Objective (MC/TF)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Subjective (essays, prob.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Research paper		Research paper required	<input type="checkbox"/>	No research paper required	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Out of class work (readings, assign)		0-½ hrs./ class period	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 hrs./class period	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Grade expectations		A	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Use of Technology		Frequent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seldom	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Class material/ test material relationship		Tests repeat class material	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tests require analytical thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Class discussion/ participation		Voluntary participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Compulsory participation	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Final exam coverage		Final comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Final not comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	% of grade based on final exam		40%	<input type="checkbox"/>	10%	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Group projects		Required	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not required	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	% of grade based on group projects		40%	<input type="checkbox"/>	10%	<input type="checkbox"/>

THE STATUS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING AT THE AACSB ACCREDITED SCHOOLS OF BUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

Although social networking has quickly taken a foothold in the business world, a 2011 research study found that implementation in higher education greatly lagged behind. As a result, this study was conducted to examine the current status of Web 2.0 implementation at AACSB accredited schools of business to determine if the institutions of higher education have begun to keep pace with businesses. Results indicate that the state of Web 2.0 technology implementation at AACSB accredited schools of business has dramatically and dynamically changed within a short time frame. Not only is there a much higher percentage of schools utilizing social networking, there has been a trend to increase the number of social networking technologies available to the college consumer. Moreover, a distinct dichotomy is developing with respect to institutional control. A greater percentage of private schools versus public schools implement every category of social technology. Finally, findings demonstrate that Facebook and Twitter remain the dominant social networking technologies utilized at AACSB accredited schools of business.

INTRODUCTION

The electronic social network, often referred to as the Web 2.0, has quickly permeated business. In 2009, just 42% of *InformationWeek* 500 companies used wikis, blogs, or social networking tools to collaborate with customers, suppliers, and partners (Murphy, 2011). By mid 2011, 77% of these companies were doing so and by late 2011, 87% of companies indicated having some form of internal social network, the majority of which were in place less than three years (Healey, 2012).

An *InformationWeek* Social Networking in the Enterprise Survey of 394 business technology professionals found that in 2012, the primary approach driving external social networking is marketing, based upon branding and promotion efforts. This is especially important given that 24% of the 10,000 consumers surveyed by Accenture stated that they are more likely to do business with a company that they can interact within a social media environment (Henschen, 2012a). In addition, companies such as American Express, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the American Red Cross are using sentiment analysis to gauge the mood on

social networks (Henschen, 2012b). This analysis can provide insights about the company, its products, and its competition.

The dominant technologies in the Web 2.0 include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and blogs. In December of 2012, for example, Facebook had 165 million unique U.S. site visitors (Complete.com/Facebook, 2013). Worldwide, it is estimated that there are more than 900 million active users (Bullas, 2013). A 2012 AARP Pew Internet Project even found that more than one third of online Americans ages 65 and older are active on social networking sites, with those ages 75 and older having an average Facebook network size of 42 friends (Rainee, 2012). Research findings also indicate that advertising messages provided by Facebook friends effect consumer brand attitudes while advertising messages provided by commercial sources affect both consumer brand attitudes and purchasing intentions (Yang, 2012).

Twitter, on the other hand, attracted 46 million unique U.S. site visitors in December of 2012 (Complete.com/Twitter, 2013). In an example of usage, during the 67 minutes of the U.S. Presidential Inauguration ceremony on January 21, 2013, there were 1.1 million tweets (Twitter.com, 2013). Researchers have found that users believe that using Twitter can improve their performance or their ability to achieve specific goals and, thus, are more extrinsically motivated to continue to use it (Agrifoglio, et al., 2012). Moreover, users feel pleasure, enjoyment, and satisfaction, thus, are more intrinsically motivated to use it.

YouTube is also extremely popular. In December of 2012, there were 162 million unique U.S. site visitors (Complete.com/YouTube, 2013). Worldwide, there are over 800 million unique visitors each month (YouTube, 2013). Interestingly, 72 hours of video are uploaded each minute.

LinkedIn is the premier business social network. By December of 2012, LinkedIn had more than 200 million users in over 200 countries and territories and had two new members enrolling per second (LinkedIn, 2013). During that month alone, there were 26 million unique U.S. site visitors (Complete.com/LinkedIn, 2013).

Blogging is also a common social networking activity. Technorati, a blog search engine, tracked more than 35,500 business blogs in February of 2013 (Technorati, 2012).

This research, therefore, examines several questions. Is the current state of implementation different than 2011? What are the currently implemented social networking technologies? Does implementation vary by institutional control? Results are important in helping institutions of higher learning to better understand social network technology implications and to assist in identifying potential competitive opportunities.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This study's authors conducted an exploratory research study in 2011 to better understand university social networking behavior and to establish a baseline for future research (Case & King, 2011; Case & King, 2012). In particular, the study was undertaken to examine the state of

Web 2.0 implementation at all of the AACSB accredited schools of business. Overall, findings suggested that although these institutions lagged behind business implementation, schools were adopting the technologies.

In particular, results indicated that electronic social networking had been implemented at 39% of the AACSB accredited schools of business. Facebook was the most common technology, utilized by 37.8% of institutions. Twitter, the most common microblogging tool, was used by 30.3% of schools, followed by YouTube (21.3% of schools), and LinkedIn (20.2% of schools). The least utilized technologies included Flickr (9.2% of schools) and blogs (5.5% of schools). Although 5% used only one technology, 28% of firms used three or more technologies. Pearson statistics found a high degree (.01 significance level) of correlation between the implementation of each of the technologies.

Findings also demonstrated that implementation varied by institutional control. Facebook, for example, was used at 36.7% of public institutions versus 40.2% of private institutions. Twitter was used at 28.1% of public institutions versus 35.1% of private institutions. A greater percentage of private institutions utilized each technology with the exception of blogs. The largest discrepancy of usage was with regard to YouTube and Flickr, where 62.8% and 50.4%, respectively, more private schools utilized the products.

In terms of multiple technologies, usage also varied by institution control. Thirty-two percent of public institutions utilized two or more technologies. On the other hand, 39% of private institutions utilized two or more technologies. Moreover, 15% of public institutions utilized four or more technologies while nearly one quarter, or 23%, of private institutions did the same.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study utilized the AACSB website list of the AACSB accredited schools of business to obtain institution names and identify each school's website URL (AACSB, 2012). Each institution's website was then examined to determine Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, and other web 2.0 technology utilization. Demographic data such as institutional control was obtained through the research office at AACSB International. One hundred percent of the AACSB accredited schools of business were examined.

RESULTS

A review of the 647 AACSB accredited schools of business found that institutions utilize a variety of social networking technologies (Table 1). The most commonly used technologies include Facebook (65.2% of schools), Twitter (57.3% of schools), YouTube (41.6% of schools), and LinkedIn (32.1% of schools). The least utilized technologies include blogs (23.5% of schools), Flickr (16.5% of schools), and other (15.8% of schools).

	Facebook	Twitter	You Tube	LinkedIn	Flickr	Blog	Other
Schools That Utilize	65.2%	57.3%	41.6%	32.1%	16.5%	23.5%	15.8%
Schools That Do Not Utilize	34.8%	42.7%	58.4%	67.9%	83.5%	76.5%	84.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2 details the “other” (least common) social networking technologies utilized by schools of business. These were implemented by 15.8% of schools and include 36 different programs such as Daily Motion, Delicious, FourSquare, GooglePlus, iTunes, Viadeo, Vimeo, Weibo, and so on. The most common programs include FourSquare (28 schools), iTunes (25 schools), GooglePlus (11 schools), and Vimeo (8 schools). Each of the remaining 32 programs were used by five or fewer institutions.

Program	Number of Schools
FourSquare	28
iTunes	25
GooglePlus	11
Vimeo	8

Relative to social networking technology utilization, 9% of schools employ only one technology (Table 3). Ten percent use two technologies, 13% use three technologies, 20% use four technologies, 12% use five technologies, 5% use six technologies, and 2% use seven technologies. Overall, 71% of the AACSB accredited schools of business use at least one form of electronic social networking.

Technologies	Percentage	Number of Schools
Only 1 Technology	9%	58
Uses 2 Technologies	10%	65
Uses 3 Technologies	13%	84
Uses 4 Technologies	20%	129
Uses 5 Technologies	12%	79
Uses 6 Technologies	5%	35
Uses 7 Technologies	2%	10
Total	71%	460

Social networking utilization was next examined to determine if there were correlations between the use of any two technologies. Table 4 illustrates that there are correlations significant at the .01 level (2-tailed test) for all six technologies. In other words, for example, the use of Twitter was significantly positively correlated with the use of YouTube.

Technology	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	LinkedIn	Flickr	Blog
Facebook	1	.807**	.576**	.468**	.325**	.229**
Twitter	.807**	1	.588**	.473**	.350**	.235**
YouTube	.576**	.588**	1	.393**	.359**	.206**
LinkedIn	.468**	.473**	.393**	1	.228**	.173**
Flickr	.325**	.350**	.359**	.228**	1	.126**
Blog	.229**	.235**	.206**	.173**	.126**	1

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 provides a breakdown of social network usage by institutional control. In terms of the 432 public institutions, 66.0% use Facebook, 66.4% use Twitter, 39.4% use YouTube, 30.3% use LinkedIn, 15.0% use Flickr, 23.4% use a blog, and 18.9% use another social networking product. In terms of the 215 private institutions, 79.4% use Facebook, 73.2% use Twitter, 56.2% use YouTube, 43.8% use LinkedIn, 23.7% use Flickr, 29.4% use a blog, and 23.7% use another social networking product. When comparing public versus private institutions, a greater percentage of the private institutions have implemented every technology. Specifically, Facebook is used by 20.3% more of the private schools. Moreover, the differences include Twitter by 29.6% more, YouTube by 42.6% more, LinkedIn by 44.6% more, Flickr by 57.8%, blogs by 25.6%, and other by 71.9% more of the private institutions. Importantly, there are significant statistical differences between public versus private implementation with respect to all technologies with the exception of blog implementation.

	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	LinkedIn	Flickr	Blog	Other
Public	66.0%	66.4%	39.4%	30.3%	15.0%	23.4%	18.9%
Private	79.4%	73.2%	56.2%	43.8%	23.7%	29.4%	23.7%
% Difference	20.3%	29.6%	42.6%	44.6%	57.8%	25.6%	71.9%
Chi-Square Difference	.016*	.002**	.001***	.005**	.019*	.201	.006*

* Significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
 ** Significant at the .005 level (2-tailed)
 *** Significant at the .001 level (2-tailed)

Overall, 66% of the publicly-controlled institutions and 74% of the privately-controlled institutions use at least one form of electronic social networking (Table 6). In terms of public institutions, 11% of schools employ only one technology, 11% use two technologies, 16% use three technologies, 20% use four technologies, 11% use five technologies, 4% use six technologies, and 1% use seven technologies. In terms of private institutions, 8% of schools employ only one technology, 11% use two technologies, 11% use three technologies, 25% use four technologies, 19% use five technologies, 9% use six technologies, and 3% use seven technologies. When comparing private versus public, 56% of private institutions implemented four or more products while only 36% of public institutions did so.

Technologies	Public	Private	% Difference
Only 1 Technology	11%	8%	-27%
Uses 2 Technologies	11%	11%	0%
Uses 3 Technologies	16%	11%	-30%
Uses 4 Technologies	20%	25%	28%
Uses 5 Technologies	11%	19%	75%
Uses 6 Technologies	4%	9%	122%
Uses 7 Technologies	1%	3%	109%
Total	66%	74%	12%

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Results indicate that electronic social networking has been implemented at 71% of the AACSB accredited schools of business. Facebook is the most common technology, utilized by 65.2% of institutions. Twitter, the dominant microblogging product, is used by 57.3% of schools, followed by YouTube (41.6% of schools), and LinkedIn (32.1% of schools). The least utilized technologies include Flickr (16.5% of schools) and other (15.8% of schools). Although 9% use only one technology, 52% of schools use three or more technologies. Pearson statistics suggest a high degree (.01 significance level) of correlation between the implementation of each of the technologies.

Findings also demonstrate that implementation varies by institutional control. A greater percentage of private institutions utilized each technology. Facebook, for example, is used at 66.0% of public institutions versus 79.4% of private institutions. Twitter is used at 66.4% of public institutions versus 73.2% of private institutions. Moreover, the difference between private and public implementation is statistically significant for all technologies except for blog implementation. The largest discrepancy of usage is with regard to Flickr and other, where 57.8% and 71.9%, respectively, more private versus public schools utilize the products.

In terms of multiple technologies, usage also varies by institution control. Fifty-five percent of public institutions utilized two or more technologies. On the other hand, 66% of

private institutions utilized two or more technologies. Moreover, 36% of public institutions utilized four or more technologies while more than one half, or 56%, of private institutions did the same.

There are four important implications from the study. One finding is that the state of Web 2.0 technology implementation at AACSB accredited schools of business has dramatically and dynamically changed within a short time frame. In 2011, only 39% of schools has social networking icons on their web page. In one year, however, the percentage of institutions promoting the Web 2.0 increased to 71%. Facebook implementation, for example, increased from approximately one-third (37.8%) of institutions in 2011 to two-thirds (65.2%) of institutions in 2012. Similarly, Twitter increased from 30.3% to 57.3% and YouTube from 21.3% to 41.6%. Another example relates to institutional control. For example, the percentage of public schools implementing YouTube climbed from 17.7% in 2011 to 39.4% in 2012. In the private sector, the percentage of schools implementing LinkedIn increased from 23.2% to 43.8%. These findings suggest that schools are finding value in social networking and/or are attempted to keep pace with the competition.

A second implication is that there is a trend to increase the number of social networking technologies available to the college consumer. In 2011, 28% of schools implement three or more technologies and 17% implemented four or more technologies. In 2012, however, more than half (52%) implemented three or more technologies and 39% implemented four or more technologies. It is possible that schools are saturating the social environment in an effort to appeal to different target markets and user preferences.

A third implications is that a distinct dichotomy exists with respect to institutional control. A greater percentage of private schools versus public schools implement every category of social technology. This difference is statistically significant for all technologies with the exception of blogs. Moreover, private institutions appear to be more aggressive in utilizing the non-traditional or "other" category of social networking technologies such as FourSquare, iTunes, and GooglePlus. In fact, the gap appears to be widening with respect to several technologies. For example, in 2011, the percentage difference between public and private school implementation of Facebook was 9.6%. In 2011, the percentage difference increased to 20.3%. Similarly, the blog percentage gap increased from 9% in 2011 to 25.6% in 2012. When examining institutional control, the percentage of public versus private schools implementing four or more technologies was 15% and 23%, respectively, in 2011. However, the gap increased in 2012 from 36% of public to 56% of private schools. This dichotomy may be evidence of the increasing pressure being felt by private schools to achieve and maintain enrollment goals.

A final implication is that Facebook and Twitter remain the dominant social networking technologies utilized at AACSB accredited schools of business. In both the 2011 and 2012 studies, they were number one and number two in implementation. This dominance is also consistent with usage and trends in the general population.

The limitations of this study are primarily a function of the nature of the research methodology and each school's website. The study examined web pages from a cursory perspective but did not contact site web masters to further examine usage. The site, for example, may have a Facebook logo but not actively utilize its Facebook presence. In addition, if a school utilizes a technology, for example, but does not have the logo displayed on the web page that is linked from the AACSB web site, then it was not counted. As a result, the social networking participation may be higher than reported in this study. The study does, however, further clarify the extent of that social networking is increasing in incidence at AACSB accredited schools of business.

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A DOCTORAL DEGREE? PERCEIVED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY CONSTRAINTS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined antecedents to determine what may impact college students' perceived employment opportunities constraints as it relate to obtaining a PhD. There is a growing literature that indicates the increasing importance of graduate education, including doctoral degrees for academic and non-academic jobs. An advance level of thinking which is often promoted in doctoral programs is purported to be increasingly needed to sustain and promote the competitive progress and advancement of the United States. With this being said, it is important that college students consider obtaining a doctoral degree as a viable option when considering their career options. This study examined the extent to which college students may or may not be interested in earning a PhD.

The results indicated that though students were satisfied with their advisor that advisor satisfaction did not influence their Perceptions of Employment Opportunity Constraints (PEOCs) of pursuing a PhD. In fact, students perceive that holding a PhD would make it more difficult for them to obtain a corporate job because they believe that others would think that they would likely be too nerdy. Maintaining these misperceptions would decrease the likelihood of many students pursuing the doctorate degree and thereby actually constrain the increased career options they would have if in fact, they went on to pursue and earn a PhD. We conclude this paper with a discussion of the implications, limitations, and future research suggestions.

INTRODUCTION

To keep the United States competitive the Commission on the Future of Graduate Education in the United States (2010) and the Commission on Pathways through Graduate School and into Careers (2012) has identified the increasing need for people who have completed graduate degrees, including doctoral degrees for a variety of expanding jobs. In fact, "2008 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that most doctoral degree holders work in occupations in service industries – generally in professional, scientific, and technical services or

in government.” These commissions have documented an alarming trend that too few students in the U.S. are pursuing graduate degrees particularly doctoral degrees.

Studies show many students do not seem to be as inspired or driven to attend graduate school to pursue their PhD as some believe that having a doctorate degree would hold them back from corporate success. Somehow they believe that academia is the primary career that a doctoral holder can have and/or enjoy. Certainly, by earning a PhD, academia becomes a viable option but it is not limited to academia and actually according the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) a PhD opens up wide variety of other opportunities which are projected to grow over the next ten years (2010).

We believe that students’ perceptions of the professoriate and the PhD are woefully lacking due to a significant information gap as well as encouragement to pursue it as a viable option (Beale & Brown, 2010). We believe that if students were well informed about the multiple opportunities that their perception of the PhD degree would be significantly more positive.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While the widening of the professor-pipeline is a wonderful benefit for future students, “All students can benefit from being a part of a diverse student population in undergraduate and graduate school as interaction with diverse populations assists in developing professional skills. In addition, it is important for continued research in the area of minority recruitment and retention in graduate programs” (Shears, Lewis & Furman, 2004). “The projected shortage of science and engineering professionals and faculty in higher education within the next 10 years, coupled with a shift in the racial composition of the population will create important challenges in higher education and the labor market” (Thomas, 1992). Trends indicate that meeting the United States’ human resource needs in the future will require a greater production of individuals with advanced higher education credentials (that is, degrees beyond the baccalaureate level). This is especially true for major U.S. minorities, who remain underrepresented throughout the higher educational pipeline, particularly at the graduate level.

Students’ thoughts and beliefs are central to the doctoral pursuit. We believe that academic advisors could foster this interest by informing students of various careers that include but goes beyond academic opportunities.

HYPOTHESES

We hypothesized the following:

H1 Advisor satisfaction will be influenced by a). Academic Support, b). Self Efficacy and c). Self Esteem.

-
- H2 Perceptions of Employment Opportunity Constraints will be influenced by a). Academic Social Support, b). Self Efficacy and c). Self Esteem.*
- H3 Advisor Satisfaction will be influenced by Perceptions of Employment Opportunity Constraints.*

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

The survey packet was administered during class times to various students across the campus of two comprehensive universities located in the northeastern and southeastern parts of the United States. It contained 52 items and took approximately 10 minutes to complete. All research participants were volunteers. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 362 responded and were useable for a response rate of 90.5 percent. The sample demographics are contained in Table 1.

Measures

In the present study, we used the following constructs to develop and test the hypothesized model shown in Figure 1. Unless stated otherwise, we used a Likert-type response format for the survey items. The following scales were used to collect data in the study:

Self Esteem. Ten items were used to assess this construct. The scale was developed by Rosenberg (1965). A sample item is “I take a positive attitude toward myself.” The Cronbach alpha was .87.

General Self Efficacy. Sherer et al. (1982) developed an instrument that assessed self-efficacy. The four items were used from this instrument. An example item is “When I make plans, I am certain that I can make them work.” The alpha was .86.

Perceptions of Advisor Satisfaction. Five items were developed to assess student perceptions of their satisfaction with academic advising. The items are contained in Appendix A. An example item is “I benefit from my advisor’s advice.” The alpha was .82.

Perceptions of Academic Social Support. Five items were developed to measure this construct. The items are contained in Appendix A. An example item is “My parent(s) encourage me to do well in college.” The alpha was .72.

Perceptions of Employment Opportunity Constraints (PEOCs). Four items were created to evaluate this construct. Items included “It will be more difficult for me to get a corporate job if I have a PhD degree.” All items are noted in Appendix A.

Age. To assess age, respondents were asked to write their age to the left of the category that best represented their present age.

Work Status. Subjects were asked to check either yes or no in response to a dichotomous item that asked if they were working.

Attendance Status. Subjects were asked to check either full-time or part-time in response to a forced-choice dichotomous item.

Employment Status. Subjects were asked to check either yes or no in response to a forced-choice dichotomous item that asked if they were working.

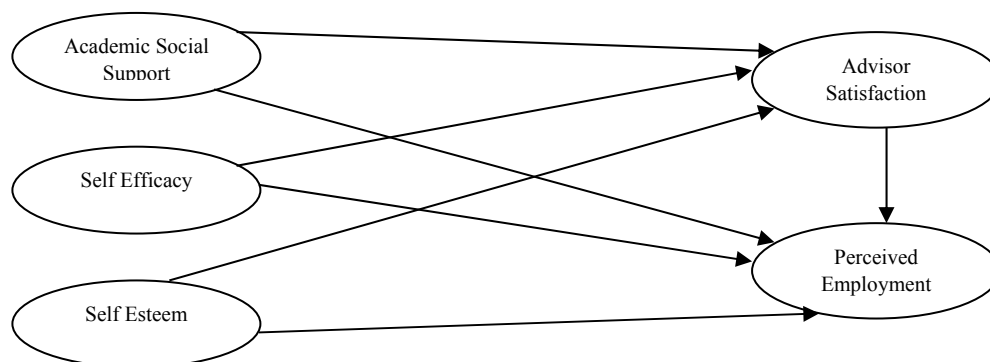
Sample Characteristics	% of Sample
Gender	
Male	38.1
Female	61.9
Ethnicity	
African-American	94.2
Caucasian	0.6
Hispanics-Black	1.1
Other	4.1
Age	
18-23	99.4
24 and older	0.6
Work Status	
Not working	78.5
Working	21.5
College Rank	
Freshman	61.6
Sophomore	11.6
Junior	12.2
Senior	12.4
Graduate student	2.2
Attendance Status	
Full Time	99.2
Part Time	0.8

Analysis

The proposed model presented in Figure 1 was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) to evaluate the research hypotheses by using the Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) computer program (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993).

SEM's major strength is that using latent variables permits estimation of relationships among theoretically interesting constructs that are free of the effects of measurement unreliability. The covariance matrix was used as the input for all path analysis models, and the maximum likelihood estimation procedure was employed to produce the model parameters. To examine model fit, we utilized measures of absolute fit and incremental fit to determine how well the data fit the hypothesized model (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

Figure 1: Hypothesized Model



RESULTS

The means, standard deviations, reliability estimates, and zero-order correlations are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, Zero-Order Correlations, and Reliability Estimates							
Variables	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5
1. AdvSat	21.16	5.12	(.85)				
2. PEOC	6.09	2.83	-.055	(.85)			
3. AcadSS	30.74	3.26	.167**	-.14**	(.75)		
4. SelfEf	21.44	3.60	.153**	-.31**	.249**	(.83)	
5. SelfEs	18.69	1.89	-.128*	-.302**	.273**	.304**	(.87)
<i>n</i> = 362; Reliability estimates are on the diagonals in parentheses; * <i>p</i> < .05 and ** <i>p</i> < .01							
AdvSat: Advisor Satisfaction							
PEOC: Perceived Employment Opportunity Constraints							
AcadSS: Academic Social Support							
SelfEf: Self Efficacy							
SelfEs: Self Esteem							

Common Method Variance Tests

All constructs were measured using self-report measures, the researchers therefore examined whether common method variance was a serious issue. As recommended by Podsakoff and Organ (1986), Harman's one-factor test was performed. In this test, all survey items were entered together into an unrotated factor analysis and the results were examined. If substantial common method variance is present, then either a single factor would emerge or one general factor would account for most of the total variance explained in the items (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). After entering the 27 items into the factor analysis model, six factors emerged from the analysis, and the first factor only accounted for 20.466 percent of the total variance. In addition, no general factor emerged from the factor analysis. Thus, common method variance was not deemed a serious issue in this study.

Model Fit Measures

We used the following fit indices to assess the fit of the nomological network developed in Figure 1. The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) is a measure of absolute fit of the model by comparing the fitted model with the actual data, and ranges from 0-1. Values greater than 0.90 demonstrate that the model fits the data well (Hair et al., 1998; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996).

The absolute fit measures, maximum likelihood ratio chi-square statistic (X^2) and goodness-of-fit index (GFI), provide a measure of the extent to which the covariance matrix estimated by the hypothesized model reproduces the observed covariance matrix (James & Brett, 1984). In addition, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was considered as it provides an estimate of the measurement error. Another fit index, the non-normed fit index (NNFI), was used to assess model fit; the NNFI assesses a penalty for adding additional parameters to the model. We also used the normed fit index (NFI) because it provides information about how much better the model fits than a baseline model, rather than as a sole function of the difference between the reproduced and observed covariance matrices (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). The comparative fit index (CFI) has similar attributes to the NFI and compares the predicted covariance matrix to the observed covariance matrix and is least affected by sample size.

Test of the Model

The two-step approach to structural equation modeling was employed (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). First, the measurement model was inspected for satisfactory fit indices. After establishing satisfactory model fit, the structural coefficients were interpreted.

Measurement Model

As shown in Table 3, the measurement model had acceptable fit indices. That is, the Chi-square statistic was at its minimum, and the p-value was nonsignificant. The GFI was above its recommended threshold level of 0.90 (Hair et al., 1998), and the RMSEA was less than 0.08, indicative of an acceptable model (Steiger & Lind, 1980). The Chi-square divided by the degrees of freedom coefficient was less than three, which indicates acceptable model fit (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1995). The CFI, NFI, and NNFI all indicated an acceptable fit of the model to the data.

Table 3: Fit Indices for the Hypothesized Model

Model	$\chi^2(df)$	p-value	χ^2/df	RMSEA	GFI	NNFI	NFI	CFI
Baseline	0.17(3)	0.98	0.056	.000	1.00	1.07	1.00	1.00

Statistics are based on a sample of 362 respondents.

RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
 GFI = Goodness of Fit Index
 NNFI = Non-Normed Fit Index
 NFI = Normed Fit index
 CFI = Comparative Fit Index
 df = Degrees of Freedom

Interpretation of Structural Equation Model

Table 4 presents the structural coefficients for the model. Advisor satisfaction was one of two endogenous variables in our study. Support was established for Hypothesis 1a because the path from academic social support to advisor satisfaction was significant and in a positive direction. Likewise, the path from self-efficacy to advisor satisfaction was significant and in a positive direction, thus establishing support for Hypothesis 1b. However, self-esteem did not influence advisor satisfaction and thus no support was found for Hypothesis 1c in our model.

Table 4: Standardized Path Coefficients for the Model

Parameter	Path Coefficient	T-value	SMC
Advisor Satisfaction			
Academic Social Support	.19	2.27*	4%
Self Efficacy	.15	1.87**	
Self Esteem	.17	1.13	
Perceived Employment Opportunity Constraints²			
Academic Social Support	-.08	-.42	14%
Self Efficacy	-.19	-4.68*	
Self Esteem	-.34	-4.45*	
Academic Satisfaction	.01	.24	

Statistics are based on a sample of 362 respondents.
 * $p < .05$ ** $p < .10$

Support was established for Hypotheses 2b and 2c because the paths from self-efficacy to perceived employment opportunity constraints and from self-esteem to perceived employment opportunity constraints were significant and in a negative direction, indicating that as self-efficacy and self-esteem increases the negative perception of employment constraints about having earned a PhD decreases. Academic social support did not predict perceived employment opportunity constraints; thus, no support was established for Hypothesis 2a. Hypothesis 3 was not supported because the path from academic satisfaction to perceived employment opportunity constraints was not significant.

In summary, academic social support and self-efficacy predicted advisor satisfaction in our model. Self-efficacy and self-esteem influenced perceived employment opportunity constraints.

DISCUSSION

The current research investigated the antecedents of advisor satisfaction and perceived employment opportunity constraints when earning a PhD. In structural equation model, academic social support and self-efficacy predicted advisor satisfaction. Also, self-efficacy and self-esteem influenced perceived employment opportunity constraints. Considering the far reaching impact that having a PhD degree could have on the individual earning the degree as well as the goals and needs of the United States, it would behoove advisors, and universities Career Centers to provide more doctoral career information early in students' matriculation through undergraduate school (McAlpine & Norton, 2006). Furthermore, prospective employers could also provide more information to students in viable ways using social media to expose the multitude of opportunities, many which is sufficiently illustrated in the Commission on Pathways through Graduate School and into Careers (2012).

Academic advisors and professors may need to provide more information regarding the benefits and rewards of earning a PhD degree. Also, our findings indicate that academic social support of students is an important variable that contributes to the advisor satisfaction among research participants and therefore parents and friends should encourage loved ones to excel academically throughout their undergraduate experience.

Our findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge because this study examines some potential explanations for the shortage of students who are interested in earning a PhD namely the misperception of the benefits of earning a graduate degree by undergraduate students. Our findings indicate that students believe that PhD degree will limit their corporate employment opportunities and by association limit other viable career options. Another contribution of the current research is that our sample contained a large percentage of African Americans, which adds to the richness of the extant literature. Further, analyzing diverse samples may provide additional insight into respondent behavior that may be useful to understanding whether minority groups are less or more inclined to consider a career in the Academy.

LIMITATIONS

As is true of most empirical research, the current research has some limitations. First, the cross-sectional design of the study does not allow for causal inferences. Another limitation of the study was that all data were collected via self-report measures, which may lead to the problem of common method bias and inflated the predictive relationships. However, as recommended by Podsakoff and Organ (1986) and detailed in the results section, we conducted Harmon's One Factor test, which did not indicate that common method variance was problematic in our structural equation model.

FUTURE RESEARCH

A future area of inquiry would be to examine whether personality influences advisor satisfaction and perceived employment opportunity constraints in an academic setting. Another interesting research avenue would be to compare the responses of students with those of employees with bachelor's degrees. We also believe that longitudinal designs are needed in this area to examine the behavior of these constructs to determine whether they wax or wane over time.

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APPENDIX

Perceptions of Employment Opportunity Constraints

1. It will be more difficult for me to get a corporate job if I have a PhD degree.
2. People with PhD degrees are too nerdy to work in the corporate world.
3. Having a PhD degree will hurt my chances of becoming the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a corporation.
4. Corporations are not looking to hire people with PhD degrees.

Advisor Satisfaction

1. My advisor gives great advice.
2. I do not benefit from my advisor's guidance.
3. My advisor gives poor advice.
4. I benefit from my advisor's guidance.
5. I ignore my advisor's guidance.

Academic Social Support

1. My friends support my academic success
2. Sometimes my friends prevent me from doing college work
3. My friends encourage me to do well in college
4. My friends motivate me to do my class work
5. My parent(s) encourage me to do my class assignments
6. After talking to my parent(s), I am motivated to do my course work
7. My parents encourage me to do well in college

General Self Efficacy

1. When I set important goals for myself, I rarely achieve them
2. I give up things before completing them
3. If something looks too complicated, I will not even bother to try it
4. When trying to learn something new, I soon give up if I am not initially successful
5. I give up easily

Self Esteem

1. I feel I am a person of worth, at least on an equal with others
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities
3. I am able to do things as well as most other people
4. I take a positive attitude towards myself
5. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself

CFA of Perceived Employment Opportunity Constraints			
Items	Loading	Standard Error	T-value
Item 1: It will be more difficult for me to get a corporate job if I have a PhD degree.	.64	.05	13.66
Item 2: People with PhD degrees are too nerdy to work in the corporate world.	.60	.04	17.15
Item 3: Having a PhD degree will hurt my chances of becoming the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a corporation.	.71	.03	21.69
Item 4: Corporations are not looking to hire people with PhD degrees.	.65	.04	15.04
Fit Indices $\chi^2(\text{dfs}) = 6.75(2), p = .078$ CFI = .99 GFI = .99 NNFI = .98 RMSEA = .042 N = 362			

WHEN OPPOSITES DETRACT: STUDENT (DIS)SATISFACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPATIBILITY MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Within numerous service environments, the social behavior of customers impacts the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of other customers. Customers find themselves compatible with some customers, yet incompatible with others; this affects their satisfaction with the service. Compatibility is the extent to which customers “are capable of existing or performing in harmonious, agreeable, or congenial combination with other customers”(freedictionary.com). This paper examines the role of compatibility in higher education and evaluates its importance in accordance with the seven compatibility-relevant characteristics identified by Martin and Pranter (1989). The impact on student satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) is examined; recommendations for compatibility management are presented.

INTRODUCTION

Establishing relationships with students could provide institutions of higher education with a competitive advantage effected through positive word-of-mouth communications with potential future students and through long-term collaboration with the institution (Henning-Thurau, Langer & Hansen, 2001; Rowley 2003; Tapp, Hicks & Stone, 2004). However, in order to develop a relationship with its students, it is the responsibility of the institution to first understand the factors that affect student satisfaction (Alves & Raposo, 2009). Most of the research to date investigates student satisfaction with the service provided, focusing on either the technical service itself or the manner in which the service is delivered.

A small but growing stream of research has begun to examine the effects of the social behavior of individuals within the service process and how it affects their overall satisfaction (Grove & Fisk, 1997; Martin, 1996; Martin & Pranter, 1989). As Martin and Pranter (1989, p.6) point out, “to a large extent other customers in the service environment are part of the service.” Customers may feel comfortable with the behaviors of other students, or they may not. When customers determine themselves to be socially incompatible with other customers, they are more

likely to be dissatisfied with the service experience. Yet, surprisingly little research has been conducted with regard to customer compatibility.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of compatibility within the context of higher education and consider its potential impact on student satisfaction (or dissatisfaction). The paper is presented in five sections. First, the construct of compatibility is introduced. Second, the literature regarding the effect of compatibility on satisfaction (and dissatisfaction) is reviewed. Third, the importance of compatibility to the higher education environment is examined. Next, several compatibility factors that are specific to the context of higher education are explored. Finally, managerial implications are set forth.

COMPATIBILITY

Although compatibility is starting to receive some attention in the business literature, definitions of compatibility in any of the academic literature are rare. Freedictionary.com defines compatibility as being “capable of existing or performing in harmonious, agreeable, or congenial combination with another or others.” In their examination of compatibility as it relates to job performance, Tett, Rothstein and Reddon (1999) report three levels of person-job fit: *task-level fit* occurs with respect to the immediate activities, goals, and duties that define a given job; *group-level fit* denotes a matching of the person to his or her co-workers; and *organization-level fit* results when a person's traits match the organization's culture.

Importantly, compatibility is not the same as similarity. Similarity deals more with how closely two people resemble each other along a variety of factors. Compatibility is more about getting along. As Tett and Murphy (2002) conclude, co-workers may prove to be the most compatible when they are similar in some ways yet complementary in others. Shutz (1958, 1966) adds that compatibility exists if the behavior expressed by one person is congruent with what the other person wants to receive.

It is highly improbable that all customers in a marketing setting will be compatible with each other. As explained by Martin and Pranter (1989, p.6):

Inevitably, customers find themselves compatible with some customers yet incompatible with others. Patrons may be negatively or positively influenced by the specific behaviors of fellow patrons, by verbal exchanges with them, by their appearance and demeanor, by their physical proximity, and by stereotypical impressions formed. Of course, whenever customer satisfaction is affected, so may be consumer patronage and hence the success of the service operation.

This phenomenon of customer compatibility is real and widespread, affecting a host of commercial and non-profit institutions, including schools and universities (Martin & Pranter, 1989). We can apply Tett, Rothstein and Reddon's (1999) three levels of person-job fit to the higher education setting in particular as follows: task-level fit equates to the activities, goals, and performance that define being a student at a given institution; the group-level fit is the matching

of the student to his classmates or team members; and the organizational-level fit approximates how the person's traits match the institution's organizational culture. In terms of differentiating compatibility and similarity within the context of higher education, it is not that students need to be similar to each other, but rather that they are similar in some ways and complementary in other ways such that their behaviors are congruent.

COMPATIBILITY AND (DIS)SATISFACTION

Most of the business research to date that examines compatibility tends to focus on its effect on customer satisfaction per se. However, as noted by Raajpoot and Sharma (2006), the behavior of other customers may be the cause of more dissatisfying incidents than satisfying ones in specific service contexts. This is consistent with the finding reported by Grove, Fiske and Dorsch (1998) that other customers are responsible for the smallest proportion of *satisfying* events yet the largest proportion of *dissatisfying* events. The limited effect of customers on satisfaction may also help to explain the findings of Moore, Moore and Capella (2005) that customer-to-customer interactions do not significantly affect satisfaction. In other words, the behavior of other customers represents a dissatisfier, as opposed to a satisfier. We can gain greater understanding of the difference between satisfiers and dissatisfiers by looking at the extant work in the organizational management literature presented by Herzberg (1974).

According to Herzberg (1974), satisfaction and dissatisfaction are produced by different factors. With specific regard to employment conditions, Herzberg (1974) finds that what makes people satisfied are factors that relate to the content of their jobs - specifically, achievement, recognition for achievement, interesting work, increased responsibility, growth, and advancement.

Alternatively, what makes people unhappy at work is not what they do but how well (or poorly) they are treated. These treatment factors (dissatisfiers) are related not to the content of work, but to the context of the job. The main factors in this group are company policy and administration practices, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, salary, status, and security.

Marketers can draw an analogy to the services marketing environment by considering the two distinct types of service quality: the service outcome (the core service that the customer receives or the content component) and the service process (the manner in which the service is delivered or the social context). Given that other customers impact the process component, we can expect other customers to serve as dissatisfiers rather than as satisfiers, and this is indeed consistent with the literature (Grove, Fiske & Dorsch, 1998; Moore, Moore & Capella, 2005; Raajpoot & Sharma, 2006). In conclusion, what researchers need to focus on is the effect of customer-to-customer interactions on dissatisfaction, rather than their effect on satisfaction.

This is an important distinction. As noted by Herzberg (1974) satisfaction is not the absence of dissatisfaction. Satisfiers include those factors that account for variance in overall

satisfaction above a neutral hedonic level with little or no bearing on satisfaction below that level. Dissatisfiers, on the other hand, account for variance in overall satisfaction below a neutral hedonic level with little or no bearing on overall satisfaction above that point. Put more succinctly, the claim is that satisfiers operate primarily on the positive side of the overall satisfaction scale while dissatisfiers operate on the negative side (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959, pp. 111-112). Applied in our marketing context, effectively managing compatibility should not be expected to increase satisfaction, but should reduce dissatisfaction.

At first glance this may not seem too important. However, dissatisfaction in higher education has been associated with some dire consequences. Specifically, dissatisfaction can lead to poor student performance (Walther, 2000; Wiese, 1994), cause students to want to or transfer to another institution or forego education altogether (Chadwick & Ward, 1987; Dolinsky, 1994; Thomas, Adams & Birchenough, 1996; Wiese, 1994), or lead to negative word-of-mouth that could reduce future applications by potential students (Chadwick & Ward, 1987; Dolinsky, 1994; Ugolini, 1999; Walther, 2000). Thus, we need to investigate the construct of compatibility among students of higher education to minimize or prevent these negative consequences.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPATIBILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTS

According to Martin and Pranter (1989), the importance of compatibility (and therefore the practice of compatibility management) increases with the number of compatibility-relevant characteristics associated with the particular service industry. Although compatibility is important if even one compatibility-relevant characteristic is present, it gains in importance as more characteristics apply. The service environment of higher education can be evaluated in terms of the seven compatibility relevant characteristics identified by Martin and Pranter (1989).

Customers are in Close Physical Proximity to Each Other.

In higher education, not only do students interact in the same buildings and classrooms, but they often share the same desks or work space. It is not unusual for students to be seated within elbow distance from each other. At many undergraduate institutions, students share dormitory rooms or apartments, or live in fraternity or sorority housing. Again, students are in close proximity while on campus and this potentially affects their college experience.

Verbal Interaction among Customers is Likely.

Students of higher education engage in informal conversation both before and after class, and engage in formal (and informal?) discussions during class. Some class discussions are

primarily between student and instructor, but many are between and among students as in the case of the teamwork that is commonly required in business courses.

Customers are Engaged in Numerous and Varied Activities.

While it may be more likely that all students in a given classroom are engaged in an identical activity (such as listening to a lecture, taking an exam, or conducting online research), there may be times when activities vary and are at odds with each other. For example, when students who complete an assignment are permitted to talk amongst themselves or initiate a new activity, students who are still working on the assignment may be distracted. Martin and Pranter (1989) provide the more likely scenario taking place in the library where some students require quiet study time while others are chatting while working in small groups.

The Service Environment Attracts a Heterogeneous Mix.

Martin and Pranter (1989) use the specific example of community colleges to illustrate the characteristic of heterogeneity, suggesting that a wide range of customers are attracted to the learning environment. Heterogeneity likely decreases with higher levels of education, as students go on to pursue specialized graduate programs. However, to the extent that undergraduate students are required to take a common body of core courses regardless of their future area of specialization, heterogeneity can be expected to be high. Furthermore, to the extent that entrance requirements are lax, a wider variety of student population in terms of academic preparation can be anticipated.

The Core Service is Compatibility.

The central function of some service organizations is to arrange and nurture compatible relationships between customers (Martin & Pranter, 1989). Although this does not represent the core service of higher education, there is potential application to the extent that new students are provided with student-led orientation, encouraged to join clubs or on-campus social organizations, required to live in university dorms with assigned roommates, or required to work in teams.

Customers Must Occasionally Wait for the Service.

Waiting in lines can be monotonous and stressful (Martin & Pranter, 1989), with the situation exacerbated by incompatibility. Alternatively, compatibility among customers makes the wait more relaxing and helps to pass the time (Martin & Pranter, 1989). Although institutions of higher education are increasing their use of automated services, students at some institutions

may still end up standing in lines at the school book store to purchase books and then again when it's time to sell them back, at the cafeteria to purchase food and beverages, at student health services, and at various registration, enrollment and financial aid offices.

Customers are Expected to Share Time, Space, or Service Utensils with One Another.

“Sharing is common when the service is consumed with others,” (Martin & Pranter, 1989, p.11). As mentioned previously, it is not unusual for students to share desks, tables, or other workspace with each other. In science classes, students may share lab equipment. In computer labs, students may share scanning or printing equipment. As noted by Martin and Pranter (1989), sharing of some resources may become more intense during periods of high demand. This might occur in the cafeteria during peak meal times, in the parking lot fighting for spaces during peak class times, in the library during midterms or final exam week, or in classrooms that are filled to capacity.

In summary, it appears that each of the compatibility-relevant characteristics applies to the higher education setting. Therefore, compatibility proves to be a critical construct to include in theories or models of student satisfaction. Now that the importance of compatibility in higher education is established, the next step is to take a closer look at the factors which might affect compatibility among students of higher education.

FACTORS AFFECTING INCOMPATIBILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A number of factors of ‘other customers’ have been identified in the existing literature. Until recently, most of the research regarding these factors has been conceptual rather than empirical. Kim and Lee (2012), in a study focused on restaurant services, empirically differentiate between attributes of other customers that customers use to evaluate a service product (age, gender, appearance, attire, public behavior and number). Number was found to affect service provider selection rather than post-service satisfaction (Kim & Lee, 2012). Unfortunately, their study failed to consider the valence or direction of any of the factors (Kim & Lee, 2012). In other words, using age as an example, responses did not reveal whether they prefer older, same age, or younger customers (Kim & Lee, 2012).

As a reminder, this paper is concerned with compatibility as opposed to similarity. Arguably, most educators would agree that demographic diversity (age, gender, race, etc.) or dissimilarity contributes positively to the classroom environment where multiple perspectives can be shared and discussed. In fact, students may prove to be the most compatible when they are similar in some ways yet complementary in others (see Tett & Murphy, 2002). Compatibility is more about getting along. What factors then, specific to higher education, might contribute to dissatisfaction resulting from incompatibility? In this paper, we limit our discussion to two

critical ways in which students might be incompatible: levels of academic preparation coming in to the institution and the goals or benefits sought.

Academic Preparation

Academia, unlike most services that readily come to mind, generally requires some level of qualification before the customer can enter the service environment as a student. Some institutions of higher education set forth very high standards for admission (e.g. in the form of SAT score requirements), assuring that all students entering have a similarly high level of academic preparation. Compatibility at such institutions may be expected to be higher. However, at institutions where the admissions bar is set quite low, the variability of academic preparation among students is higher. There is never an upper level bar set (SAT score no higher than...) to ensure compatibility among students with less academic preparation. Incompatible behaviors become more likely; such behaviors may include lesser prepared students asking questions that try the patience of the more prepared students, lesser prepared students failing to prepare for class and therefore unable to contribute meaningfully to class discussions or to answer questions posed by the faculty member; and uneven contributions among students on team projects where the better prepared students pick up the slack for the lesser prepared students. Such institutions promote incompatibility among students, leading to lower student satisfaction and a greater probability that students who are dissatisfied will switch to another institution.

Motivation/Goals

According to Bitner (1992), people's reactions to a service environment are dependent on their purpose for entering it. Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006) studied this construct in the context of shopping and divided customers into task-oriented shoppers who seek needed services or information and recreational shoppers who seek pleasure from the shopping experience itself. Applied to a higher education setting, we may similarly see task-oriented students, those wishing to expand their knowledge, and recreational students, those more focused on pleasure.

Such differences in motivation may therefore affect the compatibility of students. That is, students may be incompatible in terms of their goals or the benefits they are seeking from their education. For example, if one student is enrolled in school with a goal of acquiring a higher level of learning and understanding that may be applied to career advancement while another student is enrolled with the simple aspiration of getting the piece of paper upon graduation while investing as little time and effort as necessary, satisfaction for both student types is jeopardized. In a team project, for example, the former student may exert considerable effort toward achieving a high grade and expect the same of his or her teammates, while the latter student may resent such aggressive behavior, wishing to take life a little less seriously, and be satisfied with a passing grade.

Depending on the specific institution and its student population, the list of incompatible behaviors may vary. Each institution needs to survey a sample of students who are representative of its target market to identify specific behaviors of other students that give rise to student dissatisfaction. Martin and Pranter (1989) find that most individuals have little difficulty in providing a laundry list of dissatisfiers and are quite specific in their descriptions. Once a list appropriate to the institution is developed, students should be asked to rate each of the behaviors using the Customer Compatibility Reaction Scale (Martin & Pranter, 1989). Responses on the six point scale range from “Would not affect me one way or the other” to “Would bother me enough that I would never return.” The information gathered from the survey would be crucial to the compatibility management efforts of the institution.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The responsibility faced by marketers of higher education is one of compatibility management (see Martin & Pranter, 1989). “Broadly defined, compatibility management is a process of first attracting homogeneous consumers to the service environment, and then actively managing both the physical environment and customer-to-customer encounters in such a way as to enhance satisfying encounters and minimize dissatisfying encounters,” (Martin & Pranter, 1989, p.7).

Target Marketing and Strategic Positioning

The dominant emphasis for compatibility management is better segmentation of customers and then strategically positioning the institution to appeal to targeted segments (Martin, 1996; Martin & Pranter, 1989). First, the institution needs to more clearly identify its target market and ensure to the extent possible that customers sharing the educational service experience are compatible in order to promote satisfaction and retention. In other words, universities need to go beyond market segmentation on the basis of demographics, and include other bases of segmentation such as benefit segmentation (educational goals) and behavior or lifestyle segmentation. Furthermore, narrowing the parameters associated with entrance requirements (both upper and lower parameters) ensures greater homogeneity in terms of academic preparation.

Second, articulation of a clear positioning statement enables customers to self-select service businesses and reduce incompatibility (Raajpoot & Sharma, 2006). Positioning usually means that an overt decision is being made to concentrate only on certain segments (Aaker & Shansby, 1982). Yet, the effect of generating a distinct, meaningful position is to focus on the target segments and not be constrained by the reaction of other segments. (Aaker & Shansby, 1982, p.61). Harrison-Walker (2009) explains the importance of strategic positioning specifically for higher education and illustrates how universities should go about developing an

effective positioning strategy. “The effect of target marketing and positioning is often the creation of increased homogeneity within the customer mix,” (Martin & Pranter, 1989, p.8).

Evaluating Domains of Student Satisfaction

All too often, marketing managers rely on measures of overall satisfaction. However, some researchers suggest that there exists a sub-set of customers who are only partially dissatisfied. As explained by Fredericks and Salter (1988), some customers may be satisfied overall, but switch service providers when they are not satisfied with particular aspects of the service. In the context of higher education, it may be that some students become at-risk of leaving the institution when there are issues of incompatibility with other students. While a student may be satisfied overall with the institution’s provision of an education, it may be that incompatibility with other students detracts from the learning environment and switching to another institution suggestive of higher compatibility becomes appealing. More specifically, the incompatible students may chase away students who are more representative of the target market by negatively impacting the learning experience.

Realistic Marketing Communications

Since the mismatch of expectations and reality leads to higher perceived incompatibility, institutions need to create more realistic expectations (Raajpoot & Sharma, 2006). Communicating realistic expectations helps students self-select into compatible higher education environments. Furthermore, students will look back upon initial expectations when evaluating the service experience after they have been enrolled at the institution for some period of time, particularly if they have a negative experience. This process of imagining alternative outcomes after the fact has been termed counter-factual processing, and is more prevalent after negative than after positive experiences (Gavanski & Wells, 1989; Gilovich, 1983; Gleicher et al, 1990; Kahneman & Miller, 1986; Sanna & Turley, 1996). A positive experience will be more probable to the extent that greater compatibility among students exists.

Supporting Student Self-Selection on the Basis of Compatibility

Sometimes part of the reason people choose a particular service provider is because they like the other customers – the other customers add to the service experience beyond the typical benefits associated with the institution and the service itself (Moore, Moore, & Capella, 2005). Higher education institutions can encourage activities that help potential students evaluate their compatibility with existing students. For example, they can take advantage of students doing campus visits by introducing them to a group representative of the target market and encourage classroom visits to help them better evaluate how well they would fit in.

Insights from the Seven Compatibility-Relevant Characteristics

Finally, marketers of higher education can actively manage the physical environment and student-to-student encounters in such a way as to enhance satisfying encounters and minimize dissatisfying encounters by attending to each of the seven compatibility-relevant characteristics identified by Martin and Pranter (1989). First, regarding physical proximity, classroom and desk space can be redesigned to allow students more personal space.

The second compatibility-relevant characteristic is probably one that should be maximized rather than minimized in the educational setting. Verbal interactions between and among students should actually be encouraged, as institutions attempt to promote a supportive learning environment and a feeling of belongingness. Student to student interactions among compatible students (relying on effective target marketing, positioning and marketing communications) helps build long term relationships and ideally leads to future donations and continued support from alumni.

Third, in terms of varied activities, the physical environment can be created which allows the conduct of various activities in separate areas such that students engaged in one activity are not in conflict with students engaged in another activity. For example, school libraries are starting to offer special meeting rooms for student teams to gather and talk such that students who are reading or studying are not bothered. Cafeterias could be segregated similarly, with one area designated as a quiet zone.

Fourth, to minimize heterogeneity among students, entrance requirements can be strengthened with thought given to personal interviews for graduate students to assure a good fit to the institution and with the student body.

Similar to the second compatibility-relevant characteristic, promoting compatibility as a core service through student housing, student organizations, and teamwork among compatible students all help to build student to student relationships and personal connections to the university. Accordingly, promoting compatibility among students through various means is to be encouraged.

Sixth, institutions of higher education are already making inroads in terms of reducing waiting lines. Not only are numerous services automated and/or made available online, but some services may be offered by a third party (such as the purchase of textbooks from outside vendors). When it comes to more personal services such as student health care, greater attention needs to be paid to staffing particularly during peak seasons when illness is prevalent.

Finally, strategies can be put into place to minimize the sharing of time, space and service items. For example, classroom sizes, food service and cashier lines in the cafeteria, and student parking lots can be designed to ensure adequate accommodations for students, particularly during peak demand periods.

Relationships between customers in the service environment generally and in the higher education environment specifically) have been ignored despite indications, in the marketing and

social science literature, that they are highly important (see Martin & Pranter, 1989). Customers who are alienated by the presence or behaviors of others are likely to evaluate both the service experience and the provider negatively. Marketers of higher education need to recognize the importance of compatibility in reducing student dissatisfaction, identify the characteristics unique to their institution that serve as dissatisfiers to targeted students and implement measures to increase compatibility, dissipate dissatisfaction and promote retention. As explained by Herzberg (1959, 1974), dissatisfiers (such as incompatibility) need to be remedied in order to bring individuals to a neutral state before measures can be introduced to move the individual from the neutral state to a feeling of satisfaction.

