Research Burnout in Tenured Marketing Professors: An Empirical Investigation

Surendra N. Singh and Ronald F. Bush

In 1988, an American Marketing Association (AMA) task force expressed concern that a large number of senior marketing academicians were turning into "burnouts." This article reports findings from a large-scale study that defined and measured the research burnout construct and explored its relationship to several variables. Findings indicate that research burnout is not as widespread as envisaged by the task force. Five correlates— intrinsic motivation for research, collaborative research efforts, failure to keep up with knowledge developments, lack of performance-contingent rewards, and weak doctoral training—account for 61% of the variation in research burnout.

According to the American Marketing Association’s (AMA’s) Task Force on the Development of Marketing Thought (1988), a significant structural impediment to the development and dissemination of marketing knowledge at the academic level is the fact that many productive scholars either burn out and prematurely withdraw from research or become “bigamists,” that is, devote little time to research and focus their attention on consulting, executive teaching, and administrative duties instead.

Research burnout (RB), particularly among senior academicians, is a major impediment to the advancement of knowledge in marketing because (1) it robs us of our most productive scholars, (2) the withdrawal of older research masters before they can help younger scholars mature limits research leadership, and (3) premature withdrawal of senior faculty members from the research scene creates a bad precedent for younger scholars who may come to see research as simply a matter of “paying your dues” (AMA Task Force 1988, p. 13).

We report findings from an empirical study whose primary purpose was to examine and gather baseline data on the phenomenon of RB in marketing academicians. In particular, the study sought to answer such questions as, How widespread is RB in marketing? What factors contribute to RB? What role, if any, does psychological burnout play? How do academicians who are totally soured by their research experience compare with those who are on the other end of the spectrum? What effect does RB have on such outcome variables as attitude toward the research, time devoted to research and related activities, job satisfaction, turnover intention, and research productivity?

In addition, the study explored a set of more fundamental issues such as why we do research in the first place. Is it because our institutions require it and provide extrinsic rewards (e.g., pay, promotion, etc.) for doing it? Or do we engage in research because it is intrinsically satisfying? Do we, the researchers ourselves, believe in the value of our work or are we just playing the "publishing game"?

As the first to explicitly define and measure RB and to examine its relationship to various other variables, this study should contribute to our theoretical understanding of the RB phenomenon and help us understand more about our professional lives.

After explaining the RB construct, we identify its various correlates. We then describe the research methods used in the study, report the results, discuss the findings, and consider the implications and directions for future research.

RB: A FORMAL DEFINITION

"Burnout" refers to the human situation, analogous to breakdowns in electrical appliances, wherein after a period of productive use the system overheats and self-destructs. In short, those marketing academicians fortunate enough to win job security by making their way successfully through the tenure process often find that the superhuman exertions needed to win promotion have left them in a state of complete physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion. Thus spent, they cannot sustain the intellectual energy needed to carry their research forward to the next stage of their academic careers. In an

Surendra N. Singh is a professor of marketing and the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation Chair in Marketing Strategy at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater. Ronald F. Bush is a professor of marketing at the University of West Florida. The authors thank Shelby Hunt, John Lastovicka, and Dennis Rosen for their valuable comments and all survey respondents for their participation in the study. Financial support by the University of Kansas General Research Fund is gratefully acknowledged. A substantial portion of the work was completed while the first author was at the University of Kansas.

ironic sense, their research productivity is self-immolated on the fires of their own ambition. . . . Too many experienced marketing academicians are ”burnouts,” exhausted by heroic labors early in their careers and now devoting only low levels of time and energy to research pursuits, perhaps because they feel they have already “paid their dues” and need no longer suffer the painful trials and tribulations of the “publishing game.” (AMA Task Force 1988, pp. 13-14)

It is evident from the preceding excerpt that the task force is using the term burnout to refer to a rather narrowly defined construct that relates to a severe reduction in an individual’s research efforts due to the strain and weariness associated with research activity. Unfortunately, both colloquially and in the psychology literature, the term burnout is used to refer to a generalized psychological state, characterized by a state of fatigue or frustration due to an unrealistic devotion to a cause or way of life (Freudenberg 1980). Therefore, to avoid confusion, we offer a formal definition of burnout associated with the research process and use the term research burnout to distinguish it from psychological burnout. Following Levinson’s (1981) conception that “the major defining characteristic of burnout is that people can’t or won’t do again what they have been doing” (p. 76), we define RB as follows: RB is an emotional state brought on as a result of long-term stresses associated with the academic research and publication process that has a pronounced negative effect on one’s research efforts.

