

AN EXAMINATION OF INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY OF MARKETING ACADEMICIANS

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ABSTRACT

The importance of publishing cannot be understated for Marketing academics. Decisions about promotion and tenure rest heavily on the quality and quantity research produced. This exploratory study is an attempt to gain insight into the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive, and hamper, research productivity. A survey of 119 Full Professors of Marketing employed at major universities in the United States uncovers key detriments to research productivity. Results suggest that although research productivity usually slows after reaching Full Professor status, desire to publish does not.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing educators are often classified as those who are research orientated and those who are teaching orientated. For academics that choose to dedicate their career to research, their career is defined by the type, quality, and quantity of research produced. Even for those who choose to concentrate on teaching, most must still produce at least some research in order to achieve tenure (McCullough, Wooten, and Ryan 1981). Publishing top-quality research is as important in the field of marketing as it is for any other social science. Marketing professors are expected to do much more than publish (i.e., teach, departmental and university service activities, advising, etc.), but when asked to state “what matters,” . . . the response is most often “research and publication” (Massy and Wilger 1995).

One needs to look no further than our doctoral programs to see that the status-quo of writing journal articles and presenting at conferences is instilled on marketing graduate students early and often. Coursework and assistantship duties are dominated with research methods and statistics with less attention given to other facets of the profession. Although graduate students are encouraged to produce top quality research from the beginning of their careers, there is still great variability in the quantity and quality of research produced by marketing professors over their careers. The reasons for this variance is often speculated, but rarely demonstrated empirically. Past studies have revealed different career patterns for marketing academicians as well as significant differences in their

overall level of research productivity (Powers, Swan, Bos, and Patton 1998). Other studies have examined the work styles of marketing professors and compared them with their perceptions of the work styles necessary for promotion, tenure, and salary increases. (Boya and Robicheaux 1995). Although the literature has identified patterns and productivity differences, little is known about the underlying causes. Are these differences due to the level of internal drive of researchers, the quality of training they have received during their Ph.D. program, or external situational factors that originate from peers, departmental norms, or university expectations? This study makes an exploratory effort to understand intrinsic and extrinsic factors that ultimately drive research productivity and account for career patterns and differences in research productivity.

BACKGROUND

Research output of marketing academicians has been well researched over the past several decades. In previous studies, writers have contributed to the topic through examination of the quantity of publications in selected journals by individual and institution (Aysen, Vitell, and Rose 2000; Bush and Grant 1991; Fields and Swayne, 1991; Marquard and Murdock 1983; Niemi 1988; Robinson and Adler 1981) and through analysis and classification of career research productivity of marketing academicians (Powers et al. 1998). Although the literature continues to identify the top producers in marketing and

the various trends that exemplify the productivity patterns of marketing professors, the factors that drive these trends are unknown.

Fairweather (2002) found that a small percentage of faculty in 4-year institutions achieved high levels of output in both research and teaching. This is an interesting finding considering research and teaching are only two of the many factors that compete for the academic's time and energy. It is generally assumed that various situational factors may impede research productivity such as teaching, administrative, and service expectations, but no empirical studies have been done to verify the magnitude of effects these "outside" activities have on a researcher's productivity. Just as external factors may be detriments on research productivity, other extrinsic factors such as promotion and tenure may drive productivity. Much of the research in faculty behavior has focused on socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender) and variables related to the career path (e.g., focus of one's academic institution or department, past and present positions, career age). Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) take into account self-knowledge (e.g., efficacy as a researcher, level of ambition, and persistence) and social knowledge (e.g., support from colleagues and which activities are valued by the university or department). Past research done in the field of marketing education has called for research to identify what factors affect productivity, and specifically which productivity detriments are most important (Powers et al. 1998). No research has considered the underlying intrinsic variables (i.e., ambition, drive, and curiosity) along with extrinsic variables (i.e., teaching and administrative duties or promotion and tenure) in one study. The current study is an attempt to understand how internal and external factors work together to shape the marketing academic's career.

