

# CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS VERSUS RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY IN ACCOUNTING: SOME HONG KONG EVIDENCE

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**Abstract** *With economic empirical research emphasized in accounting at the majority of universities worldwide in the past three to four decades, would this enhance the teaching effectiveness of accounting or would this be at the expense of teaching and learning of accounting? The purpose of this study is twofold (a) To determine through literature review the different views between research productivity and teaching effectiveness, what academic research today is all about and its relevance to practitioners. (b) To conduct a survey of accounting academics and the accounting profession in Hong Kong via a survey questionnaire (12 questions) followed by interviews of respondents with respect to their emphasis on teaching and research and the relevance of academic accounting research to practitioners. The conclusion of the study is derived from answering the following three research questions developed through the completion of a questionnaire by accounting academics, the accounting profession and the accounting practitioners in Hong Kong followed by interviews with the respondents: 1. Should there be a greater emphasis on teaching skills and a better balance between teaching and research? 2. Does faculty mix (e.g. qualifications) affect teaching? 3. Should faculty research cater to the needs of practitioners?*

**Keyword:** *Teaching Versus Research, Accounting Academics, Accounting Profession, Accounting Practitioners, Hong Kong*

## INTRODUCTION

In order to revitalize professional accounting education, Porter (1992) indicated two issues to be resolved: (a) the balance of teaching, research, and professional services in universities; and (b) the balance among the qualifications required of those teaching professional accounting programmes. While numerous authors from the 1970s to the present have discussed the relationship between research productivity and teaching effectiveness (see the Literature Review section), not all of these authors are accounting academics. Accounting is a profession just like medicine and law, whereby practitioners' services are offered to the public-at-large. Accounting plays an important role in business as accounting information is the basis for all business decisions. Prior to the 1970s, the focus was on teaching and some applied research as accounting faculty mostly did not have doctorates (Bricker, 1993). With economic empirical research emphasized in accounting at the majority of universities worldwide in the past three to four decades, would this enhance the teaching effectiveness of accounting or would this be at the expense of teaching and learning of

accounting?

## Purpose of This Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is twofold:

- (a) To determine through literature review the different views between research productivity and teaching effectiveness, what academic research today is all about and its relevance to practitioners.
- (b) To conduct a survey of accounting academics and the accounting profession in Hong Kong via a survey questionnaire (12 questions) followed by interviews of respondents with respect to their emphasis on teaching and research and the relevance of academic accounting research to practitioners.

The literature review helps to develop the 12 questions in the questionnaire and the three research questions as follows:

1. Should there be a greater emphasis on teaching skills and a better balance between teaching and research?
2. Does faculty mix (e.g. qualifications) affect teaching?

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3. Should faculty research cater to the needs of practitioners?

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research method consists of sending a questionnaire of 12 questions (see Appendix) to the accounting academics and a representative of the accounting profession for completion, followed by detailed interviews of the respondents to explain the logic behind the ratings. Confirmation from accounting practitioners is also sought through question 2 in the questionnaire, as the majority of questions are not applicable to practitioners.

### Why Choose Hong Kong?

The locality is situated in another part of the world, i.e. in the Asia Pacific region and is populated by both Asians and Caucasians alike. As one of the world's major financial centres and with a large securities exchange, there is a great deal of emphasis on accounting standards, financial reporting, corporate governance, etc., and hence the importance of accounting education.

Since January 2005, Hong Kong and China's accounting and auditing standards have converged with international accounting and auditing standards. Thus the reporting standards are consistent with all western developed countries that chose to converge. Accounting faculty among degree-granting universities in Hong Kong are among the world's very best, and with only a very few exceptions, all hold doctorates from North American universities. Most Hong Kong universities work with mainland universities in providing accounting and business education to mainland students.

University accounting education was at a turning point in the 1990s when several government-funded colleges and polytechnics were converted to universities. Since then, contemporary accounting research has been emphasized with over half the government-funded universities ranking in the top 50 of the best universities in the world (Times Higher Education Supplement, 2011). Prior to 1960, university accounting education did not exist and the only way to obtain a professional qualification was to article with a practitioner, and subsequently write and pass the professional exams of the Association of Chartered and Certified Accountants or the Australian Society of Accountants (now Certified Practising Accountants, Australia).