With the exception of the AMA task force report, we found no studies documenting the correlates of RB in marketing academicians. However, the educational psychology literature reports studies on psychological burnout among school teachers and college professors. Drawing on this minimal literature (and relying heavily on the task force report), plus discussions with colleagues, we identified several potential correlates of RB.

Motivation for Doing Research

It is reasonable to assume that people engage in research for intrinsic reasons as well as for extrinsic reasons. Clearly, some people are attracted to academia because they have a scholarly orientation. However, many are attracted to academia for reasons other than scholarship, such as the joy of teaching, job security offered by the tenure system, and academic lifestyle.

Although there are no data on scholarly motivation of marketing faculty, empirical evidence from other disciplines is not encouraging. For example, in Ladd and Lipset’s (1975, 1976, 1977) surveys of 4,383 faculty members at U.S. colleges and universities, less than half of the respondents indicated that their interests lay in research. Eighty-five percent indicated that “intellectual-scholar-scientist” was the poorest description of their career.

If the situation in marketing is anything like that indicated by the surveys, a large group of colleagues may not be intrinsically motivated to do research. However, for those who do engage in research primarily for intrinsic reasons, it would be a pleasurable activity and therefore probably a refuge from other stressors at work. Such individuals, when faced with the trials and tribulations of the research process, are likely to cope well and be less prone to experience RB than those who do research primarily as a means of gaining rewards.

Psychological Burnout

Psychological burnout, known to undermine educators’ productivity (Maslach 1982), has been shown to cause emotional exhaustion too, and an emotionally exhausted individual is hardly in a position to engage in such a creative activity as research. Hence, we expected a positive correlation between psychological burnout and RB.

Work-Family Conflict

The findings of Schultz, Chung, and Henderson (1989), who documented the work-family conflicts faced by university faculty members, suggest that academicians face the same kinds of conflicts in combining work and family as the workforce at large. Our supposition was that work-family conflict has a generalized negative effect on one’s productivity, including research productivity. Therefore, marketing academicians experiencing high work-family conflict are probably more prone to RB than those experiencing low work-family conflict.

Frustration with the Review Process

The AMA task force labeled the review process in marketing journals as sadomasochistic. We suspected that the sadomasochistic review process may have a role in precipitating RB, such that those marketing academicians who perceive the review process to be more frustrating are likely to report higher levels of RB than those who find the review process less frustrating.

Failure to Keep Up with Knowledge Developments

Lacking sufficient time to keep current in one’s field is one of the 10 worst stressors for professors (Smith, Anderson, and Loverich 1995). Not keeping current leads to obsolescence. Technical and conceptual obsolescence creates a vicious cycle in which the greater the obsolescence, the less the desire to catch up, leading to an ever-increasing obsolescence. The link between obsolescence and RB is clear: the more obsolete one becomes in one’s training, the less one has the desire or the ability to conduct research.

Weak Doctoral Training

Although the task force report identified weak doctoral training as a correlate of “bombs,” we believed weak doctoral training would contribute to RB as well. Academicians who are able to earn tenure despite their weak doctoral training...
will find it increasingly difficult to sustain a productive research career without proper training. The ensuing anger and frustration could fuel RB.

Lack of Funding for Research

Marketing as a discipline has very few sources of research funding. The only major sources of funding are universities, and their resources are progressively shrinking. Because of the lack of funding, many marketing academicians fail to build their research programs and often turn to other pursuits such as consulting, executive teaching, and administrative service, especially after achieving tenure and promotion (AMA Task Force 1988, p. 15). We expected the lack of research funding to be a positive correlate of RB.

Lack of Performance-Contingent Rewards

One of the major frustrations to persons who go through the trials and tribulations of research (and the publishing game) is the lack of performance-contingent rewards. Publishing an article in a major marketing journal is extraordinarily difficult. Productive researchers are discouraged when rewards commensurate with their efforts to publish in the top journals are not forthcoming. Lack of performance-contingent rewards may especially contribute to RB in persons for whom research has great instrumental value.