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UTILIZING INDUSTRY CONTACTS TO ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING IN THE CORE OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT COURSE

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we present an assignment used to link theory and practice. While we use this assignment in the core Operations Management course; the assignment can easily be adapted for use in a business strategy course. We describe the case, student experiences, and the experiences of managers at participating organizations. Through the exercise, operations management students interact with managers and executives at participating mentor organizations to observe how corporations apply operations management concepts taught in the operations management class, e.g., inventory management, quality, and continuous improvement. Spinoff benefits from the assignment include sharpening 'soft skills': further developing business writing skills, improving verbal communication skills, building teamwork and leadership skills and initiating skills in organizational assessment. Practice-relevant knowledge, integration of knowledge across business functional areas, and development of student teamwork, leadership and interpersonal skills are hallmarks of problem-based and project based pedagogies (Smith, 2005).

INTRODUCTION

One of the great challenges in providing “real-world” experiences for business students is finding organizations that are willing to provide these opportunities. One college’s approach to providing all business students with real-world experience, while focusing on learning outcomes, and reducing the number of required participating organizations is the use of a program referred to as the ‘mentor network’. The mentor network at our college consists of a faculty- recruited group of regional business professionals typically at the managerial and executive level or ‘mentors’ who have an interest in assisting with the growth and development of junior and senior undergraduate business students. The program is consistent with the experiential learning and project-based learning pedagogy.

A central element of experiential learning theory and project-based learning pedagogy is student involvement in the learning process. Experiential Learning Theory defines learning as “process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (D.A. Kolb, 1984; A.Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005 in Robinson et al, 2010). The Project-Based Learning pedagogy enriches students’ academic experience and learning outcomes by providing them with a project encompassing a series of activities that promotes “learn by doing” (Macdonald and Twining 2002). Assignments an instructor can utilize to support project based learning include providing actual real-world experiences (e.g., Devasagayam & Taran), working with groups, and accomplishing project tasks. These activities may serve to motivate, to introduce, or to apply a concept to the ‘real world’. The activities can also be used to provide reinforcement of theory and/or practice. Cognitive science research about the nature of learning supports that students benefit from working together by making cognitive, social and experiential connections that advance learning (Cross 1999 in Major & Palmer 2001).

Why a Mentor Network?

One means of providing practical experiences for business students would be requiring internships. As Bailey et al. (2000) note, providing internships or apprenticeships to all students would require a very large number of organizations willing to provide placements. Additionally, schools need to consider whether all students are, or should, be eligible to participate in internships. At our college a minimum GPA of 2.5 is required to qualify for a “for-credit” internship and therefore, not all students would perform academically at a level to be eligible to complete an internship even if it were required.

It is clear that internships can provide real-world experience and great value to students. For instance, Taylor (1988) reports that students with internship experience have better employment opportunities and experience less of a reality shock. Conversely, the literature has reported downsides to internships. For instance, the academic department loses a significant amount of control over learning outcomes and the quality of the learning experiences (O’Neill 2010). Along those lines, Clark (2003) argues that through the use of practical and reflective academic assignments, the educational value of business internships can be enhanced.

The mentor network program described next provides an alternative real- world experience for all business students. While the assignment by no means replaces internships or provides as comprehensive an experience as an internship, it has other advantages such as tighter control over learning outcomes and a reduced number of participating organizations, closer monitoring of teamwork and team activities, and in-class learning through team-to-team discussions and presentations.

What is the Mentor Network?

The mentor network at our college consists of regional business professionals typically at the managerial and executive level or 'mentors'. These mentors have been recruited by the faculty to provide a frame of reference for the theory taught in class. Currently, approximately seventy business professionals serve as mentors. Mentoring is the process whereby a more experienced person helps a less experienced person develop in some specified capacity (Murray, 1991 in Schlee 2000). Zachary (2005) describes the mentoring process as a "reciprocal and collaborative learning experience". This experiential learning process therefore becomes a combined effort between the mentor, students and the faculty member as they collaborate to enhance student learning. The faculty and mentors communicate high performance expectations through competence, professionalism, and strong adherence to standards of excellence. (See Appendix B for the Mentor Network description that is (a) reviewed with new mentors as they are recruited into the network (b) periodically discussed with existing mentors.)

At any given time, approximately thirty of the participating organizations are active in a given academic semester. Organizations flip from active to inactive (and back again) based upon seasonality (participating one semester, not participating the next semester), business cycling as a result of economic conditions, executive availability, and organizational philosophy. Connecting at the executive or managerial level is important because individuals in the organization must have enough authority and influence to help students gain entrance to functional areas of the business, gain access to key people with whom the students should speak, and to approve access to data (for assignment completion). Further, the 'halo effect' of executive/managerial involvement suggests to others in the organization that the activity is both approved and important. Students majoring in various business disciplines work in teams of three, four or five students. Four is preferred, three is our second choice, and teams of five are approved in only the most unusual of circumstances. As faculty, four members of a team have been observed as ideal. More students per team, complicates coordinating schedules to meet with the mentor while less members, proves to create a burdensome workload in completing the assignments and project. Each student team has a team leader that is put forth by the team but formalized only upon professor approval. The team schedules an initial interview with their assigned contact or, i.e., executive or manager, at the mentor organization. The mentor then gives the team a tour of the organization and helps the team contact additional employees if necessary.

The profile of a business professionals volunteering in our mentor network is an executive or manager: (1) with 5.7 years of mentor experience; (2) dedicated to meeting with and guiding student teams; and willing to spend an average 9.4 hours per semester of in-company meeting related to the mentor team. Similar to Bailey et al. (2000) we find that mentors are mainly participating for philanthropic reasons. Most mentors participate because they have affinity for our college, e.g. mentors who are alumni from our institution, or a connection to a

specific faculty member. We also find that many mentors receive community-service credit from their organizations and have this recognized in their performance evaluations.

The Assignment

The assignments linked to the mentor network are assimilated into a hands-on, real-world, students-do-everything project. This project applies and extends what the students learn in the introductory Operations Management class that is required of all undergraduate business students at our institution. This course is typically completed during a student's junior year. The students, working in small teams, perform analysis and provide both a written and oral report of their findings resulting from their work with a mentor and mentor organization. Enhancing students' communication skills provides students with a competitive advantage in the market place (Anderson 2010). The general objectives of the assignment are to:

- involve students in the learning process.
- to introduce or to apply a concept to the 'real world'
- acquire hands-on experience documenting and analyzing business processes.
- gain experience reporting and presenting findings.
- reflect on experiences and connect it with existing and new knowledge
- formulate recommendations based on a synthesis of evidence gathered and knowledge applied
- provide service to the surrounding business community.

The activity-based assignment provides an opportunity for students to gain experience in and apply concepts to the 'real world' while involving students in the learning process. In addition, the mentor network assignment extends classroom learning by reinforcing theory with practice. Students therefore are more engaged in the learning process and transform the educational experience to knowledge.

The mentor network project itself is for many students, the first time they are required to write a large report (if combined, papers are typically in the forty to fifty page range, excluding appendices). Students are given an overview of the requirements for the papers, presentations, administrative issues, and expectations. For each paper students are given a list of requirements. Due dates for the papers and presentations are listed in the syllabus. The topics covered in class and the topics assigned are scheduled to be in lock-step. In the appendix, the topics are divided in 3 papers and 3 presentations that together provide a comprehensive overview of the organization's practices. However, the assignment can easily be adapted to 1 or 2 papers by either combining or excluding topics from the assignment.

Macdonald and Twining (2002) point out that it is important that in an activity-based

learning environment, the complexity of the assignments increases. Therefore the ambiguity in the assignments purposefully increases as the semester progresses building from simply describing what is observed in the mentor company to critiquing practices and prescribing recommendations. To practice presentation skills, students present their findings in class. Mentors are invited to these presentations and usually attend.

Feedback and Learning

To measure the effectiveness of our assignment, we conducted a survey of students' and mentors' reactions at the end of the spring 2011 semester. The results are reported in Table 1. Demographic questions of student characteristics provided the following results. Of the students surveyed 56% are male. The average age of the students is 21.9 years. Students indicate that in comparison to traditional class assignments they learn more from the mentor network assignment and are willing to put more time in the assignments, 4.17 and 4.43 respectively on a 5 point scale with 1 labeled much less and 5 labeled much more.

Table 1 presents statistical results for a set of questions that asked students and mentors to rate their perception of the effectiveness of the project compared to traditional textbook assignments to improve student understanding in several topics. Students and mentors were asked to rate 8 topics on five point scales with end points labeled 1 = much less to 5 = much more.

	Mentors (n = 10)		Students (n = 48)	
	mean	st. dev.	mean	st.dev.
Supply Chain Management	4.00**	0.50	4.22**	0.89
Inventory Management	3.89**	0.60	4.43**	0.72
Corporate Strategy	3.80	1.22	3.78*	1.03
Continuous Improvement	3.90**	0.74	4.04**	0.87
Quality	4.40**	0.70	4.48**	0.59
Organizational Assessment	3.60	0.84	3.83**	0.97
Metrics / Measurement	4.20**	0.63	3.30	1.09
System Analysis	3.67*	0.87	3.39	1.06

¹ We used "student" and "yours" for the mentor and student surveys respectively
Scale endpoints: 1 = much less, 5 = much more
* indicate significantly different from the midpoint at the 0.01 and 0.05 level, respectively.

Because the project builds on the strengths identified in the experiential learning literature, we anticipate that the mentor network project is more effective than traditional textbook assignments. Since a score of three indicates that the respondents perceive the traditional and mentor network assignments are equally effective, we compare the mean

responses to the scale-midpoints. Based on a two-tailed t-test, the mentors' and students' mean response for 6 of the 8 questions are significantly different from a neutral response, at the 0.05 level of significance. Clearly, mentors and students felt students learned more from this assignment than from the traditional textbook approach. The exceptions were corporate strategy and assessment for the mentors and metrics and system analysis for the students which were not significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Apparently, mentors and students believed this project better affected their understanding of core concepts as opposed to a traditional textbook assignment.

The second set of questions asks about the effectiveness of the project to improve student skills. Students and mentors were asked to rate the items on five point scales with the endpoints labeled 1 = not at all and 5 = very much. These results are reported in Table 2. Based on a two-tailed t-test, the mentors' and students' mean response for all 5 questions are significantly different from a neutral response, at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, mentors and students believe that the assignment helped them improve presentation, writing, time management, team work and critical thinking skills.

Table 2: To what extent do you believe the mentor network project improved the following skills?

	Mentors (n = 10)		Students (n = 48)	
	mean	st. dev.	mean	st.dev.
Teamwork skills	4.00**	0.67	4.35**	0.82
Presentation skills	4.00**	0.67	3.96*	1.17
Writing skills	4.11**	0.93	3.61*	0.93
Time management skills	3.90**	0.57	4.04**	1.09
Critical thinking skills	4.10**	0.88	4.04**	1.09

Scale endpoints: 1 = not at all, 5 = very much
 ** and * indicate significantly different from the midpoint at the 0.01 and 0.05 level, respectively.

While these results only measure student and mentor perceptions of learning, the mentor network assignments/project is also used for outcome assessment. We have identified specific student learning outcomes for 'soft skills' e.g., writing and presentations for which the project is used as our outcome assessment tool.

Summary and Additional Thoughts

At one college, the mentor network program has been found to be meaningful vehicle to enhance student learning. However, one needs to be aware that, like all relationships, the mentor network requires substantial time to establish and maintain. Faculty members devote the time, and while largely uncompensated, there is great satisfaction in advancing student learning. Also, when viewed pragmatically by faculty, they have the opportunity to (a) interact with interesting and accomplished professionals, (b) tour organizations (c) gain an insider's perspective, and (d)

develop their professional network which periodically leads to consulting engagements.

While by no means replacing internships or providing all the benefits of internships, the mentor network assignment described in this paper addresses some of the weaknesses in internships identified in the literature, e.g., control over learning outcomes, while providing some of the same benefits, e.g., reducing the real-world-shock. Because the assignments can provide value to the participating organization, e.g., identifying wastes in the lean/process improvement section of the assignment, a larger number of organizations might be willing to provide a mentor network than an internship experience.

Both students and mentors, indicate that the assignment is more effective than traditional class assignments to improve student understanding of concepts taught in the introductory operations management course. Student feedback is based on comparison of the mentor network project with assignments completed for other courses. Mentor feedback considers the executives/mentors formal education experiences as the frame of reference. In addition, students and mentors believe that the assignment helps students improve teamwork, presentation, writing, time management, and critical thinking skills. This project is currently a component of the operations management course at our college. However, the concept is flexible enough that, if warranted, the project can be adapted to be part of any business course or become a stand-alone course.

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APPENDIX A

Mentor Network Assignment

Papers and Presentations: Overview

Papers

The purpose of the three papers which teams will submit is to challenge students to critically consider and clearly express, *through the lens of an operations manager*, the application of theory (classroom learning) in practice (mentor company observations). Accordingly, in cogently written, effectively organized papers, students will submit each paper no later than the dates noted in the syllabus.

A rubric for grading each paper is summarized as:

Facts only = D

Facts + good writing = C

Facts + good writing + learning = B

Facts + good writing + learning + application = B+

Facts + good writing + learning + application + critical thinking = A

Papers are valued at 80 points each. With three papers required, 240 points can be earned.

Presentations

Students will present their findings to class in a series of “Executive Briefings.” Briefing content will be 10 minutes with an additional 5 minutes for questions and answers (15 minutes total). While three papers are being written, only two will be presented. The professor will determine the dates and times for the presentations. Presentations are valued at 30 points. With two being required, 60 points can be earned.

Administrative Issues

Papers and presentations are worth 300 of 800 course points (37.5%). Students are encouraged to produce quality results in a constructive manner. As you interact with your mentor company, creating a positive impression of yourselves, the Business Department, and York College is an expectation.

Working collaboratively within your team is essential. All members are expected to actively contribute quality work in a timely manner in an effort to complete the papers and presentations. At times, a student is significantly lax in her/his work to the point that it is detrimental to the team. When this happens, the balance of the team will expeditiously bring this to the attention of the student in question. The nature of the offense will be documented and given to the offending student, with a copy forwarded to the professor. If performance does not improve, the team may dismiss the offending student **ONLY WITH THE CONSENT OF THE PROFESSOR**. To this end, the team (absent the offending party) must meet with the professor to discuss the situation. Dismissing a teammate is a serious matter, as the student will receive a grade of “0” for the 300 paper and presentation points. Accordingly, dealing with aberrant performance as soon as possible is suggested.

In a situation where a mentor deems team performance to be inadequate, s/he may dismiss the team from the mentor company. Should this occur, each member of the team will receive a “0” for the papers and presentations (0/300)

Executive Summaries

Each paper must include an executive summary. Instructions regarding the writing and placement of the executive summary will be provided by your professor.

PAPER 1: THE MENTOR COMPANY IN CONTEXT

The purpose of this paper is to help you develop skills in understanding the external environment in which a company functions, and how environmental factors influence the development and migration of organizational mission, vision, values, and supply chain.

In a cogently written, effectively organized paper, not to exceed ten pages (Appendices do not count in the page total) author a paper which, in essence, applies what you’ve learned in chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 11 to your mentor company. Accordingly:

In what industry does your mentor company function? Access IBIS world and similar databases to write about salient characteristics (size, profitability, trends, etc.) of the industry. (5

points)

Write a brief description and analysis of the markets in which these companies function. Include specific details about their markets and describe the competitive issues they face. (10 points)

What are the mission, vision, and values of the company? How do they manifest themselves on a day-to-day basis? (5 points)

In a broad sense describe the company culture that supports their vision, mission and values. What does the leadership do to reinforce them? How do they “live” the mission, etc. and what does this look like in both the behavior of the employees and the organizations “behavior”, e.g. “green operations” is the stated mission and value and how do they support this that is observable. (5 points)

Insert and comment on the organizational chart(s) which the company has configured. (5 points)

Flowchart the supply chain of the company (use the SIPOC model). Include a brief description of their transformational processes that result in their outputs. How do they organize their operations to give them a competitive edge and differentiate themselves operationally from their competitors? (20 points)

Based on what you’ve learned thus far, describe the competitive advantages and critical success factors (activity map) of the company in their market. What makes them unique in their market and what specifically does each company do to accomplish this? (10 points)

Required Appendix:

Agenda(s) from the meeting(s) with your mentor specific to this assignment.

Minutes from the meeting(s) with your mentor specific to this assignment.

A one page summary (per student) indicating how what you have learned from this paper relates to your academic major. The purpose of this reflective exercise is to help you relate operations management to your specific field of study. What personal/professional lessons were learned that have resulted in you growing as a business student? Further, if you had it to do over again, what would you change about your team? (10 points)

Professionalism of document, quality of writing, intensity of effort, ‘value added’ capability of the document (10 points)

PAPER 2:

QUALITY MANGEMENT SYSTEMS IN THE MENTOR COMPANY

The purpose of this paper is to help you develop organizational assessment skills related to issues of quality and customer interaction/satisfaction. By necessity therefore, this paper

looks both externally (toward the customer) and internally (toward the transformation process). Understanding *quality* is a complex but essential matter as an organization must determine how to position and manage the value of products and services per customer expectations.

In a cogently written, effectively organized paper, not to exceed ten pages (Appendices do not count in the page total) author a paper which, in essence, applies what you've learned in chapters 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 to your mentor company. Accordingly, specific to your mentor company, the following questions should prompt you to write the required paper:

How is quality defined?

How is quality measured?

How does the company determine customer expectations? In essence, how does the company hear the voice of the customer?

How are product life cycles tracked?

What TQM tools does the organization use?

Does the company have a Quality Department? If so, how is it organized?

How are inspectors utilized in the company?

How does the physical configuration of the organization impede or advance the quality of products and services?

What steps are taken to recruit and retain employees who will deliver quality goods and services per company standards?

Given what you've learned about this topic, build a "House of Quality" for your organization.

Required Appendix:

Agenda(s) from the meeting(s) with your mentor specific to this assignment.

Minutes from the meeting(s) with your mentor specific to this assignment.

A one page summary (per student) indicating how what you have learned from this paper relates to your academic major. The purpose of this reflective exercise is to help you relate operations management to your specific field of study. What personal/professional lessons were learned that have resulted in you growing as a business student? Further, if you had it to do over again, what would you change about your team? (10 points)

NOTE: This assignment purposely does not include point values for the issues which you are to consider. Also, please do not consider this a comprehensive list of issues that can be addressed. Rather, at this point in your undergraduate academic development, we expect each team to build a quality paper that is interesting, relevant, and complete.

**PAPER 3:
MANAGING OPERATIONS IN THE MENTOR COMPANY**

The purpose of this paper is to help you develop organizational skills focused on assessing and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of internal operations.

In a cogently written, effectively organized paper, not to exceed ten pages (Appendices do not count in the page total) author a paper which, in essence, applies what you've learned in chapters 12, 13, 14, and 16. Accordingly, specific to your mentor company, the following questions should prompt you to write the required paper:

How is organizational efficiency measured? Please provide examples of calculations.

How does the organization match demand and capacity? What percent of the capacity of the organization is being utilized? How is idle capacity dealt with? When demand is greater than capacity, how is (would) demand be met?

How is inventory managed? What inventory models are used?

How are the four types of inventory tracked and audited?

Describe a primary inventory methodology used by the company. Using company data, provide an example of an inventory report. Critique the report.

Do JIT and/or Lean systems exist in the organization? How is operational waste minimized? How is variability driven out of existing processes? Please provide examples.

With some of the detail now known, let's put it in operational context. How does operational information flow? Is it organized through an ERP and/or MRP? If not, what processes are in place to assure that products and services are delivered on time and with expected quality? (see Figure 14.11 on p. 582).

Given what you have learned about your mentor company, revise the activity map for the organization as configured from Paper 1 (Figure 2.8, p. 46 in the text).

Place yourself in the role of a paid consultant. What recommendations would you make to your client to assure that they thrive into the future? What needs to improve? How would you go about it? Why?

Required Appendix:

Agenda(s) from the meeting(s) with your mentor specific to this assignment.

Minutes from the meeting(s) with your mentor specific to this assignment.

A one page summary (per student) indicating how what you have learned from this paper relates to your academic major. The purpose of this reflective exercise is to help you relate operations management to your specific field of study. What personal/professional lessons were learned that have resulted in you growing as a business student? Further, if you had it to do over again, what would you change about your team? (10 points)

NOTE: This assignment purposely does not include point values for the issues which you are to consider. Also, please do not consider this a comprehensive list of issues that can be addressed. Rather, at this point in your undergraduate academic development, we expect each team to build a quality paper that is interesting, relevant, and complete.

APPENDIX B

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MENTOR:

Meet with student team (typically 4 or 5 times throughout the course of the semester for approximately 90 minutes/session)

Arrange for a tour of the organization

Assists students in gaining access to key people throughout the organization

Help the students prepare for vocational life

Assists students in developing a perspective on academic theory in “real-world” practice

Responsibility of the students

Interact with the mentor as a customer

Adjust to the mentor’s schedule

Research the company prior to meeting with the mentor in an effort to educate themselves so that they can ask good questions and use time efficiently

Gather sufficient information to successfully complete the semester project (see attached)

THE BENEFITS OF AACSB ACCOUNTING ACCREDITATION: PERCEPTIONS OF ADMINISTRATORS OF ACCOUNTING ACCREDITED PROGRAMS

Michael E. Bitter, Stetson University

ABSTRACT

As of April, 2011, 175 institutions were AACSB accounting accredited. Generally, once an institution achieves accounting accreditation, it maintains it. The objective of this study is to identify the perceived institutional benefits of accounting accreditation.

A survey was sent to accounting program administrators at the 166 AACSB accounting accredited institutions in the U.S. Responses were received from 96 administrators (58 percent). Respondents, on average, believe that accounting accreditation is valued by their internal constituencies – senior administration, business deans, and accounting faculty – and enhances the reputation of their program with their stakeholders. Further, they believe relinquishment of accounting accreditation would reflect negatively on their accounting program.

While respondents differed in the extent to which they perceive that various aspects of accounting accreditation standards have influenced their programs, it appears that they feel the standards have positively influenced assurance of learning programs and contributed to the quality of their accounting programs. Additional analyses identified several differences in the perceptions of respondents from institutions with “smaller” vs. “larger” accounting faculties and a few differences between those from accounting units with teaching vs. research missions and those from public vs. private institutions.

Keywords: AACSB, accounting accreditation, AACSB accounting accreditation

INTRODUCTION

The American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (now the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International; hereafter, the “AACSB”) approved the establishment of an accounting accreditation program in 1978. Accreditation standards were adopted in 1980 and accreditation of collegiate accounting programs began with the accreditation of eighteen accounting programs in 1982 (Gaharan et al., 2007).

The idea of accounting accreditation was well-received initially. In fact 84 percent of the accounting chairs responding to a survey expressed intent to seek accounting accreditation (Brown

and Balke, 1983). As of April, 2011, however, only 175 institutions (29 percent of the 607 AACSB business accredited institutions) have attained and maintained accounting accreditation; one hundred sixty-six of these institutions are located in the United States. While the AACSB does not disclose the names or number of schools that earned accounting accreditation but have since chosen not to (or who have been unable to) maintain it, it appears that those numbers are quite small.¹ Once an institution achieves accounting accreditation, it typically maintains that accreditation. Why? The objective of this paper is to identify the perceived institutional benefits of accounting accreditation through a survey of administrators at schools that are AACSB accounting accredited and to determine whether these perceived benefits differ across these institutions.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR ACCOUNTING PROGRAMS²

MacKenzie (1964) notes that accreditation in education serves two primary purposes: 1) to assist the public in identifying quality institutions by certifying institutions (or programs within institutions) that meet formal minimum standards; and 2) to raise the overall quality of education through the requirement of minimum standards for excellence. The AACSB adopted formal accounting accreditation standards in 1980 (Langenderfer, 1987) and eighteen accounting programs were initially accredited in 1982 (Gaharan et al., 2007).

In 1991, the AACSB substantially revised its business and accounting standards, perhaps in response to critics who believed the original standards were too prescriptive and thereby limited innovation and experimentation and discouraged the development of new programs (Bailey and Bentz, 1991). These revised standards, which are mission-based, acknowledge the diversity among existing business and accounting programs and allow institutions more flexibility in achieving their missions. Schools are now evaluated relative to their stated missions (Kren et al., 1993; McKenna et al., 1995).³

The institution's mission is to guide its decisions, including its allocation of resources. Each institution determines the relative emphasis to be placed on faculty teaching and intellectual contributions and the types of intellectual contributions (including publications) that are to be emphasized. Many academicians (including deans at both accredited and non-accredited schools) believed that the mission-based approach would lead to an increased number of accredited institutions, particularly schools that emphasize teaching over research (Yunker, 1998; Jantzen, 2000).

Relative to accounting, the AACSB followed in April, 2000, with a new, more flexible set of accounting accreditation standards that provided accounting units with further discretion to accomplish their missions and meet the needs of their markets (Sinning and Dykxhoorn, 2001). The standards have since been revised in 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2012.⁴ Some of the more notable revisions include the use of formal strategic planning in the accounting unit, modification of the content requirements for accounting program mission statements, requirement of data on accounting student placement and the career success of program graduates, and mandating the

establishment of accounting program learning goals and a direct assessment program, among others. Despite the revisions of the standards that have occurred over the years, the overall objective of accounting accreditation – continuous improvement in accounting education – has not changed.

PRIOR RESEARCH

Prior research on the choice to obtain and maintain accounting accreditation and the benefits and costs thereof has been limited.⁵ Brown and Balke (1983) surveyed the accounting department chairs at AACSB-accredited business schools as to their intention to seek accounting accreditation, with approximately eighty-four percent of respondents indicating their intention to do so. Campbell and Williamson (1983) surveyed accounting chairs (at both AACSB accredited and non-accredited institutions) regarding their perceptions of the 1979 (then) newly-proposed AACSB accounting accreditation standards, finding that most doubted accounting accreditation would result in significant improvements to accounting education. However, a subset of the respondents, those from institutions accredited by the AACSB at the undergraduate level, felt more positively, perceiving AACSB accounting accreditation would, in fact, contribute to the development and maintenance of high quality accounting programs.

