**The Association Between Type of Accreditation and Success in Hiring Accounting Faculty**

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**Abstract**

The research examines the value of type of specialized business accreditation (AACSB, ACBSP, and nonaccredited) to various aspects of the recruiting process for accounting faculty: hiring success, factors perceived as affecting such success, and satisfaction with the administration’s role in the hiring process. A survey was sent to all US accounting programs listed in the Hasselback directory. Contrary to AACSB assertions, we found no advantage for AACSB schools in hiring. Other implications are provided.

**Introduction**

College and university accounting programs depend on their faculty for a good portion of their success. However, recruiting desirable accounting faculty is difficult for many schools.

A significant shortage exists for accounting faculty (Hunt et al. 2009; Fogarty and Holder 2012; Chapman et al. 2005), due to a combination of factors. First, a retirement of “baby boomers” has coincided with an increase in enrollments. A joint report by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the American Accounting Association (AAA) (summarized by Plumlee et al. 2006) indicated that accounting faculty retirements ranged from 500 to 700 per year. Meanwhile, the demand for faculty increased as accounting became a more popular major; accounting graduates and enrollments both increased by 19% from 2005 to 2008 (O’Reilly-Allen and Wagaman 2008). While new accounting doctoral production is up from a low of 105 in 2003, the 136 awarded in 2013 (Hasselback 2015) are clearly inadequate to meet the needs of the profession. This is especially true in the US since an estimated 40% of accounting PhDs earned in the U.S. are by foreign nationals who will return to their home countries (Ruff et al. 2009). Finally, accreditation has helped create the faculty shortage, since business programs accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) must have a minimum percentage of their faculty with terminal degrees, generally a PhD or DBA.1 AACSB accredited programs account for 83% of graduates in masters and bachelors programs. Furthermore, if a school hires an experienced faculty member, the requirement for those faculty members classified as “Scholarly Academic” to maintain an active research agenda would favor the hiring of candidates with an established research record that promises to continue in the future. Such candidates may require a salary premium. Maintaining or achieving AACSB accreditation could become problematic if a challenging market forces a school to hire adjuncts or lecturers.

Many schools have offered high salaries and benefits, as well as low teaching loads in the first several years, in an attempt to hire desirable faculty. Some schools, particularly small ones, may believe they lack the financial resources to compete effectively (Plumlee et. al. 2006). One might expect that schools with specialized business accreditation of a recognized high quality would both have more resources and use the accreditation effectively in recruiting.

Despite the current vital importance of accounting faculty recruitment, there has been very little research into hiring of accounting faculty from the school’s point of view. The existing research (Hunt and Jones 2015) did not examine the role of accreditation in hiring.

The AACSB claims that it is “the benchmark of quality worldwide” and that its accredited schools have the best faculty (AACSB 2015). If the latter is true, then AACSB-accredited schools should then have a considerable hiring advantage over other schools.2 The current research should shed useful light on whether this is the case. We compare hiring success rates and factors believed to lead to such success among AACSB-accredited schools, those accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), and other schools.

Previous research on the value of various business program accreditations for hiring was based on business faculty in general, not accounting, which is frequently considered the most difficult business discipline for obtaining faculty. Also, this research was based on perceptions; we use actual schools’ reported levels of success in filling all accounting faculty positions in the year a vacancy occurred. Information on factors leading to success may also help schools better focus their recruiting efforts by seeing what similar schools are doing. It may also provide information useful to schools in choosing whether to seek AACSB or ACBSP accreditation and those ACBSP schools considering applying for AACSB accreditation. Such decisions require costs incurred by the school; information about benefits should be useful in making such decisions.3 Finally, the results may provide some policy implications. If AACSB requirements contribute to the shortage of acceptable accounting faculty, then the profession incurs a cost that must be compared to the benefits of such accreditation. Therefore, examination of such alleged benefits is valuable.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. The next section reviews the relevant literature and presents the research questions. Next, we present the research methodology and results. The final section discusses implications of the results, describes limitations of the research, and suggests avenues for further research.

**Literature Review and Research Questions**

**Accreditation**

There are three major accrediting bodies for college and university business programs in the United States. There are also regional accrediting bodies such as North Central. The latter provide accreditation to an entire school rather than specific programs, so considerable variations in quality of departments or programs may exist within a school possessing such accreditation. Hunt (2015) discusses differences among various accrediting bodies and summarizes research that has been performed in selected areas.