LIKELY CONSEQUENCES OF RB

Unlike the well-established consequences of psychological burnout—absenteeism, tardiness, turnover, dissatisfaction, and low productivity—the consequences of RB for the individual are not well known. Still, logic and the literature point to some reasonable consequences. Persons experiencing RB may tend to view academic research as being of little theoretical or practical importance.

Additionally, RB by definition means a lowered research effort. Persons experiencing RB will spend less time on research than they did before, which may lead to a vicious cycle of lower research effort; lower research productivity; fewer publications, grants, and doctoral students; lower prestige; and, ultimately, lower job satisfaction. Therefore, prolonged RB could become a self-sustaining process in which, having dropped out of research once (or having curtailed research efforts severely), a faculty member will have a very difficult time getting back in the game. Also, because research performance is often a crucial input in performance evaluations, prolonged RB will negatively affect one’s evaluations and, consequently, rewards, lowering one’s job satisfaction even further.

In middle age, a sizable portion of academicians seem to go through a sort of disillusionment with academe. Meyers (1991) cites a 1984 survey by the Carnegie Foundation for the Achievement of Teaching in which 40% of the 5,000 professors questioned said they might leave academe within the next 5 years. However, limited mobility, particularly at the senior ranks, depresses morale. "Middle-aged, tenured faculty members have come to realize they may spend the next 20 to 25 years right where they are—and they feel trapped" (Watkins 1981; cf. Hunter et al. 1983, p. 101). The feeling of being trapped and intention to leave may be exacerbated by RB.

The above discussion suggests that academicians experiencing high levels of RB will see little value in academic research, spend little time on research, report low research productivity, report low job satisfaction, and exhibit high turnover intention.

METHOD

To explore the relationship between RB and other variables, we conducted a national survey of marketing faculty.

Sample

A list of names was generated from Wiley’s Guide to Marketing Faculty (1995). Only professors who met the following criteria were selected:

1. holds a Ph.D. or D.B.A. degree,
2. is employed by a school granting Ph.D. degrees,
3. holds the rank of associate or full professor (i.e., not listed as assistant professor or instructor).

Of the total listings, slightly more than 500 faculty members met the criteria. A questionnaire with a postage-paid return envelope and a one dollar bill as an incentive was mailed to 500 professors. Two hundred eighty-one questionnaires were returned, of which 258 were usable, an effective response rate of 51.6%.

Measures

With the exceptions of psychological burnout, which was measured with an adaptation of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach 1982), and work-family conflict, which was measured with two items from a scale developed by Izaqli (1988), all constructs were measured with scales specifically developed for the study. All but two scales were multi-item, and all were in the 5-point strongly disagree to strongly agree Likert-type summated ratings format.

Items for multi-item scales were generated from a variety of sources, including literature surveys and discussions with colleagues. In developing scales, a balance had to be struck between generating items representing multiple nuances of meaning and the length of the questionnaire. Scales were pre-tested for their clarity before administration.

The 22 MBI items representing three dimensions of psychological burnout—namely, emotional exhaustion (9 items), depersonalization (5 items), and personal accomplishment...
(8 items)—were used in the study. According to Maslach (1982), the emotional exhaustion subscale taps into "feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work." The depersonalization subscale "describes an unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients of one's care or service." The personal accomplishment subscale "describes feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people" (Maslach 1982, p. 101).

A factor analysis of the 22 items resulted in a three-dimensional solution. Three items, two pertaining to emotional exhaustion and one to personal accomplishment, were eliminated because of split loadings. All other items loaded well on the predicted dimensions. The reliability estimates of the three dimensions were $\alpha = .89$ for emotional exhaustion, $\alpha = .81$ for personal accomplishment, and $\alpha = .73$ for depersonalization.

The appendix provides details of the scales and corresponding coefficient alpha values. All reliability coefficients except one were well above the .5 to .6 range. (As described in the appendix, the two items measuring "extrinsic motivation for doing research" had a very low correlation. Therefore, those items were analyzed separately and not as a scale.)

In addition to gathering background information on age, rank, number of doctoral dissertations chaired, gender, number of children living at home, and all but dissertation (ABD) or non-ABD status at the start of the respondent's academic career, we also inquired about the frustration over negligible impact of one's research, lack of collaborative research efforts, number of children living at home, and the two dimensions of the psychological burnout—emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The relationships that turned out not to be statistically related to RB were frustrating review process ($r = .07, p < .25$), number of dissertations chaired ($r = -.07, < .25$), ABD status ($p < .59$), gender ($p < .88$), and the personal accomplishment dimension of psychological burnout ($p < .46$).