RESEARCH METHOD

Measures

The measurement instrument was designed to capture both intrinsic and extrinsic detriments to research productivity and motivations to publish using a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions. In order to capture how much time and effort was spent on the traditional academic "professional activities," subjects were asked to estimate the amount of time and effort they spent on the five major activities throughout their career.¹ Subjects were asked to report how they currently concentrate their efforts, as well as how they spent their time in earlier stages of their careers (as an Associate Professor and Assistant Professor), and respondents allocated 100 percentage points among the five "professional activities." Subjects were then asked to report how they would prefer to spend their time if it were completely up to

them, again by allocating 100 percentage points among the five activities.

Subjects were also asked to identify their intrinsic desires and extrinsic pressures to publish, take on service and/or administrative roles, and teach. A series of three questions had respondents rate whether their intrinsic *desire* to publish, teach, and take on service/administrative duties has increased as their career has progressed through various stages. Another series of three questions asked respondents to rate whether the extrinsic *pressure* to publish, teach, and take on service/administrative duties has increased as their career has progressed. Respondents answered to these six questions on a five-point scale with the endpoints "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree."

In addition to the scaled questions on the survey, respondents were presented with a series of open-ended items. A significant portion of the measurement instrument was qualitative in nature so as to provide a means to get at any factors that may have been otherwise missed. These qualitative questions served to allow respondents to freely list their thoughts, feelings, and opinions without being restrained to predefined responses. The first three open-ended questions asked respondents to report what motivated them to publish during the three predefined stages of their career. There was no prompt to specify either intrinsic or extrinsic motivations; respondents were encouraged to list any motivations or describe them in paragraph form. The final two open-ended questions asked respondents to identify and report a trend in their research productivity and then to identify the most significant detriments to research productivity throughout their career. The qualitative section of the questionnaire was positioned at the front end of the survey in order to capture the most amount of information without the respondent getting bored or tired of participating in the study.

Sample

Because productivity trends over the course of an entire career and factors that contribute to the trends are targeted in this study, only full professors of marketing (those that have experienced all three stages) at major universities in the United States were sampled. A list of U.S. colleges and universities was generated from the AMA Member Directory. The sampling frame was narrowed to large marketing departments by sampling only schools that listed five or more members in the AMA Member Directory. After compiling a list of all U.S. colleges and universities with the required number of members, 100 schools were randomly selected as the sampling frame for this study. The questionnaire was emailed to the full professors in each university's marketing department as specified by the school's web site. Of the 312 professors we emailed, 119 marketing professors

completed the online survey for a response rate of 38 percent. Twenty of the respondents held a chair, eleven were department heads, three were deans or assistant deans, three had achieved Professor Emeritus status and six were a director of some institute. The mean graduation year for respondents was 1978 and the mean year in which tenure was achieved was 1984. Respondents had published articles in “top tier” marketing journals 6.5 times on average and typically published 50 total articles in their career.² Only eight of respondents were female.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Quantitative Results

Respondents were asked to report the amount of time spent on various professional activities (research, teaching, service, administration, and consulting) during the three ranks in their career (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Full Professor). As shown in Table 1, respondents reported that research dominated their time spent at work while at the early and middle stages of their career ($M_{\text{ASSISTANT}} = 39\%$ and $M_{\text{ASSOCIATE}} = 46\%$).³ Once full professorship was achieved, however, respondents reported a significant decrease in time dedicated to research-related activities ($M_{\text{FULL}} = 28\%$). The time devoted to research activities decreased 18 percent after respondents achieved the title of full professor. Inversely, administrative duties, service, and consulting consumed more of the respondents’ time in the later stages of their careers. The largest difference in time allocation between early and late career stages was with administrative duties ($M_{\text{FULL}} = 16\%$ versus $M_{\text{ASSOCIATE}} = 1.5\%$ and $M_{\text{ASSISTANT}} = 5\%$). This finding would be expected as full professors take on department chair, dean, and other leadership roles within their department and school. Respondents reported spending 40 percent of their time on administration, service, and consulting at the time when they completed the survey compared to only 16 percent of their time on these duties as an Associate. Overall, time spent on research and teaching during the Assistant and Associate career stages ($M_s = 74\%$ and 84%) was higher than time spent on these activities at the time of participation in the study as a Full Professor ($M = 60\%$). When asked how they would prefer to spend their time, the respondents revealed that they would rather spend more time on research than they currently devote to the activity ($M_{\text{IDEAL}} = 42\%$ versus $M_{\text{REALITY}} = 28\%$) and, if given the choice, would devote more time to research than any other activity.

