

ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUSINESS SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND THE ACADEMIC BELIEFS AND VALUES OF DEANS OF AACSB ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study related the institutional characteristics of business schools to the academic beliefs and values of deans to assess the extent that demographics would "drive" the academic versus professional models of business education. Given five institutional characteristics (encompassing the following: funding source, location, doctoral program status, faculty union status, and the presence of a multi-track personnel policy including service), bi-serial correlational analyses were run on eight academic beliefs and values factors. The results indicated that all institutional variables, with the exception of location (urban versus rural), bore at least one statistically significant correlation with belief and value factors. Overall, nine statistically significant correlations were revealed. Although the magnitude of the correlations was not large, they did meet hypothesized expectations and they suggest that institutional characteristics will have some impact on the development of the various missions of business education.

INTRODUCTION

Cheit [1985] has postulated the presence of two models of business education: academic and professional. In the "academic model", business is regarded as a science. As such it has as its goal not the training of students to solve present-day, known problems, but to develop the habits of mind and analytic competence to solve future business problems as yet unknown. From a research standpoint, the focus of the "academic model" is on theory building. In the "professional model", business is viewed as more of an art than a science, and has as a main goal the development of judgment in the solution of complex, unstructured problems. In such a model, the focus of research is on solving problems of current or evolving concern to managers. In Van Auken's [1992] view, mission modeling will involve differential emphases between the academic and professional models of business education.

Uniquely, all AACSB accredited business schools, as well as those desirous of initial accreditation, will be required to develop mission statements and to assign weights to teaching, research and service, which in turn reflect their missions.

Given the new AACSB accreditation concern over mission development and alternative models of business education, this study is concerned with determining the extent that a business school's unique institutional characteristics (i.e., demographics) will relate to the academic beliefs and values of deans, or what amounts to mission values. Since deans are most often selected to personify the academic beliefs and values of their respective faculties, and given that institutional characteristics (e.g., the presence of a doctoral program) are likely to influence the academic beliefs and values of faculties (not to mention the attraction of faculty), the selection of deans for analysis appears to be well grounded. Further, deans have the responsibility of developing mission statements which are appropriate for their resources and institutional infrastructure. However, deans and faculties may have adopted academic beliefs and values which are more congruent with the old AACSB accreditation standards, especially Standard IIIB with its heavy emphasis on publication in refereed academic journals. Therefore, academic beliefs and values of deans (and faculties) may be inconsistent with their institutional characteristics, especially in resource poorer schools. This study therefore seeks to determine if the institutional characteristics of business schools are related to the academic beliefs and values of deans. If they are, this would suggest a greater opportunity for unique mission modeling. If not, this would imply that the advantages inherent in unique institutional characteristics (i.e., what is really plausible) are not being seized upon. Basically, has the rigidity of the old AACSB accreditation standards served to impede the progressive development of business education?

The new AACSB accreditation standards do recognize that a school's emphasis should relate to its mission. To illustrate, the AACSB notes that schools with a strong emphasis on graduate programs, in particular those with a strong commitment to doctoral programs, should have a substantial emphasis on basic scholarship [Final Report, 1991, p. 31], or what amounts to the pursuit of the academic model. This study thus seeks to determine whether this characteristic, as well as the following institutional characteristics: funding source, location, faculty union status, and the presence of a multi-track personnel policy encompassing service, are related to the academic beliefs and values of business deans. These institutional characteristics all carry unique implications for mission modeling. This study will now proceed to an analysis of these characteristics.

INSTITUTIONAL VARIABLES

Funding Source

With respect to funding source, state versus private support was selected for study. Since AACSB privately-supported business schools, especially top-tier, have generally followed the traditional definition of academic quality, one may conjecture a greater affinity for the academic model of business education. In this traditional definition, a business school's quality is typically judged by the research productivity of its faculty; the number of prestigious grants received; and the number of endowed chairs held; as well as admission selectivity. According to these criteria, the richest most elite research institution is the best.