For the consequences of RB, all correlations were in the expected direction, and all but one were significant at $p < .05$. The exception was the correlation between RB and research productivity change ($r = -.09, p < .09$).

Polar Extremes Approach

Although the examination of zero-order correlations was encouraging, given a highly skewed distribution of RB in our sample, we suspected that analyzing the entire database may have masked some important differences. A more insightful, stringent, and complementary method of analysis was needed to further explore the relationships. We chose the polar extremes approach. For the polar extremes analysis, we selected 24 respondents who were in the 90th percentile and above and an equal number with the lowest RB scores. Mean RB scores in the high and low groups were 18.71 and 5.13, respectively ($t = 36.56, p < .001$). Next, we compared the mean differences between the two groups on all variables.

The statistically significant ($p < .10$) results of this analysis are reported in Table 2. In general, these results are consistent with the zero-order correlations for all but five variables (number of children living at home, work-family conflict, depersonalization dimension of psychological burnout, frustration with the negligible impact of one's research, and lack of research funds), each of which has a significant zero-order correlation with RB. However, comparing means of the extreme high and low RB groups showed no statistically significant differences on any of those five variables (number of children living at home, $t = .97, p < .337$; work-family conflict, $t = 1.58, p < .122$; depersonalization, $t = 1.83, p < .075$; frustration with the negligible impact of one's research, $t = 1.41, p < .167$; and lack of research funds, $t = 1.82, p < .076$). Additionally, whereas zero-order correlation implied a relatively weak relationship between research productivity and RB ($r = -.09, p < .13$), comparing extreme groups revealed a strong negative effect of RB on research productivity ($t = 2.80, p < .008, \eta^2 = .17$).

ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 provides appropriate measures of central tendency and correlations for relevant variables. The sample composition was 58% full professors and 42% associate professors; 88% were male. The average age was 50. The RB scores for the sample ranged from 5 to 23, with an average of 9.89 and a standard deviation of 3.68. Clearly, RB does not seem to be as widespread a problem as the task force report suggests. However, an examination of the frequency distribution of RB shows that just more than 9% of the sample scored higher than 15—the midpoint of the RB scale—indicating that roughly 1 in 11 associate/full professors in marketing is soured by his or her research experience.
The results in Table 2 clearly indicate that the RB is strongly related to intrinsic motivation, failure to keep up with knowledge developments, weak doctoral training, age, social support at work, lack of performance-contingent rewards, and lack of collaborative opportunity. For all these variables, the differences between the high and the low RB groups are significant (all \( p < .05 \)). The results also show that faculty members in the high RB group have a greater practical motivation (e.g., pay, promotion, and recognition) for research than those in the low RB group (\( t = 2.20, p < .034 \)). However, contrary to our expectations, the high RB group tended to have a disproportionately high number of associate professors (80% of associates vs. 39% full) in comparison with the low RB group (20% associates vs. 61% full): \( \chi^2 = 6.91, p < .01 \).

The results lend only partial support to the notion that RB and psychological burnout are related; the high and the low RB groups differed significantly on the emotional exhaustion dimension of psychological burnout (\( t = 2.89, p < .006 \)) but not on the depersonalization dimension (\( t = 1.83, p < .08 \)).

Finally, all five relationships between RB and outcome variables were supported. Respondents in the high RB group scored significantly lower on attitude toward the value of academic research (\( t = 6.95, p < .001 \)), spent significantly less time on research (\( t = 5.97, p < .001 \)), reported significantly lower research productivity (\( t = 2.80, p < .008 \)), had lower job satisfaction (\( t = 4.82, p < .001 \)), and had higher turnover intention (\( t = 5.98, p < .001 \)) than those in the low RB group.

Examination of \( \eta^2 \) values identified the following antecedents as most potent: intrinsic motivation for research (\( \eta^2 = .70 \)), lack of performance-contingent rewards (\( \eta^2 = .49 \)), social support at work (\( \eta^2 = .20 \)), and lack of opportunities for collaborative research (\( \eta^2 = .16 \)). All consequence variables are severely affected by RB (none has an \( \eta^2 \) of less than .17), but the most dramatic effects are on attitude toward the value of academic research (\( \eta^2 = .56 \)), followed by time spent on research and turnover intention (each with a \( \eta^2 \) of .48).