The premier accrediting body for US business programs is the AACSB. It also provides separate accreditation of accounting programs. The national accounting honor society Beta Alpha Psi may be offered only at schools with AACSB business accreditation. AACSB accreditation is the oldest and most-respected (White et al. 2008; Lindsay and Campbell 2003; Trapnell and Williams 2012). The AACSB has claimed that its accreditation is superior to others and would like various parties to consider those holding other accreditations to be “nonaccredited” (Tullis and Camey 2007).

Founded in 1988, the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (initially the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs) was designed to attract smaller, teaching-oriented schools that might have trouble meeting AACSB accreditation standards. The ACBSP, unlike the AACSB, also accredits two-year business programs. The ACBSP began offering separate accounting accreditation in 2011.

A third accreditor, the International Assembly of Collegiate Business Education (IACBE), was established in 1998, to compete primarily with the ACBSP. It is the smallest of the three and has less stringent accreditation standards than the other two.

All of these accreditations are based on the idea of a school’s being evaluated for accreditation and reaccreditation based on its unique mission. However, AACSB standards are perceived as requiring greater faculty research. AACSB accreditation is expected to lead to a business program’s being better able to attract faculty (Trapnell 2007). Roberts et al. (2003) surveyed deans and chairs of business programs accredited by AACSB, ACBSP, or IACBE and found that all groups believed AACSB accreditation helped in faculty recruitment. Roberts et al. (2004) found that new faculty at AACSB-accredited schools believed that such accreditation aided in recruiting faculty. Roberts et al. (2006) found that faculty hired after a school had achieved AACSB accreditation held the same views, as well as preferring to work in such an environment.

A move to AACSB accredited status is frequently seen as an indication of emphasis being shifted somewhat from teaching to research (Roberts et al. 2004). Prospective faculty, regardless of their level of interest in research, might want to work for accredited institutions in order to receive greater research assistance. If they are unhappy with their new position, they will be better able to get another position if they have a proven research record.

**Reputation**

Social identity theory (Turban and Cable 2003; Dutton et al. 1994) suggests that applicants who view an organization positively will believe that working at that organization will enable them to maintain a positive self-image. As a result, they may be more likely to accept a position at an organization with a strong reputation. Organizational image or reputation consists of two parts, per the recruitment literature. These are general reactions toward an organization (Gatewood et al. 1993) and beliefs about specific aspects of the organization (Cable and Turban 2003; Belt and Paolillo 1982). These are important in recruiting because applicants may not be able to obtain complete and accurate information about all areas of interest before accepting employment and may rely to some extent on reputation in job choice. Organizations with stronger reputations attract more and more-qualified applicants as a result (Turban and Cable 2003).

The reputation effect of AACSB accreditation is likely to be greater for smaller, regional private schools (Tullis and Camey 2007) that lack common name recognition. White et al. (2009) indicated that AACSB accreditation has always been more important to middle-tiered schools. Nationally and internationally known programs already have strong reputations and do not need AACSB accreditation, while lower-tiered schools may lack the doctorally-qualified faculty or the resources to become accredited. For the schools in the middle, obtaining such accreditation is a way to distinguish themselves from lower-tiered schools while claiming association with well-known, highly-respected schools.

The value of accreditation may not always be clear. One reason is that the rapid growth in the number of AACSB accredited US business programs due to the AACSB’s adoption of a mission-based approach in 1994 may indicate a decline in quality standards and therefore a reduction in the perceived value of the accreditation. Prospective accounting faculty may not fully understand the distinctions among various accreditations.

**Hiring Success**

Hiring success for accounting positions was examined in Hunt and Jones (2015). Doctoral-granting schools were slightly more likely (64.3% vs. 60.4%) than nondoctoral schools to fill all vacancies in the year in which they occurred. Teaching-oriented schools had an advantage (65.8% vs. 55.1%) over those focusing on research or balanced between teaching and research. Differences, however, were not significant.

We examined schools’ level of hiring success in recent years and whether AACSB accreditation might provide schools with an advantage due to reputation effects. This leads to the following research question:

RQ1: Do schools’ levels of success in obtaining tenure-track accounting faculty in the year in which a vacancy occurs vary by accreditation of school?

