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Follow the leaders? An analysis of convergence and innovation of faculty recruiting practices in US business schools

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Abstract The debate associated with the qualifications of business school faculty has raged since the 1959 release of the Gordon–Howell and Pierson reports, which encouraged business schools in the USA to enhance their legitimacy by increasing their faculties' doctoral qualifications and scholarly rigor. Today, the legitimacy of specific faculty qualifications remains one of the most discussed topics in management education, attracting the interest of administrators, faculty, and accreditation agencies. Based on new institutional theory and the institutional logics perspective, this paper examines convergence and innovation in business schools through an analysis of faculty hiring criteria. The qualifications examined are academic degree, scholarly publications, teaching experience, and professional experience. Three groups of schools are examined based on type of university, position within a media ranking system, and accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. Data are gathered using a content analysis of 441 faculty postings from business schools based in the USA over two time periods. Contrary to claims of global convergence,

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we find most qualifications still vary by group, even in the mature US market. Moreover, innovative hiring is more likely to be found in non-elite schools.

Keywords Business schools · Institutional isomorphism · Institutional logics · Legitimacy · Management education

"Our people are our most valuable asset" is a common refrain among organizational leaders. This has been shown to be of increasing importance in knowledge-intensive fields where competitive advantage is defined by dimensions of human and intellectual capital (Bontis 2001). It is especially relevant in the field of higher education, where faculty are defined by their contribution to teaching, research, and service. These three activities have a high degree of intangibility, and the faculty who perform them require substantial skill and training. In the specific context of business schools, there continues to be a debate associated with the merit, value, and ultimately the legitimacy of different types of academic and professional qualifications (AACSB 2013; Bennis and O'Toole 2005); in fact, scholars argue that the legitimacy of business schools is highly dependent on the perceived legitimacy of their faculty (Hommel and Thomas 2014; Verhaegen 2005).

Recruitment of faculty is thus critically important for business schools. Given this, it is ironic that little empirical research has examined the recruitment of business school faculty (Verhaegen 2005), especially because business schools research and teach aspiring professionals about recruiting, selecting, and socializing employees. However, this gap is consistent with reviews finding few examples of large sample research in general on the management of business schools (Hommel and Thomas 2014; Pettigrew 2014).

This paper addresses faculty recruitment using new institutional theory and the institutional logics perspective. In doing so, we examine the convergence and innovation at business schools in one specific practice—faculty recruiting—specifically through the job advertisements of different schools. Faculty job advertisements are tangible manifestations of recruiting intentions and are approved by multiple levels of university governance, including faculty recruiting committees, senior administrators, and university human resource managers. Moreover, recruiting advertisements signal the foundational knowledge, skills, and competence required for the particular job (Leana and Van Buren 1999). Rather than look at business schools worldwide for "global mimicry," we examine whether there is national mimicry—or a case of "follow the leaders" in recruiting for tenurable faculty positions in the USA, the largest and most mature business school market.

Our empirical investigation of faculty recruiting follows the work of Van Eekelen et al. (2005) and asks three research questions to frame this exploratory study. We specify three institutional contexts in which business schools are embedded: university, ranking systems, and accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Our three questions connect these contexts and the isomorphic pressures they generate with two theoretical concerns from institutional theory, convergence and innovation. The research questions are organized by type of embeddedness.

Research Question 1 (RQ 1): Does the type of university a business school is embedded in influence its recruiting qualifications?

Most business schools in the USA are embedded in larger universities (Khurana 2010). The mission of the university should influence the qualifications of the faculty members recruited because of coercive forces from central administration and common norms

among university faculty. We classify universities based on the primary type of degrees conferred (Finch et al. 2015; McCormick and Zhao 2005). The first category consists of *medical–doctoral universities*, which offer a broad range of degrees, including numerous doctoral programs and medicine. The second category consists of *comprehensive universities*, which offer a narrower range of programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including professional degrees, but few doctoral programs and no medical school. The last category consists of *undergraduate universities*, which focus on Bachelor's degrees. There are many ways that university type could affect recruiting. For example, research-focused medical–doctoral universities may prioritize scholarly related qualifications (e.g., a PhD and a record or peer-reviewed publications) when recruiting. In contrast, teaching-focused undergraduate universities may prioritize teaching experience when recruiting (Fram and Lau 1996; Finch et al. 2015).

Research Question 2 (RQ 2): Do media rankings influence a business school's recruiting qualifications?