In another survey of accounting chairs, Balke and Brown (1985) found the pride and status that would be attained through accounting accreditation was the most common reason for seeking it. Other reasons provided for seeking accounting accreditation were to “measure up to a standard of excellence,” to better compete with other accounting programs for faculty and students, and to secure additional resources. Respondents further believed that accreditation signifies program quality to recruiters of their students. The time involved and the cost of seeking and maintaining accreditation, however, were of concern.

Kren et al. (1993) surveyed accounting administrators at AACSB-accredited schools regarding the contribution of AACSB standards to quality in accounting education and the benefits and costs of accounting accreditation. Not surprisingly, respondents from accounting accredited programs and programs “likely to apply” for accounting accreditation generally felt separate accounting accreditation was desirable and beneficial, allowing for the establishment and maintenance of minimum standards for quality. Other perceived benefits of accounting accreditation included a positive influence on the decisions of prospective students, prospective faculty, and student recruiters. On the contrary, respondents from non-accredited accounting programs generally perceived the costs of accounting accreditation, particularly the administrative burden, to exceed the benefits derived. They further believed that separate accounting accreditation was redundant. Thus, while accounting administrators have historically demonstrated strong interest in accounting accreditation, it seemed uncertain whether the percentage of accredited business schools also holding accounting accreditation would increase.

In a survey of accounting program administrators at AACSB-accredited institutions, Bitter et al. (1999) endeavored to determine why only 37 percent of those schools also held accounting

accreditation. They found significant differences in the attitudes of administrators at accredited and non-accredited accounting programs, with administrators at accredited programs perceiving more value in accounting accreditation and perceiving that administrators, faculty, students, employers, and institutional peers also value accounting accreditation. Accounting administrators at non-accredited programs, while generally agreeing that accounting accreditation is valued by their faculty and would likely enhance their program's reputation, viewed the cost (both time and money) of accounting accreditation as too high. Less than half of the respondents from non-accredited accounting programs were considering or actively pursuing accounting accreditation, suggesting there had been a decline in interest by non-accredited schools and the overall proportion of institutions with accounting accreditation may decline as the number of U.S. institutions with AACSB business accreditation increases.

Although focusing on the process that accounting programs develop to achieve accounting accreditation, Sinning and Dykxhoorn (2001) did identify three benefits that accounting programs may obtain from achieving and maintaining accounting accreditation: 1) self-assessment and peer review that can lead to program improvement and additional resources; 2) enhanced attractiveness of the accounting program to students, faculty, and student recruiters; and 3) enhancement of the accounting program's reputation.

Gaharan et al. (2007) examined the benefits and challenges of seeking and achieving accounting accreditation, particularly as they relate to the accounting faculty, and whether the benefits and challenges differ for accounting units with teaching missions vs. those with research missions. Based on a survey of accounting administrators at institutions that either had achieved accounting accreditation or were in candidacy (as of July, 2003), accounting accreditation was believed to result in greater involvement by advisory boards, re-examination of promotion and tenure guidelines and faculty performance evaluation methods, improvement of curriculum, improvement of the quality of students and faculty attracted to the accounting program, and better job placement of graduates. However, accreditation was not believed to significantly decrease teaching loads and resulted in only limited increases in funding (for salaries, travel, library resources, and supplies). The authors concluded that while achieving accounting accreditation had a positive influence on accounting *programs* in several areas, existing *faculty* received very little benefit from seeking/achieving accreditation, while bearing the majority of the burden, particularly the time involved in the accreditation effort and the efforts to increase/improve output of intellectual contributions and interact more with the accounting profession.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

As of April, 2011, AACSB's web site (www.aacsb.edu) listed 175 colleges and universities world-wide with accounting accredited programs, 166 of which were located in the United States.⁶ These 175 institutions constitute 29 percent of the 607 institutions with accredited business programs. While growth in the number of accounting accredited institutions is occurring more slowly than growth in the number of business accredited institutions (resulting in a decline in the percentage of AACSB business accredited institutions that are also accounting accredited), the

number of accounting accredited programs is, nonetheless, increasing. Thus, it appears for many there is real (or at least perceived) value in seeking and retaining accounting accreditation.

Balke and Brown (1985), Kren et al. (1993), and Bitter et al. (1999) all examined, as part of their studies, the perceived benefits of accounting accreditation. However, these studies are rather dated and their findings were rather general. More recently, Gaharan et al. (2007, 13) purported to study the "...benefits and problems accounting units face..." in the accounting accreditation process. However, their results suggest the study actually examined benefits both to the accounting unit and to the unit's accounting faculty.

The purpose of this study is to contemporarily identify the value of accounting accreditation as perceived by accounting administrators at AACSB accounting accredited institutions and to determine whether the perceptions of accounting administrators differ across these accounting accredited institutions. Similar to some previous studies (e.g., Bitter et al., 1999), I seek to identify the institutional stakeholders who value accounting accreditation. Unlike prior research, however, my study also focuses specifically on whether select AACSB accounting accreditation *standards* are perceived to positively impact the accounting unit, another measure of the perceived value of accounting accreditation.

This leads to the following questions:

RQ 1 Which institutional stakeholders are perceived to value accounting accreditation?

RQ 2 Which accounting accreditation standards are perceived to have had a positive influence on accounting accredited institutions?

Perceptions of accounting administrators may be influenced by certain attributes of their institutions and/or accounting programs. Different accounting accreditation standards may be more beneficial to some than to others. For example, Gaharan et al. (2007) found some differences in the responses of administrators of accounting programs with research missions and those with teaching missions. In addition to the accounting program missions, my study seeks to identify differences, if any, resulting from the type of institution (public vs. private) in which the unit operates, the number of years an accounting program has held accounting accreditation, the size of the accounting faculty, and the existence of an accounting doctoral program.

This leads to the following question:

RQ 3 Do perceptions of the value of accounting accreditation vary across accounting accredited institutions?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Subjects

A one page (double-sided) survey⁷ was mailed to accounting program administrators⁸ at each of the 166 AACSB accounting accredited institutions in the U.S. listed on the AACSB web site (www.aacsb.edu) as of April, 2011. In rare instances where the accounting administrator could not be identified, the survey was addressed to the dean. To encourage response, subjects were provided with a postage-paid envelope, guaranteed anonymity, and offered an executive summary

of the results. A second request was mailed to non-respondents approximately one month after the initial mailing.

Research Instrument

The survey comprised two sections. The first section consisted of 20 “belief” statements regarding accounting accreditation. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement using a five point Likert-type scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The first four statements sought to identify which institutional constituencies were perceived to value accounting accreditation. Following Bitter et al. (1999), the first three statements relate to the respondent’s perception of the value various internal institutional constituents place on accounting accreditation. Statements four and five relate to the impact of accounting accreditation on external constituencies. Specifically, statement four, also generally adopted from Bitter et al. (1999), relates to the association between accounting accreditation and the unit’s reputation with its stakeholders. Based conceptually on signaling theory⁹, statement five relates to whether relinquishment of accreditation would reflect negatively on the accounting program.

The next 14 statements relate to the extent to which respondents believe accounting accreditation standards have had a positive influence on various aspects of their accounting programs. Development of these statements was based largely on review of accounting accreditation standards as well as the findings of select prior research. The final statement measured the extent to which respondents believe compliance with accounting accreditation standards has contributed to the overall quality of their accounting program.

Section two of the survey sought information regarding the number of years the respondent’s program has been accounting accredited, the geographic location of the respondent’s institution, the type of institution (public or private), the mission of the accounting unit (teaching or research), the institution’s Carnegie classification, characteristics of the accounting faculty (highest degree earned, rank, and licensure/certification), accounting degree programs offered, and accounting unit structure (e.g., department, school).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Respondents

Responses were received from 96 administrators, yielding a response rate of 58 percent. The majority of the respondents (76 percent) was from public institutions. Sixty-six percent of respondents’ institutions have maintained accounting accreditation for more than 15 years. Forty-eight percent of respondents indicated their accounting unit’s primary mission is teaching, while 33 percent indicated their unit’s primary mission is research.¹⁰

Ninety-eight percent of the respondents’ programs offer bachelor degrees in accounting, 85 percent offer professional master’s degrees in accounting, 26 percent offer a master of taxation, and 32 percent offer a Ph.D. or D.B.A. in accounting. The average accounting unit employed

approximately 15 members, 78 percent of whom hold a Ph.D. or DBA. Other characteristics of the respondents and their institutions are detailed in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Characteristics of Survey Respondents' Institutions		
	<u>N</u>	Percentage
Surveys Mailed	166	
Number of Respondents	96	58%
Years Accounting Accredited:		
Less than 5 years	4	4%
5-15 years	29	30%
More than 15 years	63	66%
Institutional Type:		
Public	73	76%
Private	23	24%
Primary Mission of Accounting Unit:		
Teaching-based	45	49%
Research-based	31	33%
Both Teaching and Research	17	17%
Accounting-related Degree Programs Offered:		
Bachelor	93	98%
Master in Accounting	81	85%
Master of Tax	25	26%
PhD/DBA	30	32%
Other	6	6%
Institution's Carnegie Classification:		
Research University	39	42%
Doctoral/Research	22	23%
Master's (L/M/S)	29	31%
Baccalaureate	4	4%
Structure of Accounting Unit:		
Department	71	74%
School (within a College)	19	20%
Separate School	1	1%
Other	5	5%
Geographical location (AAA region):		
Mid-Atlantic region	8	9%
Midwest region	23	24%
Northeast region	5	5%
Ohio region	5	5%
Southeast region	25	26%
Southwest region	13	14%
Western region	16	17%

Mean Number of Faculty by Rank	
Professor	5.03
Associate Professor	3.68
Assistant Professor	3.21
Clinical Professor	.62
Lecturer	2.73
Other Rank	.14
Mean Number of Faculty by Highest Degree	
PhD/DBA	11.82
Juris Doctor/LLM	.73
Master's Degree	2.57
Other Degree	.13
Accounting Faculty Size	
Mean By Count of Faculty Rank	15.30 ^b
Range	(4 – 43)
Mean By Count of Highest Degree Earned	15.25 ^b
Range	(5 – 43)
Mean Percentage of Faculty with a PhD/DBA	77.63%
Range	(50% - 100%)
Mean Percentage of Faculty with a CPA License	60.69%
Range	(17% - 100%)
Percentage of Institutions with Two or More Faculty CPAs on Staff	89% (100%) ^a
Percentage of Institutions with One or More Faculty CMAs on Staff	48% (55%) ^a
Percentage of Institutions with One or More Faculty with Other Certifications	31% (35%) ^a
^a – percentage in parentheses calculated using only data from those respondents providing data on the certifications held by their faculty.	
^b – means differ by .05 because information provided by two respondents on faculty size as determined by count of faculty rank and as determined by count of highest degree earned differed. Specifically, one respondent provided data on faculty size by count of highest degree, but not by count of faculty rank, while one respondent provided data on faculty size by count of faculty rank, but not by count of highest degree.	

Perceived Value of Accounting Accreditation

Generally, respondents perceive accounting accreditation is valued by their internal constituencies – their university's senior administration (mean response of 4.17), their business dean (4.39), and their accounting faculty (4.06). They also perceive accounting accreditation enhances the institution's reputation in the eyes of its stakeholders (4.27). Taken as a whole, it does not seem maintenance of accounting accreditation is driven by any particular stakeholder or stakeholder group; rather, it seems to be supported by all of these stakeholders. Finally, respondents agreed relinquishing accounting accreditation would reflect negatively on their program (4.38). All five means were significantly above the mid-point of the scale ("neutral"). In general, the consensus is accounting accreditation is valued by both internal and external constituencies and relinquishing accreditation would be damaging to the accounting program. See table 3.

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral	Strongly Agree		Mean	Std Dev	p-value*
1. Your university's senior administration values your accounting accreditation	1%	2%	17%	40%	40%	4.17	.854	.000
2. Your dean values your accounting accreditation	2%	2%	12%	22%	62%	4.39	.933	.000
3. Your accounting faculty values your accounting accreditation	2%	6%	13%	40%	39%	4.06	.982	.000
4. Accounting accreditation enhances your unit's reputation with its stakeholders	3%	4%	6%	36%	51%	4.27	.978	.000
5. Relinquishing accounting accreditation would reflect negatively on your accounting program	1%	6%	10%	19%	64%	4.38	.976	.000
Accounting accreditation standards have had a positive influence on...								
6. ...innovation in and continuous improvement of your accounting program	8%	8%	26%	37%	21%	3.53	1.160	.000
7. ...your (accounting) strategic planning/management	8%	6%	21%	44%	21%	3.63	1.136	.000
8. ...the availability of sufficient resources to achieve your mission	10%	13%	32%	29%	16%	3.27	1.183	.027
9. ...the alignment of your unit's activities with the accounting mission	7%	10%	30%	38%	15%	3.44	1.093	.000
10. ...the diversity of your faculty and students	16%	23%	45%	13%	3%	2.66	1.003	.001
11. ...your mission-based accounting learning goals	8%	3%	21%	50%	18%	3.66	1.074	.000
12. ...your accounting assurance of learning program	3%	3%	11%	40%	43%	4.16	.966	.000
13. ...your deployment of academically qualified faculty	6%	8%	14%	44%	28%	3.78	1.132	.000
14. ...faculty production of mission-driven scholarship/intellectual contributions	7%	11%	27%	40%	15%	3.43	1.103	.000
15. ...the extent of your faculty's interaction with the profession	12%	20%	39%	23%	6%	2.91	1.087	n.s.
16. ...support for faculty professional development	10%	16%	34%	32%	8%	3.15	1.086	n.s.
17. ...your faculty's portfolio of relevant practical experience	12%	22%	38%	23%	5%	2.89	1.055	n.s.
18. ...your ability to hire/retain qualified accounting faculty	10%	12%	25%	33%	20%	3.41	1.228	.002
19. ...job placement of your students	12%	17%	29%	33%	9%	3.13	1.154	n.s.
20. ...Overall, compliance with accounting accreditation standards has positively contributed to the quality of your accounting program	5%	10%	17%	42%	26%	3.73	1.119	.000
*- Difference between mean and scale mid-point of three (two-tailed t-test)								

Perceived Positive Effects of Accounting Accreditation on the Accounting Unit

There was much greater variation in the responses to the 14 statements on the survey focused on the influence of accounting accreditation standards on accounting programs. In fact, the mean response exceeded “4” (“agree”) for only one statement: “Accounting accreditation standards have had a positive influence on your assurance of learning program” (mean response of 4.16). The strong response to this statement is not unexpected, given current AACSB standards require institutions to maintain an assurance of learning program for their accounting program(s), something most institutions likely did not have (at least as formally or as extensively) prior to the addition of this accreditation requirement.

The mean response to several statements, however, did significantly exceed the mid-point of the scale (“neutral”). Generally, respondents perceive that accounting accreditation standards have had a positive influence on their accounting unit’s strategic planning/management, innovation/continuous improvement, availability of resources, mission-based outcomes (including unit activities, faculty production of research, and development of accounting learning goals), and faculty management (hiring/retention of qualified faculty and deployment of academically qualified faculty). Respondents, however, disagreed that accounting accreditation standards have had a positive influence on the diversity of accounting faculty and students.

The mean belief regarding the unit’s ability to hire and retain qualified faculty is consistent Gaharan et al. (2007, 18), who found that accounting accreditation enhances the ability to recruit “better qualified” faculty. The mean belief regarding support for faculty development (“neutral”) is also consistent with Gaharan et al. (2007), who found that accounting accreditation resulted in only limited increases in funding for travel and dues to professional organizations. However, my findings related to the availability of sufficient resources, job placement of the unit’s students, and faculty interaction with the profession are contrary to those of Gaharan et al. (2007). They found that accounting accreditation resulted in only limited increases in resources for salaries, library resources, and supplies, but that it did enhance student job placement. They also found that accounting accreditation resulted in a “moderate to considerable increase” in faculty interactions with the profession (17).

Given current accounting accreditation standards require accounting faculty to interact with the profession and to maintain a portfolio of relevant practice experience and based on the Gahan, et al. (2007) findings, I expected respondents to indicate the standards more positively impacted these activities. The results may well indicate, due to the “professional” orientation of accounting education, a number of institutions had faculty who were regularly interacting with the profession and obtaining practice experience prior to such a requirement being added to accreditation standards and/or that these activities would occur regardless of accreditation.

Despite mixed results, the majority of respondents believe compliance with accounting accreditation standards has positively contributed to the quality of their accounting program. Thus, while various aspects of accreditation seem to have differing levels of influence on accounting units, there is general belief accounting accreditation provides value.

Additional Analysis of Respondent Perceptions¹¹

Two-tailed t-tests were performed to determine if beliefs differed between respondents from institutions with “smaller” and “larger” accounting faculties¹², teaching-oriented and research-oriented accounting units¹³, public and private institutions, institutions maintaining accounting accreditation for more than 15 years (i.e., those that were likely accredited under the original “rules-based” standards) and those accredited 15 years or less (i.e., those that were initially accredited under “mission-based” standards), and institutions offering an accounting doctoral program and those that do not. Several significant differences were noted in the perceptions of respondents from institutions with “smaller” and “larger” accounting faculties and a few differences were noted between respondents from institutions with teaching-oriented and research-oriented accounting units and from public and private institutions.

“Smaller” vs. “Larger” Accounting Faculties

The most significant differences were noted between respondents from institutions with “smaller” and “larger” accounting faculties.¹⁴ Respondents from institutions with “smaller” faculties felt more strongly that their accounting faculty value their accounting accreditation relative to those from institutions with a “larger” faculty ($p=.004$). While, as previously noted, the mean response of all 96 respondents exceeded “4” (“agree”) for only one statement relating to the perceived positive effects of accounting accreditation on the accounting unit, the mean response of those from institutions with “smaller” accounting faculties equaled or exceeded “4” for three statements. These respondents felt more strongly that accreditation standards had a positive influence on the accounting assurance of learning program ($p=.001$) and on mission-based accounting learning goals ($p=.002$), and compliance with accounting accreditation standards has positively contributed to the quality of their accounting program ($p=.027$) than did those from institutions with “larger” faculties.

Additionally, respondents from institutions with a “smaller” faculty felt more strongly that accounting accreditation positively influenced innovation in and continuous improvement of their accounting program ($p=.006$), the unit’s ability to hire and retain qualified accounting faculty ($p=.008$), support for faculty professional development ($p=.015$), job placement of students ($p=.043$), and the extent of faculty interaction with the profession ($p=.031$). See Table 4.

	Faculty		Institution		Mission	
	Smaller	Larger	Public	Private	Teaching	Research
Number of respondents	49	44	73	23	45	31
1. Your university’s senior administration values your accounting accreditation	4.12	4.20	4.21	4.04	4.16	4.13
2. Your dean values your accounting accreditation	4.39	4.39	4.45	4.17	4.47	4.23
3. Your accounting faculty values your accounting accreditation	4.45	3.80**	4.10	3.96	4.29	3.87
4. Accounting accreditation enhances your unit’s reputation with its	4.45	4.16	4.32	4.13	4.42	4.13

	Faculty		Institution		Mission	
	Smaller	Larger	Public	Private	Teaching	Research
stakeholder						
5. Relinquishing accounting accreditation would reflect negatively on your accounting program	4.51	4.20	4.38	4.35	4.62	4.10*
Accounting accreditation standards have had a positive influence on...						
6. ...innovation in and continuous improvement of your accounting program	3.86	3.20**	3.62	3.26	3.89	3.19**
7. ...your (accounting) strategic planning/management	3.84	3.45	3.71	3.35	3.80	3.48
8. ...the availability of sufficient resources to achieve your mission	3.27	3.30	3.34	3.04	3.13	3.35
9. ...the alignment of your unit's activities with the accounting mission	3.63	3.28	3.55	3.09	3.62	3.33
10. ...the diversity of your faculty and students	2.78	2.57	2.79	2.22*	2.67	2.87
11. ...your mission-based accounting learning goals	4.00	3.34**	3.75	3.35	3.89	3.61
12. ...your accounting assurance of learning program	4.49	3.86**	4.23	3.91	4.33	4.00
13. ... your deployment of academically qualified faculty	3.94	3.65	3.90	3.39	3.82	3.67
14. ... faculty production of mission-driven scholarship/intellectual contributions	3.65	3.23	3.45	3.35	3.62	3.23
15. ...the extent of your faculty's interaction with the profession	3.16	2.68*	2.96	2.74	3.04	2.77
16. ...support for faculty professional development	3.43	2.89*	3.21	2.96	3.29	3.00
17. ...your faculty's portfolio of relevant practical experience	2.98	2.80	2.97	2.61	3.00	2.77
18. ...your ability to hire/retain qualified accounting faculty	3.73	3.07**	3.51	3.09	3.67	3.03*
19. ...job placement of your students	3.37	2.89*	3.25	2.74	3.31	2.90
20. ...Overall, compliance with accounting accreditation standards has positively contributed to the quality of your accounting program	4.00	3.50*	3.86	3.30*	3.93	3.61
Note: The median number of full-time accounting faculty at respondent institutions was 13. For purposes of analysis, "smaller" faculties are those staffed by 13 or less faculty; "larger" faculties are those staffed by 14 or more faculty.						
Significance of Mean Differences (two-tailed t-test):						
*- p<.05						
**- p<.01						

Accounting Units with Teaching Missions vs. Research Missions

Respondents from an accounting unit with a teaching mission felt more strongly that relinquishing accounting accreditation would reflect negatively on their accounting program ($p=.014$) than those from accounting units with research missions.¹⁵ Respondents from an accounting unit with a teaching mission also had stronger beliefs that accounting accreditation

positively influenced innovation in and continuous improvement of their accounting program ($p=.008$) and their ability to hire and retain qualified faculty ($p=.024$). See Table 4. More specifically, Bonferroni post-hoc analysis (results not tabled) indicates that these differences were between respondents from units with a teaching mission *and* a “smaller” faculty and those from units with a research mission *and* a “larger” faculty.¹⁶

Public vs. Private Institutions

Respondents at public institutions were more likely to believe accounting accreditation positively contributed to the quality of their accounting programs than those from private institutions ($p=.036$). See Table 4.

Interaction of Accounting Faculty Size and Institution Type

Seventy-five percent of accounting units served by “smaller” faculties were housed in a public institution, whereas 76 percent of accounting units served by “larger” faculties were also housed in a public institution. Given this and given differences previously noted between respondents from units with “smaller” and “larger” faculties, further analysis is conducted to determine how, if at all, the interaction of accounting faculty size and institution type impacts perceptions. Responses were categorized into one of four groups: units with a “smaller” accounting faculty housed in a public institution (SPUB); units with a “larger” accounting faculty housed in a public institution (LPUB); units with a “smaller” accounting faculty housed in a private institution (SPRI); and units with a “larger” accounting faculty housed in a private institution (LPRI). One-way ANOVAs were conducted, with a Bonferroni post-hoc analysis of the four group means.

Respondents from LPRI institutions felt less strongly that their accounting faculty value accounting accreditation than those from SPUB or SPRI institutions ($p=.008$ and $p=.004$, respectively). These respondents also felt less strongly that accounting accreditation enhances their unit’s reputation with stakeholders than respondents from SPUB and SPRI institutions ($p=.041$ and $p=.019$, respectively), although the mean response was well above three (3.55).

Review of mean responses of respondents from LPRI institutions suggests that these respondents are generally less likely to perceive a positive influence of accounting accreditation standards on their programs relative to other respondents. Specifically, the mean responses of those from LPRI institutions to all 14 statements were below 3 (“neutral”), except for the mean response to the statement regarding the impact of accreditation on the accounting assurance of learning program (mean of 3.55). Fourteen of the 15 significant mean differences identified through Bonferroni post-hoc analyses were between respondents from LPRI institutions and those in the other three groups, with eight of those significant mean differences between these respondents and respondents from SPUB public institutions. Respondents from SPUB institutions felt more strongly that accounting accreditation positively influenced innovation in and continuous improvement of their accounting program ($p=.005$), the diversity of their students and faculty¹⁷ ($p=.004$), their mission-based accounting learning goals ($p=.006$), their accounting assurance of learning programs

($p=.006$), their deployment of academically qualified faculty ($p=.039$), their ability to hire and retain qualified accounting faculty ($p=.018$), and the job placement of their students ($p=.003$). These respondents felt much more strongly that relinquishing accounting accreditation would reflect negatively on their program ($p=.004$).

Respondents from SPRI institutions felt more strongly that accounting accreditation positively influenced innovation in and continuous improvement of their accounting program ($p=.020$), the diversity of their students and faculty¹⁷ ($p=.034$), and the job placement of their students ($p=.014$) than respondents from LPRI institutions. Respondents from LPUB institutions felt more strongly that accounting accreditation positively influenced the diversity of their faculty and students¹⁷ ($p=.001$), their deployment of academically-qualified faculty ($p=.044$), and the job placement of their students ($p=.014$) than respondents from LPRIV institutions. Finally, respondents from SPUB institutions felt more strongly than respondents from LPUB institutions that accounting accreditation positively influenced their accounting assurance of learning program ($p=.050$). See Table 5.

Group ID Accounting Faculty Size Institution Type Number of Respondents ^a	SPUB-1 "Smaller" Public 36	LPUB-2 "Larger" Public 34	SPRI-3 "Smaller" Private 12	LPRI-4 "Larger" Private 11	Significant Differences
1. Your university's senior administration values your accounting accreditation	4.11	4.29	4.17	3.91	
2. Your dean values your accounting accreditation	4.56	4.35	4.08	4.27	
3. Your accounting faculty values your accounting accreditation	4.28	3.97	4.58	3.27	1 vs. 4 ** 3 vs. 4 **
4. Accounting accreditation enhances your unit's reputation with its stakeholder	4.39	4.35	4.67	3.55	1 vs. 4 * 3 vs. 4 *
5. Relinquishing accounting accreditation would reflect negatively on your accounting program	4.44	4.29	4.67	4.00	
Accounting accreditation standards have had a positive influence on...					
6. ...innovation in and continuous improvement of your accounting program	3.83	3.44	3.92	2.55	1 vs. 4 ** 3 vs. 4 *
7. ...your (accounting) strategic planning/management	3.81	3.71	3.83	2.82	
8. ...the availability of sufficient resources to achieve your mission	3.22	3.50	3.25	2.82	
9. ...the alignment of your unit's activities with the accounting mission	3.69	3.48	3.42	2.73	
10. ...the diversity of your faculty and students	2.78	2.88	2.75	1.64	1 vs. 4 ** 2 vs. 4 ** 3 vs. 4 *
11. ...your mission-based accounting learning goals	4.08	3.50	3.75	2.91	1 vs. 4 **
12. ...your accounting assurance of learning program	4.56	4.00	4.25	3.55	1 vs. 2 * 1 vs. 4 **
13. ... your deployment of academically qualified faculty	3.94	3.94	3.83	2.91	1 vs. 4 * 2 vs. 4 *

Group ID Accounting Faculty Size Institution Type Number of Respondents ^a	SPUB-1 "Smaller" Public 36	LPUB-2 "Larger" Public 34	SPRI-3 "Smaller" Private 12	LPRI-4 "Larger" Private 11	Significant Differences
14. ...faculty production of mission-driven scholarship/intellectual contributions	3.58	3.38	3.92	2.73	
15. ...the extent of your faculty's interaction with the profession	3.14	2.85	3.25	2.18	
16. ...support for faculty professional development	3.42	3.06	3.42	2.45	
17. ...your faculty's portfolio of relevant practical experience	3.03	2.94	2.92	2.27	
18. ...your ability to hire/retain qualified accounting faculty	3.78	3.26	3.58	2.55	1 vs. 4 *
19. ...job placement of your students	3.36	3.18	3.42	2.00	1 vs. 4 ** 2 vs. 4* 3 vs. 4*
20. ...Overall, compliance with accounting accreditation standards has positively contributed to the quality of your accounting program	4.08	3.74	3.75	2.82	1 vs. 4**
^a Total N=93, as three respondents did not provide information on accounting faculty size.					
Significance of Mean Differences (Bonferroni multiple comparison test): *- p<.05 **- p<.01					

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL ANALYSES

Perceived Value of Accounting Accreditation.