### Participants in the Survey

The participants are (i) the nine institutions in Hong Kong representing the accounting academics, (ii) the Hong

Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA) representing the accounting profession, and (iii) the big-four accounting firms representing the accounting practitioners. In the case of (i), the nine institutions include eight public universities, one of which is not funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) and a private degree-granting college. The eight universities represent the entire population of universities in Hong Kong, with the exception of the author's home university, which is not included in this survey. The nine institutions are: The University of Hong Kong (HKU), The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), City University of Hong Kong (CityU), Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), Lingnan University (LN), The Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK), and Chu Hai College of Higher Education (Chu Hai).

In the case of (ii), the HKICPA is the only statutory body that regulates the accounting profession in Hong Kong and therefore, is selected to represent the profession. In the case of (iii), the big-four firms recruited 55.4% of all accounting graduates in Hong Kong out of the over 1,300 accounting firms operating in this locality (Chen, 2013) and are chosen to represent the practitioners.

### Tools and Approaches Used

The first step is to send a detailed Likert-scale questionnaire of 12 questions (5 ratings ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) to the Heads of the Department of Accounting (HoD) at the eight universities and one degree-granting college. The number indicated for each rated item is the number of institutions giving that rating with a total of 9 for each item. The "X" represents the rating of the HKICPA. For example, Question 1(i) shows four institutions rating the item as "4" (agree) as well as the HKICPA, while five institutions rating as "5" (strongly agree). The HoD of each institution is asked to conduct a departmental meeting and to go over the questionnaire with departmental colleagues. It was indicated to the HoDs that majority consensus must be reached for views presented on each item in the questionnaire at each institution or else a mean score should be given. The responses are then discussed with each HoD and recorded during a 45-minute interview. The completed questionnaire only provides the incentive and guide for the subsequent follow-up detailed interviews during which time the logic behind the data collected through the questionnaire is obtained. This approach to data collection will ensure that the views of all accounting faculty at each institution are represented, whereas sending the questionnaire to individuals will not ensure such representation as many may not respond. Furthermore, the views are vetted by the HoD and being a member of the university Academic Board or

Senate knows what is implementable at his or her institution. The same questionnaire is sent to the Director of Education and Training at the HKICPA and the exercise is repeated with colleagues in his department followed by an interview. The twelve questions in this questionnaire relate to the three research questions.

The next step is to send Question 2 of the questionnaire to the Human Resources (HR) Partner of each big-4 accounting firm. Not all questions in the detailed questionnaire are applicable to practitioners. The HR partner of each firm will then survey not less than 10 partners within his or her firm and compute the mean score for the item rated. Follow-up telephone interviews clarifying the philosophy behind the ratings were conducted with one representative partner of each firm, chosen by the HR partner for his or her familiarity with the business practice of the firm as well as an interest in accounting education such as serving on advisory boards of universities and education committees of the HKICPA. Although practitioners do not have a direct interest in faculty members' research productivity, many partners of big four firms do have an interest in accounting graduates attributes and skills that they can bring to the employers. Hence, they can influence the curriculum and pedagogy of accounting programmes by the aforementioned involvement with the universities as well as the HKICPA. On the other hand, as the partners are very busy, one representative question (Question 2) from the questionnaire would be sufficient to indicate their preference.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Teaching Versus Research

Porter (1992) reported that an expanded view of scholarship placing other types of scholarly activities (teaching, service) on an equal footing with research was called for by the prestigious Carnegie Foundation with the Accounting Education Change Commission (AECC) recommending giving priority to teaching. In terms of the question of whether teaching should be the primary concern for promotion of faculty and whether the pressure to publish reduce the quality of teaching at your university, a significant percentage of all faculty, research universities, PhD granting universities and liberal arts colleges, all said yes. Schools of accounting should thus work towards a balance among teaching, research and service within the school rather than leaving the balancing task to individuals (Porter, 1992).

While the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) specified that the terminal credential in all business disciplines including accounting was the doctoral degree, Gribbin *et al.* (2002) surveyed 39 accounting doctoral programme directors and reported that too little emphasis was placed on teaching skills, thus supporting

Porter's findings ten years ago. Porter (1992) reported that many accountants in academe and practice believed that the best faculty mix in a school of accounting was: (a) the majority (75%) of the faculty should hold a professional (CPA, CMA, CIA) certificate, (b) all (100%) of the faculty should hold at least a master's degree in accounting, (c) a reasonable number (50%) of the faculty should hold a doctoral degree in accounting, (d) a majority (75%) of the faculty should participate in professional service activities, and (e) a reasonable number (50%) of the faculty should publish to varying degrees in appropriate practitioner and/or academic accounting journals.