The tremendous growth of business education over the past two decades contributed to the emergence of media-driven ranking systems (Wedlin 2007). The methodologies vary and include attributes such as faculty characteristics, student satisfaction, research productivity, salaries of graduates, and others (Wilkins and Huisman 2012). For instance, research accounts for only 10 % of the *Financial Times* score, whereas it accounts for 60 % in *The Times*. Nevertheless, rankings influence business schools and their management (Corley and Gioia 2000; Elsbach and Kramer 1996). Rankings have become "a surrogate sound-bite index of program quality for prospective students, corporate recruiters, funding agencies, and other stakeholders" (Gioia and Corley 2002, p. 108). Thus, business schools seek to improve their rankings. Moreover, many schools tend to manage to the rankings rather than other indicators of effectiveness (Adler and Harzing 2009; Gioia and Corley 2002). Argenti (2000, p. 17) argues that "rankings have more of an effect on admissions, placement, hiring, and giving than any other single variable." Clearly stated criteria in rankings provide normative pressure on schools to pursue such criteria (Wilkins and Huisman 2012). Because the responses to meet some criteria are uncertain (Milliken 1987), there are mimetic pressures and schools imitate those perceived as successful (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Wilkins and Huisman 2012). And from a Foucauldian perspective, rankings control behavior by shaping how business school faculty and administrators understand the reality around them (Rasche et al. 2014).

Research Question 3 (RQ 3): Does AACSB accreditation influence a business school's recruiting qualifications?

Our third research question examines the influence of accreditation on faculty recruitment. Accreditation (e.g., AACSB, EQUIS) is an important component in the education sector, and accreditation systems for business schools are proliferating (Lejeune and Vas 2014). In the context of faculty qualifications, accreditation bodies may provide guidelines (e.g., AACSB 2013) or explicit requirements (e.g., AACSB International 2002). For example, in a study of 69 European business schools, Verhaegen (2005) finds that EQUIS accreditation influenced the perceived priority of hiring criteria among deans. Due to the fact that our sample is business schools in the USA, we consider the influence of AACSB accreditation

on faculty hiring because AACSB has been accrediting American business schools since 1916, including an estimated one-third of them in 2015 (AACSB undated). In contrast, only three American schools have EQUIS accreditation (EFMD undated). The AACSB sets standards that business schools must meet in order to attain and maintain accreditation. AACSB accreditation engenders a range of isomorphic pressures by providing specific accreditation standards (i.e., coercive pressures), the attainment of which is often uncertain (i.e., mimetic pressures). The AACSB also offers seminars on how to attain accreditation (i.e., normative pressures).

Regarding faculty qualifications, the AACSB introduced Standard 10 in 2002. It created a new classification system for faculty based on their academic qualifications (AQ) and professional qualifications (PQ). AQ faculty possess a terminal degree (normally a PhD) that is "…intended to produce scholars capable of creating scholarly contributions through advances in research or theory" (AACSB 2009, p. 5). PQ faculty possess professional qualifications that are "relevant to the faculty member's teaching assignment, significant in duration and level of responsibility, and current at the time of hiring" (AACSB 2009, p. 14). Standard 10 still required that a minimum of 50 % of faculty at an accredited business school be defined as AQ. In 2013, the AACSB introduced Standard 15, a new model to reflect the increasing pace of change and increasing need to demonstrate relevance (AACSB 2013). The new classification system assigns faculty to one of four categories based on their academic qualifications, professional experience, and sustained engagement in scholarship and practice. This new model is being phased in over a period of years. Thus, AACSB accreditation demands a significant commitment to maintaining a high level of academic, teaching, and scholarly quality. As a result, we examine the influence of AACSB membership on faculty recruitment.

New institutional theory and institutional logics offer an important theoretical framework for these three research questions for the following four reasons. First, legitimacy, an important concern of business schools (Rynes and Brown 2011; Thomas and Cornuel 2012; Alajoutsijärvi et al. 2014), is a central concept of institutional theory (Deephouse and Suchman 2008; Greenwood et al. 2008). Second, business schools are embedded in different institutional contexts and thus face institutional complexity and conflicting logics (Greenwood et al. 2011; Pettigrew et al. 2014; Thornton et al. 2012). Third, based on their review of business school research, Pettigrew et al. (2014) argue that identifying the scope of both convergence and divergence, and the factors affecting them is critical to the effective management and the future legitimacy of business schools. Thus, our study takes an embeddedness perspective to examine the extent of "global mimicry" in faculty recruiting (Pettigrew 2014; Wilson and McKiernan 2011). Fourth, contemporary institutional theory seeks to locate sources of innovation within a sector, especially whether from elite or peripheral organizations (Greenwood and Hinings 1996; Leblebici et al. 1991). Given these reasons, it is not surprising that Pettigrew et al. (2014) highlighted institutional theory in their book on the institutional development of business schools.

This research seeks to make two contributions to research on the institutional development of business schools. First, we do not find macro-level convergence in the USA among the recruiting advertisements. Instead, we find convergence among three intermediate-level categories. These findings inform the convergence–divergence debate important to institutional theorists and researchers of business schools alike (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Pettigrew et al. 2014; Wilson and McKiernan 2011). Second, we find greater innovation in faculty qualifications among peripheral business schools, suggesting conservatism among elite schools. This is ironic because different qualifications may better

bridge the gap between scholarly research and managerial practice, a common concern among critics of business schools (Bennis and O'Toole 2005; Bartunek and Rynes 2014).

