Agricultural and Extension Education Department Heads' Perceptions of Journals and Importance of Publishing

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According to Katz (1973). most college administrators tend to rely on their own intuition and knowledge of different journals as criteria for faculty evaluation. The administrator's intuition and knowledge of a journal is usually based upon familiarity and notion of quality (Goldsmith, Thoresen & Goldsmith, 1988). Agricultural and extension education department heads' perceptions of journals and publishing is a crucial factor in the evaluation and career advancement of faculty members. The department head's assessment of faculty production affects individual faculty salary, promotion, tenure, and opportunities for future professional growth and advancement.

Administrator perceptions of journals have been studied in a variety of fields as a part of journal analysis. Journal analysis measures the systematic changes in a journal over a specific period of time. One area within the journal analysis is detenniniig the familiarity and quality. According to Mace and Warner (1973) and Buss and McDermott (1976). journal familiarity and quality studies are conducted for two main reasons: 1) to guide potential contributors to journals and 2) to assist administrators in making decisions about an individual faculty member's promotion and tenure.

A number of researchers have examined journal familiarity and quality specific to their disciplines: marketing (Browne and Becker, 1977); sociology (Glenn, 1971); psychology (Koulack and Keselman, 1975); business (Peery and Adams, 1981) and home economics (Goldsmith, et al.. 1988). Browne and Becker (1977) surveyed business school department heads and found that faculty evaluation, within colleges and departments of all sizes, was being influenced more and more by publishing/productivity. They also found that administrators of smaller departments placed less emphasis on publishing than administrators of larger departments. In addition, familiarity and quality ratings were not highly correlated and faculty size had no significant effect on familiarity or quality ratings of 53 journals.

Goldsmith, et al. (1988) found that home economics deans and chairpersons now view faculty publishing more importantly than they did previously, and the stress to publish is steadily increasing withii small and large departments. They also found that familiarity and quality ratings were positively related for most journals and faculty size is independent of journal familiarity and quality rankings.

There have been a number of studies published on journal analysis in agricultural and extension education in recent times (Radhakrishna & Jackson, 1992; Moore, 1991; and Newman, 1990). Radhakrishna and Jackson (1992) analyzed articles that were published in the Journal of Agricultural Education for the decade 1980-90. Moore (1991) determined who is cited and what is cited in the Journal of Agricultural Education and Newman (1990) examined opinions of agricultural educators about the Journal of Agricultural Education.

However, a study specifically measuring agricultural and extension education department heads' perceptions of journals has not been conducted. This study attempted to determine department heads' perceptions regarding familiarity and quality of 16 journals commonly used by agricultural educators. In addition, the **study** also attempted to identify those items that the department heads' consider important in the evaluation of faculty publishing.

Purpose and Hypotheses

The primary purpose of the study was to determine agricultural and extension education department head's perceptions of familiarity and self-perceived quality of 16 journals related to agricultural and extension education.

Based on the findings of the Browne & Becker (1977). the Peery and Adams (1981), and the Goldsmith, Thoresen and Goldsmith (1988) studies, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide this study:

There is a positive relationship between familiarity and self-perceived quality of journals.

Agricultural and extension education department heads who subscribe to the journals will give them higher familiarity and quality rankings than nonsubscribers.

There is a positive relationship between faculty size and familiarity rankings of journals.

There is a positive relationship between faculty size and quality rankiigs of journals.

Agricultural and extension education department heads place greater emphasis on faculty publishing than they did previously.

Procedure

Population

The population for the study consisted of all department heads of agricultural and extension education listed in the Directory of Teacher Educators in Agriculture, 1991-1992. To arrive at an accurate frame, the following procedures were adopted: 1) departments having only one faculty member were eliminated from the list, 2) individuals listed as chairperson, department head, coordinator, interim head/chairperson. and/or director were selected, 3) since the names of the departments and the title of department heads vary across universities, a common name for the department and the title for department head was used. The common terms selected were: "Department of Agricultural and Extension **Education"** and "Department Head." As a result of these procedures, a total of 62 department heads were selected for the study. The institution where the researchers came from was excluded from the population. Two faculty members and one graduate student in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at The Pennsylvania State University checked the population list for accuracy.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was developed by the researchers based on literature found in related studies (Becker, 1977 and Goldsmith, et al., 1988) The instrument