**Factors Affecting Recruiting Success – Prior Research**

If success levels do vary by type of accreditation, then it is possible that their reasons for success could differ as well. Following is a discussion of research in factors of importance in hiring, most of which has been conducted from the applicant’s viewpoint; in a subsequent section, we discuss how these factors could be related to accreditation.

Factors of importance to applicants in choosing specific academic positions have been examined in accounting (Hunt et al. 2009; Eaton and Hunt 2002; Kida and Mannino 1980; Holland and Arrington 1987), management (Hunt 2004), and finance (Eaton and Nofsinger 2000). Results of the latter two studies were similar to those of the accounting studies. During the time period in which most of this work was performed, conditions were more favorable for schools to hire faculty.

Kida and Mannino (1980), examining hypothetical job decisions of PhD students and faculty, found that research support was rated highest at doctoral schools but relatively low at nondoctoral schools. Geographical location of the school was rated highest for nondoctoral schools. Holland and Arrington (1987) examined actual job decisions by accounting faculty. Those going to nondoctoral schools focused on personal and family factors, such as spouse’s happiness, family happiness, salary, quality of life and geographic location. In contrast, salary, the department chair, and research opportunities and support were of greatest importance to those going to doctoral schools.

Eaton and Hunt (2002) examined actual job selection decisions of new PhDs and relocating faculty. Teaching load, compatibility with other faculty, and spouse’s evaluation of the area were highly important factors in job selection. Research-oriented issues were considerably more important to those going to doctoral schools.

Hunt et al. (2009) found teaching load to be the most important factor for new PhDs going to either doctoral or nondoctoral schools. Both groups rated compatibility with other faculty in the top five items. Research support was also important for both groups, inconsistent with Eaton and Hunt (2002). Base salary was considerably higher rated for those going to PhD schools. However, tenure criteria and spouse’s evaluation of the area were rated higher for those going to nondoctoral schools. Relocating faculty going to doctoral schools ranked teaching load first, while those going to nondoctoral schools ranked it third, behind compatibility with other faculty and likelihood of obtaining tenure.

Hunt and Jones (2015) examined accounting faculty hiring from the school’s viewpoint. Respondents from doctoral-granting schools perceived teaching load, summer research grants, and research interests of other faculty as the top three success factors, and their importance ratings on these items were significantly higher than for respondents from nondoctoral schools. Reputation of the school and existence of a PhD program were also viewed as significantly more important by doctoral schools. For nondoctoral schools, however, school location was significantly more important and ranked second in perceived importance. Class size was also significantly more important for this group. Teaching load was the only research-oriented factor in the top ten for nondoctoral schools, ranking fifth. Base salary and compatibility with existing faculty members had relatively high importance mean scores for both groups, and differences were insignificant. Schools were dichotomized into those emphasizing teaching and those emphasizing research or weighing teaching and research equally. Results were qualitatively similar overall, except that the only factor perceived as more important by teaching schools was class size.

We are aware of no research dealing with accreditation and its possible effects on factors of success in recruiting. However, there are several implications from other research that will be discussed in the next two paragraphs.

**Accreditation and Factors Affecting Hiring Success**

Although the stated goal of AACSB is to improve business program quality, some believe that the real purpose is to increase business faculty salaries, possibly at the expense of other academic programs. Faculty at AACSB accredited schools earn considerably more than those at non accredited schools (Hedrick et al. 2010; Bell and Joyce 2011).

Accreditation may serve as a statement regarding teaching loads. Hedrick et al. (2010) noted that faculty at AACSB accredited schools teach less than those in other ones. This should allow faculty more time for research. Increased research productivity results in increasing prestige of the institution (Taylor and Stanton 2009) and this may lead to future success in hiring desirable faculty members. Also, recruiters at AACSB accredited schools are more likely to find research-oriented factors contributing to their success in hiring than those at ACBSP or nonaccredited schools. As suggested above, one might expect that teaching load, salaries, and various forms of research support would be greater factors of success for AACSB schools. This leads to the following research question:

RQ2: Do the factors that recruiters believe led them to be successful in hiring tenure-track accounting faculty in the year in which a vacancy occurred differ by type of accreditation?