Subjects were also asked to respond to a series of questions regarding the extrinsic and intrinsic motivations that drive the professional activities in which professors engage. Findings indicate that the extrinsic pressure to take on service and/or administrative roles increased as

the respondents progressed through the various stages of their career ($M = 4.07$), whereas the desire to do so did not ($M = 2.85$). There was only a slight difference in the respondents desire to publish as their career progressed ($M = 3.2$) compared to the external pressure they felt to produce ($M = 2.71$). There was even a smaller reported difference between the pressure and desire to spend more time on teaching responsibilities through the progression of respondents’ careers ($M_{\text{PRESSURE}} = 2.7$ versus $M_{\text{DESIRE}} = 2.9$). Mean results for these items are reported in Table 2.

Qualitative Results

The open-ended questions asked respondents to specify what motivated them to publish in each of the three stages of their career. All responses were read by two raters and categorized according to general themes that were uncovered. The themes are presented in Table 1. In all three career stages, “interest” (in a particular topic or in research in general) was the most commonly listed motivator. Over half of the respondents listed this intrinsic motivation for the Assistant and Associate Professor periods and just less than half listed it for the Full Professor period. This finding is particularly interesting because the top motivator in all three career stages was intrinsic in nature. The extrinsic pressure of achieving tenure and/or promotion was the second most listed motivation for publishing during the Assistant career stage and promotion was also the second most listed motivation for the Associate stage. Almost three-quarters of the respondents (71.4%) listed some variation of tenure/promotion requirements as motivation to publish as an Assistant but only 48.8 percent of respondents listed tenure/promotion as motivation to publish at the Associate stage. This is most likely due to the fact that academics are typically tenured at the end of their time as an Assistant professor. The following are examples of typical responses to these questions:

“getting sufficient publications to achieve tenure . . . moving my career forward . . . the intrinsic joy and interest of the research”

“the tenure clock was ticking . . . a strong interest in the topics I investigate”

Beyond interest in research and promotion/tenure requirements, there are some notable findings for motivation to publish during the Assistant and Associate career stages. The next most important factors that motivated respondents to publish during the Assistant and Associate career phases were “research is expected/research is a job requirement” and “to make a contribution to the discipline/advance marketing knowledge.” These two factors make up approximately one-third of the responses to the questions of what motivated them to publish during the Assistant/Associate stages of their career. Responses such as “(publishing) was the thing I was trained to do and it

**TABLE 1
HOW MARKETING PROFESSORS SPENT THEIR TIME**

| | Assistant | Associate | Full | Ideal |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Research | 39.1% | 46.4% | 28.3% | 42.1% |
| Teaching | 35.7 | 38.3 | 32.1 | 29.9 |
| Service | 13.6 | 10.3 | 16.1 | 10.2 |
| Administration | 5.8 | 1.6 | 16.6 | 6.3 |
| Consulting | 5.7 | 3.5 | 7.0 | 11.6 |

**TABLE 2
MEAN VALUES OF SEMANTIC SCALE ITEMS**

| | To Publish | To Take on Service / Admin. Duties | To Teach |
|-----------------|-------------------|---|-----------------|
| Desire | 3.2 | 2.9 | 2.9 |
| Pressure | 2.7 | 4.1 | 2.7 |

was my job to do it” and “I always wanted to advance a topic that I felt could make a major contribution to the field” were typical.