Overall, results suggest that accounting faculty value their accounting accreditation, although respondents from accounting units with "smaller" accounting faculties perceive the value to be stronger. Specifically, respondents from units with "smaller" faculties (regardless of whether at public or private institutions) believe their accounting faculty value accounting accreditation and that accounting accreditation enhances their unit's reputation with its stakeholders more so than respondents from LPRI institutions. Further, respondents from units with a teaching-oriented mission believe relinquishment of accounting accreditation would reflect negatively on their program more strongly than those from units with a research-oriented mission.

Perceived Influence of Accounting Accreditation Standards.

Generally, respondents from LPRI institutions were less likely to perceive that accounting accreditation standards were a positive influence on their program than respondents from SPRI and public (particularly SPUB) institutions. The most significant differences in perceptions related to the influence of accreditation on innovation and continuous improvement, assurance of learning, faculty hiring/retention and deployment, and student job placement. Specifically, respondents from units with "small" faculties (at both public and private institutions) feel more strongly that accounting

accreditation standards have had a positive influence on innovation in and continuous improvement of their accounting program than those from LPRI institutions.

While results indicate that respondents, in general, believe that accounting accreditation standards have positively influenced their mission-based accounting learning goals and accounting assurance of learning program, respondents from accounting units with “smaller” faculties felt more strongly than respondents from units with “larger” faculties. More specifically, respondents from SPUB institutions felt more strongly than respondents from LPRI institutions.

Respondents from both accounting units with “smaller” faculties and accounting units with a teaching mission generally felt more strongly accounting accreditation standards have positively influenced their ability to attract and retain qualified accounting faculty than respondents from units with “larger” faculties and units with a research mission, respectively. The greatest differences in perception were between respondents from units with “smaller” faculties and a teaching mission and those from units with “larger” faculties” and a research mission as well as between respondents from SPUB institutions and LPRI institutions. Respondents from public institutions felt more strongly accounting accreditation standards have positively influenced their deployment of “academically qualified” faculty than those from LPRI institutions.

Respondents from LPRI institutions were less likely to perceive that accounting accreditation standards have positively influenced the job placement of their students than respondents from public and SPRI institutions. In fact, review of the mean responses of those from LPRI institutions suggest they generally did not perceive any positive influence on job placement. Finally, while results indicate that respondents, in general, believe that compliance with accounting accreditation standards has positively contributed to the quality of their accounting program, respondents from accounting units with “smaller” faculties and respondents from public institutions (regardless of accounting faculty size) felt more strongly than respondents from units with “larger” faculties and respondents from private institutions, respectively. The greatest difference was between respondents from SPUB institutions and respondents from LPRI institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

The number of U.S. institutions holding accounting accreditation has increased from 18 in 1982 to 166 in 2011. The objective of this study is to determine the perceived value of accounting accreditation to these institutions. Administrators of U.S. accounting accredited programs who responded to the survey, on average, believe accreditation is valued by their internal constituencies – senior administration, business deans, and accounting faculty – and enhances the reputation of their programs with their stakeholders. It was also clear they believe relinquishment of accounting accreditation would reflect negatively on their accounting programs.

While respondents differed in the extent to which they believe various aspects of accounting accreditation standards have positively influenced their programs, it appears that respondents believe the standards have influenced assurance of learning programs and have positively

contributed to the quality of their accounting programs. The greatest number of differences was between respondents from institutions with “smaller” accounting faculties and those with “larger” accounting faculties, with respondents from institutions with “smaller” accounting faculties agreeing more strongly about the influence of accounting accreditation standards on their programs. The differences were most significant between respondents from units with “smaller” faculties housed at a public institution and those from units with “larger” faculties housed at a private institution.

Prior research has indicated a strong interest in accounting accreditation, yet the number of new institutions achieving accounting accreditation has slowed and the proportion of business accredited schools that are also accounting accredited has fallen. Are there misperceptions regarding accounting accreditation among those not yet accounting accredited? Since the results of this study indicate accredited schools (particularly those with “small” faculties and/or at public institutions) perceive value in accreditation, perhaps there is a need for the AACSB to further promote the benefits of accounting accreditation to accounting program at institutions that hold business accreditation but not accounting accreditation. Such efforts might include active recruitment of schools that could qualify for accounting accreditation (particularly non-U.S. institutions with accounting programs since only nine of 150+ non-U.S. AACSB business accredited institutions are also accounting accredited), continued formal dialogue regarding some of the perceptions (and perhaps misperceptions) and concerns of non-accredited accounting programs, and continual consideration of ways to improve accounting accreditation standards and the accreditation process.

Certain limitations of the study must be acknowledged. First, the study attempted to capture the perceptions of accounting administrators at U.S. accounting accredited institutions. These reported perceptions may not reflect reality and may not reflect the perceptions of the accounting faculty at these institutions (or at non-U.S. accounting accredited institutions who were not invited to participate in this survey). Second, a number of respondents were unwilling to categorize their accounting unit’s mission as primarily teaching-oriented or research-oriented. Instead, they marked on the instrument itself that their unit’s mission was both teaching- and research-oriented. Had this “dual mission” option been provided on the survey, an unknown number of other respondents may have also identified their accounting unit in that way, thus changing my findings regarding the impact of unit mission on perceptions. Third, institutional demographics were self-reported by respondents. Since the survey was conducted anonymously, there is no way to verify the accuracy of this information. Finally, while the overall response rate was strong, no responses were received from 70 institutions. It is unknown how the results may have differed had the accounting administrators from those 70 institutions completed the survey.

ENDNOTES

- 1 For example, 118 of the 122 AACSB accounting accredited schools listed in the 1996-97 AACSB membership directory were still accounting accredited as of April, 2011.

2 For a more thorough review, see Bitter et al. (1999).
3 For a further discussion of the 1991 revision of accounting accreditation standards, see Bailey and Bentz
(1991).
4 Most recently, the AACSB issued revised Accounting Accreditation Standards that were adopted by the
AACSB Accreditation Council in April, 2013.
5 There has also been research on the processes, including outcomes assessment, institutions have
implemented to achieve and maintain AACSB accreditation. See Sinning and Dykxhoorn (2001) for
citations of prior research. Sinning and Dykxhoorn themselves attempted to develop a list of accreditation-
related processes that accounting units have developed and implemented and identified the extent of faculty
involvement in those processes.
6 As a point of reference, Gaharan et al. (2007) noted that 72 accounting programs had been accounting
accredited by 1989. Bitter et al. (1999) reported that, according to the 1996-97 AACSB membership
directory, 122 institutions (37 percent of the 326 institutions with AACSB business accreditation) held
accounting accreditation. By November, 2000, 149 (40 percent of the 370 AACSB business accredited U.S.
institutions) were also accounting accredited (Sinning and Dykxhoorn, 2001). By December, 2005,
Gaharan et al. (2007) reported 167 (32 percent of the 515 schools holding AACSB business accreditation)
were also accounting accredited (Gaharan et al. 2007).
7 The survey was exempted from review by the Human Participants Institutional Review Board at my
University based on criteria established by the Board and certified by my department chair at that time.
8 While there are likely other faculty members and/or administrators who could potentially provide
informative responses, accounting chairs were chosen as the recipients of the survey as they are likely to
possess a thorough understanding of accounting accreditation standards and be directly involved in the
accreditation maintenance process.
9 In the context of accreditation, the idea (based on MacKenzie, 1964) that AACSB accreditation “signals”
program quality and, therefore, relinquishment of accreditation may “signal” loss of or lack of quality.
10 While not provided as option on the survey, 18 percent of respondents hand-wrote that their unit’s primary
mission was both teaching and research.
11 A “value” score (not reported) was calculated for each respondent by summing their responses to the first
five survey items regarding the value of accounting accreditation. An “influence” score (also not reported)
was also calculated for each respondent by summing their responses to survey items six through twenty
regarding the perceived influence of accounting accreditation standards. These scores were regressed
against accounting faculty size (“smaller” vs. “larger”), institution type (public/private), accounting unit
mission (teachings vs. research/both), length of time accredited (greater than 15 years vs. 15 years or less),
Carnegie classification (research vs. master’s/baccalaureate), and existence of a PhD program. Neither
regression model was significantly predictive.
12 The median size of respondents’ full-time accounting faculties (based on count of “faculty rank” variables)
was 13. For purposes of analysis, “smaller” (“larger”) faculties are those staffed by 13 or fewer (14 or
more) faculty. Presumably, smaller faculties service smaller accounting program enrollments.
13 For purposes of analysis, institutions indicating their accounting unit’s mission was both teaching- and
research-oriented were excluded.
14 The majority of institutions with “smaller” accounting faculties has an accounting unit with a teaching-
oriented mission (74 percent), is either a baccalaureate or masters-level institutions (52 percent), offers no
accounting PhD program (88 percent), and has held accounting accreditation for 15 years or less (53
percent). The majority of institutions with “larger” accounting faculties has an accounting unit with a
research-oriented mission (59 percent), is Carnegie-classified research or doctoral institutions (86 percent),
offers an accounting PhD program (55 percent), and has held accounting accreditation for more than 15
years (80 percent).

- ¹⁵ The majority of accounting units with a primary teaching mission has a “smaller” faculty (84 percent), is part of a baccalaureate or masters-level institution (61 percent), and offers no accounting PhD program (98 percent). The majority of accounting units with a primary research mission has a “larger” faculty (77 percent), is part of Carnegie-classified research or doctoral institutions (100 percent), offers an accounting PhD program (81 percent), and has held accounting accreditation for more than 15 years (90 percent).
- ¹⁶ Recall that, as noted in footnote 14, 74 percent of accounting units served by “smaller” faculties also had a teaching-oriented mission. Likewise, as noted in footnote 15, 84 percent of accounting units with teaching-oriented missions also were served by “smaller” faculties. Due to missing self-reported demographic information, only 74 of the 96 responses were included in the post-hoc analysis.
- ¹⁷ While the mean response from respondents from these institutions were significantly higher than those from respondents from LPRI institutions, the mean response suggests they generally do not believe accounting accreditation standards have had a positive influence on student and faculty diversity.

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SOCIAL CAPITAL, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND HAPPINESS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ASYMMETRIC IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON HAPPINESS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness. A significant and positive relationship is found between all dimensions of emotional intelligence and happiness. However, the impact is found to be asymmetric between groups exhibiting different social capital. The implications of this finding for faculty and administrators in universities who are vested in the education of students are examined.

INTRODUCTION

The mental and emotional health of students have been of growing concern to administrators and faculty in universities who recognize that their role in education is not simply to provide students with technical and cognitive skills but to educate the “whole person.” Many universities cite the education of the whole person as a governing goal in their vision statements. Congruent with that strategic vision is the concurrent demand of employers from all industries, healthcare inclusive, for employees who have both technical skills as well as the “soft skills” often grouped under the term of personal competencies or emotional intelligence. This is especially important in industries where stress and burn-outs are prevalent (Codier, Kooker and Shoultz, 2008; Akerjordet and Severinsson, 2007; McQueen, 2004).

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has gained significant traction over the last twenty years. Emotional intelligence has been shown to have an impact on overall job performance, in areas such as conflict management, negotiation and work group outcomes (Yang, 2009; Foo et.al, 2004; Van Rooy and Viswesvaran, 2004). It is related to key organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, performance and customer or patient satisfaction (Clarke, 2006; Daus and Ashkanasy, 2005; McQueen, 2004; Van Rooy and Viswesvaran, 2004; Larson and Ferketich, 1993). The significance of EI as a better predictor of management success than technical and cognitive skills has been well documented (Goleman et.al, 2002; Goleman, 1995). Business organizations such as Federal Express and Proctor and Gamble have responded to these findings by providing EI training to their employees.

Educational institutions and program accrediting bodies such as the Accrediting Council of the Graduate Medical Education have also responded to these findings by including EI as elements of core competencies thereby increasing the EI of their professional students with the aim of creating caring and high performing work environments of the future (Grewal and Davidson, 2008).

However, the importance of emotional intelligence goes beyond simply work performance. Indeed, Goleman argues that it influences not just an individual's career achievements but more importantly one's mental and physical health (Goleman, 1995). Studies in this area point to the role of emotional intelligence in the personal outcomes of individuals, which include among other things, the ability to handle emotional issues such as those prevalent in the healthcare industry as well as stress (Ciarrochi and Scott, 2006; Clarke, 2006; Day and Carroll, 2004; McQueen, 2004; Van Rooy and Viswesvaran, 2004; Larson and Ferketich, 1993). Research shows that students with low emotional intelligence tend to engage in negative behaviors such as procrastination, social withdrawal and use of stimulants like tobacco, all of which have harmful impacts on their health and well-being (Pau et. al, 2004; Pau and Croucher, 2003).

While emotional intelligence has been recognized in research as being important for personal outcomes and performance of individuals, only a few studies have examined its relationship with happiness or subjective well-being. Yet subjective well-being has been shown to be related to life satisfaction, stress and delinquent behaviors (Furnham et.al, 2005; Palmer et.al, 2002). It has also been found to be related to depression and a set of psychological disorders. Youths exhibiting higher levels of subjective well-being are less inclined to violent behaviors and have higher intrinsic motivation (Hirschi, 2011; Park, 2004). The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between happiness or subjective well-being and emotional intelligence. It hypothesizes that emotional intelligence is positively related to happiness. Weisinger asserts that EI can be learned (1998 p1). This suggests that colleges can teach EI to their students. As such, would the college curricula that include EI instruction not only prepare students better for the work place but would also increase their overall happiness? Furthermore, the literature indicates that individuals who are engaged in sports or within the organization are happier (Huang and Humphreys, 2012). This paper, therefore, further examines the hypothesized asymmetric effect of EI on happiness of students who are engaged in accumulating social capital on campus as opposed to those who are not. Participation in sports and in campus organizations are used as proxy for campus engagement. Finally, impact analysis is conducted to identify those attributes that have the largest impacts on happiness among students exhibiting different accumulated social capital as well as between upper and lower classmen. This leads to managerial implications for faculty and university administrators as they make decisions on groups of students to additionally focus their educational interventions in their quest to realize their strategic goal of educating the "whole person."

METHOD

In total, 366 individuals who are students in a 4-year university on the East Coast participated in the study. The sample consisted of about 48% males and 52% females. Average age was 21 years. Participants took about one hour to complete the study.

Measures

Emotional Intelligence

The term “emotional intelligence” was put forward by Salovey and Mayer in 1990 to capture a form of “social intelligence” that enables individuals to manage their emotions, monitor the emotions of others and use this information to guide actions and thoughts in building relationships. The roots of social intelligence is older than Salovey and Mayer and can be traced to Edward L. Thorndike who wrote about managing and understanding men and women in human relations (Thorndike, 1920). Mayer and Salovey defined emotional intelligence as “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (Mayer and Salovey, 1997, p10). Furnham and Petrides, in their investigation of happiness, used the trait emotional intelligence questionnaire short form to measure global trait EI (Furnham and Petrides, 2003). This does not lend itself to understanding the impact and importance of the different facets of emotional intelligence. Thus, the 16-item WLEI Scale is used because it has been found to be a comprehensive measurement of trait emotional intelligence. Furthermore, rigorous tests, construct validity as well as predictive validity of this scale have been extensively detailed (Deshpande and Joseph, 2009; Kafetsios and Zampetakis, 2008; Sy and O’Hara, 2006; Law et.al, 2004; Wong and Law, 2002).

Happiness

The recent focus among psychologists to include studies on the positive elements of the human condition has been embraced with much enthusiasm by many sectors of the community, including scholars, scientists and educators. This branch of psychology, called Positive Psychology, recognizes that psychology’s traditional emphasis on human unhappiness manifested in depression, anxiety and emotional disorders and their corresponding treatments provides an incomplete picture of the human experience and human potential. Instead, Positive Psychology applies scientific methods to gain better understanding and modes of intervention that aims to “build thriving individuals, families and communities,” (Aspinwall and Staudinger, 2003; Seligman, 2002). The Oxford Happiness Inventory, a 29-item questionnaire is used in this study (Argyle, Martin & Crossland, 1989). This 7-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly

disagree) inventory has been shown to have test-retest reliability and internal consistency (see Argyle et. al, 1989). It has been used extensively as a measurement of happiness and has been translated into multiple languages.

RESULTS

Identifying Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

The sixteen attributes in the WLEI scale are subjected to factor analysis to uncover the salient dimensions of emotional intelligence. Factor analysis is the procedure for summarizing the information ratings on the 16 attributes into a smaller number of dimensions, which can then be identified as the dimensions underlying the respondents' ratings. The analysis extracted factors that had eigenvalues more than one. Four factors are extracted using this criterion accounting for about 75% of the variance. The results of the factor analysis after applying the varimax rotation procedure are summarized in Table 1. Varimax rotation is used because of its assumption of orthogonality among the factors. The attributes within each dimension is consistent with Wong and Law's four items of emotional intelligence (2002).

Table 1: Factor Analysis of Variables

Variable Label	Regulation of own emotions	Leveraging emotions	Understanding own emotions	Emotional appraisal of others
Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Able to control temper and handle difficulties rationally	0.781	0.234	0.160	0.265
Quite capable of controlling own emotions	0.782	0.199	0.366	0.118
Can always calm down quickly when very angry	0.832	0.081	0.138	0.074
Good control of own emotions	0.797	0.168	0.342	0.167
Would always encourage myself to try my best	0.212	0.838	0.253	0.194
Am a self-motivated person	0.227	0.828	0.277	0.107
Always set goals and try my best to achieve them	0.151	0.737	0.091	0.361
Always tell myself that I am a competent person	0.100	0.772	0.354	0.164
Have a good sense of why I have certain feelings	0.204	0.228	0.768	0.164
Have a good understanding of my own emotions	0.349	0.300	0.759	0.164
Really understand what I feel	0.269	0.265	0.763	0.220
Always know whether or not I am happy	0.171	0.182	0.694	0.263
Good understanding of emotions of people around me	0.176	0.150	0.244	0.807
Good observer of others' emotions	0.092	0.187	0.256	0.800
Always know my friends' emotions from their behavior	0.094	0.176	0.306	0.737
Am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others	0.414	0.309	-0.078	0.608

The first factor relates to the ability to control one's temper and emotions, to be able to calm down and control one's emotions as well as handle difficulties rationally. This dimension pertains to the degree to which individuals are able to regulate their own emotions. As such, similar to Wong and Law (2002), this dimension is labeled Regulation of Own Emotions.

The second factor pertains to the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as competent and self-motivated with tendencies to encourage themselves to set and achieve goals. It is labeled Leveraging Emotions. The third factor relates to assessing one's feelings and understanding one's own emotions. This factor pertains to an individual being able to discern his or her own emotions and is, therefore, labeled Understanding Own Emotions. The fourth factor relates to the ability to observe, understand and be sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others. It also includes the capacity to discern emotions of others through their behaviors. Similar to Wong and Law (2002), this dimension is labeled Emotional Appraisal of Others.

Relationship between EI and Happiness

Happiness is regressed on the four dimensions of EI. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 2 and indicate that all four dimensions of EI are positively and significantly related to happiness at the $p=0.001$ level.

Salient Dimension	Parameter Estimate	t-statistic
Regulation of own emotions	0.287*	5.489
Leveraging emotions	0.319*	6.110
Understanding own emotions	0.334*	6.406
Emotional appraisal of others	0.189*	3.630

* All parameters are significant at the $p=0.001$ level; r-squared =0.588, model is significant at the $p=0.001$ level.

Understanding Own Emotions and Leveraging Emotions had the largest impacts on happiness. Higher abilities in these areas lead to higher degrees of happiness. Both dimensions have parameter estimates of 0.334 and 0.319 respectively. Compared to the other dimensions, the dimension with the least influence on happiness is Emotional Appraisal of Others with a parameter estimate of 0.189.

Asymmetric Impact of EI on Happiness

A dummy variable regression is used to estimate the impact of the four dimensions of EI on happiness among groups exhibiting different social capital. The usefulness of this analysis lies in its ability to obtain separate estimates for those who are engaged within the institution from those who are not. Participation in sports and participation in campus organizations are used as proxy. The regression analyses for participation in sports and membership in campus organizations is exhibited in Table 3, columns A to B and columns C to D respectively.

The results of this analysis illustrated in Table 3 columns A to D indicate that, with the exception of the dimension Emotional Appraisal of Others among those who participate in organizations, which is positively related to happiness but not significant, all other EI dimensions have positive and significant effects on happiness at the $p=0.05$ level at least. More importantly,

the impact of all dimensions of EI on happiness is higher for those who are not engaged in campus organizations.

Table 3: Regression of Happiness on Dimensions of Emotions Intelligence

Salient Dimensions	Participate in Sports ^a (A)	Not Participate in Sports (B)	Participate in Organizations ^b (C)	Not Participate in Organizations (D)
Regulation of own emotions	0.288*	0.302*	0.288*	0.399*
Leveraging emotions	0.242*	0.403*	0.255*	0.412*
Understanding own emotions	0.371*	0.322*	0.343*	0.406*
Emotional appraisal of others	0.173**	0.215*	0.087	0.333*

* Parameters are significant at the p=0.01 level. ** Parameters are significant at the p=0.05 level.
a, Model is significant at the p=0.01 level; r-square =0.60. b Model is significant at the p=0.01 level; r-square =0.57.

Similarly, comparing columns A and B, the impact on happiness of all dimensions of EI, except the dimension of Understanding Own Emotions, is higher for those who do not participate in sports. Among those who participate in sports, Understanding Own Emotions is found to have the largest impact on happiness. This is consistent with findings that show that management of feelings or emotions is an important element in an athlete’s performance (Lane and Wilson, 2011; Puig and Vilanova, 2011).

This asymmetric effect indicates that EI dimensions of Emotional Appraisal of Others, Leveraging Own Emotions and Regulation of Own Emotions on happiness is about 283%, 62% and 39% higher in situations when students are not part of campus organizations than when students are part of campus organizations. This means that improving one unit of EI among the former group will have a greater impact on happiness ratings. Similarly, Leveraging Emotions and Emotional Appraisal of Others are nearly 67% and 24% higher when students are not participating in sports than among students who are part of sport groups.

Table 4: Regression of Happiness on Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence for Upper and Lower Classmen

Salient Dimension	Upper Classmen (A)	Lower Classmen (B)
Regulation of own emotions	0.179**	0.368*
Leveraging emotions	0.292*	0.341*
Understanding own emotions	0.213*	0.429*
Emotional appraisal of others	0.240*	0.143**

* All parameters are significant at the p=0.001 level. **Parameters are significant at the p=0.05 level.
Model is significant at the p=0.01 level; r-square = 0.66.

