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Georgia Management Students' Perceptions of Faculty Academic Qualifications and Professional Experiences

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Georgia Management Students' Perceptions of Faculty Academic Qualifications and Professional Experiences

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of undergraduate management students at one Georgia institution of higher education regarding the importance of academic qualifications and professional experiences possessed by their management faculty. The study addressed the importance of these attributes to include relevant practical experience, traditional academic training, scholarly productivity, higher education institutions attended, and level of engagement with the business community. This quantitative study surveyed 70 upper-level management students using Likert categories to provide an exploratory view of attributes that today's students view as important in faculty. The findings ranked attributes of relevant professional experience more important than academic qualifications such as scholarly research activities across all demographics as related to their importance of gaining a quality management education. This study may provide insight into the attributes that students deem important in faculty in an effort to support student success, as well as inform accreditation mandates, determine faculty ratios of academic versus professional faculty, make hiring decisions, and address compensation issues of academic versus professional faculty. As well, this study and extended research may provide insight into improving outcomes for higher education's community stakeholders to meet the dynamic demands of business. Additionally, this research could extend to varied types of industry that require professional experiences such as educational leadership and nursing to better prepare students for the workforce.

Keywords

academic qualifications, professional experiences, business management faculty, business management education

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Introduction

Business schools, defined as “high-level educational institution[s] at which students study subjects relating to business and commerce,” were once regarded as trade schools as opposed to the scientific structure of schools of arts and sciences (Oxford University Press, 2020, para. 1). Previously, business schools moved away from the scientific model to the professional/clinical model to ensure relevancy within these schools of education (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005). Schools of business have shifted to teaching and learning that promotes the political, ethical, and philosophical nature of the practical application needed in the industry in an effort to be recognized as rigorous and relevant options for business and management education (Grey, 2004). A current study noted the need for business students to be intellectual activists, which called for having actual knowledge of progressive politics and being accountable to others in articulating these values (Contu, 2020). Furthermore, business schools currently balance difficult tradeoffs between the roles of the academic and professional sides of business educators. Business schools have been perceived as failing to provide students with real-world experience as they prepare to enter the workforce. Learning motivation and acquired knowledge are critical to the transfer of knowledge from business schools to business industry (Tho, 2016). In turn, they are being pressured to hire professionals with practical business experiences to teach courses (Clinebell & Clinebell, 2008). In return, some university programs have supplemented traditional research faculty with professional faculty that often have many years of relevant practical experience but who did not follow the conventional research path of academia to gain a doctorate; however, these faculty are often considered by some universities as lower ranking (Bishop et al., 2016).

From a university standpoint, there are significant accreditation requirements that business schools must adhere to in terms of ratios of academically qualified versus professionally qualified faculty (Stepanovich et al., 2014). Noteworthy research and publication output are typical characteristics of these academically qualified faculty who hold terminal degrees and in tenured/tenure-track positions. Additionally, a recent study noted programs should “examine the diversity of the academic qualifications and practitioner experiences of their faculty and develop strategies to enhance their programs with these complimenting skill sets” (Tolman et al., 2019, p. 86).

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of business students, specifically undergraduate management students, in one school of business in a metropolitan region of Georgia regarding the importance of attributes of academic qualifications and professional experiences possessed by their management faculty in gaining a quality education. The study was guided by the following research questions: 1) To what degree do students' perceptions of management faculty differ between faculty with attributes of academic qualifications compared to faculty with professional experiences in

the context of receiving a quality management education?; and 2) To what degree do demographic characteristics of management students differ between faculty with attributes of academic qualifications compared to faculty with professional experiences in the context of receiving a quality management education?

Review of the Literature

The literature review focused on faculty attributes of business and management professors. The literature review will first look at the issues of business school accreditation and faculty qualifications, and conclude with faculty credentials, experience, and student satisfaction.

Business Program Accreditation

Program accreditation has become a critical component for business schools' reputations and perceived credibility in the competitive business school landscape. One strategy business schools are pursuing to achieve higher stature and gain or maintain business students in their programs is their accreditation credentials. The *Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)* is the leading accrediting organization for business and business-related programs (2006). AACSB represents itself as the world leader in the advancement of management education with their beginnings at universities such as Harvard, Columbia, Stanford, and Wharton (Lowrie & Willmott, 2009). AACSB has 21 standards of quality that colleges must meet to gain a decisive accreditation for which two include the review of faculty qualifications (Koys, 2008).