As a contrast, Bell *et al.* (1993) investigated the relation between research productivity and teaching effectiveness at 31 US universities and found that the results showed generally positive associations between teaching effectiveness and research productivity, particularly with publication in the major research journals showing the highest association with teaching effectiveness. The association resulted from not only research enhancing knowledge, but reinforcing the ability to organise one's thoughts in a cogent fashion and to communicate well. Hence, the conclusion was that people good at research are also good at teaching as they excel at everything they do. This finding did not fully support some of the earlier studies and one of the later studies as follows:

- Marsh (1984) focused on 13 empirical studies and concluded that there was no evidence for a negative relation between effectiveness in teaching and research.
- Feldman (1987) reviewed 43 studies undertaken between 1962 and 1983 and concluded that with very few exceptions, the direction of the relationship between the two was positive, but insignificant. With the input from four relevant studies, Bausell & Magoon (1972), Grant (1971), Harry & Goldner (1972), and McCullagh & Roy (1975), reported that a statistically insignificant average correlation of .07 between teaching effectiveness and the time spent on research, Feldman further concluded that even with the amount of time devoted to teaching and closely related activities did not seem much related to teaching effectiveness.
- Linsky & Straus (1975) and Marsh (1987) concluded that there was no strong evidence that teaching effectiveness was related to intelligence, but that class level (both undergraduate and graduate), class size, expected grades, and whether the course was required or an elective might affect the relation between research productivity and teaching.
- Gribbin (1995) found that the majority of accountants surveyed did not agree that good teachers must be good researchers and vice versa, and that good teachers were under-rewarded, with research being too focused in tenure decisions.

Although the aforementioned points did not fully support the Bell *et al.*'s findings, they merely showed a weak relationship between effective teaching and research and not a negative relationship.

At the turn of the century, Demski & Zimmerman (2000) argued that teaching and research were strong complements, not substitutes, and hence, doing more of one increased the value of the other. This view appears to be shared by most universities nowadays.

Assessment of research productivity has been focused on in the new millennium. Herron & Hall (2004) updated the literature dealing with accounting educators' evaluations of accounting journal quality with Bean & Bernardi (2005) developing a model for rating accounting journal quality. Everett *et al.* (2004) developed benchmarks of publication productivity of accounting faculty that could be used in AACSB accreditation. Fogarty (2004) investigated the research productivity of senior accounting faculty members and the factors that influenced sustained productivity which were prestige of doctoral-granting institution, prestige of current employing institution and level of research productivity early in the career based on publications in top journals.

Teaching effectiveness is often measured using student evaluations because of lack of a better approach. Earlier, Marsh (1984) agreed that effective teaching had no single indicator while Centra (1981) reported that desirable instructor characteristics might include: (a) ability to communicate well, (b) positive attitudes toward students, (c) extensive knowledge of the subject matter, (d) good

organisational skills, (e) enthusiasm about the subject, (f) fairness in exam and grading, (g) flexibility, and (h) encouragement of students to think for themselves. The author of this paper does not agree that student evaluations should be used solely to determine teaching effectiveness as quite often, students do not understand the subject discipline well enough to assess delivery and that instructors who are demanding on students' performance, assign large volumes of homework and make the courses they teach difficult, would often receive lower ratings in the "satisfaction" category.

Research productivity could be even more difficult to measure. Approaches used include: (a) counting the number of articles published, (b) using subjective perceptions of administrators or peers, and (c) using external recognitions such as appointments to editorial positions and boards (Bell *et al.*, 1993). The author believes that none of these approaches are satisfactory by themselves as it is difficult to quantify the tier level of the journal.

A summary is provided in Table 1 and includes findings in addition to the aforementioned.

The author is of the opinion that teaching effectiveness and research is positively related as at his home university (primarily a teaching university), the slogan is "teaching led, research active". Furthermore, publications including those of Demski & Zimmerman (2000) and Bell *et al.* (1993) all supported this phenomenon.