contained four parts. Part one contained names of 16 journals to be measured for familiarity, quality and subscription. Responses to familiarity and quality were measured on a Likert-type scale (for familiarity--unaware, slightly familiar, moderately familiar, familiar and very familiar, and for quality--unaware, poor quality, average quality, high quality and very high quality). Respondents circled "yes" or "no" to indicate whether or not they subscribe to the journals. Four blank spaces were also provided on the instrument so respondents could identify journals that may have been excluded from the original list. Part **two** of the instrument contained 13 items that measured the perceptions of department heads relative to importance of faculty publishing. These items were measured on a Liiert-type scale ranging from 1 "not important" to 5 "very important." Part three of the instrument gathered information on the number of full-time faculty, graduate and undergraduate enrollment, years as department head and years as a faculty member. Part four consisted of blank spaces for respondents to make comments or suggestions. Content and face validity of the instrument were established by a panel of experts that consisted of three faculty members and one graduate assistant from the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at The Pennsylvania State University. The 16 journals were chosen from a list of 16 frequently cited journals in the Journal of Agricultural Education during the decade 1980-90 (Radhakrishna & Jackson, 1991).

Pilot Test

The instrument was pilot tested using 25 faculty members in the Department of Agricultural Education at The Pennsylvania State University. Twenty-three of the 25 faculty members responded to the pilot survey (92%). As a result of the pilot test, several changes were made to the instrument: 1) the list of journals were arranged in alphabetical order, 2) another journal was added to the list. 3) three items were deleted and four items were added to part two of the instrument, and 4) two items in part three were deleted. Using the data collected from the pilot test, a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .87 was obtained for part two of the instrument, which measured department heads' perceptions about importance of faculty publishing.

Data Collection and Analysis

A cover letter, explaining the purpose of the study, a copy of the instrument and a return addressed envelope were mailed to the population. After three weeks, 41 department heads responded, yielding a return rate of 66 percent. Follow-up telephone calls were made to the remaining 21 department heads requesting them to return the surveys. **A** total of 44 department heads responded (71%).

Data were analyzed using frequencies, means, and percentages. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to determine relationships between familiarity and self-perceived quality of journals. A post hoc reliability analysis indicated that the instrument had acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha=.87).

Results

The department heads of agricultural and extension education were asked to indicate their familiarity of 16 journals on a scale that ranged from 1 "unaware" to 5 "very familiar." Results are shown in Table 1. The highest rating for familiarity went to the

Journal of A&cultural Education (4.79). followed by Vocational Education Journal (4.44). NACTA Journal (4.42), Journal of Vocational Education Research (3.73), and Journal of Extension (3.68). The journals that were rated low for familiarity were Personnel Psychology (.61), followed by Journal of Environmental Ouality (.73) and Journal of Appl i e d C o - (0.84).

The department heads of agricultural and extension education were also asked to indicate their perceived quality of 16 journals on a scale that ranged from 1 "unaware" to 5 "very good" quality. The Journal of Agricultural Education was rated highest for quality (4.02) followed by NACTA Journal (3.39). Journal of Vocational Education Research (3.19). Journal of Extension (3.09). and Vocational Education Journal (3.07). The lowest rated journals for quality included: Personnel Psvcholonv (.71), followed by Journal of Environmental Quality (0.89) and Journal of Applied Communications (0.91) (Table 1).

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated to describe the relationships between familiarity and self-perceived quality for each of the 16 journals. As shown in Table 1, findings indicated positive relationships, significant at the 0.01 level, between mean familiarity and self perceived quality of 16 journals. The correlation coefficients ranged from .54 (Home Economics Research Journal) to .80 (Journal of Extension), with a mean correlation of .67. Overall, these findings tend to corroborate those achieved in Goldsmith et. al .(1988) study for home economics journals. To a lesser extent, the findings closely match those of Browne and Becker (1977) study for marketing journals.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and Rankings for Familiarity and Self-Perceived Quality of 16 Journals

	Familiarity*		Quality**		
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Ppmr***
Journal	SD		SD		
Journal of Agricultural Education	4.79	1	4.02	1	.62
	0.59		0.90		
Vocational Education Journal	4.44	2	3.07	5	.65
	0.97		1.17		
NACTA Journal	4.42	3	3.39	2	.70
	1.05		1.50		
Journal of Vocational Education Research	3.73	4	3.19	3	.74
	1.54		1.09		
Journal of Extension	3.66	5	3.09	4	.80
	1.68		1.41		
Journal of Teacher Education	3.07	6	2.97	6	.70
	1.39		1.57		
Journal of Adult Education	2.50	7	2.08	9	.66
	1.50		1.90		