Due to higher research requirements, AACSB accredited schools might be expected to provide additional resources to affected programs to gain and retain accreditation (Trifts 2007; White et al. 2006). This could result in higher salaries for newly hired faculty, more library holdings and databases, lower teaching loads, and greater research funding. AACSB costs more than other accreditations and traditionally was used by schools with more resources. Brink and Smith (2012) found that, of the three business accreditations, AACSB schools had the most assets, revenue, and highest faculty salaries, while IACBE ranked last in these areas. This discussion leads to the following research question:

RQ3: Does satisfaction with the administration’s role in the hiring process vary by type of accreditation?

**Methodology**

We created a survey and sent it to a number of accounting department heads and recruiting committee chairs. Many of their suggestions and comments were incorporated into the final survey.

The first question asked whether the school had attempted to hire any tenure-track accounting faculty members in the previous three years. Those respondents who answered “no” were thanked for participating and directed to exit the program. Those respondents who answered “yes” were directed to a number of demographic questions, such as degrees offered (Ph.D., Macc., BBA, etc.); public or private; whether AACSB accredited; and if not, what other accreditations were held. Additional questions dealt with their level of success in recruiting and the factors that they believe affected their success or failure in recruiting. The latter items asked for ratings of importance for various items on a 1-4 Likert scale. There were 20 factors, plus an “other” category, most of which had been found to be important to applicants in Hunt et al. (2009). Respondents were also asked whether they would accept individuals without terminal degrees as tenure-track faculty and the extent to which schools were satisfied with their administration’s help in the hiring process. The survey contained numerous additional questions, dealing with issues such as how applicants were obtained and interviewing activities, which are not described in the current paper.

The population consisted of all US schools listed in the 2010-2011 edition of Hasselback’s Accounting Faculty Directory. Individuals listed as the chair or head of an accounting department or as a school of accountancy director received the survey and a cover letter sent electronically by SurveyMonkey®, an online survey service. If an accounting program was part of a larger unit, such as a Department of Accounting and Information Systems, the survey was sent to the chair of that larger unit. Otherwise, the survey was sent to the Dean of Business. E-mail addresses were not listed for some such individuals. The email address was then obtained from the school website. However, in approximately ten cases, that information was unavailable on the website and the schools were dropped from the population.

A follow-up letter was sent electronically to those schools which did not respond within approximately three weeks of the initial appeal. Those who still did not respond were sent a third and final letter.

**Results**

A total of 237 individuals responded to the online survey. Of these, 210 respondents indicated that they had attempted to hire new faculty members during the past three years. All 27 who indicated that they had not attempted to hire during that timeframe were from nondoctoral-granting schools. Since another 10 addressees responded via personal email that they did not attempt to hire, the effective response rate was 29 percent (247/851).4

Table 1 shows demographics of the 210 institutions that indicated they had tried to hire during the previous three years. Panel A indicates that 133 schools had AACSB-accredited business programs, while 77 had not. Due to the small number of schools indicating that they were accredited by the IACBE, we lumped them in with the nonaccredited category. Panel B shows that 21 respondents were from schools which granted doctoral degrees in accounting, while 189 were not. Panel C shows that 56% were public institutions.

**Table 1. Demographic Information**

**Panel A. Accrediting Bodies Indicated by Respondents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Accrediting Body** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| AACSB | 133 | 63.3 |
| ACBSP | 23 | 11.0 |
| Neither | 54 | 25.7 |
| Total | 210 | 100.0 |

**Panel B. Doctoral vs. Nondoctoral-Granting Institutions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of School** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| Non-doctoral-Granting | 189 | 90.0 |
| Doctoral-Granting | 21 | 10.0 |
| Total | 210 | 100.0 |

**Panel C. Public vs. Private Schools**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of School** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| Public | 118 | 56.2 |
| Private | 92 | 43.8 |
| Total | 210 | 100.0 |

To determine whether respondents were representative of the population, we compared responding schools to those in Hasselback (2010). Respondents were somewhat more likely to represent AACSB accredited business programs (63.3% vs. 53.7%). However, AACSB-accredited programs are often larger than non-accredited ones and thus may have been more likely to attempt to hire faculty during a given three-year period. Therefore, we believe that the respondents were representative of schools attempting to hire faculty.