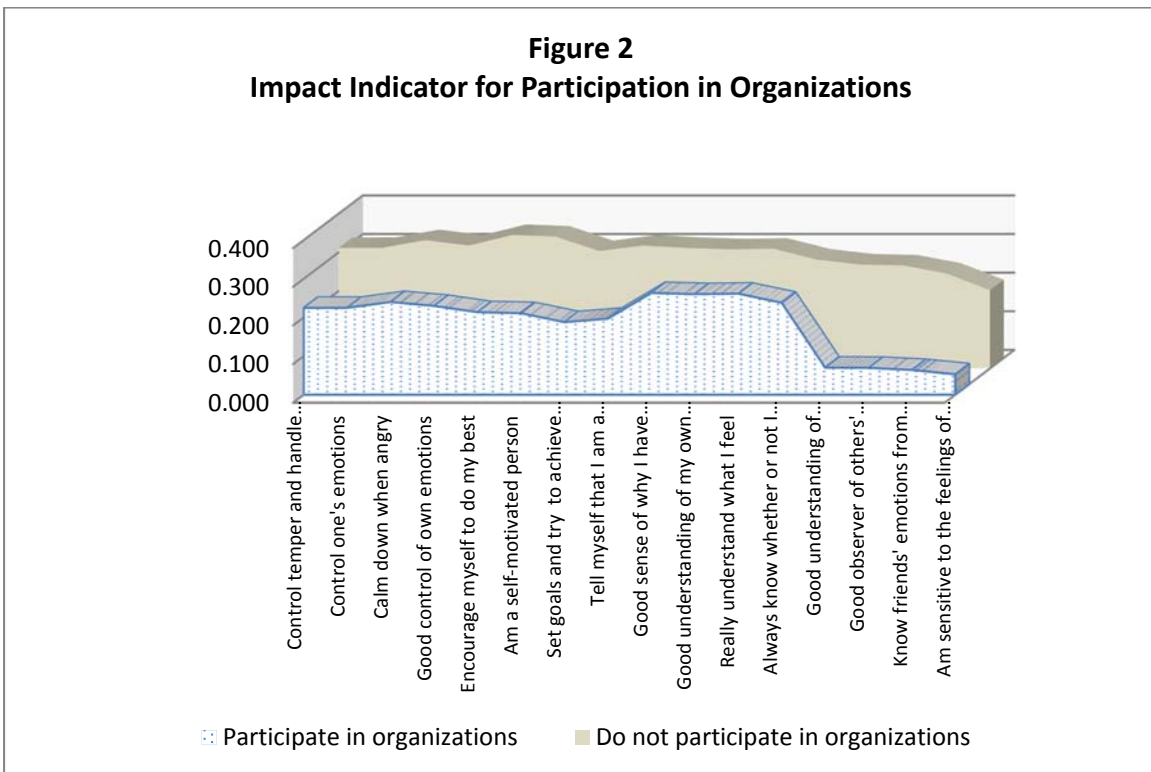
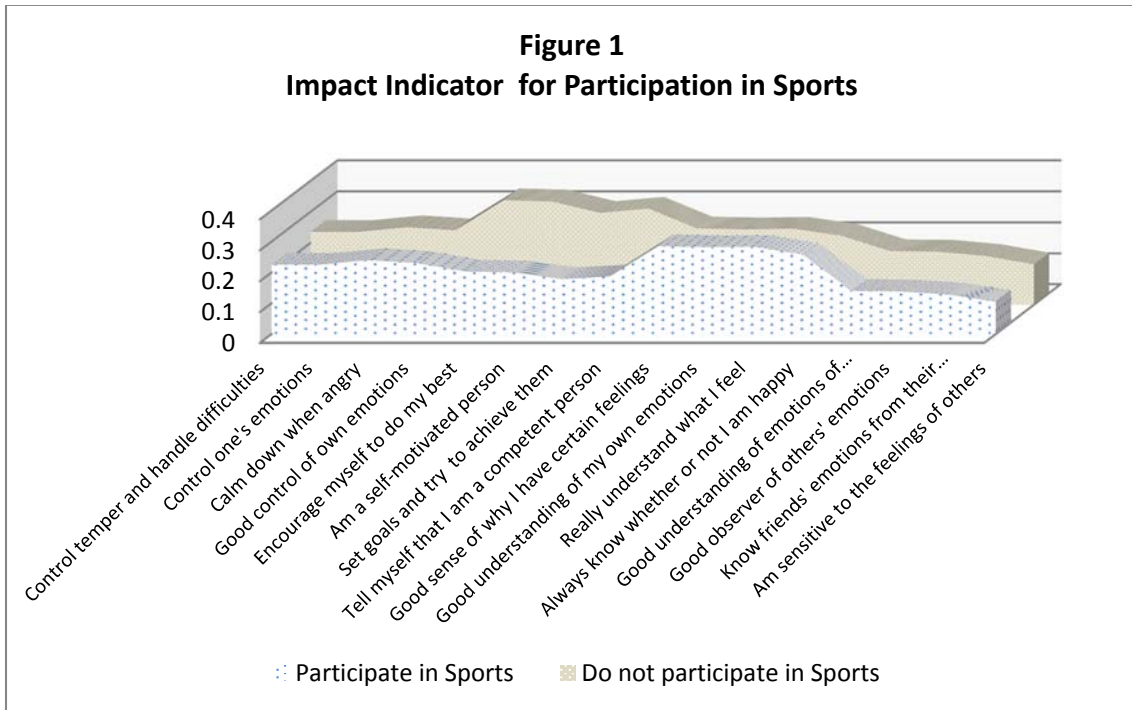
Table 4 Column A and B indicates that all dimensions of EI are positively and significantly related to happiness for both the lower and upper classmen at the p=0.05 level at least. More importantly, comparing columns A and B, the impact on happiness of all dimensions of EI, except the dimension of Emotional Appraisal of Others, is higher for the lower classmen.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The analysis indicates that all four elements of EI are positive and significantly related to happiness. Thus, making EI part of the curricula and the core competency of student would increase their overall performance and happiness ratings. Happier individuals perform better work. However, administrators charged with the task of nurturing students often operate with limited resources. They are required to allocate their limited funds across an array of initiatives intended to improve student well-being, among other important initiatives. This requires the ability to locate areas that yield the greatest response per unit of investment. Indicators of impact would help university administrators understand each attribute and EI dimension and have a clear understanding of their impact on happiness among different groups. The two requisite sets of information required for ascertaining impact indicators are salience of the attribute and its influence on happiness. Impact of each attribute on happiness is the function of salience, given by the factor loadings and individual influence captured by the regression coefficients. Thus, by looking at the indicators of impact, a university administrator or faculty is able to examine each attribute and dimension and have a clear understanding of its impact on happiness.

Table 5: Asymmetric Impact Indicators

Attributes	Participate in Sports	Not Participate in Sports	Participate in Organizations	Not Participate in Organizations
Able to control temper and handle difficulties rationally	0.225	0.236	0.225	0.312
Quite capable of controlling own emotions	0.225	0.236	0.225	0.312
Can always calm down quickly when very angry	0.240	0.251	0.240	0.332
Good control of own emotions	0.230	0.241	0.230	0.318
Would always encourage myself to try my best	0.203	0.338	0.214	0.345
Am a self-motivated person	0.200	0.334	0.211	0.341
Always set goals and try my best to achieve them	0.178	0.297	0.188	0.304
Always tell myself that I am a competent person	0.187	0.311	0.197	0.318
Have a good sense of why I have certain feelings	0.285	0.247	0.263	0.312
Have a good understanding of my own emotions	0.282	0.244	0.260	0.308
Really understand what I feel	0.283	0.246	0.262	0.310
Always know whether or not I am happy	0.257	0.223	0.238	0.282
Good understanding of emotions of people around me	0.140	0.174	0.070	0.269
Good observer of others' emotions	0.138	0.172	0.070	0.266
Always know my friends' emotions from their behavior	0.128	0.158	0.064	0.245
Am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others	0.105	0.131	0.053	0.202

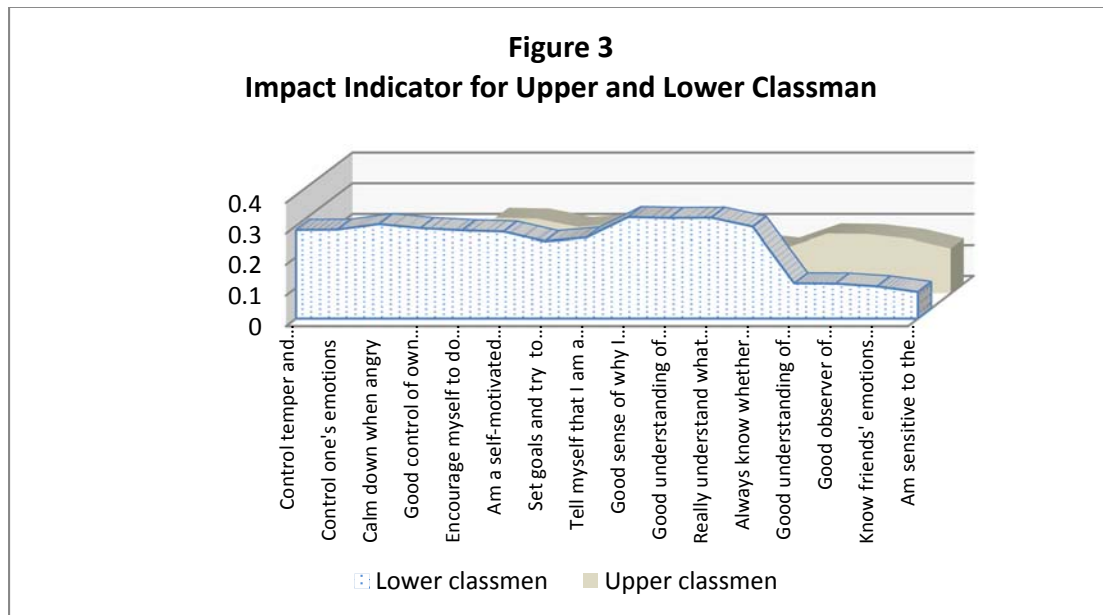


For instance, looking at Table 5 and Figures 1 and 2, though all students should be provided with EI as a core competency, university administrators should intentionally focus additional intervention toward students who are disengaged, without membership or participation in any campus organizations or sports. In these groups, teaching individuals how to motivate themselves and leverage emotions will result in the highest increase in overall happiness. More specifically, the attributes having the largest impact pertain to being able to encourage oneself to do one's best and being "self-motivated." Among students who participate in sports, however, helping them learn to regulate and understand their own emotions result in the highest increase in happiness. More specifically, helping athletes to learn how to "calm down when angry," as well as to have a good understanding of their emotions will have substantial impacts on their overall happiness.

Table 6: Asymmetric Impact Indicators for Upper and Lower Classmen

Attributes	Upper Classmen	Lower Classmen
Able to control temper and handle difficulties rationally	0.140	0.287
Quite capable of controlling own emotions	0.140	0.288
Can always calm down quickly when very angry	0.149	0.306
Good control of own emotions	0.143	0.293
Would always encourage myself to try my best	0.245	0.286
Am a self-motivated person	0.242	0.282
Always set goals and try my best to achieve them	0.215	0.251
Always tell myself that I am a competent person	0.225	0.263
Have a good sense of why I have certain feelings	0.164	0.329
Have a good understanding of my own emotions	0.162	0.326
Really understand what I feel	0.163	0.327
Always know whether or not I am happy	0.148	0.298
Good understanding of emotions of people around me	0.194	0.115
Good observer of others' emotions	0.192	0.114
Always know my friends' emotions from their behavior	0.177	0.105
Am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others	0.146	0.087

Finally, at what stage in the students' career on campus will EI intervention or learning result in the largest impact on happiness? Impact analysis, as illustrated in Table 6 and Figure 3, indicates that university administrators might consider starting the education on EI early in the students' careers. Engaging lower classmen in learning how to understand their own emotions will have the highest impact on happiness.



CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that university administrators or decision makers should include EI as part of the curricula and core competency of all students. They should not simply approach the entire student population with one blanket approach. Directing their efforts in such a general format will not result in the largest return on their efforts. Instead, they should focus additional efforts toward those groups of students who are disengaged without membership or participation in any campus group or sports. Finally, university administrators should introduce EI education early in the students' university experience.

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INTEGRATING ETHICAL DECISION MAKING IN MULTIPLE BUSINESS COURSES

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ABSTRACT

Management literature and the popular press are implicating colleges, and especially business schools, in the preparation of decision makers in organizations who are perceived as rewarding executives for bad behavior. This paper responds to the challenge by promoting the integration of ethical principles in multiple courses within a college degree program to raise and expand a student's level of awareness of factors involved in ethical decision making.

Using a collection of concepts, this paper defines ethics as a code of behavior that restricts self interest for the greater long term good of society (Sharp, 2005); and the use of a moral base of value-related rules in which individuals as well as businesses make judgments about what is good and bad or right and wrong related to human conduct and relationships (Carlson et al., 2002), (Kashman, 2005) and (Fuqua and Newman, 2006).

This paper highlights five ethical decision models from literature to encourage professors who are reluctant to overtly address ethics in classroom or online courses and to equip those not schooled in philosophy or psychology with some basic principles to raise ethical awareness among students. In so doing, several assumptions are made to guide the approach about how to teach ethics: no professor should impose his/her values onto students; students exhibit different levels of personal and social development; students are not learning ethics from traditional sources such as parents, school and religious affiliations; and evidence of the importance of teaching ethics continues to mount, thus calling for curriculum action.

This article concludes by making twenty recommendations to professors including creation of course opportunities for student reflection on personal ethical experiences in which decisions harmed or benefited another; relating personal ethical behavior to organizational ethical behavior; and designing assignments based on elements of the highlighted models.

INTRODUCTION

The motivation for this paper is twofold. One is the personal frustration related to the ethical development of students experienced by these authors over a combined 20 years in business schools teaching undergraduate and graduate students in the classroom and online. The

second is to respond to the public blame bestowed on business schools for scandals such as Enron and Madoff. This paper is a call for any reluctant professor to integrate ethics into more than pure ethics courses. Decision making is the trigger for deciding the most appropriate place to do so with the recommendation that ethics be integral to any opportunity in which decisions are made at the personal or professional level for an individual, group, organization or society.

DEFINITIONS

Ethics is a “code of behavior that restricts self interest for the greater long term good of society” (Sharp, 2006, p. xv). Ethics and morality are interchangeable and overlap (Sucher, 2008). Both involve judgments about what is good and bad or right and wrong; both pertain to the study of human conduct, relationships and values (Fuqua & Newman, 2006). The code is an amalgamation of intellect, reasoning, experience, education, relationships, values and culture (Longest & Darr, 2008).

Ethical decision making is complex as a result of conflicts among individual differences, how people and businesses think about ethical decisions and how organizations manage resources and employees (Trevino & Youngblood, 1990). It is a process in which a moral base is used to determine whether a moral issue is right or wrong (Carlson et al., 2002).

A **moral issue** is present when a person’s willful actions may harm or benefit others (Jones, 1991).

A **moral base** is the set of rules that develop during moral development that function as a platform for distinguishing right from wrong (Carlson et al., 2002). This article summarizes how the development takes place. Sucher (2008) adds that the moral base is the foundation for moral reasoning related to accepted behavioral norms, boundaries and expectations.

Laws are “rules of conduct prescribed by society and enforced by public authority” (Longest and Darr, 2008, p.169). Additionally, criminal laws of right and wrong are the ethical code of conduct while civil law addresses relationships in society. Laws are formal (bylaws of an organization, charters, treaties and professional codes of conduct) and informal (custom, cultural norms, tradition). However, uncertainty clouds what is legal (formal) versus ethical. This introduces consequences that influence a decision to act. The opposite principle is the Golden Rule, which focuses on duty rather than consequences.

ETHICS IN BUSINESS

Business ethics comprises company attitude and conduct toward stakeholders including employees, customers and community served (Kashman, 2005). Since the 2001 Enron scandal, colleges and especially business schools have been undergoing soul-searching in terms of curriculum reform related to ethics (DiMeglio, 2009). In response, there was a 500% increase in the number of stand-alone ethics courses over the period 1999 -2007 (BizEd, 2007).

The apparent deterioration of ethical decision making reaches far beyond whether business school students are ethically challenged. Ghoshal (2005) asserts that the bottom line orientation to business has shaped leaders, policy makers and college professors. Additionally, businesses and business schools may be fostering the decline in moral responsibility by casting shareholders as the supreme stakeholder to the detriment of all other stakeholders.

When corporate compensation packages offer people vast wealth for behaving badly, it is tough for an ethical organization to compete. Therefore, Schonsheck (2009) calls for challenging anyone in authority to consider how such unregulated schemes condone the various character flaws that lead to the scandals in the news.

Bogle (2009) adds that dependence on the market place and competition to create prosperity has allowed self-interest to rule and these unchecked market forces have overwhelmed traditional standards of professional conduct developed over time. The result is a shift from moral absolutism to moral relativism. She further notes society has moved from 'there are some things that one simply does not do' to 'if everyone else is doing it, I can too'. Therefore, the old notion of trusting and being trusted, once accepted standard of business conduct, seems to be a quaint relic of an era long gone.

According to Fuqua & Newman (2006, p.206, 207) "lack of attention to basic requirements for moral development of human systems has contributed to intolerable levels and forms of systemic mismanagement". Evidence abounds in "increased violence and aggression, ignoring performance standards and greed at all levels of management". There is a "paradoxical notion that ethics belongs to the private life and that ethics and business do not or cannot mix". While the evidence points to an increased need to raise ethical awareness, the paradox seems to dampen any motivation to do so. "Humans are moral systems; organizations are collections of humans in functional systems in which rules, norms and expectations exist for both social and private behaviors. Therefore, organizations are human systems with moral structures built directly into their framework." This paradox is at the heart of the reason for this article.

Trevino & Youngblood (1990) observe that ethical decisions are influenced by moral development, which acts as the basis for moral reasoning leading to moral decisions. They characterize individuals as 'bad apples' and organizations as 'bad barrels'. Unethical 'barrels' are attributed to competition, results orientated management, poor role models, reward and punishment systems and the presence or absence of guiding policies and procedures. Bad 'apples' are likewise attributed to peer pressure, observing what happens to others in ethical decision making, the role of individual differences in perceptions and the level of control over events in one's life.

A good example of suspect ethical decisions is described by Szlek (2009), who posits that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is broken due to a history of "adopting practices, often for financial reasons, which all but ensure it will fall short of protecting us from harmful drugs". She further asserts that the "almighty dollar has corrupted medical judgment" to the point that some employees committed to integrity remain silent out of fear of retaliation. She calls for

accountability and transparency in the FDA. Kashman (2005, p.37) agrees that the lack of an ethical decision making process can lead to “arbitrary and inconsistent decisions” and that a transparent decision making process is necessary to “build trust” and “sustain results” in times of struggle, crises and conflict.

According to Schonsheck (2009), the mission statement of either a business or a business school is very telling about the ethical behavior that is desired. Fierce competition is a “broadly construed corporate culture” (p.49). Additionally, the mission statement expresses how moral integrity is valued and behavior is validated. No mission statement promotes dishonesty, greed or deception. However, leaders sometimes behave as if those were their guiding principles. The impact of the stated mission versus the shady guiding principles is reflected in how employees are rewarded with raises, allocated office space and recognized by the company. For purposes of this article, the same can also apply to the methods in which students are held to a business school’s code of conduct and the consistency with which students are punished for cheating and plagiarism across departments, courses and professors.

ETHICS AMONG STUDENTS

Community leaders which whom the authors of this article interact consistently rate ethical values as high as interpersonal skills and higher than computer skills. Yet, colleagues of these authors note that ethics is not high on the list of interests among business students in their traditional ethics and organizational behavior courses. These same colleagues observe that students assume they have learned ethics in previous courses and often overestimate their knowledge of subjects, including ethics. They further observe the greater student problem is a distorted view of business management based on movies and news stories in which business is cast as a dog-eat-dog world in which concepts of honesty and integrity have no place.

When compared to other professions and occupations, literature on academic ethics is relatively small due to the assumption professors will naturally be ethical; the assumption that private ethical issues are not ranked as highly as medical and business ethics; and the concern that more transparent ethical discussions will interfere with academic freedom of faculty (Rocheleau & Speck, 2007). Therefore, these pressures may be inhibiting professors not schooled in philosophy or psychology from overtly addressing ethics outside of pure ethics courses.

Ethical issues are ambiguous and complex, not black and white. Education of students occurs through diverse modalities (classroom, residence halls, community service projects, academic advising, and athletic fields) all of which convey what the institution considers important and creates a potential for miscommunication of values (Eberhardt, 2006).

Bartlett (2009) describes how college students from all disciplines are tapping into essay mills located all over the world to fulfill writing assignments. Students view the mills as just one more electronic research resource. The managers of such mills pacify their consciences by saying

they are simply providing templates from which students can extract ideas rather than actual papers to be submitted for grading. Enforcing any laws against such mills is difficult with the writers living abroad. Bartlett asserts that students who use these services know exactly what they are doing and intend to cheat from the beginning of the venture and that one good way to find out is to discuss papers with the students to ascertain that they did not read the material much less write the paper.

A 2008 telephone survey of 750 twelve to seventeen year olds revealed that over half of respondents said their parents are their role models followed by 13% friends and 6% teachers and coaches. Eighty percent of these teens stated they believe they are ethically prepared to make moral business decisions; however, nearly 40% believe they need to 'break the rules' to be successful in life. For example, 49% said lying to parents and guardians is acceptable and 61% said they have lied to either of those in the past year (Junior Achievement Worldwide, 2009). This raises concerns about the unethical behaviors in which these teens will be engaged when they enter the workforce and the quality of decisions they will make. It also emphasizes the challenges for schools and businesses in developing these future leaders. Bennett-Woods (2005) characterizes organizational leaders as moral agents. These teens are future moral agents in training.

The media is calling for business schools to place a greater emphasis on ethics in the curriculum (Schonsheck, 2009, p. 48). He notes that "it would be wonderful if professors were so powerful as to prevent corruption in business. However, there is a limit to what professors can and cannot do". The media seem to be calling for schools to both instill and reform student values. Schonsheck adds that "individual actions arise from one's own values and students arrive on the first day of class with a well-entrenched set of values instilled long ago by parents, siblings, teachers and religious figures." Therefore, professors can only equip students with an expanded awareness of how and why ethical decisions are made.

MODELS FOR DESIGNING COURSE WORK ON ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

Five models spanning 25 years of research on ethical decision making can establish a basis for professors without training in philosophy or psychology and who may be reluctant to venture into course content related to ethics. The models were selected because they have greatly assisted the authors of this article in understanding student issues with ethics. Two major themes resonate across the models: the sequence of choices made in the ethical decision process and the factors that influence those choices.

Six Stages of Cognitive Moral Development

Kohlberg et al. (1984) approaches the development of a moral base from a psychology viewpoint and asserts that moral development occurs along a hierarchical continuum on how reasoning relates to judgment and the resulting behavior.

Stage One: In stage one, the decision to behave a certain way is based on punishments and rewards. An example is to doing what parents, professors or bosses require.

Stage Two: This next stage is based on the idea that ‘good’ behavior is in one’s own self-interest. In other words, ‘What is in it for me?’ Notice that this theme permeates the earlier sections on the current state of business and student ethics.

Stage Three: A ‘good boy/girl’ attitude is exercised in which the individual tries to gain approval of others through appropriate behavior. In other words, one strives to please people or be viewed as good.

Stage Four: An individual recognizes the merits of abiding by the law and acting on obligations of duty to maintain order.

Stage Five: Respect for the rights and responsibilities of self and others develops as one recognizes a ‘social contract’ exists with mutual social relations and concern with the welfare of others.

Stage Six: Principles higher than the authority of law are honored in stage six. Conscience is based on universal principles of what is bad or wrong even if legal.

Trevino & Youngblood (1990, p. 379) note that this model demonstrates that a person’s “moral judgment grows less and less dependent on outside influences with each successive stage and moves from self-centered conception of what is right to a broader understanding of the importance of social contracts and principles of justice and rights”. Examples include cheating, resisting authority figures, helping behaviors and principle-based decision making.

Sucher (2008, p. 24) observes that this model demonstrates that “moral awareness develops in both children and adults and progresses from externalized right and wrong enforced by obedience and punishment to an internalized appreciation for moral principles with which individuals constantly interact”. She adds that there are issues with this model due to the degree of severity of the moral challenge embedded in each ethical situation, mindsets of participants and the complexity of behavior options, which require moral reasoning about what one believes to be right. Sucher provides these issue examples.

In a ‘right versus wrong situation’ the ethical imperative is unambiguous, one’s critically ill spouse needs a lifesaving medication and stealing the unaffordable medicine is wrong. However, in a ‘right versus right situation’ a genuine dilemma exists when each side of an argument is rooted in a basic core value such as telling the truth versus maintaining loyalty, which pits honesty against loyalty (p.25).

Four Factors of Influence in Ethical Decision Making

Morrison (2006, p.3, 267) follows the Kohlberg et al. model of moral development but emphasizes how it is exhibited in daily personal and professional life. The context is ethical decision making in health care administration systems.

The first influencer is one's personal **code of ethics and moral integrity**. "Ethics has to do with the question of how one 'ought' to live and act. However, what one 'ought' to do is influenced by what one 'can' do" (p. 159). This comes from the attitude that if a law is not being broken, a person is being ethical. Ultimately, actions of an individual exhibit one's ethics and those actions impact others.

Organization or system ethics represent **internal factors** in moral behavior. Ethics is not just theory or task but something to be practiced daily. For example, the mission of an organization is exhibited in the daily behaviors of the collective. The behaviors of individuals impact the image of the organization and spill into the community related to such moral attributes as fairness and fiscal responsibility.

External influences represent the professional, geographic or social market in which an individual and organization functions. An example is codes of conduct outlined in professional health care organizations. Different cultures have different values, assumptions, beliefs, motives, attitudes, language, stories and experiences that form identity and motivate behaviors. Therefore, ethics is a cultural issue due to violations increasing in organizations within a market such as lying and falsifying records.

Founding principles comprise the final factor serving as a backdrop for how individuals and organizations make ethical decisions. Examples include ethics theories typically learned in traditional stand alone ethics courses such as Kant's 'what is right for me is right for all', Rawl's 'protecting the least well off' and Mill's 'greatest good for the greatest number' (p.249). Longest and Darr (2008), also writing about ethical decisions in health care systems, highlight the strong influence of the presence or absence of respect, justice, fairness, and do no harm.

Morrison emphasizes moral integrity as key to establishing and maintaining trust that allows people to live successfully with one another by realizing that all are 'co-creators' of the world in which each functions (p.271). Ethical decisions are "not made in a personal vacuum and values initially obtained from friends and family are influenced by education, professional socialization and experiences" (p. 196). She advocates closer examination of the inner self, core values and personal bottom line; learning from failures rather than repeating them; formulating a personal mission statement and adhering to it fervently. A warning is given to sustain moral integrity and be aware of 'moral derailment', the dark side of leaders and followers in such areas as how power, greed and money are used to persuade decisions.

Four Stages of Ethical Decision Making

Jones (1991) isolates the sequence of ethical decision making as four stages:

Stage One: The **moral issue** (dilemma, situation, challenge) is recognized with the awareness that a decision to act will affect others and that a choice is involved. If a person fails to recognize a moral issue, his ethical decision making is based on another non-ethics factor such as economics. Aupperle (2008, p.2) notes that “recognition and awareness of moral issues are partly related to selective perception as well as one’s own physiological gestalt such as social culture, family, friends, school, religion and work environment”.

Stage Two: Based on one’s evaluation of the moral issue, a **moral judgment** on optional behavior choices is made. Moral judgments involve judgments about what a person should do in certain situations. Judgment about what constitutes right or wrong behavior relies on one’s moral base.

Stage Three: Moral judgment leads to a **moral intent** to act or not act in which one resolves to place moral concerns ahead of other concerns. Moral intent is a result of balancing the factors of the moral issues (stage one) with other factors leading to whether or not to engage in a moral behavior. It is not simply judging what is morally correct but it is making a choice to act or not act on the judgment of stage two. For example, a person observes the behavior of another that could potentially cause harm but never considers blowing the whistle; he knows what is right but intends to do nothing meaningful about it.

Stage Four: Once the intent is determined, the decision maker follows through and engages in the selected **moral behavior**.

Jones focuses on moral intensity as being the level to which the characteristics of the moral issue matter (the degree of badness of an act or failure to act) resulting in a moral judgment. The higher the moral intensity, the greater the impact on the decision process (p. 391). According to Jones (1991, p. 374-378), there are six characteristics of a moral issue that are positively related to the degree of moral intensity:

Magnitude of consequences defined as the sum of harms (or benefits) to victims (or beneficiaries) of the moral act in question. For example, an act that causes 1000 people to suffer a particular injury versus an act that causes 10 people to suffer the same injury.