The paper is structured as follows. The first section presents our literature review of hiring decisions at business schools and institutional theory. The second presents the methods used to answer the research questions. The third section presents results. The final section discusses the contributions, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Literature review

The debate about business school faculty qualifications

Concern with faculty qualifications at business schools emerged following the release of the Gordon and Howell (1959) and Pierson (1959) reports. These reports recommended that business schools become more scientific in their research to enhance their legitimacy. Faculty were needed with qualifications that supported rigorous scientific research, such as holding a PhD or publishing in scholarly journals (Khurana 2010). Subsequently, the number of graduates in the USA with PhDs in business disciplines increased from 135 in 1960 to 2286 in 2011 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). However, this increased focus on scientific research generated concerns that business schools were becoming too detached from practice (Mintzberg and Gosling 2002; Bennis and O'Toole 2005; Raelin 2007). Some argue that this resulted in managers and scholars speaking two different languages (Bartunek and Rynes 2014; Clinebell and Clinebell 2008) and that there is a paucity of collaborative research with industry partners (Crespo and Dridi 2007).

Although business school faculty qualifications are debated, there is little empirical research on the topic (Clinebell and Clinebell 2008; Pettigrew 2014). This is a significant knowledge gap as it inhibits the ability for faculty and deans to support hiring decisions based on evidence. Instead, as Adler and Harzing (2009) claim, the hiring and promotion criteria at business schools are rooted in opinion, intuition, tradition, and self-interest. Following the advice of Hommel and Thomas (2014) and Pettigrew (2014), we examine a micro-process (recruiting for new faculty) that influences actual faculty qualifications. Our research considers common types of qualifications discussed in the literature, including academic credentials, research productivity, and teaching and professional experience. However, we do not specify *ex ante* all qualifications but instead rely on the data to guide the research.

The applicability of institutional theory

New institutional theory is appropriate for examining the research questions. In their review of business school research, Pettigrew et al. (2014) recommended future research on convergence and divergence among business schools.

The study of convergence is a central topic in new institutional theory; usually, under the label of isomorphism, organizations face coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphic pressures (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Previous research, summarized in a meta-analysis of 144 studies and 375 effect sizes by Heugens and Lander (2009), shows that isomorphism leads to legitimacy, another central concern of institutional theory (Deephouse and Suchman 2008; Greenwood et al. 2008). Thus, new institutional theory offers a framework

to examine how institutional pressures contribute to the convergence and divergence of faculty recruitment.

New institutional theory is also appropriate because business schools are embedded in different institutional contexts (Pettigrew et al. 2014). Each context has its own institutional logic, a shared set of beliefs and material practices that engender isomorphic pressures that influence behavior (Friedland and Alford 1991; Thornton et al. 2012). The institutional logics framework elaborates on the macro- to micro-links between institutional logics, organizational identities and practices, and individual actions (Thornton et al. 2012). Indeed, multiple contexts may generate institutional complexity and conflicting logics (Greenwood et al. 2011). Within the logics perspective, there are two contradictory ideas. The first is that there is an overarching logic for a sector, like higher education. The second is that logics can compete with each other within a sector. For example, in drawing from the mutual fund industry, Lounsbury (2007) highlights how different logics for managing investments in Boston and New York led to different organizational practices for contracting with money managers. For instance, Swan et al. (2010) found conflicting logics among biomedical researchers practicing Mode 1 science and Mode 2 science. Thornton et al. (2012, p. 99) summarized this by stating: "Not all social actors are equally embedded in or committed to prevailing institutional logics." Thus, there could be differentiated responses within the institutional field of American business schools that vary by the contexts in which the schools are embedded (Pettigrew 2014; Wilson and McKiernan 2011). Our research questions seek to examine this convergence–divergence debate.

Convergence could be present globally or at different intermediate contexts based on the underlying institutional logic of that context. We specify three contexts that have been identified as important influences on business schools, as discussed above in our research questions: type of university, presence in rankings, and being accredited by the AACSB. If convergence was not found for any of these, this would provide greater evidence for global convergence.

Innovation, a type of divergence, was overlooked in the early development of new institutional theory as research at the time focused on the isomorphic processes leading to convergence (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). In 1996, Greenwood and Hinings (1996) directed attention to how institutions affected innovation and change, specifically addressing how institutional embeddedness influences the likelihood of radical and incremental change. Institutions vary in their coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures that constrain interest-driven adaptation. Conflicting institutions and logics provide opportunities for actors to innovate (Greenwood et al. 2011). The most common factor studied is the position in the field (Greenwood et al. 2011), usually dichotomized into central or elite organization and peripheral or secondary organizations. Peripheral organizations are less beholden to current practices and have more to gain from change (Leblebici et al. 1991). However, central organizations have greater power to make change that they can benefit from (Greenwood et al. 2002); moreover, they are more likely to also be subject to institutional pressures for change.