Faculty Qualifications

These standards classify faculty into two distinct categories to include academically qualified (AQ) and professionally qualified (PQ) faculty. These same categories were used in this study as the operational definitions for academic qualifications and professional experiences. For a faculty member to be considered AQ, they must hold a doctoral or other terminal degree and engage in activities that maintain a level of currency in the business arena. For a faculty member to be classified as PQ, they must hold at minimum a master's degree in the field related to the teaching discipline and, also, maintain significant professional experience in duration and with substantial levels of responsibilities (Smith et al., 2009). The standard to meet accreditation is 50% of the faculty must be AQ with 90% being AQ or PQ (Stepanovich et al., 2014). In addition, there is a standard that segments faculty into two classes to include participating and supporting faculty. Participating faculty must be active in other programs beyond teaching, which include activities such as program governance, research, advising, or policymaking. Supporting faculty are generally ad hoc faculty that only teach. For accreditation, AACSB expects 75% of teaching to be done by participating faculty (Krom & Buchholz, 2014).

For AQ faculty, the number of refereed journal publications has become the most critical factor for faculty to achieve and or maintain AQ status. A higher percentage of faculty engagement in research and publication in peer-reviewed journals was required in the re-accreditation process to meet the AQ requirements (Taylor & Stanton, 2009). While AACSB schools are increasing research, publications, and participation in academic programs requirements, higher education becomes a less attractive, and inflexible workplace for practitioners and has the potential to exacerbate a continuing faculty shortage (Lightbody, 2010). Specifically, while schools of business overall have been increasing the number of AQ faculty devoting more time and focus on research and publications, a shortage of qualified faculty has emerged in the marketplace. For example, the accounting discipline has had a significant impact on the increased AQ faculty requirements and the limited supply of AQ faculty for hire. The imbalance between supply and demand is expected to become more severe and has prompted business schools to use non-tenure track faculty to cope with the shortages (Schneider & Sheikh, 2012).

Business Schools Approach to Address Shortfalls in Faculty Qualifications

Furthermore, in an attempt to address these shortages in business schools and a desire to increase practical relevance, the AACSB has modified its categories for accreditation to enhance the practical relevance of teaching and research. Under the revised AACSB Standard 15, there has been an increase in categories to include Scholarly Academics (SA) – those who maintain currency and relevance through research and scholarly activities, Practice Academics (PA) – those who maintain currency through relevant professional engagement and interaction, Scholarly Practitioner (SP) – those who maintain currency relevancy through continued professional experience, engagement, or interaction and provide additional scholarship activities related to their experience, and Instructional Practitioner (IP) – those who maintain currency and relevance through continued professional experience and engagement, or professional activities that continue supporting their professional experience (Boyle et al., 2014).

Student Perceptions of Faculty Attributes

In a seminal research study of learners' preferences in teaching techniques, accounting, finance, marketing, and management majors all ranked practical, hands-on projects as their highest preference (Agnello et al., 2011). Students prefer faculty with more relevant experience (Ariail et al., 2009). Subject matter relevancy and faculty subject-matter competency are significant contributors to student satisfaction, which is the subjective perception by the student on how the learning environment supported their academic success (Howell & Buck, 2012). Increasingly, students are becoming viewed as customers as described by the AACSB Standards, where the term *students* are referred to as customers placing more importance on their satisfaction in the classroom (Hammond et al., 2009). Furthermore, substantial student satisfaction

may translate to increased student recruitment, higher retention levels, and more engaged and motivated graduates within their academic program of study (Anderson & Shelledy, 2013).

To give a global perspective to this challenge, in a comparison of United States and Cameroonian business students, both groups reported the faculty attributes that were most important to them were related to teaching and experience while service, research, and other activities were ranked toward the bottom. Cameroonian students ranked association with the business community slightly higher than students in the United States, while students in the United States ranked material knowledge somewhat higher. Both groups rated the attribute of publication toward the bottom on important attributes (Ariail et al., 2014). To this end, there is a disconnect between today's fast-moving business arena and business schools creating a divide between the relevance of research and practice suggesting business schools continue to become less relevant (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005).

Debate Between Importance of Scholarly vs. Practitioner Faculty Qualifications

In colleges of business, the accounting profession has explicitly been criticized by both educators and professionals in the field, for failing to make sure that students are equipped with the skills required to handle challenges they may experience after graduation as they enter the workforce. This failure may be due to increasing numbers of accounting faculty that do not have relevant professional experience which is believed to contribute to added levels of demands of faculty, increased conflicts, and students' receipt of inadequate training for the profession (Marshall et al., 2012).

However, there are arguments that too much focus is directed toward the gap between research and practice and students should be taught to be consumers of business research as they enter industry (Burke & Rau, 2010). There are ongoing debates that persist between those in the business arena and schools of business on the importance of research output verses relevant practical and practitioner experience that continue to perpetuate growing gaps between the faculty attributes that are needed to ensure the success of business students. Research to the like is limited on how students perceive faculty attributes from business students and thus, further research is warranted.