Social consensus defined as the degree of social agreement that a proposed act is evil (or good). For example, the evil involved in bribing a customs official in Texas has greater social consensus than that of bribing a customs official in Mexico.

Probability of effect defined as the joint function of the probability the act in question will actually take place and the act will actually cause the harm (or benefit) predicted. For example, selling a gun to a known armed robber has greater probability of harm than selling a gun to a law-abiding citizen.

Temporal immediacy defined as the length of time between the act and the onset of consequences of the act; a shorter length of time implies greater immediacy. For example, reducing the

retirement benefits of current retirees has greater temporal immediacy than reducing retirement benefits of employees who are currently between 40-50 years of age.

Proximity defined as social, cultural, psychological or physical ‘nearness’ the person making the moral decision has for victims. For example, layoffs in a person’s work unit have greater moral proximity than layoffs in a remote plant.

Concentration of effect, the number of people affected by a moral decision compared to the magnitude of the affect.

McDonald & Norsworthy (2000) note that people respond differently to moral issues related to the characteristics of the issue itself. A classic example is a small versus large theft of any kind related to the number of people harmed. In other words, ethical decision making is issue-contingent and the embedded characteristics noted above by Jones affect all stages of the ethical decision process. Like Jones, McDonald & Norsworthy (p. 58) associate issue-contingency with the “concepts of retribution and proportionality in criminal law in which all crimes are not treated equally by the legal system. Court rulings tend to be more harsh for the most severe crimes”.

Therefore, issue-contingent ethical decisions have special implications for education in business schools. “Business majors tend to align their ethical judgments and intentions toward profit maximizing behavior and may discount information about harm to non-economic stakeholders.” Raising ethical awareness of students beyond a bottom line orientation emphasizes obligations to more than direct shareholders who will be harmed or benefited (p. 57).

Perceived Importance of an Ethical Issue (PIE)

While Robin et al. (1996) recognize that the Jones’ moral intensity construct influences every stage of the ethical decision making process and focuses on the characteristics of the issue, they extend the moral intensity construct by emphasizing the powerful role of an individual’s perception of the characteristics of the moral issue. They propose that the individual state construct of a person or organization in the form of Perceived Importance of an Ethical Issue (PIE) is more powerful than the moral intensity construct of the Jones model. PIE is defined as “the perceived personal relevance or importance of an ethical issue to an individual, similar to the concept of ‘involvement’ in consumer behavior with involvement being the perceived importance of the consumer issue to an individual. It is personal and temporal in character” (p. 17).

Stage One: Definition of the **moral issue** accommodates beliefs and needs of either the individual in a personal decision or a group, organization or society in a public decision. The perception of the issue also takes into account special characteristics of the situation and ongoing pressure to act or not act. It recognizes that actual issue characteristics are likely to be perceived differently by different individuals or by the same individual over time based on ethical sensitivity of an individual; the organizational and individual values that are activated; the opportunity for ethical and unethical behavior; and relations with superiors, peers and subordinates. In essence, PIE

addresses the variance of both the relevance and importance of the issue across individuals and across time for the same individuals.

Stage Two: The embedded moral issue elements influence **moral judgment**.

Stage Three: The intent to act or not act comprises stage three, **moral intent**.

Stage Four: Execution of the selected moral behavior occurs in stage four.

Research conducted by Robins et al. positions PIE as a better predictor of ethical decision making than moral intensity of the Jones model. They believe that an "individual state construct is closer to both moral intention and moral behavior" (p.17).

Four Stages of Ethical Decision Schema

Haines et al. (2008) expand both the previous two models using business decision making as the context. They assert that moral intensity, developed by Jones, mediates the whole process and PIE, developed by Robin et al., is tempered by an individual's sense of responsibility to act or not act.

Stage One: From the Jones model, higher **moral intensity** of a moral issue calls for more ethical behaviors and a greater impact on the decision process. In both of the previous two models, moral intensity varies significantly across issues. Both moral intensity developed by Jones and PIE developed by Robin et al. influence the definition of the issue. However, PIE focuses on the decision maker rather than the moral issue; asserts that individuals view issues differently and expects the same individual to view issues differently at different times and under different circumstances.

Stage Two: From Robins et al., higher PIE will judge ethical issues immoral in stage two, **moral judgment**, and a person is less likely to engage in immoral behavior. Haines et al. introduces a new concept of moral obligation, which relates to a new type of personal internal state of a decision maker. It is the "extent to which an individual feels a sense of responsibility to act (or not act) morally and relies on a well established relationship between attitude and intention to act". Moral obligation is a "sub process between moral judgment and moral intent and occurs after the individual makes the judgment but before the actual intent is established" (p.391). Therefore, moral obligation is inserted between judgment, stage two, and intent to act, stage three.

Stage Three: Establishment of a moral intent whether or not to act is mediated by the Robin et al. concept of **moral involvement**. Haines et al. add that moral involvement is a social psychology concept that "explains consumer decision making behavior; as the consumer perception of a product's importance increases, involvement in the decision increases" (p.388). The personal intent state of an individual based on the perceptions of the moral issue characteristics (PIE from

Robins et al.) drives the decision process, not the issue characteristics themselves as is espoused in the Jones model.

Stage Four: The decision maker engages in the **moral behavior**.

The major element introduced by Haines et al. is the concept of moral obligation to explain variance in moral intent. Recalling the private versus public paradox described earlier, moral obligation is a personal internal state and the area in which individual ethics (the private personal side) impacts organizational and social decisions (public side). This sequential nature of ethical decision making implies that the way a moral issue is defined, perceived and modified by an internal obligation will determine if a decision is based on moral considerations versus other non ethical factors such as economics. Kashman (2005) provides evidence in health care in which he finds that influencing decision factors are 50% legal, 30% financial, and 20% political. Notice no mention of ethics as a basis for decision making by Kashman.

Haines et al. note the implications of their model for managers. For purposes of this paper, they are summarized below and can just as easily apply to professors of business school students as managers of employees. Intentions lead to behavior and initiatives are needed to increase employee *and student* (emphasis ours) intentions to act morally. Manager *and professor* actions should increase the importance attached to moral issues and raise employee *and student* awareness through ethical training. This includes identifying aspects of the situation and raising the level of ethical sensitivity such as emphasizing codes of conduct, honest communication methods and enforced rewards and punishment structure to awaken a sense of responsibility and awareness of one's relationships with the world beyond one's self.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The twenty recommendations provided below for professors are based on assumptions drawn from research for this paper. First, the focus of the recommendations is the moral base of students and not the moral base of professors. Second, raising ethical awareness among students should not be interpreted as passing judgment on the ethical decisions actually made by students. Third, students are not learning ethics from traditional sources and come to class with different levels of personal and social development. Fourth, even if ethical behavior is innate, natural morality can be altered by attributing blame, distorting the circumstances, displacing responsibility and rationalization. Last, the major problem in teaching ethics is the fact the content involves personal values and behaviors rather than the more familiar skills and knowledge rooted in lectures and books.

The objectives of the recommendations include helping students discover and expand awareness of personal and environmental factors involved in ethical decision making; define and reflect on the personal and professional foundation of ethical values from which they are currently operating compared to other factors to consider in reframing their foundation; come to terms with a definition of their own moral code and how it can be translated into action, and

move student thinking from what one 'can' do to aligning what one 'ought' to do with what one 'will' do.

Use decision making as the key element to locate the best place to integrate ethics into learning exercises (Bennett-woods, 2005). Basically, use ethics as the viewpoint for examining decision making in any course work (DiMeglio, 2009).

Bennett-Woods (2005, p. 160, 161) also suggests using ethics as a platform "to stimulate students to reflect deeply on personal and professional moral and ethical foundations, develop confidence in their ability to analyze and defend positions, grasp content in ethical theories and principles and perform formal analysis resulting in the decision making process". She further suggests using the basic eight step management problem solving model (gather information, state the problem, identify the ethical issue, select ethical principles to analyze the issue, conduct the analysis and prepare justification or make counterarguments, determine competitive behavioral options, evaluate the options and select the best action/behavior).

Porter and Schick (2003) use Bloom's Taxonomy to suggest how ethics can be addressed in coursework. First, ethics should be integrated into course planning. Second, educators must enable both cognitive (knowledge, application, synthesis) and affective (awareness, conceptualizing and valuing precepts) competencies for graduates to be successful in the field. Third, educators should distinguish among ethical domains of decision making as personal, professional, clinical, organizational and social.

Raise ethics to the level of value placed on interpersonal communication and computer skills (Tanyel et al., 1999). Encourage students to reflect on their own values and understand how actions relate to values. According to Schonsheck (2009), value clarification helps students realize that they acquire values uncritically by passively absorbing beliefs. Assist students in comparing such unexamined values using the models outlined above.

Just as Fuqua & Newman (2006) make the following recommendation for businesses, the content is applicable to business schools, professors and students. Fully integrate moral issues into the usual organizational structure; emphasize that moral development applies to individuals as well as organizations and moral issues are fundamental to human organizational structures. Emphasize that it is not possible to separate an individual's moral character from the person as a whole. Stating one set of values and living another is a contradiction well worth examination.

Another recommendation by Fuqua & Newman (2006) speaks to the heart of the title of this article. They suggest facilitating meaningful moral discourse as a routine process. Examples include discussing the parties harmed or benefited by a decision; the level of honesty in communications; the difference between the desired code of conduct versus the code exhibited in actual behavior; and the influencing formal/informal and spoken/unspoken factors. Just having the discussion is in itself a learning experience.

While one may debate Detert et al. (2008) who assert that ethical decisions cannot be validated by tests in the same manner as skills and knowledge from textbooks and lectures, the authors of this article have learned that ethics can be validated in essays, discussions and case

analysis compared to the near impossibility to do so in multiple choice, true-false and fill in the blank assignments. Use real events and stories from the press, literature and student's own experience in the home, work or school to create opportunities to reflect on personal ethical events that harmed or benefited an individual, group, organization or society. Integrate ethical decision making in critical thinking, case analysis, group discussions, interviews with people who have experienced ethical dilemmas, community service projects and writing assignments. For example, Sharp (2006) recommends the case method to identify the moral issue, consider alternatives available and the criteria and consequences for evaluating the alternative behaviors, exchange ideas and reach consensus. The byproducts are skills and confidence in the safety of a course setting related to confrontation, problem analysis and making difficult moral decisions.

Link personal ethical behavior to organizational ethical behavior. For example, expectations for leaders and professors have increased due to public and catastrophic moral failures of recent years. Teach students to observe what is being emphasized and the message being conveyed (Fuqua & Newman, 2006). An example is the questionable behavior of Atlanta teachers modifying student work when teacher success is tied to student achievement scores (The Washington Post, July 24, 2011).

Include ethical decision making in learning assessment in meeting business school accreditation standards to demonstrate that integrity and social responsibility matter as much as profitability, survival and personal or organizational advancement.

Use the Kohlberg et al. model to demonstrate the moral development process and its impact on judgment and to move students from stage two (What is in it for me?) to the more advanced stages.

Use the Morrison model to apply ethics to daily decisions in areas such as data integrity, honest communications, careful use of resources and use of management tools to influence others, measure performance and take corrective actions in both personal and professional life.

Use the Jones model to link moral issues to moral behavior and the concept of moral intensity. Focus on the characteristics of the moral issue to examine how they influence what one 'can' do versus 'ought' to do.

Use the Robin et al. model to examine how the perceived importance of the characteristics of an ethical issue (PIE) influences decision behavior that differs across individuals and differs for the same individual across time.

Use the Haines et al. model to examine the sub process of the personal internal state of the decision maker related to moral obligation that resides between moral judgment and moral intent to act.

Coordinate use of ethical decision making material with other faculty so that courses later in a program of study build upon rather than simply repeat ethical principles or exercises already addressed elsewhere.

Be more direct in teaching transparency and what it means to be an honest business leader (DiMegilo, 2009). For example, do not make ethics courses elective that allows

achievement of a degree without pondering right and wrong in a systematic way. In other words, do not make moral integrity optional.

Ethical situations are gray and complex with no obvious solutions that enable everyone to win (McDonald & Norsworthy, 2000). Fandray (2005, p.82) advocates telling students “if they think of the world as black and white, they should stay as far away from black as one can get. The difficulty is that a person is tempted to nose himself into the gray to see how far away from white he can get. That is the pressure that comes with opportunity, greed and money”. They further encourage rewarding people who understand the difference between right and wrong and advocate that every organization should have a code of ethics that not only tells a person how to behave in specific situations but gives him clear ideas of how the organization (or school) expects them to deal with ethical dilemmas that can’t be anticipated.

Do not be alarmed in an attempt to raise ethical awareness if students assume a victim attitude or assign blame to support past ethical decisions. Establish and sustain emphasis on decisions they have made and not decisions others have made that harmed or benefited them.

Expect to encounter the private-public paradox in which students will assert that moral integrity is a private matter (Fuqua & Newman, 2006). The counter is moral systems in which one lives, works and plays are both private (personal) and public (groups, organizations and society as a whole).

Use the reference list at the end of this article to glean content for lectures and exercises or construct grading rubrics for assignments.

CONCLUSION

Fandray (2005, p.82) notes that decision making is more than choosing between right and wrong, that values matter and intentions to act vary depending on the state of health of one’s conscience. “Every time something is gray, people are going to game it. America is a business civilization; if it’s going to be a successful one, moral sensitivity and moral integrity fall on the business leadership” and by inference in this article to professors in business schools.

When advocating for moral integrity, Morrison (2006, p.291) notes that “cheating, dishonesty and other moral flaws are sometimes mistaken as good actions when they get you ahead of the next person”. Therefore, she urges the avoidance of ethical hypocrisy defined as the “dissonance between words and actions, which undermines trust” and concludes there is more to being an ethical business professional than just doing a job and tracking financial reports.

Lessons learned in this research include the fact that any course in which decision making occurs is an opportunity to introduce ethical awareness; decision making is a moral behavior and moral behavior is preceded by moral intention to act or not act. Moral intention is a result of moral judgment and moral judgment is impacted by personal, professional and situational circumstances. However, circumstances alone do not dictate behavior. It is one’s perception of

the circumstances merged with the values in one's own ethical core that influences a chosen behavior.

While students may continue, in the near future, to practice self interest by swapping papers, cheating on tests, blaming a professor for a low grade when the work was not completed or lying, a more broadly distributed array of exercises on ethical decision making may eventually alter the current issues with moral integrity outlined in this article.

Dosick (1993) as cited by Morrison (2006, p.316) provides a sound basis for developing a foundation for moral development (as in the Kohlberg et al. model); for ethical daily living both personally and professionally (as in the Morrison model); a higher level of moral intensity (as in the Jones model); better understanding of the power of perception (as in the Robin et al. model); and realization that a moral obligation resides between moral judging and moral intentions to act (as in the Haines et al. model).

Everywhere, all the

Time, be

Honest; act with

Integrity; have

Compassion. For what is at

Stake is your reputation, your self-esteem, your inner peace.

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BRINGING BUSINESS PRACTITIONERS TO CAMPUS: EXECUTIVES IN RESIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

An Executive in Residence course can be used to bring “real-world” experiences into the business education classroom. This paper is based on the author’s experience hosting approximately 53 guests during 5 annual Executive in Residence courses. This paper stresses the value of a formal academic format for an Executive in Residence program, and describes a one-credit-hour course. The paper includes examples of practitioner guests and discusses the benefits and costs of an Executive in Residence course to students, the instructor, and the college. Emphasis is on the benefits of executive guests to students, which include learning what employers want in new graduates as employees; accessing a network for potential job opportunities; learning to match expectations to reality in the working world; and hearing and meeting entertaining speakers. This course has the potential to grow into a more robust experience for practitioners and students, and to introduce the college to “friends” who may provide financial and professional support in the future.

INTRODUCTION

Students of business administration need exposure to real-world perspectives. Faculties, as well as students, have been criticized for their lack of ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world problems (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005). According to Aschenreiner & Hein, research on the challenges of teaching students to apply the theories of their discipline has been going on for over 40 years. Instructors have attempted to bridge the gap between theory and practice by using “case studies, live business projects, guest lecturers, field trips, action learning labs, simulations and internships” (Achenreiner & Hein, 2010).

An Executive in Residence program is one method to bring real-world perspectives to the classroom. An Executive in Residence course brings business practitioners to a university campus to meet with students and share their experiences and knowledge. A college of business is motivated to develop an Executive in Residence course by a number of reasons which will be discussed more fully later in this paper. Foremost of these reasons is the need to bring “real-world” practitioner experiences into the classroom.

Who has need for practitioner input into the business classroom? A student needs to better understand business practice and business practitioners. An instructor needs current

knowledge of business practice and fresh anecdotes. A college of business needs a current and relevant curriculum, and to further its mission.

Accreditation by The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) is based on mission-driven objectives, which often include applied learning. Because AACSB accreditation criteria are mission-based, there is not an explicit standard regarding efforts to teach real-world perspectives to business students. Nevertheless, research has shown that almost half of AACSB-accredited programs have some type of executive-in-residence program (Shrader & Thomas, 2004).

AACSB standards reveal an emphasis on applied, practical perspectives. First, according to Standard 2, Intellectual Contributions: “Contributions to Practice (often referred to as applied research) influence professional practice in the faculty member’s field” (AACSB, 2012a), and is one of three types of Intellectual Contributions a faculty member can make.

Second, the discussion of Standard 10, Faculty Qualifications states: “Regardless of their specialty, work experience, or graduate preparation, the standard requires that faculty members maintain their competence through efforts to learn about their specialty and how it is applied in practice” (AACSB, 2012b).

Finally, the AACSB Bridge Program trains practitioners to meet the accreditation criteria of a “qualified” instructor and thereby fast-tracks their transition to the university classroom. A promotional brochure states: “As an experienced business professional, your unique insights and real-world knowledge are extremely valuable to students . . . The world’s top business schools recognize this—and are continually integrating professionally qualified instructors into their faculty.” In summary, a premier accreditor of higher education in business recognizes real-world learning as essential for faculty to become and remain qualified.

In summary, the primary reason for developing an Executive in Residence course is to bring “real-world” experiences into the classroom. Students, instructor, and college all benefit from the input of practitioners. This paper presents an Executive in Residence course design, presents examples of practitioner guests, and discusses the benefits and costs of an Executive in Residence course.

EXECUTIVE IN RESIDENCE COURSE DESIGN

The design of an Executive in Residence-type course can take many forms. Achenreiner and Hein (2010) place Executive in Residence programs into two categories: “full-time” and “short-term.” In a full-time program, executives teach full-time and have sole responsibility to teach a course or courses for one or more semesters. In a short-term program, executives visit campus for periods ranging from one day to several weeks. Several executives could visit in a term and speak to classes, attend events, mentor individual students, etc. Executive in Residence programs have been used in agribusiness education (Litzenber & Dunne, 1996) and to internationalize a business curriculum (Praetzel, 1999).

This paper describes what could be called a “short-term” Executive in Residence course for academic credit, with room to grow into more robust program. Three steps are discussed: (1) Publish a formal Executive in Residence course offering in the university catalog; (2) Invite practitioners to visit the classroom and (3) Build relationships with practitioners through additional activities.

A formal Executive in Residence course in the university catalog has better properties than an informal guest speaker series. Students enroll in the Executive in Residence course as usual, and meet the pre-requisites, which include successful completion of core marketing, finance, and accounting courses. Students who meet pre-requisite requirements are generally advanced students who are looking ahead to life after graduation. Formal registration also ensures that the course has a meeting room and time, and that a consistent audience of advanced students is available.

The author’s courses had the particular characteristics described in the following section. Students earned one semester hour of academic credit. The fact that students earned credit and a grade provided the structure within which the author set course requirements and expectations for performance, as well assigned academic tasks.

An academic component is important for learning. In the author’s courses, students heard the experiences of practitioners, and then reflected on their learning in written form. The task of synthesizing research and information from the visitor created a level of learning and rigor not present in a simple guest speaker arrangement.

A few students were matched with each visitor. The selected students performed additional research and wrote a profile of the visitor, his or her organization, the industry, etc. This assignment guaranteed a few cogent questions from the students to the practitioner, and their reports were distributed to other students.

Each student also met with a guest over lunch on one or two occasions per term. The guest, instructor, and one or two students spent time in conversation over lunch and got to know one another in an informal small-group setting. The college paid for the meal. This was an important activity in that students got to meet with the practitioners in an informal but business-oriented setting, and were able to ask questions and connect with the practitioner more personally. One student received an internship almost immediately after an informal lunchtime "interview."

At Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business, the Visiting Executive program “includes informal lunches and dinners with students as well as office hours for individual and small-group meetings” (Tuck, 2004). Treating the practitioner as an honored guest at meals can enhance the “prestige” of serving as an Executive in Residence.

One’s choice of practitioners is important to the success of the Executive in Residence program. Patrick (1969) stated that “the most vital determinant of a successful residency is the quality of the participating executive” and that “broadly experienced and knowledgeable top executives are the best candidates.” He suggested that “generalists in smaller businesses” are a

better choice for Executive in Residence than “big corporation specialists.” Wendel (1981) suggested that the useful Executive in Residence life of a retired CEO is limited, because his “capital (active participation in business) quickly deteriorates.”

Table 1 lists the job titles of visitors to Executive in Residence courses taught by the author. This list features a variety of local and regional organizations, including those of public and private ownership, corporations and small businesses, profit and not-for-profit corporations.

Table 1: Executive in Residence Visiting Practitioners
Manufacturing Manager, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company
Controller, Quebecor World (Printing and Direct Marketing)
Store Manager, Lowe’s home improvement store
Store Manager, Wal-Mart Supercenter
District Marketing Manager, Federated Insurance
CEO, Community Hospital
Community Bank President, local bank
Consul & Trade Commissioner/Investment, Consulate General of Canada
Financial Services Officer, Farm Credit Services of Mid-America
Vice President of Operations, Ferry-Morse Seed Company
Manager of Machining, Materials, Accounting and MIS, Marvin Windows and Doors
Professional Sales Associate, Sanofi-Aventis (pharmaceuticals)
Owner, Hot Rod Shop
News Anchor, NBC Television Affiliate
Customer Service Manager, Tennessee Valley Authority
State Commissioner of Financial Institutions
Local Manager, telephone company
President, John Deere dealership
Manager, Telemedicine, Health Science Center, teaching hospital
Human Resources Manager, MTD Products (power equipment manufacturer)
Director, local Economic Development Corporation
President, sporting goods store
General Manager, Public Television station
Safety & Environmental Coordinator, local manufacturer
Owner, restaurant
VP, Hispanic Business Alliance
Affiliate Broker/Owner, Realty company

As Table 1 shows, even a College of Business in a small town can host Executive in Residence guests from a variety of industries and academic backgrounds. Prospective Executive in Residence participants includes practitioners with ties to the local community or to the university.

An Executive in Residence course offers the opportunity to build relationships between the college and practitioners with additional activities. “Executive in Residence” implies a deeper role for visitors than simply as a guest speaker.

A goal would be to expand the practitioner's role from the "entry-level" Executive in Residence class described here into a deeper involvement with the college. One could invite the wider college and university community to attend the practitioner's presentation. The practitioner may teach in subject-area courses in which he or she is qualified, such as management, finance, or marketing. Another option would be to have the practitioner bring along staff members who are specialists in the subject areas, and hence provide input into multiple discipline areas. For example, the practitioner could bring along the company human resources manager and conduct mock (or real) job interviews.

The practitioner's involvement could be expanded outside of the business school as well, with roles in university or community activities taking place over multiple days. The practitioner could dovetail his curricular involvement with extracurricular activities such as a sporting event, advisory or alumni board meeting, or a business event if his or her company has a local presence. And of course the relationship between the practitioner and college could deepen over time with multiple visits.

For example, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville has hosted executives in residence since 1975. The UT program has featured about a dozen "high-profile" executives each year. Students in the class must apply and are hand-picked from undergraduate Honors program and MBA students. The students participate in "roundtable" discussions with at least three executives of their choice. Students also participate in two half-hour career mentoring sessions with executives (University of Tennessee, 2006).

BENEFITS AND COSTS

The benefits and costs of an Executive in Residence course are summarized in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5. These tables reflect the viewpoints of students, instructor, college and practitioners, and are based on the author's experience hosting about 53 Executive in Residence visits across five academic terms.

Student feedback was the source of information on benefits and costs to students (See Table 2).

Table 2: Student Benefits and Costs of an Executive in Residence course	
Benefits	Costs
Learn what employers want in new graduates as employees.	Time spent in class, doing research, meeting practitioner.
Access a network for potential job opportunities.	Credit hour tuition costs (no additional cost if a full-time student).
Learn to match expectations to reality in the working world.	
Be entertained by speakers.	

Student benefits were: (1) Learn what employers want in new graduates as employees; (2) Access a network for potential job opportunities, (3) Learn to match expectations to reality in the working world and (4) Be entertained by speakers.

Executive in Residence participants with knowledge of and connections to current job prospects are among the most desirable guests for students. According to Dizik (2010) “For business schools, using executives in residence helps add real-life experience to classes that are sometimes steeped in theory. At the same time, it gives the schools readily accessible professionals who have first-hand knowledge of forging career paths in emerging fields such as social enterprise or sustainability.”

Among the author’s students, many advanced students were very interested in getting a job, so they welcomed insights on job hunting and job prospects. A student commented that “many of these people were smart and gave very informative speeches on how much work it is to get to the point of doing what they were doing now. I loved some of the pointers they gave us about how to look for work, how to present ourselves, and how to stand out in front of an employer.”

Students had the opportunity meet hiring decision-makers. One student obtained an internship with a practitioner’s organization. Another commented, “I recommend this course to anyone that would like to do an internship with a company in the surrounding area, anyone that needs a job and is considering staying or working in this area.”

The practitioners helped students bring their expectations in line with the reality of the working world. One student commented that “my thoughts were changed about the short term operational goals of first starting businesses, in that the most successful ones do not start off huge. They start off small and work their way up. I also realized owning your own business is more complicated when you hear it from a true entrepreneur instead of just reading it from the book.”

Students valued the opportunity to meet with the practitioner in a small group setting, and to learn what is on the minds of business practitioners. Students also found the class entertaining and enjoyed the variety of programs. A student said, “A highlight of this course was I was able to go to dinner with one of the speakers. Each one of us was able to have one on one contact with one of the speakers. Overall, this class was entertaining and informative class.” Another stated that “I learned a lot in general about just how the business world operates and what perspective employers are looking for in employees. I particularly enjoyed the fact that it was a hands-on class that allowed you to interact with real people.”