This study focuses on an innovation regarding faculty qualifications that closes the gap between managers and scholars, because this is a major concern expressed by critics of business schools (Bennis and O'Toole 2005; Bartunek and Rynes 2014). Managers and scholars operate under competing institutional logics and communicate in different ways (Swan et al. 2010; Bartunek and Rynes 2014), and these factors contribute to the "rigor–relevance" debate (Bartunek and Rynes 2014; Clinebell and Clinebell 2008). Bennis and O'Toole (2005) advocated for faculty who had *both* academic and professional qualifications because they may be able to concurrently produce high-quality scholarship and

address the needs of managers. We speculated that this joint qualification would be an innovative hiring criteria and relatively uncommon practice; the evidence will be seen in the results section. We also looked for other innovative qualifications in our coding of job postings, as described below.

Methods

Data

We empirically answer our research questions through the analysis of a sample of recruiting postings for tenurable faculty in business schools in the USA. We believe convergence may be found for several reasons: US business schools are well developed; there is substantial training and mobility of faculty and administrators; and the schools are embedded in common institutions, such as AACSB and academic associations. Divergence may be found because many business schools are embedded in local contexts and have unique histories and identities. Innovative new hiring criteria may be found because there has been much debate about the value of business schools,

In this research, we focus on tenure-track faculty positions because the faculty hired in these positions will be subject to the tenure systems that reflect the values and priorities of the university (Adler and Harzing 2009; Palmer and Short 2008), so the qualifications would normally be aligned with these priorities. In contrast, non-tenurable faculty positions are less a reflection of mission and more a reflection of short-term budgetary constraints or demand for skills in specific courses (Figlio et al. 2013; Musselin 2005). In some cases, an inability to recruit high-quality tenurable faculty may lead to the hiring of non-tenurable faculty.

Data were collected from two major employment websites that specialize in postsecondary education in the USA: (i) HigherEdJobs (http://www.higheredjobs.com/) and (ii) AKADEUS (https://www.akadeus.com/).[1] Every posting between May 15 and June 15, 2013, was collected and recorded. To eliminate the risk of double counting postings listed on multiple websites, all postings were organized by school. Any duplicate postings were removed. In total, there were 441 unique postings from 240 institutions in the USA offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in business or management.

Coding

Defining a consistent and concise coding scheme is critical when conducting a content analysis across multiple data sources (Backhaus 2004; Wu et al. 2010). Three of the authors independently coded 50 job postings. The coders then met to review each posting to align on areas of inconsistency, following the guidelines of Wong et al. (1995). The pilot coding yielded inter-coder reliability of .90, within the range of acceptability (Wong et al. 1995). From this pilot, a codebook was created consisting of the coding procedures and the definitions for each variable. The entire sample of 441 items was then coded by one author. After the coding was complete, a second author blind coded a random sample of 39 from

[1] The keyword search explicitly sought only postings related to the higher-order categories of "business" or "management." This method allowed us to capture all related sub-disciplines (e.g., accounting and marketing). Moreover, it ensured we focused our data collection on the faculty level, rather than the institutional level (i.e. business school vs. faculty of management).

the 391 job postings (10 %). The inter-coder reliability was .92, providing additional validation to our coding scheme.

The dependent variables of faculty qualifications were measured based on the definitions of initial academic preparation and initial professional experience defined in AACSB Standard 15. Therefore, a posting was classified as having *academic qualifications* when a PhD or a DBA was required or preferred. We also measured *PhD qualifications* separately. A posting was classified as having *professional qualifications* when professional experience in the discipline was required or preferred. In addition, a posting was classified as having *scholarly qualifications* when having at least one publication was required or preferred. Finally, a posting was classified as having *teaching qualifications* when teaching experience was required or preferred. Following from the work of Bennis and O'Toole (2005), a posting was classified as *academically and professional qualified* when it sought a candidate with both academic and professional qualifications (referred to hereinafter as APQ). "Appendix" presents job postings from a variety of schools and the associated application of the coding methodology.

The independent variables were measured as follows. The category of university was determined by assessing the types of degrees it confers that were listed on the University's website in pages with titles such as "degrees offered" or "programs of study." Following McCormick and Zhao (2005) and Finch et al. (2015), each university was classified based on an analysis of programs offered. If a university had a medical school, it was classified as *a medical–doctoral* university. If a university had some doctoral programs, many masters' programs, but no medical school, it was classified as a *comprehensive* university. If a university did not offer graduate programs, it was classified as an *undergraduate* university. The three coders agreed on the classification for 100 % of the postings.

Although there are many business school rankings systems with different methodologies (Wilkins and Huisman 2012), research shows that decision makers pay attention to them (Argenti 2000; Gioia and Corley 2002; Adler and Harzing 2009). Thus, we follow Dichev (1999) and include the schools found in at least one ranking system, specifically the *Financial Times* Global MBA (2013), *Business Week* MBA and undergraduate programs (*Business Week*, 2013), *The Economist* (2013), and the QS Global 200 (2013). If a business school was included in any of these rankings, it is coded as "ranked"; if a business school was not included in any of the rankings, it is coded as "unranked." Finally, a posting was coded as from an AACSB-accredited business school if it was fully accredited by AACSB as of June 2013.