Student input should not be taken seriously in the direction for research as they tended not to be symmetrically informed. For example, Hoque (2002) reported the perceptions of

**Table 1: Summary Findings on Teaching Effectiveness Versus Research**

Authors	Findings on Teaching Effectiveness Versus Research
1. Bell, Frecka & Solomon (1993) 2. Dyckman (1989) 3. Kinney (1989) 4. Demski & Zimmerman (2000)	Positive association between teaching effectiveness and publication
Bricker & Previts (1990)	Greater research productivity associated with less effective teaching performance
Marsh (1984)	No single indicator for effective teaching and no negative relation between teaching effectiveness and research
Centra (1981)	Identified 8 desirable instructor characteristics, none of which related to research
1. Feldman (1987) 2. Bausell & Magoon (1972) 3. Grant (1971) 4. Harry & Goldner (1972) 5. McCullagh & Roy (1975)	Insignificant correlation between teaching effectiveness and research time spent
1. Linsky & Straus (1975) 2. Marsh (1987)	No strong evidence between teaching effectiveness and research, but class level and size, expected grades, required or elective course might affect the relationship between the two



students who were given journal articles (both academic and professional) to read. Using a deep approach in reading, they found professional as opposed to academic articles being more useful.

## Characteristics of Academic Research

Demski & Zimmerman (2000) saw research as having the following characteristics:

- Research was viewed as a process of compression of many observations into a few.
- Scholarship required us to know what feedback should go into the waste basket, what should be set aside for the time being and what deserved our continued search.
- Research output was viewed as being concentrated in the hands of a few. For example, quoting Zivney *et al.* (1995), the authors reported that over a 30-year period, only about half of the accounting faculty with doctoral degrees had published in established journals. The authors also reported that Read *et al.* (1998) focused on those promoted to associate professor during the period 1987 to 1994 and found that the median number of publications for those promoted was about four publications in schools with a doctoral programme. Contrary to the above, universities in Hong Kong require their academic staff to publish substantially more and in many cases, only in top-tier accounting journals. Hong Kong Shue Yan University, the newest university in Hong Kong and the only private university to-date, has a publication guideline of one article every two years in a refereed journal.
- The research process forced one to be rigorous in thinking and faculty ought to instill these intellectual processes in their students.

## Another View towards Teaching versus Research

One of the ways to consume research is in the form of teaching. Faculty members must willingly either do the underlying research themselves or understand research done elsewhere. For example, Swain & Stout (2000) surveyed recent doctoral graduates to ascertain perceived readiness in AECC-recommended teaching readiness and found that research-led teaching development tended to be a personal effort. Teaching and research can thus be viewed as substitutes because there are only so many hours in a day. However, teaching could also generate research insights as student questions may lead to ideas for research projects.

## Academic Research and its Relevance to Practice

Generally speaking, practitioners do not understand contemporary research as they have not had the training in mathematics and statistics that contemporary accounting research uses. Bricker (1993) reported that in 1960, academic accounting faculty primarily had master's degrees, professional certification, and significant practical experience. As such, the focus was on teaching and applied research. Later on, the AACSB changed the accounting's terminal qualifications to a PhD requiring a social science model of research. The highly mathematical research was of little use to practitioners.

Bricker (1993) summarized nine categories of academic accounting research.

- **Market Efficiency Research:** These studies borrowed portfolio theory and the capital asset pricing model from economics and finance and tested stock price reactions to corporate earnings announcements assuming that the stock market was efficient with respect to publicly available information.
- **Positive Accounting Research:** Watts and Zimmerman in the late 1970s, started positive accounting research, using an efficient markets concept and investigating into the way managers chose among accounting methods. This research was heavily criticized as naïve and misleading.
- **Accounting Information Processing Research:** As an example, the "lens model" used concepts from psychology and applied them in accounting, allowing researchers to see how a number of different accounting information cues were used in applied settings.
- **Research into the Role of Accounting Organisations and Society:** Using the social welfare perspective, the values furthered by accounting in a free market system were questioned. Contingency theory and expectancy theory were used.
- **Auditing Research:** The two areas of audit research are one that explores methods of statistical sampling and the other taking theories from psychology and examines decisions CPAs make in audit settings.
- **Modeling Research:** These are exercises in symbolic logic that apply information economics to accounting settings, and have been used in areas such as financial reporting, managerial accounting and auditing.
- **Laboratory markets/ experimental accounting research:** These studies develop economic models of behaviour and then test them in laboratory experiments.
- **Accounting History Research:** One approach to accounting history seeks to describe and document

accounting history and to draw inferences relevant to contemporary accounting while a second area attempts to provide interpretations of accounting history from a perspective of particular social philosophies.