### Regression

Although contrasting the high and low RB groups helped us identify the relevant correlates of RB, given significant intercorrelations among several variables, this analysis was deemed inadequate for determining the unique contributions of individual correlates when several are considered jointly. For this reason, and to obtain a more parsimonious interpretation of our data, we performed a stepwise (forward) regression on the entire data set with RB as a dependent variable and all statistically significant (\( p < .05 \)) correlates from Table 3 as independent variables. Results of this analysis are reported in Table 3.

The stepwise regression procedure selected five independent variables in the regression equation, accounting for...
## Table 3
### Stepwise Regression Results (Dependent Variable: Research Burnout)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Entered at Step</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
<th>F(Eqn.)</th>
<th>Sig. F</th>
<th>R² Change</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>Significance of Change</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5402</td>
<td>.5384</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.5402</td>
<td>299.558</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.8636</td>
<td>.0539</td>
<td>-.6064</td>
<td>-13.514</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of collaborative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.5708</td>
<td>.5674</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.0306</td>
<td>18.095</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.3187</td>
<td>.1013</td>
<td>.1357</td>
<td>3.146</td>
<td>.0019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research effort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to keep up</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5973</td>
<td>.5926</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.0266</td>
<td>16.742</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.3706</td>
<td>.0919</td>
<td>-.1634</td>
<td>-4.032</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of performance-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.6091</td>
<td>.6029</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.0117</td>
<td>7.516</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.1632</td>
<td>.0680</td>
<td>.1211</td>
<td>2.740</td>
<td>.0066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contingent rewards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak doctoral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.6178</td>
<td>.6102</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.0088</td>
<td>5.760</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.1632</td>
<td>.0680</td>
<td>.0982</td>
<td>2.400</td>
<td>.0171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** R² = .6178. Adjusted R² = .6102.

61.02% of variation in RB. These variables were intrinsic motivation for research, lack of collaborative research effort, failure to keep up with knowledge developments, lack of performance-contingent rewards, and weak doctoral training.

### Discussion

With 1 in 11 associate/full professors burned out on research, the situation is probably not as alarming as initially envisaged by the AMA task force. However, concluding that the extent of RB is too low to worry about may be imprudent because the presence of RB in a segment of academia may be a manifestation of underlying problems/structural impediments plaguing the whole discipline. By examining the correlates of RB, we may remove various impediments and thereby help enhance the productivity of average researchers in the discipline.

Of the many significant correlates of RB, intrinsic motivation is unquestionably the most potent. Intrinsic motivation—combined with failure to keep up with knowledge developments, lack of collaborative research effort, lack of performance-contingent rewards, and weak doctoral training—accounts for 61% of the variation in RB. Whereas an intrinsic motivation to do research seems to be an antidote for RB, an extrinsic motivation (as reflected in "I do research for very practical reasons, e.g., monetary incentives, gaining peer recognition, promotion, etc." tends to exacerbate it. This finding should not be surprising given the general perception that payoffs from research are meager.

In terms of failure to keep up with knowledge developments, technical obsolescence appears to be a slightly bigger problem than conceptual obsolescence, with 15% of the respondents agreeing that they had become technically obsolescent and 9% confessing to conceptual obsolescence. This finding is in line with the results relating to weak doctoral training, as 42% of the respondents agreed with the statement, "I wish I had received better methods training," and 27% agreed with the statement, "I wish I had received better conceptual training."

Age, lack of social support at work, and the emotional exhaustion dimension of psychological burnout all exacerbate RB. One surprising finding is that a higher proportion of associate professors than of full professors experienced RB. To find an explanation for that result, we looked at the differences in time allocated to various activities by rank and found no statistically significant differences for the respondents in the high RB group. In the overall sample, too, associate and full professors spent virtually the same percentages of their time on research, teaching, and other activities aside from executive teaching and consulting, which consumed 10.4% of full professors' time versus 7.05% of associate professors' time (t = 2.41, p < .017). Although this difference is statistically significant, its effect size is so small (η² = .02) that for all practical purposes, we can conclude that the two groups spend their professional time in virtually the same way and that seniority per se does not imply an increased level of either RB or bigamy (i.e., involvement in administration, consulting, etc.).