Methods

A quantitative study design was utilized to determine rank, mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and minimum and maximum scores of both academic qualifications and professional experiences of business faculty. This descriptive analysis allowed the researchers to begin the inquiry into student

perceptions of faculty qualifications in terms of both academic qualifications and professional experiences.

Participants

A survey was sent to 200 undergraduate students enrolled in upper-level management courses taught by management faculty during the last two years of business school at the third largest institution in the state of Georgia in a metropolitan area and one of the 50 largest public institutions in the country. The participants included students from all business majors at this single institution with many declaring management as a major or minor. The students were from both face-to-face classrooms and online courses. Each section of the management course was offered the opportunity for student participation in the study on a voluntary basis. Seventy participants completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 35%. A study by Poynton et al. (2019) found that the average response rate for online empirical studies was 34.2%, yielding evidence that this study's response rate is suitable for interpretation of the data. Researchers utilized a convenient sample, where participants were chosen based on their accessibility (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) as one of the researchers was a faculty member working specifically with the undergraduate management students who participated in the study.

Instrument

The survey used was previously utilized to study undergraduate and graduate business students and thus, reliability and validity had been previously established (Ariail et al., 2014). The survey is composed of 10 questions with four Likert responses placing the importance of faculty attributes to include (1) extremely important, (2) somewhat important, (3) little importance, and (4) not important. The survey instrument is framed around faculty attributes required in the AACSB standards, hiring requirements to meet AACSB research and publication classifications, and general standards for research universities' promotion and tenure requirements, thus providing support to the validity and reliability of the instrument. Similar results have been attained from students enrolled in business courses at various universities (Ariail et al., 2014). The survey utilized in this study was a modification of a survey developed by Ariail and colleagues in 2009 attending to the AACSB Standards, with the central survey's 5-point Likert scale being revised to a 4-point scale, in attempts to diminish response bias removing the opportunity for excess neutral responding. Additionally, general demographic information was gathered from the participants including the participants' gender, age, and class standing.

Data Collection and Analysis

Permission to make the survey available to management students along with an overview of the study and request for student participation and consent was attained by the researcher from the university (Ariail et al., 2014). The survey was distributed and data collected via a Qualtrics web-based survey

provided to the students with a specific consent acceptance box that either exited the survey (consent denied) or accessed the survey questions (implied consent). The respondent data were exported to a spreadsheet. All survey data were presented using numerical representations. Descriptive statistics (means, minimum and maximum scores, standard deviations) were calculated in Microsoft Excel. The raw data of the faculty attributes were ranked by their mean, and the relative percentage of each category was calculated for comparison. These data were summarized using appropriate tables and figures.

Results

A sample size of 70 management majors was attained. The demographic variables were gender, age, and class standing as presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic of Participants' Gender, Age, and Class Standing

Gender	Male	41	58.6%
	Female	29	41.4%
Age	29 and Under	62	89%
	30 and Over	8	11%
Academic Class Standing	Junior (undergraduate)	6	8.6%
	Senior (undergraduate)	64	91.4%

Note. n=70

Research Question One

Research question one asked if students' perceptions of management faculty differed between faculty with attributes of academic qualifications compared to faculty with professional experiences in the context of receiving a quality management education. The means, minimum and maximum scores, standard deviations, and rank of means are displayed in Table 2. By examining the rank of means (1- Extremely Important and 4- Not at all Important), participants reported the faculty qualifications ranking from 1 to 5, with ability to communicate (1.17), knowledge of application to real-world cases and examples (1.19), high levels of material knowledge (1.26), substantial business experience (1.34), and participation in consulting work (1.93) in order of most importance. The questions based on the mean ranking that ranged from very important to little importance are questions pertaining to involvement with practice-related organizations with a rank mean of 6. (2.10), and academic organizations with a rank mean of 7. (2.34). The ranks mean of 8. (2.70), 9. (2.71), and 10. (2.77) represent publishing in scholarly journals, faculty's degree and granting university, and published in trade journals respectively as of minimal importance.

Table 2

Means, Minimum Scores, Maximum Scores, Standard Deviations, and Rank of Means for Faculty Attributes

Questions	Rank	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
#8. Ability to communicate effectively	1	70	1.17	.380	1	2
#10. Knowledge and application of real-world cases and examples	2	70	1.19	.427	1	3
#9. High level of knowledge of the materials	3	70	1.26	.530	1	4
#3. Substantial business experience in the business area/field being taught	4	70	1.34	.740	1	3
#4. Continuing association with the business community through consulting work	5	70	1.93	.598	1	4
#5. Participates in practice related organizations	6	70	2.10	.684	1	4
#6. Participates in academic organizations		70	2.34	.740	1	4
#1. Extensively published business research in scientific/scholarly journals	8	70	2.70	.768	1	4
#7. Degree-granting institution and degree of earned by a faculty member	9	70	2.71	.887	1	4
#2. Extensively published business articles in practice or trade-oriented journals	10	70	2.77	.783	1	10