- Tax Research: Legal research explains tax law and creative ways in which tax law can be practically applied.

Having some understanding of academic accounting research, I now turn to the subject of relevance of research to practice. Leisenring & Johnson (1994) offered thoughts from the practitioner's perspective about the issue of the relevance of academic research, approached from the perspective of accounting standard setting. Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) Concepts Statement No. 2 uses the term "decision usefulness" rather than the word relevance as information that is both relevant and reliable is decision useful. Their findings are summarized below:

- With five-year programmes becoming widespread in the United States, basic training in research methodologies and how to read research ought to be part of those programmes.
- Aside from using extensive mathematics and statistics, contemporary research studies tend to be too narrow with research being changed from non-empirical to empirical.
- Another reason for academic accounting research not being useful to practitioners is that in such research, replication seems to be the exception rather than the rule and sometimes when they are replicated, the findings are contradictory.
- During the period 1987 to 1992, very few articles were published in renowned accounting journals with many academics engaging in writing and publishing textbooks, study guides and articles in professional and trade journals without the recognition of insights and the confirmation of suppositions.

The aforementioned findings pointed to the fact that contemporary accounting research is of limited use to practitioners, unless the results are understandable, reliable and relevant to the decisions being made.

## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### Should there be a greater emphasis on teaching skills and a better balance between teaching and research?

Hong Kong accounting academics in general do not oppose to a balance between teaching and research while University Grants Committee (UGC) institutions would oppose to

an emphasis of teaching over research. The accounting profession and a non-UGC institution would agree that teaching should be emphasized over research.

Most UGC institutions disagreed that there should be more emphasis on teaching as opposed to research, especially in regard to faculty reward systems and tenure decisions. This supports what most academics felt in the United States (Fay *et al.*, 1993; Bell *et al.*, 1993; Demski & Zimmerman, 2000) as teaching and research complement one another and are not mutually exclusive. The only exceptions came from a non-UGC teaching institution (Chu Hai) and the HKICPA. They support teaching skills over research and they opined that more rewards should be given to effective teaching as opposed to research as well as more resources should be allocated to undergraduate studies as opposed to the doctoral programme. This view was also shared by a smaller number of academics in the United States (Porter, 1992; Swain & Stout, 2000) in which teaching and research are substitutes as there are only so many hours in a day and that those who are not teaching graduate studies or are teaching only at the professional level, would feel that research would be taking up their valuable time in course preparation. On the other hand, with the exception of the teaching institution, all institutions would not oppose to a balance between teaching and research, as seen from the normal and even distribution of many of the responses on this topic and from discussions with the institutions (e.g. HKU, HKBU, LN). Most institutions would also disagree that the pressure to publish reduces the quality of teaching and that requiring academic staff to have the doctorate in accounting would place too little emphasis on teaching. "Good teachers will not sacrifice teaching", said the LN representative. "The best teachers are the best researchers", said the CUHK representative. "Research does affect teaching, but it also leads to good teaching", said the HKBU representative. In terms of the allocation of faculty resources between undergraduate and doctoral programmes, this is clearly a split situation among the institutions. Disagreeing on having more resources allocated to undergraduate programmes, HKU had this to say, "Doctoral teaching is not recognized at HKU. Therefore, more resources should be allocated to doctoral teaching". "This should be left with administration and equally allocated", said the CUHK representative. From the researcher's point of view, a more balanced approach between teaching and research as well as funding of resources would be most appropriate as this is the view shared by most institutions today. In this regard, Porter (1992) suggested that Schools of Accounting should work towards a balance among teaching, research and service within the school rather than leaving the balancing task to individuals. Even the only private university in Hong Kong (HKSYU) and primarily a teaching institution, recognising the importance of research, has a slogan of "teaching led, research active".

All would agree that accounting PhD programmes emphasize research and most would agree that these programmes do not help in developing student communication and team-building skills, nor do they relate classroom accounting to accounting practice. On the other hand, Doogar (2003) examined the call for more emphasis on training doctoral students in their teaching skills and found that certain doctoral programmes in accounting already provided training in innovative teaching strategies.