The student costs listed in Table 2, such as time spent in class and on homework, are typical for courses and are assumed since students did not give feedback on their costs.

Instructor costs and benefits are based on the author’s experience conducting the course (See table 3). The instructor benefited from (1) learning current business practice to use as examples in teaching and (2) learning current career advice to give students. The instructor heard business anecdotes that were useful for other classes. The instructor also found that having

up-to-date information about jobs was valuable to students not in the Executive in Residence course. The one-hour format added variety to the curriculum while fitting within the instructor's workload and students' course load.

Benefits	Costs
Learn current business practice to use as examples in teaching.	Time spent preparing for class, coordinating visits, evaluating assignments, time in class.
Learn current career advice to give students.	Time spent getting a course added to the college catalog (one time).

The instructor was faced with the normal time and effort to manage a course, plus the added effort to coordinate and host guests to campus. The Executive in Residence course took more of the instructor's time to coordinate than one-hour of a "traditional" academic course.

One potential concern is that a faculty member may not possess the wherewithal to organize a series of Executive in Residence visitors, including the inclination to make and maintain relationships with business practitioners and organize visits to campus. There are a few ways to address this issue.

First, there is likely to be only one Executive in Residence course per college of business (or large department), so the assignment to serve as instructor could go to a faculty member inclined toward outreach activities. Second, the author enlisted the help of the Dean and development staff to identify Executive in Residence guests. They were happy to identify alumni and potential friends of the college to honor with the Executive in Residence invitation.

Thirdly, the instructor can, with the support of the Dean's office or department, gain assistance from staff to coordinate the logistics of the visits. Finally, the instructor can promote the executive's visit broadly, the make the real-world contribution of the guest available to the university community (meeting time and space permitting).

The college benefited from the ability to provide practitioner knowledge as an option in the curriculum for students (See Table 4).

Benefits	Costs
Provide practitioner input to students in the business curriculum.	Cost of faculty time.
Contribution to achieving college mission and objectives (e.g. outreach; service to community).	Cost of meals.
Potential new "friends" of the college.	

The college also made progress toward its mission of involving practitioners and organizations in the teaching process. For example, since 1995 the objective of the Executive in Residence program at Iowa State University has been "to enhance the educational programs in

the College of Business by enriching the learning environment of both undergraduate and graduate students and fostering research ideas for faculty and graduate students. The program is also intended to provide faculty and staff involved in outreach activities with new ideas and perspectives on how to serve the business community” (Iowa State, 2004).

Executive in Residence visitors may become deeper “friends” of the college and provide professional or monetary support. For example, the Executive in Residence program of the Center for Retailing Studies has an objective to “familiarize executives with our retailing program, Mays Business School, and Texas A&M University” (Texas A&M, 2004).

The University of Iowa’s College of Business got a boost when the chairman emeritus of HON industries (and visiting faculty member in the college's Executive in Residence program) donated \$2.5 million for an endowed professorship (FYI, 1998). At the University of California at Davis, a former visiting executive donated \$350,000 to support the Executive in Residence program (UC Davis, 2007).

The costs of supporting an Executive in Residence class to the college were the costs of meals (about \$400 per term) and the cost of instructor time (offset by student credit hours).

Practitioner costs and benefits are listed in Table 5. Practitioners have gotten the opportunity to share their experiences with an attentive, appreciative, and admiring audience. He or she received the satisfaction of helping students by sharing his or her experiences. This benefit is more psychic than tangible, but valuable nonetheless. In describing his Executive in Residence experience at Cornell, Wendel (1981) said, “I was exposed to lively inquiring minds, an informal and relaxed atmosphere, a beautiful campus, (and) distinguished scholars in diverse disciplines throughout the university.”

Benefits	Costs
An attentive audience of students.	Time and travel costs.
A chance to help others by sharing his or her experiences.	
Association with the Business School.	
Opportunity to meet prospective employees	
Forum for promoting his or her firm	
A free lunch	

Practitioners in the author’s courses shared information on job opportunities at his or her organization, and met potential new employees. The practitioner got to associate himself or herself, and his or her organization, with the university. The practitioner may be able to advance his or her firm’s goals by meeting prospective employees and promoting the firm. On top of these benefits he or she received a free lunch and a warm thank-you letter on college letterhead. Practitioner costs were time and energy spent on the visit and costs of travel.

CONCLUSION

In summary, an Executive in Residence course can be used to bring “real-world” experiences into the business education classroom. This paper stressed the value of a formal academic format for an Executive in Residence program, and described a one-credit-hour course. The paper included examples of practitioner guests and discussed the benefits and costs of an Executive in Residence course to students, the instructor, and the college.

Students benefit by learning what employers want in new graduates as employees; accessing a network for potential job opportunities; learning to match expectations to reality in the working world; and hearing and meeting entertaining speakers. This course has the potential to grow into a more robust experience for practitioners and students, and to introduce the college to “friends” who may provide financial and professional support in the future.

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: A SAUDI STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Practices of academic dishonesty are prevalent on college campuses (Chen, 2009; O'Rourke, Barnes, Deaton, Fulks, Ryan, & Rettinger, 2010; Simkin, 2010). The pressure to excel, peer perception, and the lack of faculty enforcement are among several factors that lead students to cheat. Building on an initial multi campus 673 participant-survey results, circumstances of academic integrity among Saudi students at a Midwestern university are examined through in depth interviews. Findings revealed prevalence of academic misconduct behaviors among study participants. Academic misconduct behaviors ranged from simple utilization of cheating on tests to utilizing internet paper mills. Findings also showed a gap between students' moral beliefs and their moral actions (Gross, 2011). Most participants, though reporting several academic dishonesty behaviors as accepted practices, denounced cheating as opposed to their own cultural, religious, and ethical beliefs.

INTRODUCTION

Occurring for several reasons with varying rates, types of cheating within a college setting may have no limits (Hendricks, Young-Jones, & Foutch, 2011). An observed increase of incidents of academic dishonesty from Middle Eastern international students on three adjacent Midwestern institutions raised a flag to faculty members. As a result an initial survey of academic integrity was adapted from the Dr. Donald McCabe of Rutgers University. After obtaining the proper approval of the Institutional Review Board, an electronic copy of the survey was circulated utilizing Patton's (2002) snowball sampling method through student international groups at 11 cities in the United States. Initially group administrators were concerned lest the result might influence the reputation of their members. However, they agreed to distribute the survey after a promise of keeping their group names anonymous. Out of 673 returned surveys, 501 were from Saudi students and 172 were from other Middle Eastern students from several nationalities including Kuwaiti, Libyan, Qatari, Egyptian, Jordanian, Algerian, Moroccan, Sudanese, Lebanese, Syrian, and Yamani in a descending order. Frequency results showed large difference between the Saudi students and the American national levels of academic dishonesty practices as reported by the Center for Academic Integrity at Duke University (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2004). However, the comparison between students from countries other than Saudi Arabia and the national reported data did not show significant difference (See Table 1

for a summary of frequency data). The focus of this article is to explore the motives and circumstances surrounding Saudi students' increased reported academic dishonesty practices. An exploration qualitative study was developed to explore the reasons pertained to Saudi students' academic integrity behaviors, how they perceive, interpret, and justify these behaviors, and ways a university may be able to decrease these behaviors.

Table 1 Frequency Comparisons

Dishonest Academic Behaviors	Saudi	U.S.A.	Middle Eastern**
Unauthorized collaboration	48%	42%	44%
Copying a few sentences from an electronic source without referencing them	42%	36%	38%
Getting questions or answers from someone who has already taken the test	32%	15%	13%
Receiving substantial unpermitted help on an assignment	53%	24%	18%
Fabricating or falsifying a bibliography	15%	14%	15%

* Engagement once or more in Dishonest Academic Behaviors

**Non Saudi Middle Eastern Students

BACKGROUND

Over the last two decades, academic dishonesty has become an alarming phenomenon on college campuses (Carter & Punyanunt-Carter, 2006; Fishbein, 1993). Davis, Grover, Becker, and McGregor's (1992) study on 6000 college students showed that between 46% and 79% of students reported that they have cheated at least once. Several forms of academic dishonesty can take place in the college classroom with its larger meaning. These forms may vary in their degree of severity and seriousness from copying from a nearby student answer sheet during a quiz to plagiarizing a paper from an internet website or collaborating on homework and inappropriate utilization of tutoring services (Levy & Rakovski, 2006). Faculty perceptions about cheating always varied from those of the students who usually denied the severity of the different forms of cheating (Graham, Monday, O'Brien, & Steffen, 1994). Moreover, students consider some forms of academic dishonesty more serious than others. Consequently, students are more frequently engaged in behaviors that they consider less serious than other forms of cheating (Kidwell, Wozniak, & Laurel, 2003).

Types and Reasons of Academic Misconduct

Types of academic dishonesty can be classified according to several dimensions in regard to intentionality, seriousness of the misconduct from students' point of view, and the degree of student awareness of types and consequences of academic misconduct. Levy and Rakovski (2006) found that student regarded the following categories of misconduct as severe: stealing an exam, submitting another student's paper, knowingly allowing another student to use one's paper, copying an exam with or without the other student's knowledge, copying a paper, and using a cheat sheet. Students categorized copying homework; giving or receiving help on graded work; and plagiarizing from the internet as the least serious and the most frequently practiced (Levy & Rakovski, 2006).

According to Callahan (2004), shifting values from idealism to materialism caused the increases in cheating incidents among students. According to the study conducted by Smith, Nolan, and Dai (1998), faculty believed that student cheating is more encouraged when students encounter a "moral dilemma." Researchers argue that one of the main reasons of today students' academic dishonesty is the social pressure demanding them to demonstrate productivity, performance, and speed (Blum, 2009; Rabi, Patton, Fjortoft, & Zgarrick, 2006). Likewise, Wowra (2007) argued that college students who choose to cheat in some form have higher value for their social impression than they attribute to maintaining their integrity. Anxiety about grades, compulsory achievements, and economic conditions may lead students towards sacrificing their integrity especially when the risk of being caught is foreseen to be minimal (Wowra, 2007).

Students who reported incidents of academic dishonesty blamed their college professors for failing to respond efficiently to cheating incidents that were obvious (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001). Hard, Conway, and Moran (2006) found that professors underestimating the amount of student academic dishonesty fail to integrate challenging measures to stop student academic misconduct. They also argued that tolerance of academic misconduct might increase the number of incidents in their classes.

Preventing Academic Misconduct

The intentional academic misconduct performed by the students on papers and written assignments falls under Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior. According to Ajzen (2002), a certain behavior is controlled by three main aspects. First, individuals decide to engage in certain behaviors based on their attitude toward that specific behavior. Second, perceptions of social pressures may decide whether individuals will perform a certain behavior or not. Third, individuals' control over the conditions of performing the behavior and its consequences is a determinant factor in the decision to engage in that behavior (Ajzen, 2002; Passow, Mayhew, Finelli, Harding, & Carpenter, 2006). Therefore, the prevention of academic misconduct needs to include these three dimensions. College administrators need to raise the ethical commitment of their students to decrease the frequency of cheating. To accomplish that, colleges choose different ways ranging from notifying students upon admission of the university honor code to

more concrete techniques like requiring students to sign an honor contract (McCabe & Trevino, 2002) or write an essay pledging to uphold to the honor code (Gomez, 2001).

Modifying the learning process to focus more on acquiring knowledge and skills more than accumulating grades may be another factor that alleviates the pressure on students to perform acts of academic misconduct. Hard et al. (2006) suggested raising the faculty members awareness of the dimensions of academic misconduct and its expected frequency as a way to prevent academic misconduct through increasing faculty numbers who work against it. Raising faculty awareness of the matter may urge faculty to take active measures to prevent academic misconduct. One of the most important in such measures is articulating their policy towards cheating and the consequences that students may face due to academic misconduct. Scholars also argued in favor of improving student learning and asserting its precedence over grades while accepting feedback about assignments in a non-intimidating learning environment (Gallant, 2008; Rabi et al., 2006).

Academic dishonesty is prevalent on American college campuses. Students choose to cheat due to social pressure and higher appreciation of grades over the importance of conformity to the ethical framework guided by personal integrity (Ajzen, 2002; Passow et al., 2006). Students who choose to cheat rationalize their behavior according to the perceived severity of different forms of academic dishonesty (Kidwell et al., 2003). Their behavior is also influenced by their knowledge of the consequences they may face if caught by the instructor (Callahan, 2004; Wowra, 2007). Articulation of the university honor code and actively informing students of university policies in response to academic misconduct may help reduce the frequency of student violations of the code (Gomez, 2001; McCabe & Trevino, 2002). In the classroom, instructors asserting their measures responding to cheating incidents may minimize the frequency of student academic misconduct (Hard et al., 2006; McCabe & Trevino, 2002). Moreover, shifting the goal of the educational process from accumulating high grades to acquiring knowledge and skills may lessen pressure on students and encourage them to abstain from cheating (Gallant, 2008; Rabi et al., 2006).

METHODS

As a qualitative study, the current study presents a more complex world view where participants have limits, opportunities and intermingling complications they have to reconsider while shaping their reactions and perceptions (Firestone, 1987). It is the orientation of the current study to explore, discover, and interpret the meaning produced during observations and interviews. The case study approach, usually more prominent and integrative of themes, is used to allow the data to drive the outcome instead of starting with hypotheses and trying to prove them (Yin, 2003). The products of field observations and interviews are the data sources for the proposed study. Interviews, one of the most powerful research techniques for human understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998), are selected as a tool because of their effectiveness in

understanding feeling, emotions, and perceptions of participants regarding their complex experiences and the various factors involved with them. Each interview protocol included certain guidelines and rules for participant's responses (Sypher, Hummert, & Williams, 1994). Interview protocols for each group of participants, though varied, were crafted to assure that the contained response of the participant is addressing the intended research questions. They also provided chances for appropriate elaboration that expanded and widened the scope of the response to clarify ambiguities and reveal unsolicited, though valuable, aspects or experiences of the participants.

Procedures

Building on the results of the aforementioned survey, the primary data source for this study originates in open-ended interviews with each of the 13 key participants. Participants responded to a topical interview protocol eliciting their feelings about academic honesty, beliefs about cheating and possible practices of academic dishonesty at Riverside State University (a pseudonym) during the academic year 2011/2012. Using a pseudonym list of participant names, the responses were recorded and transcribed. Data were coded and categorized within an emergent framework of relevant themes to examine the intricate relationships that shape the situation of Saudi students at Riverside State University (RSU) and the impact of campus environment, recruitment circumstances, administrative procedures, and academic practices on their practices and perceptions of academic dishonesty behaviors.

Conducting several exploratory discussions with faculty about the topic, the issue proved to be worth of a deliberate and structured research endeavor. After obtaining an Institutional Review Board approval to observe student activities and to interview students, faculty members, and administrators in an effort to reveal the different aspects of the issue, the current exploratory study revealed the different constructs central to the case of these students. The exploratory discussions helped structuring the interview protocols to explore the themes related to academic integrity beliefs, practices, and justifications of Saudi students pursuing degrees at RSU.

Interview Language

Although the interviews were conducted in English and the participants were asked to respond in English, most of the participants fluctuated in their responses between English and Arabic, their mother tongue, due to their level of English language proficiency. Some of the participants inquired if they can use Arabic instead of English. The suggestion was to use Arabic if they feel more comfortable in using it than English. As a native speaker of Arabic, I translated the interviewees' Arabic responses to English. The accuracy of the translations were later verified by a fellow researcher who has proficiency in both English and Arabic.

FINDINGS

Overwhelmed by the amount of work expected from them to keep up the good grades and accomplish their goals, some Saudi participants sought external help away from regular

university resources. Hanan tells how she needed tutoring to succeed in her classes. She recollects,

I find it very difficult for someone like me to come and study here. I think the 500 on TOEFL they required us to have before admission is not enough score. ... I had a lot of troubles in my first year. I had to get a tutor from the English Institute here to help me get some skills in reading and how to organize my papers and even respond to questions in my exams.

Like Hanan, Jihad had to get a tutor to help him during his English language year. Telling how the studying at ELI got harder in his first year, he says, "Studying was not that hard at the beginning of the year because they think that we do not know any English." However, he needed to use an extra help as the difficulty of assignments and instructional material increased. "Later in the year, things got harder and harder. I could barely pass my quizzes. I had to get a tutor that helped me with both my assignments and my studies," He reflects.

Although the role of the tutor seemed traditional at the beginning of Jihad's study of English, that role changed with larger assignments.

He used to take a copy of my syllabus and the textbooks. ... we met three times a week. In each meeting, he would go over the important points in the next week's lessons. He also gave me notes about the chapters we are going to cover in class. If there were any assignments due, he would give me an outline of the assignment I should write. Then I would start writing the assignment on my own. ... After that, he would revise them for me and make the paper looks really good to submit to my professor. This was what he suggested for me. But in a few large assignments, I left the whole job for him because I was not able to do them at all.

Later, when Jihad started his academic program, he utilized the service of another person who "is really easy going but he does not explain things. They say he is very busy. He gives you your papers written and if you need them summarized, he can give you that too. But he has to know in advance like three weeks before you get the paper".

Rabie tells two incidents when he had to get help from the internet. He says,

During my second semester, I was asked to write a research paper about one of the class topics. I found a similar paper on the internet. ... I used many sections of that paper in my assignment. I knew that was not right but I did not take it that serious because I did that in other classes too and still got good grades on the assignments. ... She told me that she should have sent me to the Legal Affairs Department but she will forgive me as it is my first time to do it on the condition that I redo the assignment.

Although Rabie admits knowing that this was not right, he argues that it passes in other classes. His simple inference is that this should have passed in that class as well. He continues to tell his experience with the University Writing Lab, “Another professor sent me to the writing lab when I submitted my first reflection paper on the reading. But you know the Writing Lab did not offer that great help. They wanted me to submit a nearly correct paper to revise for me.” Because he did not get what he expected from the Writing Lab, he tried and found another way to satisfy his needs when it comes to writing papers,

But I did not know how to do it from the beginning. It was not until I knew that Syrian guy. He helps me a lot with my papers. ... I give him the assignment, and what I want to write about and if the professor has gave me some directions and he does the paper for me. ... He also gives me a summary of what is included in the paper if I have to talk about it.

Rabie’s approach was not different from other Saudi participants. Fadila, having some other Saudi students in her program, uses passed over class material to help her get better grades. She says, “I tried to use my friends’ class material as a great help in the classes that has the same professor.” She reflects on how this helped,

In the first classes of the master program, I had so much trouble writing the papers that was required. I got D’s and C’s on my first papers. ... Then, my husband got me the folders of his friends’ wives, the ones that had the program before. I followed their assignments and papers.

Fadila knows about university rules concerning plagiarism. She tells how she avoids getting into trouble because of using other students’ assignments. She says, “I used their papers but changed a little in each paper because my husband told me that if the professors know they can fail me the course and may be the whole program.”

Feras talks about how he and other Saudi students in his program found a student who graduated from the same program to help them with reading, papers, and quizzes.

The topics we study are usually new to me. ... I have three Saudi who are in the same program with me. One of us knows a student who finished the program two years ago and he did not find a job. This guy helps us a lot. ... He offers to write us papers... and summarize the chapters that we are quizzed in for us.

Responding to a question about what they do when they are required to present in their classes, Feras said, “When one of us has a presentation about a paper, he gives us an outline for the presentation.” The help even was extended to quizzes. Feras declared, “He offers to... summarize the chapters that we are quizzed in for us. His summaries really helped me to pass quizzes.” Feras explains how they managed to survive classes with final exams without doing much of the reading that is required throughout the year. “In the classes that have tests, he

summarizes the books for us and then we study the summary before the tests. This worked so far.” He says. John’s help extended to reach group work on class projects as well.

In class projects, we try to be together so it is easier for us to work together. ... It was only one class where I had to do group work with other students in the class. But it worked OK. I discussed my role with my group. ... And with the help of John, I finished my part and he told me that I can offer them to revise the paper and submit it. He is very good in MLA and he does the works cited very well.

Fadila speaks about another person that helps her doing her assignments as well. But she uses this service only in classes that she does not have the material.

The courses that had a different professor were another problem that we were also able to solve. We had this [man] who does papers for us and takes a sum of money –not much – he takes a \$100 for each paper and an extra 25 if we need him to summarize the paper for a presentation in the class. ... He is very good and since the time we knew him; I have been getting A’s on all my papers.

Fadila opines the external help she is getting as an acceptable behavior in her opinion. She argues, “I know this is wrong but this will not influence me when I go back to my country. I cannot fail here. It will be a scandal if this happens. I have to get that degree no matter what. I do not need what they teach us here as I need the degree itself.” However, she admits that she was afraid at the beginning of jeopardizing her chances of success at RSU. She says, “I know this is wrong but this will not influence me when I go back to my country. I cannot fail here. It will be a scandal if this happens. I have to get that degree no matter what. I do not need what they teach us here as I need the degree itself.”

When asked if she considers this as cheating, Fadila argues, “Not that much. I think I can do whatever I can to get my degree. ...I am not copying someone’s answers on a test. ... I am not going to get the grades of anybody else.” She claims that as long as she is not taking something that belongs to someone else she is not cheating, “I am not going to get the job they are supposed to get. I will have my degree and leave to my country.” Likewise, Rabie and Feras did not admit that this could be considered cheating. They both argued about that they are not using some other student’s work to get credit. Feras argues,

It is cheating only when you take another student’s answers and copy them... I do not do that... I submit papers that are not written by other students ... I know that is not right because I cannot tell the professor that I do that but I am not taking anyone’s right here.

DISCUSSION

Except for one participant, all Saudi participants reported incidents of academic dishonesty as an acceptable norm for survival in their American college endeavor. The academic dishonesty incidents they reported included copying from the internet, using other students' papers as their own, and receiving help on assignments. These practices, although rated by American students as the least serious form of cheating and therefore the most frequently practiced (Levy & Rakovski, 2006), appeared to be a common practice among the Saudi study participants. The concept of cheating appeared to be blurred when they reported these incidents. Their first argument mainly focused on the stress they suffer because of their inevitable failure without these forms of external help let alone their cultural challenges (Razek & Coyner, 2012). As Nolan and Dai (1998) found, the stress they suffer from lest they lose their scholarship or return home without their respective degrees places them in the shift to materialism as suggested by Callahan (2004). Saudi participants reported increased incidents of academic misconduct which may be a direct result of the collective cultural framework they belong to (Triandis & Trafimow, 2001). This cultural framework directs them to value their social impression higher than maintaining their academic integrity (Wowra, 2007).

Resonating with the arguments of Gallant (2008) and Rabi et al. (2006), Saudi participants reporting incidents of academic misconduct mentioned how grades are more important for them than learning and the precedence of obtaining the degree over acquiring the knowledge and skills matching to their respective degrees. Students in the study also reported how their advisors, instructors, and most important, the scholarship administrators put high values on grades and assignment scores which correspond with their reported tendency for cheating on assignments one way or another (Blum, 2009; Wowra, 2007). In this respect, instructors and college administrators need to exert intentional efforts in asserting the value of acquiring the cognitive skills and put more weight to the learning process as an essential component of the educational process (Gallant, 2008; Rabi et al., 2006). Another technique may target the Saudi students' attitude toward the importance of learning and the acquisition of content knowledge and work skills during orientation programs and college success seminars, which may reduce their tendency to cheat on assignments.

The Saudi participants' other justification of cheating was about the definition of cheating. Participants reported that as long as they do not take something that belongs to another student, they do not consider themselves cheating. Educating the Saudi students upon arrival about the different forms of academic dishonesty as detailed by the university honor code may establish the common concepts of what are the accepted forms of practice and what are not. Such delineation can be asserted through different techniques like writing an essay on the university honor code (Gomez, 2001) or signing an integrity contract (McCabe & Trevino, 2002). Another strategy can target raising the faculty awareness of the increased frequency of students' academic misconduct (Hard et al., 2006). This will encourage faculty to articulate their

policies toward academic misconduct and it stated consequences for students. Faculty awareness will also increase the number of faculty working against academic misconduct.

College professor and administrators might be able to reduce the frequency of Saudi students' engagement in academic dishonest behaviors through a three faceted plan that need to be simultaneous. First they may raise students' ethical awareness to decrease the frequency of cheating (Gomez, 2001; McCabe & Trevino, 2002). Second, because students choose to cheat due to social pressure, institutional endeavor to alleviate these pressures through providing peer support, more learning support systems especially for international students, and progress check points along the academic courses may decrease the amount of academic pressure they suffer and may also decrease their fear of failure alleviating their social threats (Ajzen, 2002; Passow et al., 2006). Third, professors and instructor should focus more on students' acquiring knowledge and skills more than accumulating grades as the main goal of the educational process (Gallant, 2008; Hard et al., 2006; Rabi et al., 2006). More specific to the case of paper trade, professors are encouraged to keep writing samples for each student. Professors also may require draft submission that shows students' thought processes. Another beneficial strategy is in-class "work on assignments" segments where students are assisted by instructor and peers.

CONCLUSION

Previous studies, which dealt with academic integrity issues, rarely targeted international students as a group (Bailey & Bailey, 2011; Duff, Rogers, & Harris, 2006; Grimes, 2004; Sutherland-Smith, 2005; Teixeira & Rocha, 2010). Although the results of these studies cannot be undermined, the case of the noticeable increase of academic dishonesty among Saudi students in the United States deserved a more focused attention. The current study showed that academic dishonesty behaviors are more prevalent among Saudi Students when compared to national U.S. reported rates and also when compared to other Middle Eastern students on their colleges and universities. The study suggested some strategies to reduce the frequency of academic dishonesty among Saudi students including: Raising ethical awareness, focusing more on the developmental objective of learning, employing more collaborative learning experiences, and utilizing periodic evaluations against well-articulated objectives especially when coupled with an academic awareness of their case.

The present study had three limitations that restricted its findings. First: the small sample size of key participants limited the degree of generalization of the findings. Second, the geographic location of RSU may have had its influence on the case. In other words, Saudi students may behave, perform, and react differently if they are at an institution located on a coastal state where the student body is usually more diverse. Third, the qualitative approach, though revealing in-depth rich aspects of the case, is very specific to the case studied and cannot be utilized to speak about the whole group of the Saudi students.

Future studies may target a larger sample size of Saudi students to produce more inclusive results. A quantitative approach may be a suitable technique to studying the characteristics of a larger number of Saudi students. A collaborative multi institutional study would reveal valuable findings about Saudi students as a fast growing group on American campuses.

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