Despite exceptions to the above delineated framework, the relationship between funding source and the academic beliefs and values of accredited business school deans is worthy of pursuit. In essence, is there a meaningful relationship which would indicate a precursory tendency for a given model of business education?

Location

Location was selected because the urban versus rural dichotomy potentially relates to the two basic models of business education. With respect to this, the urban-oriented business school has a

business laboratory that is readily available and a more immediate business constituency. As a result, the professional model with its tailored programs and executive development operations may be in the offing. Alternatively, business schools in rural locations may define themselves more traditionally and they may give a greater weighting to the academic model.

Although there are also exceptions to the above delineated tendencies, location may be a key variable in the development of a school's mission; especially, given its inherent advantages and disadvantages. Basically, urban schools have a uniqueness that offers a greater level of opportunity than that associated with the rurally-oriented business school.

Doctoral Program Status

The presence of a doctoral program denotes an implicit acceptance of the "academic model" of business education. Further, as mentioned earlier, schools with a strong commitment to doctoral programs are expected by the AACSB to have a substantial emphasis in basic scholarship. It therefore follows that the presence of such a program may help to influence the academic beliefs and values of deans. Alternatively, the presence of such a program may be influential in the dean's choice of a school for deaning. At any rate, the expectations for deans from schools with doctoral programs may be at variance with those of deans from nondoctoral programs. Basically, the lack of a doctoral program may allow a business school to have greater flexibility with respect to the two basic models of business education. Therefore, an assessment of the relationship between doctoral program status and the academic beliefs and values of deans appears to have the potential of being quite revealing.

Faculty Union Status

The presence of a unionized faculty is most closely associated with public education and with educational systems that are not in pursuit of the "academic model." As a result, the presence or absence of a union could potentially help to shape the thinking of deans. Basically, faculty unions are most associated with teaching institutions and such an environment could serve to influence the academic beliefs and values of deans from those

institutions.

Multi-Track Personnel Policy

The last demographic variable selected for analysis was the presence or absence of a multi-track personnel policy which encompasses service. Basically, the presence of a service track would imply at least some commitment to the professional model of business education. This is because service can be defined as being internal, external or both. Further, schools pursuing the academic model would not as likely give recognition to service as it may detract from their mission orientation.

ACADEMIC BELIEFS AND VALUES

A number of issues were selected for analysis which have been subjected to debate and controversy within business schools. These items were drawn from the following categories of interest: research (2 issues); teaching (3); curriculum (11); the business community (2); the AACSB (4); and macro mission concerns (3). Of course, many of the items relate to more than one of the delineated categories and categorical assignments were based on an item's primary orientation. Further, the items selected tend to embody a variety of trade-offs between the academic and professional models of business education.

Research

With respect to research, two themes were selected. One of them concerns the impact of business school research, while the other involves the use of research results by the business community. Porter and McKibbin [1988] have investigated the former, as well as Van Auken, et al. [1991]. Cheit [1985] has written about the utility of both basic and applied research and, among others, Grayson and Hanson [1977], Hastie [1982], Miles [1985], Oviatt and Miller [1989], and Rehder, Porter and Muller [1988] have indicated a concern for research relevancy. Overall, the issue of research relevancy may be viewed differentially by deans with key differences in their institutional characteristics.

Teaching

Three items with a manifest teaching orientation were selected and they essentially measured the relationship between writing/research and state of the art teaching. This thematic has appeared in the addresses of Bausch [Newsline 1987] and Taylor [Decision Line 1989]. Still, Porter and McKibbin [1988] note that the scholarly activity which prepares a faculty member to be a better teacher does not necessarily imply publishing in academic journals. In sum, these issues seem worthy of note and a school's institutional characteristics may shed additional light on future business school response.