Each question was further analyzed by the Likert categories for frequency and percentages as listed in Table 3. Four questions received 70% or higher in responses to the Likert categories. Two questions tied for the most frequent and highest percentage responses in the extremely important category at a frequency of 58 and 82.9%. These questions were the “faculty’s ability to communicate effectively” and ‘knowledge of the application to real-world cases and examples’. High level of knowledge of the material followed with a frequency of 54 and a percentage of 77 followed by substantial business experience in business with a frequency of 49 and a percentage of 70. In the ‘very important’ category, the highest frequency of 48 and a percentage of 68.6

for 'continuing associating in the business community through consulting work'. The remaining questions in the 'very important' category ranged from a low frequency of 11 and a percentage of 15.7 to a frequency of 40 and percentage of 57. In the category of 'little importance', four questions received the highest frequencies ranging from 31 to 33 responses and percentages of 44.3 to 47.1. These questions were faculty 'published in business trade journals', 'published in scholarly journals', 'participation in academic organizations', and the 'faculty's degree-granting institution'. In the 'not important category', the highest frequencies were 13 and a percentage of 18.6 for the faculty's 'degree-granting institution', followed by 'publishing in business journals' with a frequency of 12 and a percentage of 17.1 and concluded with 'publishing in scholarly journals' at a frequency of 10 and percentage of 14.3. The remaining questions were single responses with only one response each.

Table 3*Survey questions by Likert Scale for Frequency and Percentages*

Survey Questions	Extremely <u>Important</u> <i>Freq (%)</i>	Very <u>Important</u> <i>Freq (%)</i>	Little <u>Important</u> <i>Freq (%)</i>	Not <u>Important</u> <i>Freq (%)</i>
Extensively published business research in scholarly journals	3% (4.3)	25% (35.7)	32% (45.7)	10% (14.3)
Extensively published business articles in practice/trade journals	3% (4.3)	22% (31.4)	33% (47.1)	12% (17.1)
Substantial business experience in the area being taught.	49% (70.0)	18% (25.7)	3% (4.3)	0% (---)
Continuing association with the business community through consulting	14% (20.0)	48% (68.6)	7% (10.0)	1% (1.4)
Actively participates in practice related organizations	12% (17.1)	40% (57.1)	17% (24.3)	1% (1.4)
Actively participates in academic organizations	10% (14.3)	27% (38.6)	32% (45.7)	1% (1.4)
Academic Pedigree of faculty member	7% (10)	19% (27.1)	31% (44.3)	13% (18.6)
Communicates effectively	58% (82.9)	12% (17.1)	0% (---)	0% (---)
Highly knowledge of course content	54% (77.1)	15% (21.4)	1% (1.4)	0% (---)
Knowledge and application of real-world cases/examples	58% (82.9)	11% (15.7)	1% (1.4)	0% (---)

*Note. n=70***Research Question Two**

In research question two, demographic characteristics of management students were shown to differ between attributes of academic qualifications

compared to faculty with professional experiences in the context of receiving a quality management education. Table 4 is a cross-tabulation of gender analysis of responses by male or female. Males represented 58.6% of the respondents and females represented 41.4% of the respondents. Categories addressing gender ratios are identified as ‘extensively published business research in scientific/scholarly journals’ – 70% females to 30% males in the ‘not important’ category; ‘extensively published business articles in practice or trade-oriented journals’ – 42% male to 58% female in the ‘not important category’; ‘actively participates in practice related organizations’ – 83% male to 17% female in the ‘extremely important’ category and 43% male to 57% female in the ‘very important’ category, and 82% male to 18% percent female in the ‘little importance’ category; and ‘degree-granting institution’ and ‘degree of earned by faculty member’ – 31% male to 69% female in the ‘not important’ category.

Participants noted differing perceptions of valued importance for their faculty members’ qualifications, which were reported by their identified gender. The three factors of highest reported level of importance by students was communication, knowledge of course content, and knowledge and application of real-world cases and examples. In total, 47% of males and 36% of females reported that their faculty ‘communicating effectively’ was ‘extremely important’. Additionally, 47% of males and 36% of females reported their faculty having ‘knowledge and applying this knowledge of real-world cases and examples’ as ‘extremely important’. Faculty having high ‘knowledge of course content’ was perceived as ‘extremely important’ by 43% of male and 34% of female respondents. Furthermore, 3% of males reported that their faculty ‘having published extensively business research in a scientific/scholarly journal or practice/trade journal’ as ‘extremely important’, whereas 1% of females noted this as ‘extremely important.’ Furthermore, 40% of male respondents reported that their faculty ‘having substantial business experience’ in the area being taught as ‘extremely important’, whereas 30% of females reported this as ‘extremely important.’ ‘Continuing association with the business community through consulting’ was noted as ‘extremely important’ by 13% of males, while only 7% of females noted this as ‘extremely important’. Additionally, 14% of male participants reported that their faculty ‘actively participating in practice related organizations’ was ‘extremely important’, while only 3% of females noted this as ‘extremely important.’ However, only 1% of males noted that their faculty ‘actively participating in academic organizations’ was ‘extremely important’, whereas only 4% of females noted this as ‘extremely important.’ Only 7% of males and 3% of females reported that their faculty’s ‘academic pedigree standing’ was ‘extremely important’.

