



Navigating the Challenges of ACADEMIC CAREERS

Career Obstacles, Shocks, and Facilitators of Professional Identification and Occupational Satisfaction among Academy of Management Academic Members

Stage 2 – Quantitative Survey Study: Feedback Report to the Academy of Management
SUMMARY

Prepared by:

Maria L. Kraimer, Scott E. Seibert, Lindsey Greco, and Jordan Nielsen
Department of Management & Organizations
University of Iowa

Leisa D. Sargent
Department of Management & Marketing
University of Melbourne

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Summary

This report contains the findings from the second stage of a two-stage study. The first stage survey asked open-ended questions to a random stratified sample of academic members of the Academy of Management (AOM). The primary purpose of the questions was to elicit specific examples of career shocks, career obstacles, and career facilitators that members have experienced during their academic career. *Career shocks* are defined as discrete events, either positive or negative, that have a lasting impact on career trajectories or lead to a significant career decision. *Career obstacles* are defined as ongoing challenges that impact an individual's ability to achieve career goals. *Career facilitators* include resources,

opportunities, and social support mechanisms that help individuals achieve their career goals and/or deal with the career obstacles and shocks.

The responses from the Stage 1 qualitative survey served as the basis for the development and choice of questions on the Stage 2 quantitative survey. A link to the Stage 2 survey was sent to all current academic members of AOM as of September 2014. Of the approximately 12,000 academic members, 2,982 members responded to at least part of the survey (a 24.8% response rate) while 2,014 members finished the survey (a 16.8% response rate). The key research questions and findings are highlighted below.

1. What are the most commonly reported career obstacles and shocks that academics are experiencing in their careers?

SHOCKS. The three most commonly reported positive career shocks were publishing a paper in a top tier journal, receiving a teaching award, and being elected to serve in a leadership role in an academic professional organization. The three most commonly reported negative career shocks were experiencing a negative political incident within one's department or university, having difficulties obtaining a job, and being in a department that was affected by significant organizational change. Personal and family shocks were experienced less frequently in general; however, the three personal shocks that were most common were having a close family member be diagnosed with a serious illness or disability; experiencing a death in one's immediate family, or of a close friend; and having a baby or adopting a child.

OBSTACLES. We examined three obstacles -- role overload, workplace practices procedural injustice, and review process procedural injustice. Half of academics (51%) feel some degree of role overload. In terms of the two perceptions of injustice, review process procedural injustice was the more important factor; 37% of academics feel that the journal review process is unfair and/or biased. A smaller percentage, 27%, feel that practices and decisions in their university work environment (i.e., pay raises, promotions, teaching allocations, etc.) are not fair.

2. Which types of career obstacles and shocks impact member's professional identification, university identification, researcher role identity, occupational satisfaction, and intentions to leave occupation?

PROFESSIONAL IDENTIFICATION. Just over half the respondents (51%) indicated that they identify with the profession (agreed or strongly agreed with this identification). Further, professional identification is positively impacted by the positive career shocks. In particular, every positive shock except for being recruited by another university was positively related to professional identification. None of the negative shocks related to professional identification. Both types of injustice, review process and workplace practices, were negatively related to professional identification.

UNIVERSITY IDENTIFICATION. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents identified with their university (agreed or strongly agreed with this identification). Both positive and negative career shocks impacted university identification. In particular, university identification was positively related to six of the eight positive career shocks, and negatively to five of the eight negative career shocks. The strongest relationships were with obtaining a grant, experiencing a negative political incident within the department or university and not being awarded tenure/promotion or an administrative position. Both types of injustice, review process and workplace practices, were negatively related to university identification.

RESEARCHER ROLE IDENTITY. Researcher role identity was positively related to a majority of the positive career shocks. It was also related positively to two of the negative career shocks: experiencing significant

organizational change and experiencing a negative performance evaluation. Both types of injustice, review process and workplace practices, were negatively related to researcher role identity. The vast majority (90%) of respondents reported identifying with a researcher role.

OCCUPATIONAL SATISFACTION. Occupational satisfaction was weakly, positively related to every positive career shock, and negatively related to all but one negative career shock. Occupational satisfaction also had moderate-strong relationships with each of the career obstacles: role overload, review process procedural injustice, and workplace practices procedural injustice. Overall, members are highly satisfied with this occupation (mean score of 4.0 out of 5).

OCCUPATIONAL TURNOVER INTENTIONS. Occupational turnover intentions were weakly and negatively related to a majority of the positive career shocks, and weakly positively related to the negative career shocks. Both types of injustice, review process and workplace practices, were positively related to intentions to leave the occupation. Overall, though members' intentions to leave the occupation were quite low (mean score of 1.6 out of 5).

