THE INTERNAL CONSISTENCY OF IMPORTANCE RATINGS ON RESEARCH AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES USED TO EVALUATE MARKETING FACULTY

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Abstract

The internal consistency of multiple importance measures, elicted for 25 activities used to evaluate marketing faculty, is examined. It is concluded that reward policies are internally consistent and work to reinforce one another; further, it is suggested that confidence in past research not specifying the reward context is enhanced.

Introduction

Policies governing the retention and promotion of marketing faculty have attracted increasing attention during the 1980's. Of particular interest has been the increasingly large role that research and publication have played in the assessment of faculty productivity (Brown and Decker 1985, Seldin 1985, McCullough, Wooten and Ryan 1981, Bohrer and Dolphin 1985, Beltramini, Schlacter, and Kelley 1985). Research has not, however, investigated if the activities used to evaluate marketing faculty productivity are consistently rated on their importance across the various methods to reward faculty. The purpose of this study is to report on the level of agreement among multiple measures of importance on 25 research, publication, and service activites.

Background Literature

Since it is possible that an activity might be differentially evaluated depending on the purpose of the evaluation, it is desirable to examine the agreement with which an activity is rated across different reward conditions. Two dependent conditions, the importance of an activity in merit pay and promotion decisions, have been cited as the predominate bases to reward faculty engaged in publication and research (McCullough, et al. 1981). A third variable used here, tenure, was not specifically included as a variable in the McCullough study but, on face value, would constitute a primary reward for publishing faculty. From a managerial perspective, it would seem desirable that the importance of each activity be rated consistently across merit pay, promotion, and tenure (MPT) decisions. If so, these three elements of the faculty reward structure would complement and reinforce one another; if not, ambiguity and misdirection of faculty efforts might occur. Further, past research, cited above, has used only one context to assess importance and a finding of agreement among the three measures would bolster confidence in these previous findings.

The Survey

Survey packages were mailed to 243 Deans of Business Schools listed in the AACSB Membership Directory. The deans were asked to complete their own and distribute questionnaires to the marketing chairperson and to two of each faculty rank (full, associate, and assistant professors). Completed packets were received from 33 institutions, containing usable questionnaires from 122 individuals. These included 25 deans, 25 chairpersons, and 72 faculty members. Beltramini et al. (1985) indicate that 170 of the AACSB accredited schools have marketing departments/chairpersons. Therefore, using this as a guide, the 33 respondent schools represent a response rate of 19.4 percent.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire contained 25 research, publication, and external/professional service activities (Table 1) drawn from lists of activities cited in previous research (McCullough, Wooten, and Ryan 1981, Seldin 1985, Bohrer and Dolphin 1985, Beltrami, Schlacter, and Kelley 1985). The activities were evaluated by the respondents three times, once each for merit, promotion, and tenure. The response key used by respondents was a one to five point Likert scale with the scale points labeled as follows: 1, Not Important; 2, Of Little Importance; 3, Somewhat Important; 4, Important; 5, Very Important.

Results

An appropriate measure of agreement among items is internal consistency reliability as measured by coefficient alpha (Cronbach 1951). Alpha was very high on every activity, indicating the responses to the three measures of activity importance were very much in agreement (Table 1). The lowest alpha value was .83, which can be considered to be high for research purposes (Nunnally 1977). Further, the majority of the activities had alpha values in excess of .90 which indicates a very high level of agreement.

The alpha values reported above, however, were calculated by aggregating responses across deans, chairpersons, and faculty. It is possible that at the "subgroup" level the alpha coefficients would be much lower. This was not, by and large, the case. The lowest alpha for the group of deans was .81, with 18 or the 25 alpha values at .90 or above. The lowest alpha for faculty was .78 and the second lowest was .85; further, 18 or 25 alpha values were at .90 or above. Chairpersons, however, displayed somewhat less agreement as the lowest alpha

value was .60 (sole author of a textbook) and three other activities had values between .77 and .79. All the rest were at .82 or above with 11 or the 25 alpha values at .90 or above.

TABLE 1

THE AGREEMENT OF IMPORTANCE RATINGS ON MERIT, PROMOTION, AND TENURE FOR EACH ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY[1]	COEFFICIENT ALPHA
1. Coauthor of casebook	.92
2. Coauthor of a chapter in a textbook	.85
3. Coauthor of published software	.90
4. Coauthor of an article in a non-refereed journal	.89
5. Coauthor of an article in a refereed academic journal	.90
6. Coauthor of a paper presented at a national meeting	.92
7. Coauthor of a paper presented at a regional meeting	.92
8. Coauthor of a textbook	.90
9. Editor of an academic journal	.93
10. Editor of a book	.93
11. Officer in a national professional organization	.92
12. Officer in a regional professional organization	.91
13. Paper reviewer for an academic journal	.88
14. Professional Consulting	.91
15. Research funding received outside the university	.92
16. Research funding received within the university	.92
17. Research in progress (articles submitted)	.87
18. Review of a textbook	.92
19. Reviewer, discussant, or session chairperson for a national meeting	.90
20. Reviewer, discussant, or session chairperson for a regional meeting	.93
21. Sole author of an article in a non-refereed journal	.86
22. Sole author of an article in a refereed academic journal	.83
23. Sole author of a paper presented at a national meeting	.87
24. Sole author of a paper presented at a regional meeting	.92
25. Sole author of a textbook	.89

[1]Activities are listed as presented to respondents.

Discussion and Conclusion

Overall, the coefficient alpha values were high; further, except for one marginal value for one group (chairpersons on sole textbook author), the internal consistency at the subgroup level ranged from high to extremely high. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that the activities were consistently evaluated across merit, promotion, and tenure reward contexts.

The finding that the activities were consistently rated across the three different contexts is of interest for two reasons. First, this suggests that the methods used to reward performance reinforce one another. It appears, therefore, that faculty focusing on achieving a shorter term goal such as merit are simultaneously working toward longer term promotion and tenure objectives.

The second implication of the finding is that researchers interested in assessing the relative importance of the various activities need only assess "overall" importance or use one or two of the reward context. For 25 activities, the respondents in this study made 75 total responses. Reducing responses would considerably decrease the response load and, thereby, likely increase response rates. A related implication is that confidence in prior research not employing multiple contexts has been enhanced (Beltramini, et al. 1985, Bohrer and Dolphin 1985, McCullough et al. 1981, Seldin 1985).

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