Table 4*Survey Responses by Likert Category and Gender*

Survey Questions	Extremely Important %		Very Important %		Little Important %		Not Important %	
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
Extensively published business research in scholarly journals	3% (2)	1% (1)	24% (17)	11% (8)	27% (19)	19% (13)	4% (3)	1% (7)
Extensively published business articles in practice/trade journals	3% (2)	1% (1)	20% (14)	11% (8)	29% (20)	19% (13)	7% (5)	1% (7)
Substantial business experience in the area being taught.	40% (28)	30% (21)	16% (11)	1% (7)	3% (2)	1% (1)	0% (-)	0% (-)
Continuing association with the business community through consulting	13% (9)	7% (5)	40% (28)	29% (20)	6% (4)	4% (3)	0% (-)	1% (1)
Actively participates in practice related organizations	14% (10)	3% (2)	24% (17)	33% (23)	20% (14)	4% (3)	0% (-)	1% (1)
Actively participates in academic organizations	1% (7)	4% (3)	21% (15)	17% (12)	26% (18)	20% (14)	1% (1)	0% (-)
Academic Pedigree of faculty member	7% (5)	3% (2)	17% (12)	1% (7)	29% (20)	16% (11)	6% (4)	13% (9)

Communicates effectively	47% (33)	36% (25)	11% (8)	6% (4)	0% (-)	0% (-)	0% (-)	0% (-)
Highly knowledge of course content	43% (30)	34% (24)	14% (10)	7% (5)	0% (-)	0% (-)	0% (-)	0% (-)
Knowledge and application of real-world cases/examples	47% (33)	36% (25)	1% (7)	6% (4)	1% (1)	0% (-)	0% (-)	0% (-)

Note. n=70

A cross-tabulation of the participants' ages is represented in Table 5. The age classifications were reduced to twenty-nine and under and thirty and over to not identify single responses in age groups. There was 89% of the respondents 29 and under and 11% of 30 or over. Findings in terms of substantial business experience and knowledge of application or real-world cases are listed as 'substantial business experience' – 94% to 6% in the 'extremely important' category, 78% to 2% in the 'very important' category, and 67% to 33% in the 'not important' category and 'knowledge and application of real-world cases and examples' – 73% to 27% in the 'very important' category.

The three factors of highest reported level of importance by students was communication, knowledge of course content, and knowledge and application of real-world cases and examples. In total, 73% of participants 29 years or younger and 10% of participants 30 years or older reported that their faculty 'communicating effectively' was 'extremely important' to them. Of these, 91% of participants 29 years or younger and 9% of participants 30 years or older reported their faculty 'having knowledge and applying this knowledge of real-world cases and examples' as 'extremely important'. Faculty having high 'knowledge of course content' was perceived as 'extremely important' by 69% of participants 29 years or younger and 9% of participants 30 years or older. Additionally, 66% of participants 29 years or younger reported that their faculty 'having substantial business experience in the area being taught' as 'extremely important', whereas 3% of participants 30 years or older reported this as 'extremely important.'

Table 5*Survey Responses by Likert Category and Age*

Survey Questions	Extremely Important %		Very Important %		Little Important %		Not Important %	
	29 & Under	30 & Over	29 & Under	30 & Over	29 & Under	30 & Over	29 & Under	30 & Over
Extensively published business research in scholarly journals	4% (3)	0% (-)	33% (23)	3% (2)	40% (28)	4% (3)	11% (8)	3% (2)
Extensively published business articles in practice/trade journals	4% (3)	0% (-)	29% (20)	3% (2)	41% (29)	6% (4)	14% (10)	3% (2)
Substantial business experience in the area being taught.	66% (46)	3% (2)	20% (14)	6% (4)	3% (2)	1% (1)	0% (-)	0% (-)
Continuing association with the business community through consulting	19% (13)	1% (1)	60% (42)	9% (6)	9% (6)	1% (1)	1% (1)	0% (-)
Actively participates in practice related organizations	17% (12)	0% (-)	46% (32)	11% (8)	24% (17)	0% (-)	1% (1)	0% (-)
Actively participates in academic organizations	13% (9)	1% (1)	31% (22)	7% (5)	43% (30)	3% (2)	1% (1)	0% (-)
Academic Pedigree of faculty member	10% (7)	0% (-)	24% (17)	3% (2)	39% (27)	6% (4)	16% (11)	3% (2)
Communicates effectively	73% (51)	10% (7)	16% (11)	1% (1)	0% (-)	0% (-)	0% (-)	0% (-)