Table 1 continued

Journal	Familiarity* Mean SD	Rank	Quality** Mean SD	Rank	Ppmr***
Journal of Higher Education	2.39 1.64	8	2.32 1.82	8	.72
Educational and Psychological Measurement	2.18 1.26	9	2.57 1.92	7	.64
Adult Education Quarterly	2.18 1.60	9	1.97 1.83	10	.77
Journal of Home Economics	1.70 1.66	11	1.25 1.63	13	.66
Journal of Applied Psychology	1.57 1.39	12	1.58 1.96	11	.58
Home Economics Research Journal	1.54 1.44	13	1.43 1.65	12	.54
Journal of Applied Communications	0.84 1.24	14	0.91 1.50	14	.76
Journal of Environmental Quality	0.73 1.19	15	0.89 1.47	15	.62
Personnel Psychology	0.61 1.20	16	0.71 1.36	16	.72

*Scale: 1=unaware; 2=slightly familiar; 3=moderately familiar; 4=familiar; 5=very familiar.
**Scale: 1=unaware; 2=poor quality; 3=average quality; 4=food quality; 5=very good quality.
***Ppmr coefficients computed using mean familiarity and mean quality scores. All correlations significant at .01 level.

Hypothesis two was tested on a journal-by-journal basis by examining mean differences in familiarity and quality ratings for subscribers and nonsubscribers. Results are found in Table 2. Data in Table 2 supports hypothesis two. For each of the sixteen journals, subscribers rated themselves as more familiar with the journals than nonsubscribers. Similarly, for subscribers, the quality rating of journals was higher than nonsubscribers. Similar findings were reported by Goldsmith et. al. (1988) for home economics journals.

To test hypothesis three and four, department heads were divided into two groups: those department heads with six or fewer full-time faculty (70%) and those department heads with seven or more full-time faculty (30%). Overall the results supported

Table 2. Familiarity and Quality Ratings of 16 Journals as Perceived by Subscribers and Nonsubscribers

	Familiarity						Journal Quality					
	Subscribers			Nonsubscribers			Subscribers			Nonsubscribers		
Journal[a]	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
AEO	7	3.86	1.21	35	1.97	1.44	7	3.43	0.53	32	1.66	1.86
EPM	2	3.50	2.12	40	2.22	1.14	2	4.50	0.71	35	2.46	1.91
HERJ	3	3.67	1.53	38	1.45	1.33	3	3.00	0.00	31	1.19	1.60
JADE	9	3.89	0.93	33	2.21	1.41	9	3.89	0.60	30	1.53	1.81
JAE	40	4.92	0.35	4	3.50	1.00	40	4.10	0.63	4	3.25	2.36
JAC	3	3.00	1.00	37	0.70	1.12	3	3.67	0.58	31	0.68	1.30
JEQ	4	3.00	1.41	37	1.46	1.30	4	3.50	0.58	32	1.34	1.94
JE	23	4.69	3.00	0.58	38	0.60	1.05	3	3.00	0.00	32	0.69	1.38
			0.47	21	2.52	1.81	23	3.65	0.71	19	2.42	1.74
JHE	9	3.89	1.05	34	2.06	1.54	9	3.78	0.67	31	1.90	1.83
HHoEd	2	3.50	0.71	40	1.70	1.65	2	3.50	0.71	34	1.12	1.57
JTE	11	3.82	0.87	31	2.87	1.38	11	3.54	0.52	27	2.74	0.34
JVER	21	4.62	0.67	22	2.82	1.65	21	3.76	0.70	21	2.57	1.86
NACTA	30	4.77	0.57	13	3.61	1.44	28	3.68	0.82	13	2.77	1.36
PP	1	-----	-----	39	0.69	1.26	---	-----	-----	34	0.73	1.38
VEJ	32	4.72	0.73	9	3.44	1.13	32	3.37	0.83	9	2.00	0.58

[a]Journal Abbreviations: AEQ=Adult Education Quarterly; EPM= Educational and Psychological Measurement; HERJ=Home Economics Research Journal; JADE= Journal of Adult Education; JAE=Journal of Agricultural Education; JAC= Journal of Applied Cornrnunications; JAP=Journal of Applied Psychology; JEQ-Journal of Environmental Quality; JE=Journal of Extension; JHE=Journal of Higher Education; HHoEd= Journal of Home Economics; JTE=Journal of Teacher Education; JVER=Journal of Vocational Education Research; NACTA=NACTA Journal; PP=Personnel Psychology; VEJ=Vocational Education Journal.

hypotheses three and four. There were **no** differences in mean familiarity and quality ratings of journals between the two groups of department heads. Further examination of data revealed that the department heads with seven or more full-time faculty members rated three journals (Adult Education Quarterly, Journal of Applied Communications, and Journal higher for familiarity as compared to department heads with six or fewer number of full-time faculty. Similarly, in regard to journal quality ratings, department heads with seven or more full-time faculty rated Journal of Applied Communications and Journal of Extension higher for quality than their counterparts with six or fewer number of full-time faculty. The fmdings achieved in this study closely match those achieved in Goldsmith et al. (1988) study for home economics journals.