RQ1 dealt with the extent of hiring success of schools with different accreditations. As shown in Table 2, ACBSP schools achieved the highest level of hiring success (83.3%), followed by AACSB schools (59.3%) and nonaccredited schools (53.8%). The level of success in filling all positions in the year the vacancy occurred differed in a marginally significant way (Chi-square 4.708, p=.095) by accreditation.

**Table 2. Relative Hiring Success of Schools\***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Accreditation** | **Yes** | **No** | **Total** |
| AACSB | 54 (59.3%) | 37 (40.7%) | 91 (100%) |
| ACBSP | 15 (83.3%) | 3 (16.7%) | 18 (100%) |
| Neither | 21 (53.8%) | 18 (46.2%) | 39 (100%) |
| Total | 90 (60.8%) | 58 (39.2) | 148 (100%) |

\*Based on whether schools filled all vacancies in the year announced.

RQ2 dealt with schools’ perceived reasons for hiring success as differentiated by accreditation type. Table 3 displays the results. Significant differences were found for teaching load, tenure requirements, compatibility with faculty, summer research grants, reputation, other research support, research interests of the faculty, presence or absence of a PHD program, presence or absence of a union, and recommendation of a PhD committee chair. AACSB schools rated each of these factors more important than ACBSP or nonaccredited schools, with the exception of presence or absence of a union, which was most important for nonaccredited schools.

**Table 3. Factors Believed to Affect Success in Hiring\***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **AACSB\*\*** | | **ACBSP\*\*** | | **Neither\*\*** | |  |
|  | **Mean** | **Rank** | **Mean** | **Rank** | **Mean** | **Rank** | **P** |
| Base salary | 3.18 | 1 | 3.25 | 1 | 2.88 | 3 | 0.125 |
| Teaching load | 3.15 | 2 | 2.63 | 7 | 2.68 | 7 | 0.000 |
| Applicant’s compatibility with faculty | 3.13 | 3 | 2.76 | 5 | 2.87 | T4 | 0.095 |
| Location of school | 3.00 | 4 | 2.81 | 4 | 3.03 | 1 | 0.666 |
| Tenure requirements | 2.93 | 5 | 2.35 | T10 | 2.62 | 9 | 0.017 |
| Ability to teach desired courses | 2.89 | T6 | 2.71 | 6 | 3.00 | 2 | 0.549 |
| Reputation of school | 2.89 | T6 | 2.38 | 9 | 2.87 | T4 | 0.041 |
| Benefit package | 2.81 | 8 | 2.88 | T2 | 2.65 | 8 | 0.465 |
| Other research support (e.g. databases, conferences) | 2.76 | 9 | 1.88 | 15 | 1.45 | 18 | 0.000 |
| Applicant’s compatibility with chair | 2.75 | 10 | 2.53 | 8 | 2.69 | 6 | 0.698 |
| Summer research grants | 2.72 | 11 | 1.38 | 17 | 1.34 | 21 | 0.000 |
| Spouse/partner’s view of area | 2.69 | 12 | 2.88 | T2 | 2.57 | 10 | 0.566 |
| Research interests of current faculty | 2.53 | 13 | 1.69 | 16 | 1.77 | 16 | 0.000 |
| Class size | 2.09 | 14 | 2.33 | 12 | 2.33 | 11 | 0.280 |
| Job opportunities for applicant’s spouse/partner | 2.06 | 15 | 2.13 | 13 | 2.00 | 13 | 0.928 |
| Applicant’s compatibility with dean | 1.96 | 16 | 2.35 | T10 | 2.14 | 12 | 0.280 |
| Other | 1.94 | 17 | 1.00 | T20 | 1.89 | 14 | 0.396 |
| Amount of service (committee, etc.) work expected | 1.88 | 18 | 2.00 | 14 | 1.79 | 15 | 0.674 |
| Recommendation of PhD committee chair | 1.83 | T19 | 1.31 | 18 | 1.43 | 19 | 0.017 |
| Existence/nonexistence of PhD program | 1.83 | T19 | 1.19 | 19 | 1.50 | 17 | 0.023 |
| Existence/nonexistence of union | 1.16 | 21 | 1.00 | T20 | 1.41 | 20 | 0.075 |

\*The number of responses to items ranged from 80-87 for AACSB schools, 28-32 for nonaccredited schools, and 15-17 for ACBSP schools, except for “Other,” for which the “n” is 17, 9, and 4, respectively.