In response to Question 2 in the questionnaire on whether more rewards should be given to faculty for effective teaching and curriculum development as opposed to doing strictly research, two of the big four firms strongly agree “5”, one agree “4” and one was neutral “3”. The latter preferred not to be involved in academic matters as there could be other ramifications aside from the interest of the practitioners. It is apparent that the three that agreed were driven by the fact that the majority of the institutions (6 in total) and the HKICPA felt that practitioners do not understand contemporary accounting research. However, with seven institutions and the HKICPA agreeing that basic training in research methodologies ought to be part of any accounting programme and that six institutions and the HKICPA agreeing that publications in professional and trade journals should be counted, the situation may change in the future if these are implemented.

### Does Faculty Mix (e.g. qualifications) Affect Teaching?

Faculty mix here refers to faculty characteristics contributing to effective teaching. The findings show that faculty mix in Hong Kong could affect the teaching of accounting.

To achieve teaching effectiveness, eight of the nine institutions and the HKICPA agreed that all faculty members should hold at least a master’s degree in accounting as suggested by Porter (1992). However, the situation remains split with whether the majority of the faculty (75% as suggested by Porter, 1992) should hold a professional certificate. “Having a professional certificate is not necessary at research universities”, said the CUHK representative. “We require everyone to have a professional certification”, said the LN representative. “Only 50% of the faculty should have professional certification”, said the HKU representative. From the researcher’s point of view, the requirement for professional certification depends on whether teaching or research is emphasized at that institution and cannot be generalised. Most second tier UGC institutions remained neutral on whether a reasonable number of faculty members (50%) should hold a doctoral degree in accounting. However, the HKICPA and a non-UGC teaching institution agreed that a reasonable number of the faculty (50% as

suggested by Porter, 1992) should hold such a degree. On the other hand, the major universities held a different view. “We require all faculty members to have a doctoral degree in accounting”, said the HKU and CUHK representatives. This again depends on the emphasis of the institution between teaching and research. While the majority would agree (with the exception of CUHK that insisted on only A grade academic journals) that a reasonable number (50% as suggested by Porter, 1992) of the faculty should publish in appropriate practitioner or academic accounting journals, the situation again remains split for the same reason on whether a majority (75% as suggested by Porter, 1992) should participate in professional service activities. This ranges from “there is no time for research faculty to be engaged in professional service activities” (CUHK) to “only 50% of the faculty should be engaged in professional service activities” (HKU) to agreeing that a majority of the faculty should participate (HKICPA and a non-UGC teaching institution). In the researcher’s view, participation in professional service activities is important for any accounting faculty member, as Mounce *et al.* (2004) found that professors possessing relevant practical experience were perceived by students to be of significantly better quality than without. Volpe & Chen (2001) indicated that faculty members had limited real world exposure and tried to avoid making curricular changes in eliminating certain courses and adding others. This latter view was also presented by Strait & Bull (1992) and Usry *et al.* (1993) when they discussed the use of assistants and graduates students in teaching accounting.

Overall, faculty mix could affect teaching and that the proper mix could include the following:

- All faculty possessing higher degrees, preferably a doctorate in accounting.
- Reasonable number (50%) of faculty publishing in appropriate practitioner and / or academic accounting journals.
- Some faculty participating in professional service activities.

### Should faculty research cater to the needs of practitioners?

The profession and the majority of the institutions feel that faculty research should cater to the needs of the practitioners by publishing in professional and trade journals. Some individuals with research institutions are attuned with their institutions’ policy and would disagree with any publications outside of the top academic journals. “We only consider A grade refereed journals”, said the CUHK representative. Most would agree that practitioners do not understand contemporary accounting research and that to help them, basic training in research methodologies ought to be part



of any accounting programme as in the United States (Leisenring & Johnson, 1994).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Hong Kong accounting academics in general do not oppose to a balance between teaching and research while UGC institutions would oppose to an emphasis of teaching over research. The accounting profession and a non-UGC institution would agree that teaching should be emphasized over research.

Representatives of UGC institutions felt that it might not be realistic to implement an overall university policy when they indicated that they supported a balance between teaching and research, when in fact, they were only rewarded for their research efforts because of the funding issue. On the other hand, as previously analyzed, research does help teaching. However, a disproportionate amount of time devoted to research under the pressure to publish could take away valuable preparation time for teaching. Focusing on teaching does not mean that research is ignored. HKSYU, primarily a teaching institution, has a slogan of “teaching led, research active”. Its faculty members are required to publish an average of one article every two years in an acceptable refereed publication. It does not appear that a ready solution is available unless the HKICPA, through complaints from practitioners, exerts pressure on the institutions to shape up on teaching. This is unlikely to happen as the big four accounting firms have no complaints against university accounting education in Hong Kong.