Not surprisingly, respondents reported very different motivational factors to publish as a Full Professor. Aside from interest in research, their rationale varied greatly from what they reported as significant factors in earlier career stages. The second most common motivator reported was “to make a contribution to the discipline/advance marketing knowledge” and “Working with Ph.D. Students and Junior Faculty” was the third most reported motivator for the Full Professor phase. It is not surprising that intrinsic motivations dominated the responses to the question pertaining to the Full Professor career stage. Interesting responses that were typical of respondents’ answers:

“I am motivated to publish on topics I am more interested in now, rather than ‘hot’ topics more likely to be published in visible journals.”

“I like working with others, especially younger colleagues or Ph.D. students.”

When asked about the most significant detriments to their research productivity over the course of their careers, 57 percent of respondents indicated that other professional activities impeded on their ability to produce. The next most common responses were lack of a research-oriented atmosphere (characterized by the lack of a research culture and/or a Ph.D. program in the department)

and a lack of funds or resources. These two detriments were reported by 11 percent of respondents. Other common detriments to productivity that respondents listed were feelings of isolation caused by not having colleagues with similar interests, frustrations with the review process, and various life issues. The major themes that were uncovered are listed in Table 4.

Also scattered throughout the open-ended responses was support for the main findings of our quantitative data. Numerous statements provided evidence for the proposition that respondents’ research productivity has slowed due to other responsibilities (e.g., administration or service). In many instances, it is clear that the respondent would rather be active in research, but has taken on other responsibilities because they feel obligated or because it is expected of them.

“Although I still enjoy research and desire to publish my work like I used to . . . at my level, I spend a great deal more time, relative to writing, on service activities.”

“. . . as you get tied into more and more administrative burdens, you like to do research as almost a refuge . . . it’s familiar territory and something that you like to do, so it becomes almost a retreat from all the stuff you don’t like to do but have to.”

“. . . frankly, I’m not as productive as I used to be due to administrative duties . . . I miss the

research process, working with others . . . I hope to get back into research and writing before I retire.”

DISCUSSION

Our results are consistent with past studies and intuition that suggests that once tenure is achieved, research productivity tends to decrease. However, these findings contradict popular opinion that academics lag in research productivity later in their careers because they choose to do so. Our data reveal that full professors *desire* to spend their time on research, but are not able to due to other responsibilities. Tenured marketing academics are not spending time on research because they seem to be expected to take on service, administrative, or other leadership roles within their department and university. Our results show that the pressure increased for respondents to take on more administrative duties, but the desire to do so did not. This could be one explanation why respondents, on average, could not allocate the amount of time they desired to on research activities. Our research also showed that marketing professors believe these service and administrative activities, (along with teaching responsibilities), to be the single largest detriment to their research productivity over the course of their careers. Furthermore only two respondents reported a lack of interest as a detriment to their research productivity as a full professor. This supports the notion that the productivity of marketing professors is hampered much more significantly by extrinsic, rather than intrinsic, factors.

There is a positive and significant association between workstyles chosen by marketing academicians and the workstyles they perceive to be encouraged and rewarded by their college or university (Glisan and Ferrell 1987). Although intrinsic motivations to produce quality

research seem to be present in tenured marketing faculty, the rewards for pursuing these desires may not exist. Many are opting for higher-paying administrative roles and succumbing to external pressures and expectations to serve their department and school, rather than staying active in research.

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings in this study is one that was absent from the list of most common qualitative responses. Quality of training was rarely ever mentioned as a reason for success or a detriment to producing research. Quality of training would seem to be one of the most significant factors that would determine an academic’s research career, yet it was never listed by more than a small fraction of the respondents. One possible explanation for this finding is that respondents may have assumed a high level of training from a reputable Ph.D. program. The sample consisted of faculty from mostly “major” research-oriented departments. Most subjects are tenured at “flagship” state institutions or highly-respected private schools.