We also examine whether there are any significant changes in the demands for qualifications following the introduction of the AACSB Standard 10 faculty credential model (i.e., AQ or PQ) in 2002. To do so, the Internet Archive (http://archive.org/web/) was used to locate archived websites used from the 2013 data collection from the years 2001–2003. Our search found 155 faculty job postings archived from the years 2001–2003.[2] All 155 archived postings were for Assistant Professors or Lecturers. Therefore, to ensure consistency between the samples from these two time periods, we compare only the tenure-track Assistant Professor and Lecturer postings in the two samples (2001–2003 $n = 155$; 2013 $n = 248$). The stratification of variables associated with university category, disciplines, AACSB accreditation, and school ranking was consistent between the samples from these two time periods.

[2] For consistency, the same job-posting websites were used in the two time periods. A period of 2 years (2001–2003) was used to ensure a sufficient sample size due to the limitations of archived data.

Final sample

The 2013 sample includes 441 employment postings from 240 American business schools offering 4-year undergraduate degrees from primarily undergraduate universities (50.6 %), comprehensive universities (37.6 %), and medical–doctoral universities (11.8 %). Half (50.3 %) of the schools possessed AACSB accreditation. The sample includes a diverse representation of business disciplines, including management (30.4 %), marketing and sales (19.7 %), and information systems (20.4 %). Assistant professorships represent the largest number of posted positions (60.3 %), followed by lecturers (18.4 %). Table 1 summarizes the sample.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using a Chi-squared (χ^2) test that examines the null hypothesis of no association among two or more groups (Tigelaar et al. 2004). Observed counts are compared to expected counts. In this study, the Chi-squared statistic tests differences

Table 1 Sample profile (2013)

Variable	Postings	%
Total positions	441	
Type of university		
Medical–doctoral universities	52	11.8
Comprehensive universities	166	37.6
Primarily undergraduate universities	223	50.6
Accreditation		
AACSB	222	50.3
Non-AACSB	219	49.7
Discipline		
Accounting	11	2.5
Business administration/general management/strategy	134	30.4
Entrepreneurship	17	3.9
Finance	50	11.3
Human resources	13	2.9
Information systems	90	20.4
Marketing and sales	87	19.7
Other	39	8.9
Faculty rank		
Instructor/lecturer	81	18.4
Assistant professor	266	60.3
Associate professor	20	4.5
Full professor	14	3.2
Dean	17	3.9
Other	43	9.8
School ranking		
Ranked	295	66.9
Unranked	146	33.1

among the groups specified in our research questions, namely type of university, ranked school of not, and accredited versus non-accredited. Statistical significance is assessed at the $p < .05$ level.

Results

RQ 1 asks about differences in hiring qualifications across three types of universities. The Chi-squared statistic tests the null hypothesis that two groups are similar. Results are presented in Table 2. Overall, there were significant differences ($p < .05$) between 13 of the 18 pairwise differences (72 %) between three categories of universities for the six types of qualifications. Only one pairwise difference ($18 \times .05 = .9$) would be significant under chance at the 5 % level of significance. Turning to the presence of APQ requirements, Table 2 shows that 13.6 % of all postings sought both qualifications, including 1.9 % of postings from the doctoral group, 12.0 % from the comprehensive group, and 17.5 % from the undergraduate group. The Chi-square test indicates significance ($\chi^2 = 9.241$, $p = .010$).

RQ 2 asks about differences in hiring qualifications between ranked and unranked business schools. Results are presented in Table 3. A total of 33.1 % of the faculty postings are coded as being from ranked business schools. Overall, there were significant differences ($p < .05$) between ranked and unranked schools for five of the six qualifications. The expected number of differences under chance is 0.3 (=0.05×6). Turning to the presence of APQ requirements, Table 3 shows that 13.6 % of all the postings sought APQ, including 6.2 % of postings from ranked business schools, compared to 17.3 % of unranked business schools. The Chi-square test indicates significance ($\chi^2 = 10.281$, $p = .001$) between these two groups.

Table 2 Percentage of qualifications specified by university category

	All	Doctoral	Comprehensive	Undergraduate	χ^2	p
Academic qualifications (%)	63.7	69.2	68.1	59.2	4.020	.134
PhD specified (%)	38.1	48.1	41.0	33.6	4.660	.097
Scholarly qualifications (%)	14.3	28.2	18.1	8.1	17.979	.000
Teaching qualifications (%)	36.1	51.9	39.6	29.6	10.702	.005
Professional qualifications (%)	38.1	19.2	30.1	48.4	22.424	.000
Switch-hitter (%)	13.6	1.9	12.0	17.5	9.241	.010

Table 3 Percentage of qualifications specified at ranked and unranked business schools

	All	Ranked	Unranked	χ^2	p
Academic qualifications (%)	63.7	71.2	60.0	5.331	.021
PhD specified (%)	38.1	41.8	36.3	1.257	.262
Scholarly qualifications (%)	14.3	21.9	10.5	10.382	.001
Teaching qualifications (%)	36.1	41.8	33.2	3.104	.078
Professional qualifications (%)	38.1	22.6	45.8	22.214	.000
Switch-hitter (%)	13.6	6.2	17.3	10.281	.001

RQ 3 asks about differences in hiring qualifications among AACSB-accredited and AACSB-unaccredited business schools. Results are presented in Table 4. Overall, there were significant differences ($p < .05$) between accredited and unaccredited schools for five of the six qualifications. The expected number of differences under chance is .3. Turning to the presence of APQ requirements, Table 4 shows that 13.6 % of all the postings sought APQ faculty, with 6.8 % of postings from AACSB-accredited business schools and 20.5 % from non-AACSB business schools. The Chi-square test indicates significance ($\chi^2 = 17.839$, $p = .000$) between the groups.