The department heads were asked to indicate their perceptions for 13 statements that measured importance of faculty publishing. Results are found in Table 3. The statements were measured on a scale that ranged from 1 "not important" to 5 "very important." Publication of articles in refereed journals received the highest mean for importance (41.4) followed by presentation of papers in research meetings (4.20). number of articles published in refereed journals (4.00). presentation of papers at conferences (3.79) and number of papers presented at research meetings (3.68). Being a member on the editorial board of a journal (2.77). publication of articles in international journals (2.91). being a reviewer of articles (2.93) and being a discussant of paper presentations (2.98) were perceived as "somewhat important" **by** agricultural and extension education department heads.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations and Rankings for Importance of Faculty Publishing (n=44)

Type of Faculty Publishing	Mean*	SD	Rank
Publication of articles in refereed journals	4.41	0.87	1
Presentation of papers in researchmeetings	4.20	0.88	2
Number of articles published in refereed journals	4.00	1.06	3
Presentation of papers at conferences	3.79	1.07	4
Number of papers presented at research meetings	3.68	0.96	5
Publication of articles in nonrefereed journals	3.43	0.97	6
Number of papers presented at conferences	3.32	1.01	7
Being an editor of a journal	3.14	1.32	8
Number of articles published in nonrefereed journals	3.07	0.92	9
Being a discussant of paper presentations	2.98	0.93	10
Being a reviewer of articles	2.93	0.87	11
Publication of articles in international journals	2.91	1.13	12
Being a member on the editorial board of a **journal**	2.77	1.00	13

*Mean for Importance computed on scale: 1=not important to 5=very important.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Several conclusions and recommendations are formulated based on the results of this study of department heads who rated the familiarity and quality of 16 journals that they and their faculties **use.**

The quality ratings and familiarity ratings of the 16 journals were positively related. In addition, familiarity ratings for all of the 16 journals were higher than the respective journal quality ratings. Department heads gave higher quality ratings for the journals with which they were more familiar.

Department heads who subscribed to specific journals rated them higher for both familiarity and quality than did department heads who did not subscribe to the journals. The Journal of Agricultural Education was rated highest for both familiarity and self-perceived quality. Perhaps this high familiarity and self-perceived quality rating was explained by the fact that 40 out of 44 (91%) of the respondents subscribed to the JAE by virtue of membership in the American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE).

Faculty size is independent of the department heads' journal familiarity and self-perceived journal quality ratings. This finding mirrors the earlier studies of Browne & Becker (1977) and Goldsmith, et. al. (1988).

Publishing has become important in the evaluation of faculty. Publication of articles in refereed journals, presentation of papers at research meetings and conferences and number of articles published in refereed journals and presented at research meetings are perceived as factors most important by department heads in the evaluation of faculty.

The following recommendations were formulated based on the findings of this study:

Faculty, especially tenure-track faculty, should familiarize themselves with the findings of this study. The findings provide a perspective of how a specific group of agricultural and extension leaders, namely department heads, perceive the quality of respective journals. In recent years the perceived quality of refereed journals has assumed significant importance in decisions regarding faculty promotion and tenure. However, it is important that faculty should recognize that their department heads views and opinions are only one criterion in selecting a journal for which to submit articles.

The findings of this study should be shared with the members of promotion and tenure committees in the departments of agricultural and extension education because publishing, in addition to teaching, advising, and service, is an important component in the evaluation of faculty.

For journal editors and editorial review boards, the findings are indicative of where their specific journals stand in the profession. In recent years, the department heads and the P & T committees have given importance to questions such as where the articles are published (names of prominent journals in the profession) and what is the quality (in terms of format, content, acceptance rate, review process, etc.). If this is what is emerging, the editors should consider avenues to pursue to maintain or improve the quality of the journals.

Faculty who teach and advise graduate students who aspire to become faculty members should use the findings to assist graduate students further to understand the nature of publishing activities in the agricultural and extension education profession. Historically, an assessment of traditional role of faculty (teaching, advising, service, relationship with peers, etc.) has been incorporated into the mentoring of new faculty. Potential new faculty should be oriented regarding the nature of publishing activities in the profession.

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