\*\*Means reflect a four-point scale, with 1-unimportant, 2=somewhat important, 3= important, and 4=extremely important

Note: p-values are from an ANOVA.

Table 3 also shows that base salary ranked first for both AACSB and ACBSP and third for nonaccredited schools, and did not differ significantly among the three groups. For AACSB schools, salary was followed closely by teaching load, applicant’s compatibility with faculty, and location of the school. ACBSP schools ranked benefit package, spouse/partner’s view of the area, and teaching load second through fourth. Non-accredited schools rated location first, followed by ability to teach desired courses, base salary, and applicant’s compatibility with faculty and reputation of school (tie).

Four respondents indicated that their schools were currently nonaccredited but were pursuing AACSB accreditation. They were included with nonaccredited schools in the above results. Analysis of the four schools found that location was the most important factor by far, with salary and various research-oriented factors considerably lower-rated.

Multiple comparisons among AACSB, ACBSP, and nonaccredited schools were performed for those factors which had significant ANOVAs. These results appear in Table 4. ACBSP and nonaccredited schools were similar in mean ratings for most factors. There were significant differences between AACSB schools and both ACBSP schools and nonaccredited schools for teaching load, summer research grants, other research support, recommendation of PhD chair, and research interests of other faculty. Tenure requirements and existence or nonexistence of a PhD program were significantly different for AACSB vs. ACBSP schools. The existence or nonexistence of a union was significantly different between ACBSP and nonaccredited schools.

**Table 4. Post-Hoc Comparisons**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Accrediting Body | Comparison Point | Mean Difference | Std. Error | P-Value\* |
| Teaching Load | AACSB | Nonacc | 0.476 | 0.151 | 0.007 |
|  |  | ACBSP | 0.528 | 0.198 | 0.036 |
|  | ACBSP | Nonacc | -0.052 | 0.219 | 0.969 |
| Summer Research Grants | AACSB | Nonacc | 1.373 | 0.171 | 0.000 |
|  |  | ACBSP | 1.343 | 0.171 | 0.000 |
|  | ACBSP | Nonacc | 0.03 | 0.176 | 0.984 |
| Other Research Support | AACSB | Nonacc | 1.314 | 0.167 | 0.000 |
|  |  | ACBSP | 0.887 | 0.203 | 0.001 |
|  | ACBSP | Nonacc | 0.427 | 0.226 | 0.158 |
| Recommendation of Chair | AACSB | Nonacc | 0.401 | 0.184 | 0.086 |
|  |  | ACBSP | 0.517 | 0.178 | 0.019 |
|  | ACBSP | Nonacc | -0.116 | 0.218 | 0.856 |
| Reputation | AACSB | Nonacc | 0.021 | 0.149 | 0.99 |
|  |  | ACBSP | 0.517 | 0.282 | 0.189 |
|  | ACBSP | Nonacc | -0.496 | 0.301 | 0.248 |
| Existence of PhD Program | AACSB | Nonacc | 0.325 | 0.183 | 0.184 |
|  |  | ACBSP | 0.638 | 0.153 | 0.000 |
|  | ACBSP | Nonacc | -0.313 | 0.174 | 0.183 |
| Existence of Union | AACSB | Nonacc | -0.251 | 0.174 | 0.328 |
|  |  | ACBSP | 0.163 | 0.065 | 0.039 |
|  | ACBSP | Nonacc | -0.414 | 0.161 | 0.04 |
| Compatibility with Faculty | AACSB | Nonacc | 0.264 | 0.18 | 0.316 |
|  |  | ACBSP | 0.366 | 0.246 | 0.319 |
|  | ACBSP | Nonacc | -0.102 | 0.287 | 0.933 |
| Tenure Requirements | AACSB | Nonacc | 0.307 | 0.193 | 0.261 |
|  |  | ACBSP | 0.575 | 0.24 | 0.065 |
|  | ACBSP | Nonacc | -0.268 | 0.286 | 0.621 |
| Research Interests of Faculty | AACSB | Nonacc | 0.763 | 0.186 | 0.000 |
|  |  | ACBSP | 0.843 | 0.181 | 0.000 |
|  | ACBSP | Nonacc | -0.079 | 0.217 | 0.93 |