Finally, we sought to examine the influence of the changes resulting from the introduction of Standard 10 by the AACSB. To conduct this analysis, we compared hiring criteria from two time periods to examine whether Standard 10 contributed to any measurable change in job posting content. Table 5 presents these results. Overall, there were significant differences ($p < .05$) between the time periods for two of the six qualifications for AACSB-accredited schools. Regarding academic qualifications, there was no significant change between the two periods. This was also the case for the PhD. However, there was a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 6.871$, $p = .032$) in scholarly qualifications at AACSB

Table 4 Percentage of qualifications specified at AACSB-accredited and AACSB-unaccredited business schools

	All	AACSB	Non-AACSB	χ^2	p
Academic qualifications (%)	63.7	68.5	58.5	4.362	.037
PhD specified (%)	38.1	41.9	34.2	2.732	.098
Scholarly qualifications (%)	14.3	19.4	9.1	9.435	.002
Teaching qualifications (%)	36.1	40.1	32.0	3.158	.076
Professional qualifications (%)	38.1	24.3	52.1	35.948	.000
Switch-hitter (%)	13.6	6.8	20.5	17.839	.000

Table 5 Percentage of qualifications specified after implementation of AACSB Standard 10

AACSB	2001–2003 ($n = 84$)	2013 ($n = 108$)	χ^2	p
Academic qualifications (%)	97.6	90.7	3.815	.051
PhD specified (%)	51.2	56.1	.362	.547
Scholarly qualifications (%)	10.7	24.1	6.871	.032
Teaching qualifications (%)	28.6	49.1	8.269	.004
Professional qualifications (%)	13.1	9.3	.714	.398
Switch-hitter (%)	11.9	6.5	5.610	.132
Non-AACSB	**2001–2003 ($n = 70$)**	**2013 ($n = 140$)**	**χ^2**	**p**
Academic qualifications (%)	62.9	72.1	1.883	.170
PhD specified (%)	21.4	36.4	4.872	.027
Scholarly qualifications (%)	1.4	7.9	3.580	.058
Teaching qualifications (%)	31.4	33.6	.097	.755
Professional qualifications (%)	24.3	45.7	9.044	.003
Switch-hitter (%)	17.1	22.9	47.533	.000

schools (+13.4 %). Further, AACSB schools also saw a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 8.269$, $p = .004$) in the demand for teaching qualifications (+20.5 %). The change for professional qualifications or APQ candidates for the time periods was not significant. These results suggest that the introduction of Standard 10 enhanced the legitimacy of teaching and scholarly qualifications but did not enhance the legitimacy of professional qualifications among AACSB schools.

For completeness, we also investigated whether there were changes in qualifications in schools that were not accredited by AACSB. Three of the six qualifications changed significantly. This included an increase in demand for a PhD by 15 % ($\chi^2 = 4.872$, $p = .027$), an increase in professional qualifications by 21.4 % ($\chi^2 = 9.044$, $p = .003$), and an increase in demand for APQ faculty by 5.8 % ($\chi^2 = 47.533$, $p = .000$).

Post hoc test

Findings suggest that convergence may be amplified in business schools with particular attributes. To explore this further, we conducted a post hoc test. We first identified that 49 of the postings in 2013 were from schools that were members of three key groups: doctoral university, ranked school, and AACSB-accredited. This combination is arguably the most prestigious group of business schools (Argenti 2000; Gioia and Corley 2002). We compared these business schools to the other 392 postings from our sample. The Chi-square tests found significant differences for four of six qualifications between the two groups. The prestigious group was more likely to seek applicants with a scholarly qualifications ($\Delta = +20.5$ %; $\chi^2 = 18.440$; $p = .000$) and teaching qualifications ($\Delta = +21.6$ %; $\chi^2 = 16.970$; $p = .003$). Moreover, this group was less likely to seek professional qualifications ($\Delta = -23.5$ %; $\chi^2 = 11.077$; $p = .001$) or APQ candidates ($\Delta = -13.1$ %; $\chi^2 = 6.272$; $p = .012$). In fact, only one posting of the prestigious group requested an APQ faculty member. These findings suggest that membership in these three elite groups amplifies convergence among these business schools.