Curriculum

Numerous curricula issues were selected for study including the focus of doctoral programs [Jaedicke 1989] [Miles 1985]; the relationship between research and new curriculum development [Business Week November 28, 1988] [Porter and McKibbin 1988]; curriculum relevancy [Business Week August 27, 1984] [Fuchsberg 1990] [Grayson and Hanson 1977] [Miles 1987/88] [Swartz 1985]; experiential learning [Exchange 1989]; value creation [Cheit 1985] [Leavitt 1987]; the overemphasis on analytics [Behrman and Levin 1984] [Business Week November 28, 1988] [McGill 1988]; and integrative curricula [Behrman and Levin 1984] [Leven 1988]. These topical areas appear to be prime with respect to perceived differences between schools with differential institutional characteristics.

The Business Community

Two issues were selected for investigation which dealt explicitly with the business community. One involves the relationship between academic respectability and a withdrawal from the business community, while the other dealt with the need for a quid pro quo relationship with the business community. These issues have been addressed by Cheit [1985] and Oviatt and Miller [1989], and they denote inherent conflict between the academic and professional models which pervade business education. It may be hypothesized that schools without doctoral programs and residing within urban locations are better positioned for relationships with the business community.

The AACSB

Four issues relating to the AACSB were selected for study. They related to the blending of theory with practice [Cheit 1985] and doctoral program accreditation [Jaedicke 1989]. They also encompassed the thematic of skill development [Behrman and Levin 1984] [Fuchsberg 1990] [Hayes and Abernathy 1980] [Rehder and Porter 1983] [Van Auken 1991]. These issues would seem to relate to a school's mission orientation, as they deal with emphasis areas and output measurements. For example, one might find greater sympathy for skill development among schools without doctoral programs, residing in urban locations, which recognize the service component in their personnel policy.

Macro Mission Issues

Finally, two issues relating to a school's explicit mission were developed for study. One of them dealt with the academic model, while the other dealt with managerial leadership, or more of a professional focus [Cheit 1985] [Oviatt and Miller 1989]. These dimensions would appear to be related to a school's institutional characteristics and they were selected for that reason.

THE STUDY

The 1989-90 AACSB listing of the deans of all 267 accredited business schools was utilized as a mailing list and, during the Spring of 1990, they were mailed a package containing a cover letter, a questionnaire, and a postage-paid return envelope. The package also included a postcard which identified the participation of each school and which was to be returned separately from the questionnaire. Basically, the dean's questionnaire responses were anonymous.

A total of 143 questionnaire packets were returned. Of this number only twelve were unusable. Overall, a total of 131 dean responses were utilized, which is equal to 49.1% of deans of AACSB accredited schools.

DISCUSSION

All statistically significant bi-serial correlations between institutional characteristics and academic belief and value factors, when subjected to a

univariate F analysis, revealed mean scores that met hypothesized expectations. In essence, the academic and professional models of business education are validated by the findings. However, the magnitude of the differences, with the exception of the need for doctoral program accreditation, was not large. The findings do, however, point to the presence of an infrastructure of institutional characteristics which could lead to mission uniqueness for AACSB accredited business schools. With the exception of doctoral program accreditation, the findings also reveal support for the newly revised AACSB accreditation criteria among AACSB deans, and they suggest that the new criteria were not formulated just to entice nonaccredited business schools into the AACSB fold.

What was surprising was the total absence of any statistically significant correlations between a school's location (urban versus rural) and the eight academic beliefs and values factors. It would seem that many urban business schools are not seizing upon one of their key assets: a business laboratory in their own "backyard." It is quite possible that the recently phased-out AACSB accreditation criteria may have encouraged this phenomenon, given their inherent bias in favor of the academic model [Van Auken 1992]. To the extent that urban schools have already developed an academic model perspective may indicate that little improvement with respect to urban relationships will be in the offing. However, universities with urban missions can indeed be expected to take the lead.

Overall, the results suggest a glimmer of a segmentation of business education along the lines of institutional characteristics. Thus resources and unique characteristics of business schools may well influence tomorrow's unique mission models.

Note: The analyses, tables and references may be attained from the author.