So why does the high RB group contain a disproportionately large number of associate professors? Perhaps they are more pragmatic and can see that the meager rewards from research do not justify the kind of effort needed to sustain a productive research career. Notice that 83% of associate professors (versus 42% full professors) in the high RB group agreed with the statement, "I do research for very practical reasons (e.g., monetary incentives, gaining peer recognition, promotion, etc.)." Verbatim comments of two associate professors in our survey are illustrative of this viewpoint: "No likelihood of any recognition or reward from the school" and "Insufficient rewards in the system. Much easier to earn money consulting."

Another interesting finding is that lack of funding did not have a statistically significant effect on RB (p < .08). This
TABLE 4
PERCENTAGE OF TIME DEVOTED TO ACTIVITIES ON AN AVERAGE WORKING DAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Research-Related Activities Not Directly Relevant to Your Research</th>
<th>Consulting/Executive Teaching</th>
<th>Administrative Duties</th>
<th>Other Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work on Your Research Projects</td>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low research burnout group</td>
<td>36.05</td>
<td>13.27</td>
<td>30.12</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High research burnout group</td>
<td>11.78</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>49.13</td>
<td>14.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( t (p < .001) \)

\( 6.63 (.016) \)

\( 2.50 (.016) \)

\( 3.54 (.001) \)

\( 2.67 (.012) \)

\( .77 (.446) \)

\( 1.54 (.131) \)

a. For example, editorial work, managing conferences, judging competitiveness of research proposals, and so forth.

b. Including Ph.D. teaching and mentoring but excluding executive teaching.

does not mean that research funding is considered adequate; rather, it reflects the split response to the funding question: 56% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed and 30% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Limited funding for research has been a major source of frustration for me.” This split was expected, as the survey respondents were at schools with markedly different levels of research support.

Two other results that were not in the expected direction warrant discussion. (1) The much maligned review process did not appear as a correlate of RB. Clearly the review process has not changed for the better; rather, the review process is perceived to be fundamentally unfair by virtually everybody—83% of the respondents either agreed with or were neutral toward the statement, “The review process is fundamentally unfair to the authors.” (2) The task force anticipated that frustration over the negligible impact of one’s research would lead to RB. This was not the case in our data \((r = 1.41, p < .167)\); still, 9% of the respondents agreed that they were frustrated with the negligible impact of their research.

With respect to the consequences of RB, the high RB group had lower job satisfaction and expressed higher turnover intention. Although most marketing academicians seem satisfied with their jobs, a rather substantial segment feels trapped (17%) or has considered leaving the academy altogether (11%).

Respondents with high RB scores had a significantly less positive attitude toward the value of academic research than those with low RB scores. Even more noteworthy is the fact that for the sample as a whole, 29% of the respondents agreed with the statement, “The academic research is mostly meaningless to the real world.”

Finally, respondents in the high RB group reported declining productivity and less time spent on research. The breakdown of time spent by the two groups in various professional activities, shown in Table 4, is quite revealing. As expected, respondents in the low RB group spent the bulk of their time (49%) on research and research-related activities, a sizable portion of time on teaching (30%), and less than 5% of their time on consulting/executive teaching. In contrast, those in the high RB group spent less than 20% of their time on research and related activities, nearly 50% on teaching, and 15% on consulting/executive teaching.

A comparison of time allocation of the high and low RB groups with that of the overall sample is even more revealing. In the overall sample, the respondents’ time allocation was as follows: teaching, 34%; research, 25%; research-related activities, 11%; administration, 16%; consulting and executive teaching, 9%; and other, 5%. Hence, the low RB group appears to be much closer to the overall sample in their allocation of time to various professional activities, but those in the high RB group appear to be channeling the time they save from research (notice that they spend exactly 50% of what the sample’s average respondent spends on research and related activities) into teaching, executive teaching, and consulting—but not into administration and other activities. Thus, our data not only confirm Sheth’s (1983) suggestion that marketing may have two classes of educators—the researchers and the teachers—but also reveal that many of the “teachers” have virtually given up on research.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have interesting implications. We begin by looking at the five correlates that account for the bulk of variance in RB: intrinsic motivation for research, lack of collaborative research effort, failure to keep up with knowledge developments, lack of performance-contingent rewards, and weak doctoral training.