Discussion

There is "a view that business schools are converging to a common type or types, and this represents both a failure of leadership and a lack of recognition of the quite different market, political, and cultural contexts in which business schools operate" (Pettigrew et al. 2014, p. 2). We examined this view in a sample of recruiting advertisements for business school faculty. Drawing from institutional theory, we asked whether isomorphic pressures from three types of institutional contexts contribute to the convergence or innovation of a business school. As specified in our research questions, the contexts are as follows: (i) the university in which the school is located, (ii) its presence or absence in media rankings, and (iii) its accreditation. We tested how these pressures affected types of hiring criteria, specifically academic qualifications, scholarly qualifications, teaching qualifications, and professional qualifications. Results indicate that a large number of significant differences exist between the groups of postings—77 % of the differences were significant, well above the 5 % that would be found under the null hypothesis of no differences. We now consider our contributions to both theory and practice in more detail.

Contribution to theory

This research makes an important contribution to new institutional theory and institutional logics. One of the challenges facing theorists is the paradoxical dynamics associated with convergence and innovation (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Greenwood and Hinings 1996; Pettigrew et al. 2014). Institutional context is an important variable that contributes to increased (or decreased) convergence among actors (Greenwood et al. 2011; Pettigrew et al. 2014). Our empirical study did not find that macro-level convergence or "global mimicry" in faculty recruiting practices among US business schools (Wilson and McKiernan 2011). Instead, we find convergence at intermediate levels, where each group has its own logic, and these logics may influence decision making at business schools (Thornton et al. 2012).

We also contribute to the branch of contemporary institutional theory that seeks to locate sources of innovation and change (Greenwood and Hinings 1996; Leblebici et al. 1991). Leblebici et al. (1991) found that change began at the periphery of the radio broadcasting industry and spread to the center. In contrast, Greenwood et al. (2002) found that the large accounting firms drove change among accountants in Canada. Our study of business schools supports the periphery. For example, the lack of requirement for APQ faculty at medical–doctoral universities provides evidence that this group has a narrower range of what is defined as acceptable behavior (Deephouse 1999), especially in such a highly complex institutional environment (Greenwood et al. 2011). Interestingly, convergence is amplified through multiple group memberships central to elite business schools. However, such change may not be limited to faculty hiring. For instance, Finch et al. (2015) find that both parents and employers perceive undergraduate universities as more innovative and more effective at developing skills valued by employers. Future research should examine other factors affecting change in business schools, such as size or the value of tradition and self-replication (Adler and Harzing 2009).

Contribution to practice

The results of this study have implications for the leadership and administration of business schools. There is little debate that business schools today are facing increased competitive, financial, and political pressures. Consequently, the allocation of scarce resources to maximize performance and outcomes is imperative. Simultaneously, evidence-based management practices have become embedded in business decision making. However, this study empirically demonstrates that the process used to support one of the most important decisions business school administrators make—the hiring of faculty—is empirically linked to group membership. This study does not purport to judge the quality of specific hiring decisions, rather it highlights that the convergence is influenced by group membership (university, ranking, and/or AACSB). One may argue that this level of convergence within a peer group (e.g., doctoral universities) is not a surprising finding. However, it is the level of convergence, combined with the actual dimensions, that raises questions associated with how group membership influences the judgments of business faculty and inhibits innovation. For example, the predominant model used today is what Bennis and O'Toole (2005) called the "either–or" model, where faculty are either AQ or PQ, and this is sufficient for accreditation by Standard 10 of AACSB. In our results, the data show that being in a doctoral university, in a ranked business school, or an AACSB-accredited school amplifies this either–or model. As noted, the new Standard 15 of AACSB provides potential new ground for innovation and increased divergence.

To explain the preexisting hiring environment that exists at business schools, it is important to reflect on the processes central to the hiring process at universities and how this may relate to our findings. The hiring, tenure, and promotion processes at most institutions are anchored in committees composed of faculty and administration. The nature of these committees amplifies the role and influence of the individual faculty member. The influence of individual faculty is no more apparent than when examining the case study of McMaster University's DeGroote School of Business, where five faculty members were suspended (McMaster 2013). The multi-year tribunal heard from 65 witnesses and 14,891 pages of testimony. It concluded that faculty had declared "war" on the dean as a "non-academic intruder" and that the tenure and promotion processes were corrupted and used as a mechanism to systematically harass, intimidate, and enact retribution against faculty who had supported the dean (Blaze Carlson 2013).

Our empirical research suggests that tradition and ideology influence hiring criteria. As Pfeffer and Sutton (2006, p. 9) state: "Ideology is among the more widespread, potent and vexing impediments to using evidence-based management. Academics and other thought leaders can come to believe in their own theories so fervently that they're incapable of learning from new evidence." Therefore, it is not surprising that hiring committees from research universities prioritize a doctorate (and specifically a PhD). Our research indicates that a challenge for business schools is establishing overt processes to mitigate the subtle pressures of tradition and ideology that lead to risk of simply following the assumed leaders. For example, Kahneman et al. (2011) suggest a 12-point checklist to mitigate bias and groupthink. Regarding faculty recruitment, this may simply start with the internal processes used to define and weigh the different faculty qualifications relative to business school goals.