Highly knowledgeable of course content	69% (48)	9% (6)	19% (13)	3% (2)	1% (1)	0% (-)	0% (-)	0% (-)
Knowledge and application of real-world cases/examples	91 (53)	9 (5)	11% (8)	4% (3)	1% (1)	0% (-)	0% (-)	0% (-)

Note: n=70

A cross-tabulation of the participants' class standing is represented in Table 6. The results when factoring in the junior and senior ratios do not show any significant variations of inversions on questions regarding class status.

Table 6*Survey Responses by Likert Category and Class Standing*

Survey Questions	Extremely Important %		Very Important %		Little Important %		Not Important %	
	JR	SR	JR	SR	JR	SR	JR	SR
	Extensively published business research in scholarly journals	0% (-)	4% (3)	1% (1)	34% (24)	6% (4)	40% (28)	1% (1)
Extensively published business articles in practice/trade journals	0% (-)	4% (3)	1% (1)	30% (21)	6% (4)	41% (29)	1% (1)	16% (11)
Substantial business experience in the area being taught	6% (4)	64% (45)	3% (2)	23% (16)	0% (-)	4% (3)	0% (-)	0% (-)
Continuing association with the business community through consulting	1% (1)	19% (13)	7% (5)	61% (43)	0% (-)	10% (7)	0% (-)	1% (1)
Actively participates in practice related organizations	0% (-)	17% (12)	9% (6)	49% (34)	0% (-)	24% (17)	0% (-)	1% (1)
Actively participates in academic organizations	0% (-)	14% (10)	4% (3)	34% (24)	4% (3)	41% (29)	0% (-)	1% (1)
Academic Pedigree of faculty member	1% (1)	9% (6)	1% (1)	26% (18)	3% (2)	41% (29)	3% (2)	16% (11)
Communicates effectively	6% (4)	77% (54)	3% (2)	14% (10)	0% (-)	0% (-)	0% (-)	0% (-)

Highly knowledge of course content	6% (4)	71% (50)	3% (2)	19% (13)	0% (-)	100 (1)	0% (-)	0% (-)
Knowledge and application of real-world cases/examples	9% (6)	74% (52)	0% (-)	16% (11)	0% (-)	1% (1)	0% (-)	0% (-)

Note: n=70

In summary, the findings ranked attributes of relevant professional experiences more important than academic qualifications across all demographics as related to their importance of gaining a quality management education and this outcome is referenced in Figure 1.