\*Games-Howell correction

RQ3 dealt with whether accreditation type was associated with the level of satisfaction with administrators in the hiring process. Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with school administrators in facilitating hiring on a 7- pt. scale with 1= lowest level and 7=highest level. As shown in Table 5, ACBSP schools had the highest level of satisfaction (mean of 5.44, sd=1.580), followed by AACSB schools (mean of 5.37, sd=1.668), and nonaccredited schools (mean of 4.68, sd=1.579). Differences between AACSB and nonaccredited schools were marginally significant in a multiple comparisons test (p=.077, Games-Howell correction).

**Table 5. Satisfaction with Administration’s Support in Hiring Process**

**Panel A. Mean Satisfaction Ratings**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Accreditation** | **N** | **Mean\*** | **Std. Deviation** |
| AACSB | 89 | 5.37 | 1.668 |
| ACBSP | 18 | 5.44 | 1.580 |
| Nonaccredited | 38 | 4.68 | 1.579 |

\*An ANOVA showed a marginally significant overall p-value for accreditation (p.079).

**Panel B. Post-Hoc Comparisons**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Accrediting Body** | **Comparison**  **Point** | **Mean Difference** | **Std. Error** | **P-Value\*\*** |
| AACSB | Nonacc | .687 | .311 | .077 |
| ACBSP | -.074 | .412 | .983 |
| ACBSP | Nonacc | .760 | .452 | .227 |

\*\*Games-Howell correction

**Additional Analysis**

Respondents were asked whether they would accept those without terminal degrees as tenure-track faculty. Table 6 shows the results for this item. Few AACSB or ACBSP schools indicated that they would do so, but a considerably greater percentage (30.8%) of nonaccredited schools stated that they would do so. The difference is significant (Pearson Chi-Square < .001).

**Table 6. Willingness to Hire Faculty Without Terminal Degrees**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Accept Masters?** | |  |
| **Accrediting Body\*** | **Yes** | **No** | **Total** |
| AACSB | 3 (3.3%) | 88 (96.7%) | 91 |
| ACBSP | 1 (5.6%) | 17 (94.4%) | 18 |
| Neither | 12 (30.8%) | 27 (69.2%) | 39 |
| Total | 16 (10.8%) | 132 (89.2%) | 148 |

\*Pearson Chi-Square = .000 for accrediting body

Respondents also indicated reasons for their failure to hire faculty in the year the vacancy occurred. Salary was the most important factor for all three groups. Due to the very high success level of ACBSP schools, there were very few “failure” schools in that group, which led to a general lack of significant differences across groups.

**Discussion and Conclusions**

The result that AACSB schools did not enjoy greater hiring success and actually had a considerably lower success rate than ACBSP schools was surprising. This finding suggests that any reputation advantage due to AACSB does not necessarily translate into a faculty recruiting advantage. It is possible that AACSB schools obtained more desirable candidates among those with PhDs. It may also indicate that AACSB schools are more selective in hiring faculty. AACSB schools may be more willing to let a position be unfilled by a tenure-track person rather than hire someone who may not perform sufficient quality research. Recent (2013) changes in AACSB accreditation standards may help AACSB schools in hiring faculty currently teaching at other schools. The creation of a new “practicing academic” faculty category may increase use of doctorally-qualified faculty who have done considerable consulting but limited research (AACSB 2013). Such faculty might have had difficulty relocating to AACSB schools in the past because of their limited research output. The finding that nonaccredited schools had the lowest success rate despite a much greater willingness to hire faculty without terminal degrees indicates serious difficulties in hiring.

Many of the differences in perceived reasons for hiring success related to research-oriented issues (summer research grant availability, research interests of other faculty, and research support). The greater perceived importance of teaching load by AACSB accredited schools may also be related to research, in that a lower teaching load frees up time for research. These results are consistent with a higher perceived importance of research and thus greater resources allocated to it than in ACBSP-accredited schools. In these research-oriented categories, ACBSP schools were more similar to non-accredited schools than AACSB-accredited schools. This may indicate that ACBSP schools have considerably lower research expectations or that such schools are focused on trying to match salary offers of AACSB schools, but then lack the resources or culture to provide much research support. The latter explanation is supported by the similar ratings of salary as a success factor for AACSB and ACBSP schools. The first explanation is not supported, since tenure requirements were less important of a success factor for ACBSP than AACSB schools. This would be unlikely if research requirements for tenure were considerably less at ACBSP schools.