Furthermore, the results also provide important direction and validation of the new AACSB Standard 15 approved in 2013. Although few business schools have implemented the new standard to date, it provides two important evolutions related to faculty qualifications. First, Standard 15 expands the former two-level AQ/PQ classification to four levels, including Scholarly Academic (SA), Scholarly Practitioner (SP), Instructional Practitioner (IP), and Practice Academic (PA). Interestingly, the SP and PA profiles are extensions of the APQ faculty in this study. Although Standard 15 offers only broad guidelines for the proportion of the four faculty "types" in an accredited business school, these new guidelines create an opportunity for AACSB schools to have up to 60 % of their faculty in these two APQ categories. This change simultaneously legitimizes APQ faculty while also removing the coercive pressure institutionalized in the previous Standard 10. As a result, the primary isomorphic pressures asserted on business school recruitment are now normative and mimetic—embedded in culture and tradition.

Limitations

It is important to identify the limitations of this study and the opportunities for future research to address them. First, the results are based on a research design using a specific time period, set of employment databases, and country. Future research should examine the generalizability of our results in other samples. Second, we studied four types of faculty qualifications and classified business schools using three categories; future research could examine whether similar results hold for other types of faculty qualifications and other characteristics of business schools. For instance, one could examine the 100 business

schools ranked by the *Financial Times* and see whether the actual ranking, not the condition of being in the rankings, affected the choices of faculty qualifications. Third, we did not study the qualifications of those who were actually hired; these could differ from faculty qualifications that were posted in recruiting advertisements, consistent with decoupling arguments from institutional theory (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Therefore, future research should systematically evaluate the relationship between explicit faculty hiring criteria and actual faculty hiring decisions. This research would provide deeper insight into the link between external legitimacy signals and internal legitimacy judgments and provide a more complete depiction of how business schools evaluate potential candidates.

Conclusion

We used institutional theory to examine the convergence–divergence debate in business schools, specifically the micro-process of faculty recruitment (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Pettigrew et al. 2014). We find that convergence in recruiting is affected by embeddedness in intermediate-level groups, suggesting that institutional logics at these levels are salient (Thornton et al. 2012). We also find that elite schools tend to be conservative, not innovative, in their recruiting (Leblebici et al. 1991). We look forward to future research that contributes to advancing institutional theory in the context of business schools, with the goal of applying evidence-based management to enhance the impact and performance of business schools.

Appendix: Sample job postings and coding application

Related coding variables are italicized. The coding is noted under each posting.

Posting # 1 (Medical–doctoral university, AACSB accredited—Academic only)

An *earned doctorate* in business or related discipline (depending on research); an *active research record* in global business, which has led to an *extensive portfolio of high-quality refereed publications*; and *experience teaching* or mentoring undergraduate, master's, or doctoral students.

Coding:

1. Doctorate
2. Scholarship
3. Teaching experience.

Posting # 2 (Elite school: Medical–doctoral university, AACSB, ranked—Academic only)

Applicants with research and teaching interests in marketing, psychology, economics, and statistics will be considered.

1. Letter of interest, with clear indication of position being applied for
2. Curriculum vita
3. Up to three *research papers*
4. At least three reference letters
5. Evidence of *teaching effectiveness.*

Note that applicants must have a *PhD* in an appropriate field or be close to completion for consideration. Also, doctoral candidates and those who have graduated in the last 2 years must also provide letters of recommendation from their references.

Coding:

1. Doctorate: PhD
2. Scholarship
3. Teaching experience

Posting # 3 (Comprehensive university, non-AACSB—Switch-hitter)

An earned *doctoral degree* in business or a closely related field of advanced studies in business management, including a minimum of 18 credit hours of graduate coursework completed in a business discipline such as accounting/finance, business communications, business ethics, business law, economics, or marketing. A professional *dossier of recognized accomplishments in industry or practice* coupled with an *active scholarship agenda that includes research, publications, presentations*, and service. *Practical management experience*, especially in entrepreneurship, global business, human resources management, training and development, healthcare administration, and/or information technology.

Coding:

1. Doctorate
2. Scholarship
3. Professional experience
4. Teaching experience.

Posting # 4 (Undergraduate, non-AACSB—Professional only)

An *MBA or similar* graduate degree and past *teaching experience* at the university level are highly desirable, but not required. Significant *mid- to senior-level management experience* in consumer brand marketing or its associated industries is required. Compensation is commensurate with qualifications.

Coding:

1. Professional experience
2. Teaching experience.

Posting # 5 (Comprehensive university, AACSB accredited—Professional only)

Applicants *must have an MBA* and a minimum of 5 years of business experience; however, consideration may be given to strong candidates with an undergraduate degree in management or related discipline, a professional designation, and *ten* (10) *years of business experience*. Candidates must also provide *evidence of effective teaching* at the university level or executive education/training levels.

Coding:

1. Professional experience
2. Teaching experience.

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