Although the intrinsic motivation for research emerged as the strongest correlate of RB, it appears that nothing can be done to enhance the intrinsic motivation of academicians who are severely burned out and who either no longer see any redeeming value in academic research (“Ninety percent of academic marketing research is meaningless bullshit. I no longer wish to participate in an activity that is damaging to the marketing area”) or who never really had an intrinsic motivation but did research for extrinsic rewards such as tenure (“Got tenure—working for things that interest me and not what will get me tenure”) or monetary gains only (“Insufficient rewards in the system, much easier to earn money consulting”). There is a segment of academicians, however,
whose intrinsic motivation may have waned because of various impediments relating to academic research and publications, such as getting rusty on the research tools, lack of collaborative research effort, and the frustrating review process. Removing these impediments may improve the intrinsic motivation of some of these academicians.

Collaborative research effort significantly reduces RB, yet only 6% of respondents reported that their institutions encourage it and 25% wanted greater opportunities for collaborative research at their schools. Schools could encourage collaborative research by rewarding senior faculty members who work with junior researchers and by not penalizing joint work, as is the case at many schools where solo authorship carries much more weight than joint authorship.

Failure to keep up with knowledge developments is a problem for many academicians. Nine percent of our respondents admitted to being conceptually obsolete, and 15% thought they had become technically obsolete. Failure to keep up with knowledge developments may adversely affect teaching. Many faculty who are not keeping up with the latest developments in the marketing field cannot educate their students as to new theories, concepts, research methods, and the like. This problem may be more acute at the schools with less emphasis on research. Professors at these schools have little motivation to stay current and read the academic journals and latest research approaches. Hence, research—a major source of pedagogical material—may no longer play a role in graduate and undergraduate education at these schools. Universities can use several approaches to help faculty members keep current.

1. Grant sabbatical leave expressly for retooling and catching up.
2. Allow faculty members to attend symposia and conferences for the sake of learning, regardless of whether they are officially involved with the conference (treat this as a faculty development expense).
3. Hold regular departmental seminars/brown-bag lunches to discuss various current conceptual and technical topics.
4. Use flexible teaching schedules to allow blocks of time to catch up (e.g., teaching four courses one semester and taking the second semester off for learning new things).

In addition, the AMA may consider offering low-cost, special seminars on various topics, especially methods topics, aimed at keeping academicians current.

Lack of performance-contingent rewards is another major source of RB. The prevailing view among our survey respondents was that academic research does not pay—55% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “The extrinsic rewards for research and publication do not appear to be commensurate with the efforts needed to publish scholarly articles, especially after promotion and tenure.” It appears that for most academicians, the inescapable conclusion is the same as noted in the task force report: “It is difficult for an intelligent person to regard a heavy commitment to research as a very rational decision” (AMA Task Force 1988, p. 15). It is no surprise, then, that there is a significant decline in research efforts of tenured professors compared to untenured ones (28.5% vs. 35.5%, respectively; Boya, Robicheaux, and Dotson 1992). Furthermore, with about 56% of marketing faculty already tenured (Boya, Robicheaux, and Dotson 1992), unless we make special efforts to compensate productive scholars, we will see an increasing number of our colleagues exhibit higher RB (and lower research effort): “I have 52 publications in my 15 years at […] University, but am paid less than faculty with three publications in the same period, and as much as $25,000 less than new hires.”

Weak doctoral training, especially weak methods training, seems to be a major problem. Many excellent suggestions for improving marketing doctoral training are offered in various publications (see, e.g., AMA Task Force 1988; Woodruff and Cravens 1990). These suggestions need to be urgently implemented, for our results show that doctoral training continues to be severely flawed. Methods training especially leaves much to be desired, as 42% of our respondents wished they had received better methods training (28% wished they had gotten better conceptual training in their Ph.D. programs).

Other correlates with a significant impact on RB are age, rank, practical orientation to research, and psychological burnout. For most academicians, a certain amount of slowdown in research is expected due to aging. However, institutional support and encouragement to help senior academicians keep current and to involve them in collaborative research efforts could ensure their continued research productivity. Practical (extrinsic) orientation to research sets one up for RB, especially associate professors; hence, performance-contingent rewards may have a greater impact in reducing RB among that group. The emotional exhaustion component of psychological burnout is correlated with RB. However, given the correlational nature of our data, we must leave the determination of causal direction to future research.

Several variables, although not statistically significant in their effect on RB, warrant further attention. One is the frustrating review process. It has been nearly a decade since the task force identified the review system as a potential barrier to the long-term development of marketing knowledge and recommended streamlining the review process of leading marketing journals. However, with 55% of the respondents feeling dissatisifed with the review process, the desired changes seem not to have taken place, and the relationship between authors and reviewers continues to be adversarial rather than cooperative.