Note that although role overload is experienced by the majority of participants, this obstacle was significantly correlated ($r = -.22$) only with occupational satisfaction and not the other four outcomes examined here.

3. Which types of career facilitators impact member's professional identification, university identification, researcher role identity, occupational satisfaction, and intentions to leave occupation?

We examined three types of career facilitators in the survey -- support from a mentor, professional networking, and university support. Respondents engaged the most in professional networking, with 68% agreeing that they proactively build their professional network to facilitate their career. In terms of university support, 58% of respondents agreed

that their university provides adequate resources and financial support. In contrast, only 27% of respondents felt they receive enough mentoring support. Each of these facilitators significantly correlated with all five outcomes with one exception: the correlation between professional networking and university identification was not significant.

4. Which career facilitators buffer the negative effects of career obstacles and shocks on the outcome variables?

We found a number of significant interaction effects suggesting career facilitators play a buffering role. Professional networking buffered the negative effects of being turned down for tenure/promotion, experiencing a negative political incident, receiving a negative performance evaluation, and review process

injustice on at least one of the occupational outcomes. Mentoring support buffered the negative effects of being turned down for promotion/tenure on occupational turnover intentions. Finally, university support buffered the negative effects of not receiving a grant on occupational satisfaction.

5. Are there differences between tenure track faculty and non-tenure track faculty in any of the career shocks, obstacles, facilitators, or occupational outcomes?

Of the eight positive shocks examined, tenure track faculty were more likely to experience all of them, except receiving a teaching or research award, compared to non-tenure track faculty. Of the negative shocks, non-tenure track faculty were more likely to experience being turned down for tenure / promotion and not receiving an administrative position, compared to tenure track faculty. For the obstacles, tenure track faculty was more likely

to perceive role overload, but less likely to perceive workplace practices injustice. Tenure track faculty were also more likely to report higher levels of university support, compared to non-tenure track. Finally, tenure track faculty had higher mean scores on professional identification, researcher role identity, and occupational satisfaction; whereas non-tenure track faculty had greater intentions to leave the occupation.

6. Are there differences across geographic regions in any of the career shocks, obstacles, facilitators, or occupational outcomes?

Across the five geographic regions, there were mean score differences in three of the positive shocks: publishing a paper in a top-tier journal, obtaining an external grant, and being recruited by another university. It is noteworthy that there were no mean differences in being invited to join an editorial board, being elected to leadership positions in professional organizations, and receiving research or teaching awards. For the negative shocks, there were geographic differences only with respect to receiving a negative performance evaluation and having difficulties

obtaining a job (those in UK/Australia/NZ region experienced more of both of these negative events). There were also some geographic differences in the reported mean scores for workplace practices procedural injustice (Asia scoring higher), university support (UK/Australia/NZ scoring higher), mentoring support (Western Europe scoring higher), university identification (Asia and South/Central America scoring higher), occupational satisfaction (US/Canada scoring highest), and occupational turnover intentions (South/Central America scoring the highest).

7. Are there gender differences in the career experiences and occupational outcomes?

There were few gender differences in career outcomes (job rank, tenure track status, salary, and number of publications). The exception is the finding that women were less likely than men to be at the Full/Chaired professor rank and women had lower salaries. However, the salary difference by gender was no longer significant when Full/Chaired professor rank was accounted for in the analysis. Compared to men, women reported

higher levels of professional identification and experienced more career obstacles – role overload, review process injustice, and workplace practices injustice – but lower levels of university support. In terms of the career shocks, women were more likely to have obtained a grant (a positive shock), but also more likely to have experienced difficulties obtaining a job (a negative shock).

Recommendations

Based on the findings to the research questions, we recommended three initiatives for Academy of Management to explore and three current valuable resources that could be further exploited.

Exploration opportunities include:

- Improving the fairness of the journal review process
- Providing resources and information for faculty to address workplace unfairness
- Providing new types of research support for members

Exploitation opportunities include:

- Build more network or affinity groups
- Encourage more senior members' mentoring of early-career and international scholars, perhaps outside of the early-career individual's home university
- Expand teaching resources to attract and serve the needs of more teaching-oriented members

Description of Sample

Table 1 provides the demographic characteristic of the respondents. Sample size ranges from 1,250 to 1,950 as not all members answered all questions.