Location was the highest ranked factor for nonaccredited schools. This perhaps indicates that these schools have enjoyed some hiring success by attracting those who may have family or other ties to the area, or that the area offers other advantages such as mild climate or outstanding scenery. This is both good and bad news for such schools. Location may partly compensate for a lack of financial resources. On the other hand, these schools may be unable to meet various other needs of applicants and have to rely passively on location desirability to attract new faculty or retain existing faculty. Related to the importance of location is the spouse/partner’s view of the area, ranked tied for second for ACBSP schools. This implies that schools may be successful in hiring by inviting spouses and partners and giving them sufficient time to tour the area.

The finding that AACSB schools did not differ significantly from ACBSP and nonaccredited schools on the importance of reputation provides some refutation of the AACSB claim that their accreditation is a badge of high quality. In addition, reputation importance scores for AACSB-accredited and nonaccredited schools were almost equal, which may mean that reputation has a different meaning at different types of schools. Reputation may be more research-oriented, on average, at AACSB-accredited schools. Nonaccredited schools may look at other factors, such as perceived teaching quality.

The finding of greater perceived importance of PhD chair recommendation at AACSB accredited schools may indicate that such individuals want their graduates to go to more prestigious schools. This may also indicate the importance of other schools’ making contacts with those in charge of PhD programs.

The finding that AACSB schools did not indicate greater satisfaction with administrators’ roles in hiring than those from ACBSP schools may indicate that AACSB accreditation does not necessarily result in a greater flow of resources, such as more money to hire faculty, to business programs. This is consistent with the very similar results for success in hiring; salary was rated about equally as a factor by both AACSB and ACBSP schools.

Overall the results do not show superiority in hiring by AACSB over ACBSP schools. However, both have considerable advantages over nonaccredited schools. Perhaps the type of accreditation is less important than the existence of business-specific accreditation.

**Limitations and Future Research**

Certain limitations apply to the current research. First, as the cover letter indicated, the survey was long. Some survey recipients may have decided not to respond due to time constraints. Others started the survey but exited before completion. However, we believe the response rate is reasonable, the respondents are representative of the population, and we have sufficient responses to all questions for meaningful statistical analysis. Second, responses to some questions were based on administrators’ perceptions of factors that led to their success or failure in hiring. Obviously, such perceptions may not be totally accurate. However, since people’s actions may be based on their perceptions, understanding such perceptions is valuable. Finally, it is difficult to state that accreditation per se resulted in differences in hiring success or in perceived factors of importance to success in hiring. Factors underlying schools’ choice of accreditor, such as resources, may have been of greater importance. However, some faculty applicants may have interpreted accreditation as providing some information about various unobservable factors, such as research support.

Future research could focus on more detailed examination of specific aspects of the current research. This could help determine which of several alternative explanations we have offered for certain results, such as AACSB, ACBSP, and nonaccredited respective hiring success rates, are supported. Also, future studies could examine whether success factors differ depending upon whether the school is hiring new PhDs vs. relocating faculty.

**Endnotes**

1. The percentage is determined by a variety of factors, including the size and mission of the business program (AACSB 2012b).

2. Many believe there are advantages to having AACSB accreditation, particularly in the areas of student recruitment and placement and the ability to obtain resources from school administration. The current study focuses only on whether there is an advantage in recruiting accounting faculty.

3. The cost of acquiring and maintaining AACSB accreditation (including application fees, conferences, and consulting fees) has been estimated to be three or four times that of the ACBSP (Brink and Smith 2012).

4. Of the 210 who indicated they tried to hire during the period in question, 62 answered nine demographic questions and then dropped when presented with a long question (not included in this research) asking how many applicants had been obtained by each of numerous methods. Some respondents may not have had the memory or patience to continue. The exclusion of these 62 respondents reduces the effective response rate to 21.7%, but does not substantially affect the demographic composition (e.g., AACSB, ACBSP, and nonaccredited) of the respondents who tried to hire.

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