Our findings raise important questions for academic administrators and professoriate. Is it more important for departments to have senior faculty to take on leadership roles in administration or let them continue with a heavy research load? Is it more beneficial for senior faculty to take on more administrative duties and service so that junior faculty can focus on research or should full professors be encouraged to stay active in research to collaborate and mentor assistants and graduate students? Who should bear the administrative/service load if senior faculty do not? There are probably no clear answers to these questions and perhaps no answer at all. It seems that full professors would rather be spending the final years of their careers doing what they were originally trained to do: advance marketing knowledge through research and publication. However, senior faculty will probably continue

**TABLE 3
MOTIVATIONS TO PUBLISH**

| Assistant | | Associate | | Full | |
|--------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Motivator | % Who Listed | Motivator | % Who Listed | Motivator | % Who Listed |
| Interest | 53.8% | Interest | 52.9% | Interest | 47.9% |
| Tenure | 46.2 | Promotion | 42.9 | Contributing | 21.0 |
| Promotion | 25.2 | Respect | 18.5 | Working w/Junior Faculty/PhD Students | 20.2 |
| Expected to | 18.5 | Contribute | 17.6 | Raises | 16.8 |
| Contribute | 16.0 | Expected to | 14.3 | Expected to | 16.8 |
| Helpful Colleagues | 12.6 | Helpful Colleagues | 6.7 | Respect | 16.8 |
| Hunger for Success | 10.9 | Hunger for Success | 6.7 | Stay Involved | 5.9 |
| Respect | 10.1 | Tenure | 5.9 | Mobility | 5.9 |
| Challenge | 5.9 | Working w/Junior Faculty/PhD Students | 5.9 | Helpful Colleagues | 5.0 |

TABLE 4
DETRIMENTS TO PUBLICATION
PRODUCTIVITY

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Time/Other Activities | 57% |
| Atmosphere | 11 |
| Funds/Resources | 11 |
| Isolation | 10 |
| Review Process | 7 |
| Life Issues | 7 |

to sacrifice their desire for research to allow younger scholars to focus their time and energy on publishing rather than other academic activities.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

The results from this study are interesting and uncover a new perspective on detriments to research productivity; however, we recognize some obvious limitations to our findings. Although our quantitative findings provide insight into how marketing academics choose to spend their time during the various stages of their careers, the methodology used to collect this data does not lend itself

to statistical analysis. Future studies might employ a between-subjects design using subjects from various career stages to further validate the findings of our study. Our sampling methodology was intended to give us a group of respondents that is representative of full professors at major research-orientated institutions. For this reason, our findings may not be generalized to marketing faculty at more teaching-orientated institutions. We also recognize that some respondents may have had a hard time allotting percentage points to time spent on various activities early in their careers. Furthermore, asking full professors to provide information about how they were motivated and hindered many years ago potentially opened our data up to some inaccuracies. The responses we received were potentially clouded by the long span of time over which the respondents were being asked to recall their feelings. A study on retrospective account data conducted by Golden in 1992 illustrates this point. In the study, CEOs of hospitals were asked to list their firm's business strategy and then, two years later, asked what their business strategy was two years earlier. Out of the 259 CEO's that responded, 58 percent failed to correctly list the strategy they themselves indicated, and which was independently verified, two years earlier. The retrospective accounts of the full professors could also be subject to some degree of social desirability bias. We recommend the reader take caution in interpreting the results of this study for these reasons.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The major "professional activities" that vie for a faculty member's time and effort were defined as: research, teaching, service, administration, and consulting.
- ² "A" marketing journals were specified as *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, and *Journal of Marketing Research* (Browne and Becker 1985).
- ³ Percentages refer to how much time respondents spent on the activity during specific stages in their careers.

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