Table 1. Basic Demographics

Average age	49 years (range was 24 to 80)	
Percent male	58%	
Percent married or living with committed partner	84%	
Race	White/Caucasian	81%
	Asian	10%
	Hispanic	2%
	African	2%
	Other	4%
Number of children currently living in home	None	59%
	One	16%
	Two	18%
	Three	5%
	Four or more	2%
Country of residence ^a	US, Canada	62%
	UK, Australia, NZ	10%
	Western Europe	13%
	Asia	5%
	South & Central America	3%
	Other	7%
Country of citizenship ^a	US, Canada	60%
	UK, Australia, NZ	8%
	Western Europe	17%
	Asia	8%
	South & Central America	3%
	Other	4%

^aWe combined the UK, Australia, and NZ because these countries are all native English-speaking and have universities modeled after the UK system.

Table 2 contains information related to academics' current academic positions and career outcomes. Sample size ranges from 1,250 to 1,950.

Table 2: Career Demographics

Current Employment Contract	Tenure-track, tenured	59%
	Tenure-track, not yet tenured	23%
	Fixed term contract (1+ years)	10%
	Temporary contract	3%
	Other	5%
Of the 249 members on "contracts"...	Is it by choice (percent yes)?	57%
	Do you work for more than one organization (percent yes)? (modal number of orgs is 2)	23%
Of the 249 members on "contracts," type of other employment, besides academia	Employed exclusively in academics	79%
	Employed full-time outside of academia	6%
	Employed part-time outside of academia	15%
Time spent on various work activities (average percent of time)	Research	36%
	Teaching	38%
	Service to university	19%
	Service to professional organizations	7%
Total # of Peer-Reviewed Publications (self-reported)	<1	6%
	1-10	45%
	11-20	23%
	21-50	19%
	50-74	3%
	>75	4%
Citations (according to <i>Google Scholar</i> , self-reported)	0-10	20%
	11-100	18%
	101-250	12%
	251-750	16%
	751-1,500	11%
	1,501-3,000	10%
	3,001 +	13%
Median Salary by Region (in US dollars) ^a	US, Canada	125,000
	UK, Australia, NZ	110,600
	Western Europe	88,900
	Asia	76,800
	Central and South America	62,595
	Other	62,530
	All	110,000

^aWe combined the UK, Australia, and NZ because these countries are all native English-speaking and have universities modeled after the UK system.

We also asked respondents some questions that describe their universities.

Table 3: University-Related Demographics

Public or Private University	Public	70%
	Private	30%
Mission of University	Research intensive	29%
	Research and teaching balance	53%
	Teaching intensive	18%
Does your university have a PhD Program?	Yes	61%
	No	39%

Last, Table 4 describes their membership and participation in AOM.

Table 4: AOM-Related Demographics

Current roles at Academy journals (assigned to highest level of participation)	Associate Editor or Chief Editor	1%
	Editorial board member	5%
	Adhoc reviewer	26%
	None	37%
	Did not answer	31%
Degree to which member agrees that they identify with their “AOM member” role	Strongly agree	7%
	Agree	36%
	Neither	41%
	Disagree	13%
	Strongly disagree	3%
Extent of involvement in the AOM	Always	13%
	Often	18%
	Sometimes	30%
	Rarely	20%
	Not at all	19%
Division of AOM with which most identified	Org. Behavior	18%
	Business Policy and Strategy	11%
	Org. and Management Theory	9%
	Entrepreneurship	8%
	Human Resources	7%
	International Management	5%
	Social Issues in Management	4%
	Tech. and Innovation Management	4%
	Management Educ. & Development	4%
	All Others (< 4% each)	30%

Findings

In this section, we provide recommendations on resources and/or initiatives that the Academy could explore and could exploit, based on the survey results. Stage 1 was an exploratory study conducted prior to the current study. The Stage 1 findings are based on open-ended responses from 99 members to a survey that asked members to describe professional challenges, career shocks, and career facilitators they have experienced. Stage 2 (the current study) Qualitative findings are based on the open-ended responses to two questions, one asked members to report what major obstacles and/or challenges they face in their academic job, the other asked what new resources AOM could provide. Stage 2 Quantitative findings are the scores to scale items measured on a 5-point Likert scale.