A second variable—work-family conflict—needs further research to fully appreciate its effect on our work and family lives. Thirty-one percent of the respondents agreed with the statement, “My responsibility to home and family makes it difficult for me to devote all the time I would like to my work.”
Written comments from the respondents indicate that some sources of work-family conflict may be spouse's career, presence of children, and aging parents.

Finally, the mentoring of doctoral students and its effect on research productivity warrants investigation. Our hypothesis that working with doctoral students enhances productivity is not supported. One scholar's comments on this issue suggest an opposite perspective: "Work with doctoral students is very labor intensive and high risk. The result is more time required per project and each doctoral dissertation has a higher risk of not being published than my own work."

CONCLUSION

We began our study with two broad goals: (1) to learn about the RB phenomenon at a theoretical level and (2) to develop baseline data on RB as well as on faculty motivations, attitudes, and activities related to academic research. We met our first goal by learning about several correlates that significantly affect RB. We also learned that five specific correlates—low intrinsic motivation, lack of collaborative research effort, failure to keep up with knowledge developments, lack of performance-contingent rewards, and weak doctoral training—account for 61% of the variation in RB, and that RB lowers attitude toward research, time spent on research, research productivity, and job satisfaction but heightens turnover intention. If these results are validated in future research in marketing and other disciplines, the interrelationships discovered here could form the basis of a theoretical model of RB.

We met our second objective of establishing a baseline by obtaining concrete information on several dimensions relating to academic research that may be useful to AMA policy makers. Most of this information is new, some was expected (e.g., 30% and 55% of respondents expressed frustration with the lack of research funding and with the review process, respectively), and some was surprising (e.g., 29% thought academic research is mostly meaningless to the real world, 42% wished they had received better methods training in their doctoral days, and 17% felt trapped in their present jobs). The most surprising finding, the limited extent of RB (1 in 11), raises an interesting issue: is the criticism of senior scholars as burnouts and bigamists justified? Webster (1988, p. 50), in his commentary to the task force report, advised caution in the absence of hard data.

Even with hard data, in the absence of norms it is difficult to say whether 1 in 11 is a "relatively large number" of burnouts, as the task force contended. Additionally, if senior scholar is defined as "full professor," the label burnout may be inappropriate because, as previously noted, the high RB group contained a disproportionately large number of associate—not full—professors. The label bigamist is even less appropriate because in the high RB group as well as in the overall sample, the associate and full professors devoted virtually the same percentage of their time to research. If one were to define senior scholar as "associate professors and above," it would still be inappropriate to pin the label bigamist on senior scholars given the following breakdown of their time allocation: research, 25%; research-related activities, 11%; teaching, 34%; executive training and consulting, 9%; administration, 16%; and other, 5%.

Labeling aside, the results clearly confirm the presence of several impediments to knowledge production in marketing. Some steps that institutions can take to remedy the situation and enhance research productivity include strengthening doctoral training (particularly methods training), encouraging collaborative research, providing mechanisms to keep professors conceptually and technically current, and providing incentives (rewards) for research.

APPENDIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/Item(s)</th>
<th>Coefficient Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motivation for doing research</td>
<td>α = .89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I derive a great deal of personal satisfaction in doing research.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My research is a very important aspect of my life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I simply enjoy the excitement and challenge of doing academic research.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward the value of research</td>
<td>α = .68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my opinion, academic research is mostly meaningless in the real world.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think academic research forms the building blocks of tomorrow's knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research burnout</td>
<td>α = .75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very soured by my past experiences of academic research.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have frequently thought about quitting academic research.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At one point in my career, I devoted a lot of time and effort to academic research, but now I have almost completely given up research.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't think I have in me what it takes to be a successful academic researcher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider myself a successful academic researcher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review process</td>
<td>α = .79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the review process of the marketing journals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The review process is fundamentally unfair to the authors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge obsolescence</td>
<td>α = .65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not kept up with the latest theoretical developments in marketing and have become conceptually obsolete.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have failed to keep up with the methods developments and thus have become technically obsolete.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for collaborative research</td>
<td>α = .47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I had more opportunities for collaborative research efforts at my institution.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative research efforts are encouraged at my institution.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weakness in doctoral training</td>
<td>α = .67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)