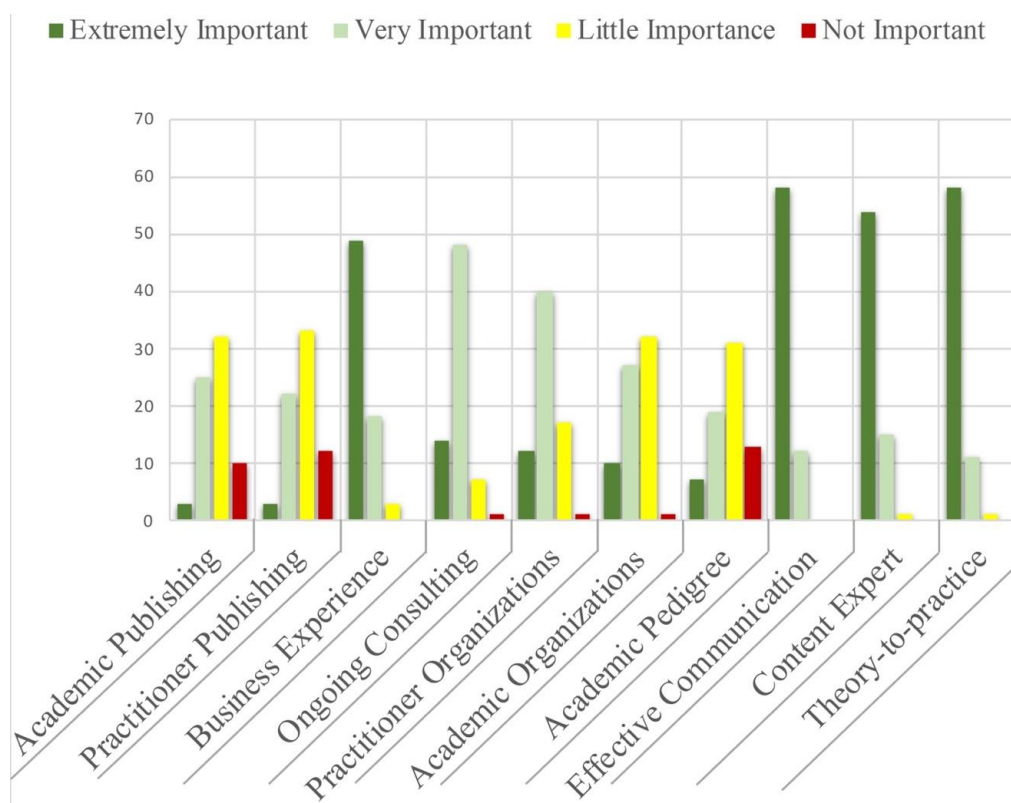


Figure 1
Business Students' Perceptions of Their Faculty's Academic and Professional Attributes

The comparison of business students' perceptions ranking practitioner qualities the greatest is reinforced by the comparison in Figure 2. As noted in Figure 2, students identified practitioner qualifications more commonly as 'extremely important' or 'very important' more frequently than attributes related to academic qualifications. Furthermore, students noted more academic

qualifications as 'not important' or of 'little importance' than practitioner qualifications.

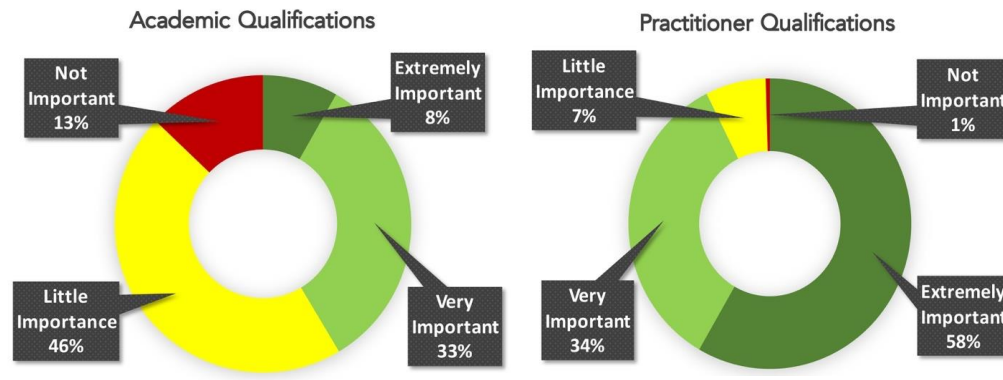


Figure 2

Business students' perceptions of their faculty's academic versus practitioner experiences and where it ranks on a four-point Likert scale.

Discussion

Research question one asked whether students' perceptions of management faculty differed between faculty with attributes of academic qualifications compared to faculty with professional experiences in the context of receiving a quality management education. The finding using the ranking of means revealed that the most important attribute for management faculty was the ability to communicate information effectively. The second most important attribute was the knowledge and application of real-world examples and cases. The third attribute was possessing a high level of content knowledge. The fourth attribute of importance was substantial business experience in the discipline being taught. The fifth attribute was continued association with the business community through active consulting. Interestingly, of the 10 business faculty attributes evaluated, students' perceptions of most important qualities pertained to the faculty's communication skills, knowledge of application to real-world cases and examples, material knowledge, business experience, and experience with consultation. Therefore, commonly noted professional attributes were perceived as the most important qualities for faculty; which is consistent with previous research findings that noted students valued professional experiences (Ariail et al., 2009).

Attributes of Traditional Academic Qualifications

Attributes that addressed the traditional academic qualifications that are common and prevalent in today's academic focus for faculty in terms of degrees, research focus, publications, academic organization involvement, and overall journal publications were ranked lower. The remaining attributes in the bottom

five were participation in practice organizations, participation in academic organizations, publication in scholarly journals, faculty's degree credentials for specific institutions, and the least important was publishing in business trade journals which was also consistent in a subsequent study of the rankings of faculty attributes (Ariail et al., 2009). To note, the participants ranked academic journals slightly higher than business trade journals while ranking business application in the top sector of the results. The data suggested students may be less interested in academic research and publications and more interested in real business knowledge, application, and the ability to transfer knowledge. These findings question the importance of the 50% requirement of faculty to be academically qualified (AQ) to meet AACSB accreditation of business school faculty (Stepanovich et al., 2014). The importance of relevant professional experiences as observed in the top five rankings, support the calls for business programs to consider moving away from the scientific model and move toward a professional model, a model which prioritizes professional experiences (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005). The focus on academic attributes combined with the lack of importance from the survey data, is consistent with business schools' perceptions of lacking real-world experience and support the pressures to return to practitioners for course instruction (Clinebell & Clinebell, 2008).