Recommendation #1: Encourage AOM journal editors to adopt new practices to reduce perceived bias in review process

Stage 1 Findings

(n = 99)

- Lack of perceived journal review fairness (bias) emerged as the 6th most common “challenge” impacting one’s career (6% of responses)

Stage 2 Qualitative Findings

(n = 375)

- 7% of responses for career challenges related to bias in review process
- 10% of responses for new services or resources AOM could provide members were about “fix the broken journal review process”

Stage 2 Quantitative Findings

(n = 2,166)

- 37% agreed process is unfair; only 10% disagreed (no one strongly disagreed)
- Mean = 3.3 and this did not vary by geographic region
- Women perceived slightly more injustice than men
- Review process injustice correlated with occupational satisfaction ($r = -.29$)

Recommendation #2: Provide resources and information for faculty to address workplace unfairness

Stage 1 Findings

(n = 99)

- 5% of respondents identified organizational politics as a major career challenge; with 8% having experienced a negative political incident as a career shock
- 8% had been turned down for promotion; 5% had difficulties obtaining a job (both of which could be somewhat related to unclear or unfair work practices)

(continued)

Recommendation #2: Provide resources and information for faculty to address workplace unfairness *CONTINUED*

Stage 2 Qualitative Findings

(n = 375)

- 20% of responses (#1 theme) were that university bureaucracy or admin control was a major challenge
- 8% reported gender or age bias
- 5% reported unclear promotion/tenure standards
- 4% reported feeling undervalued at work
- 6% of responses for new services or resources AOM could provide members were for AOM to become advocates for faculty and the profession, more generally

Stage 2 Quantitative Findings

(n = 2,166)

- 13% of respondents (n = 249) were in non tenure-track (NTT) positions
- For 43% of those, it was not by choice
- For all respondents, 27% agreed that workplace practices were unfair
- Mean score = 3.0 with higher means for NTT, women, and those in Asia
- Workplace unfairness correlated with occupational satisfaction ($r = -.41$)

Recommendation #3: Consider providing new types of research support to AOM members

Stage 1 Findings

(n = 99)

- Adequate university support accounted for 35% of the responses naming important career facilitators
- Support included funding for research and travel, reduced teaching loads to support research, and infrastructure support for research and teaching

Stage 2 Qualitative Findings

(n = 375)

- 17% of responses for career challenges identified lack of funding or resources for research as a major challenge
- 10% of responses for new resources AOM could provide members were about doing more to support research (as universities have less)
- 5% asked AOM to do more to facilitate research collaborations

Stage 2 Quantitative Findings

(n = 2,045)

- 42% were neutral or disagreed that their university provides adequate support
- Mean = 3.6
- Those in Australia/UK/NZ reported more support
- Tenure track (versus NTT) reported more support
- Men (versus women) reported more support

Recommendation #4: Help members build more professional networks or affinity groups

Stage 1 Findings

(n = 99)

- 7% of the comments for important career facilitators were related to networking in the profession and at conferences

Stage 2 Qualitative Findings

(n = 375)

- 18% of responses for new services or resources AOM could provide members were related to offering more ways to connect to members for research purposes and/or to share work advice

Stage 2 Quantitative Findings

(n = 2,008)

- 32% were neutral or disagree that they engage in professional networking
- Mean = 3.8 and this did not vary by geographic region, TT status, or sex
- Professional networking correlated with occupational satisfaction ($r = .22$)
- Professional networking was the most robust facilitator to buffer the effects of negative shocks and obstacles

Recommendation #5: Provide more mentoring opportunities for both research and teaching

Stage 1 Findings

(n = 99)

- 10% of respondents reported mentoring or social support as an important career facilitator

Stage 2 Qualitative Findings

(n = 375)

- 21% of responses for new services or resources AOM could provide members were about facilitating mentoring relationships to develop research and/or teaching skills

Stage 2 Quantitative Findings

(n = 2,040)

- Only 27% agreed that they have adequate mentoring support
- Mean = 2.8
- Those in Western European countries receive more mentoring; but there is less in Asian countries
- Mentoring correlated with occupational satisfaction ($r = .34$)
- Mentoring buffered the negative effect of being denied tenure/promotion on intentions to leave occupation

Recommendation #6: Expand teaching resources to support teaching-oriented members and help all members become more efficient in teaching

Stage 1 Findings

(n = 99)

- 10% of comments on career challenges were related to teaching issues, such as more challenging students and constant need to update coursework.
- 24% of comments related to difficulty with balancing teaching and research demands

Stage 2 Qualitative Findings

(n = 375)

- 19% of responses for career challenges related to balancing teaching and research or role overload, in general
- 7% of responses for new services or resources AOM could provide members were related to teaching resources

Stage 2 Quantitative Findings

(n = 2,259)

- 13% of respondents were in NTT positions
- 18% were at teaching intensive schools
- 53% at “balanced” schools
- 51% agreed that they experience role overload
- Mean = 3.6
- Women and tenure-track reported more role overload (compared to men and NTT)
- Role overload correlated with occupational satisfaction ($r = -.22$)