UGC institutions are not prepared to give up their status as research universities as there is a certain level of prestige associated with being one. However, with the competitive market world-wide in recruiting accounting doctorates, there appears to be a solution to this dilemma. Several universities in Hong Kong, patterning after the practice in North America, are already resorting to hiring lecturers, instructors and teaching fellows in filling up teaching vacancies for undergraduate courses. These individuals have practical experience in accounting and use a more pragmatic approach to teaching. Furthermore, they teach substantially more hours than tenured-track faculty members. Faculty mix in Hong Kong could affect the teaching of accounting. The HKICPA supports the mix proposed in the United States for effectiveness in teaching, while the institutions are split on the (a) holding of a professional certificate requirement, (b) percentage of faculty holding a doctorate in accounting, and (c) percentage of faculty participating in professional service activities. UGC institutions would insist that (a) is not required (with the exception of LN), that a substantially higher percentage should be the case for (b) and a much lower percentage in the case of (c) as time is devoted to research. Accounting is a professional discipline whereby relevant

practical experience and attendance at professional updating seminars contribute to effective teaching. Accounting doctorates without the practical experience are more suited to teaching graduate level courses than undergraduate ones as academic research focuses on the phenomenon of one narrow area, such as capital market behaviour resulting from published earnings information. In order to avoid the “perilous future” syndrome in the United States (Albrecht & Sack, 2000, 2001), UGC institutions must consider a balanced faculty mix with full implementation of a university-wide policy of a proper balance between teaching and research. With the promotion of the use of Outcomes-Based Teaching and Learning (OBTL) by the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) in the recent five to ten years, all course outlines in Hong Kong tertiary institutions now conform to OBTL format and teaching and learning as well as quality assurance are gradually emphasized. We may be seeing light at the other end of the tunnel soon.

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## APPENDIX

### DETAILED SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of your institution: (Consolidated)

[9 institutions plus the HKICPA (X)]

Please tick in the boxes beside each question in accordance with the following ratings:

(1) strongly disagree    (2) disagree    (3) neither disagree nor agree    (4) agree    (5) strongly agree

		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	PhD education in accounting (i) stressed academic research publications needed for promotion and tenure, (ii) did not include active learning strategies, (iii) did not include methods for enhancing student communication and team-building skills and, (iv) did not include relating classroom accounting to accounting practice.	i			4X	5	
		ii	2	4X	2	1	
		iii	1	2X	5	1	
		iv	3	1X	3	2	
2.	More rewards should be given to faculty for effective teaching and curriculum development as opposed to doing strictly research.	2	1	2	3	1X	
3.	More faculty resources should be recommended towards undergraduate as opposed to doctoral programmes.		2	4	3X		
4.	Universities requiring that academic staff in accounting to have the doctoral degree will place too little emphasis on teaching.	4	2	1	X	2	
5.	Teaching should be the primary concern for promotion of faculty.	5	1	2	1X		
6.	The pressure to publish reduces the quality of teaching at universities.	3	2	1	1X	2	
7.	To achieve teaching effectiveness: (i) The majority (75%) of the faculty should hold a professional certificate. (ii) All (100%) of the faculty should hold at least a master's degree in accounting. (iii) A reasonable number (50%) of the faculty should hold a doctoral degree in accounting. (iv) A majority (75%) of the faculty should participate in professional service activities. (v) A reasonable number (50%) of the faculty should publish to varying degrees in appropriate practitioner and / or academic accounting journals.	i	1	1	5	1	1X
		ii			1	4X	4
		iii	1	2	4	1X	1
		iv	1	2	4	1	1X
		v	1		1	5X	2
8.	A greater emphasis on teaching skills is preferable to research.	3	1	4	1	X	
9.	Practitioners do not understand contemporary accounting research as mathematics and statistics characterize most contemporary research.	1		2	4X	2	
10.	There should be more emphasis on teaching as opposed to research, especially in regard to faculty reward systems and tenure decisions.	3	2	3	1X		
11.	Basic training in research methodologies ought to be part of any accounting programme.	1		1	7X		
12.	Publications in professional and trade journals should be counted by universities provided that such articles provide analyses that result in new insights.	2		1	5	1X	

In some cases, a follow-up interview in person or by phone may be necessary for clarification. Would you agree to this?  
Agree ( ) Disagree ( )