The data were analyzed to determine whether students' perceptions of management faculty differed between faculty with attributes of academic qualifications compared to faculty with professional experiences in the context of receiving a quality education. This was noted by displays of higher frequencies in the extremely and very important categories for the attributes of communications, real-world knowledge, material knowledge, business experience, and consulting engagement. Previous literature suggested learners' preferences in teaching techniques include real life, hands-on projects as their highest preferences. The top five ranking of management faculty supported these finding and suggested the importance of practical experience in the classroom (Agnello et al., 2011). However, it is important to mention the need to diversify the academic qualifications and practitioner experiences of faculty and develop strategies to advance programs with the skill sets of faculty that demonstrate strong academic qualifications as well as those who have practitioner experience (Tolman et al., 2019).

Demographic Characteristics of Management Students

Research question two examined if demographic characteristics of management students differed between academic and professional attributes in the context of receiving a quality management education. In response to research question 2, the demographics for this study revealed that the majority of the participants were senior undergraduate management students under the age of 29 and had a male to female ratio of approximately 3:2. The finding revealed that for gender, there was little difference between males and females. For example, in terms of scholarly journal publications, limited data suggested

that 4% of males found these publications were not important compared to 1% of males. With regards to participating in related organizations, males were significantly higher in extremely importance at 14% to 3% compared to the females finding participation very important at 24% to 33%. Both groups believed participation was important but the findings showed in the overall rankings it was low. The data suggested that females thought the degree-granting institution of the faculty member was less important compared to males' responses.

Age was cross-tabulated to determine if there was a difference between 29 and under participants and those over 30 years old. There did not appear to be substantial differences in age and responses except in business experience and real-world examples and was consistent with previous research conclusions (Ariail et al., 2009). Both questions had a higher number of younger participants in the extremely important category. This is believed to result from younger students wanting access into the business environment compared to older experienced participants that already had connections. Class standing was cross-tabulated and noted that 91.4% of the participants were seniors; there were no significant differences between juniors and seniors in their responses aligning to previous research (Ariail et al., 2009).

There were a few areas of differences such as a high percentage of over 10 responses found practice-oriented journals not important, and business experience and consulting engagement were also less important. These findings were not consistent with previous research that noted that faculty that have more experience may be less in need of practical or trade journal content (Ariail et al., 2009). However, knowledge and application to real-world cases had an increase in responses from the 10 or more years and older group. One such thought may be the experienced senior student is looking for new ways to apply the content in their existing jobs.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the level of granularity of questions on faculty attributes including participant validity with online surveys, faculty bias for favored professors regardless of their academic or professional attributes, and collection of descriptive statistics does not allow for the drawing of causality of the findings. A larger sample size with multiple institutions as well as a longitudinal collection period would be beneficial.

Conclusion

Administrators are tasked with meeting the requirements of external and internal stakeholders. Deans and chairs of business programs must balance variables such as meeting university strategic goals, accreditation issues, funding issues, industry requirements of graduates, and the requirements of students for relevant and beneficial education and career preparation. As the

business environment experiences rapidly changing skillsets, faculty that possess the current relevant skills are often in conflict with the traditional academic preferences of university administration, accreditation organizations, and faculty roles and responsibilities. While the expectations for research and publication continue to increase to further strengthen the academic reputation and standing of the institution, business programs also need to focus on the application of theory-to-practice within their pedagogy. To this end, there also needs to be consideration given to the inclusion of hiring faculty who are professionally qualified and bring a wealth of real-world business experience to the classroom. The calling for the convergence of academically and professionally qualified faculty comes at a critical time when public universities are under pressure to measure student graduation rates, provide internship opportunities, and ensure post-education employment success in students' respective fields as they enter the workforce (Rabovsky, 2014).

The findings in this study may provide insight into the attributes that management students find important in their management faculty in the state of Georgia and nationally. These findings can be used for discussions on faculty qualification with accreditation organizations, faculty ratios of teaching versus research faculty, new hire qualifications, and compensation issues of academic versus teaching faculty. Current higher education faculty in Georgia are encouraged to utilize these results to increase their professional development, specifically in the areas of effective communication with their students and utilization of a mass of real-world examples to better explain constructs and cases. Additionally, faculty are encouraged to attend professional development workshops and business and management symposiums near and within the Georgia area to remain well knowledgeable about the present field of business. With the current pressure for supporting the value of higher education, better meeting the goals of stakeholders becomes critical.

Future research could expand the study to include multiple universities outside of Georgia, both domestic and international and students in both undergraduate and graduate programs. An additional expansion of subjects could be to perform the same study with different business student majors to determine if there are differences by specified discipline. Further studies could also include administration members, faculty, and industry professionals as well as alumni. Finally, the concept of practical experience and academic training extends into non-business disciplines such as educational administration, engineering, and healthcare-related professions.

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