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The Evolution of Job Postings for Business Administration Professorships

Evidence for German Universities in the 2014-2022 Period¹



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This paper analyzes the evolution of job postings for professorships in the field of business administration at German universities between 2014 and 2022. We use data on 742 job postings at 84 German universities which were published via the newsletter of Deutscher Hochschulverband (DHV). Our findings reveal that the overall number of job postings per year has decreased but that tenure track professorships have become more popular in recent years as a consequence of the Bund-Länder-Programm. Societal trend topics seem to gain importance for business administration research. Job titles of business administration professors increasingly emphasize ESG and digitalization. Additionally, job descriptions are more frequently requesting interdisciplinarity and external funding over time.

1. Introduction

The changing landscape of their own profession has been of increasing interest for business administration professors in recent years. The literature mainly focuses on changing biographic aspects of prospective and newly tenured professors such as gender and age (Röbken 2011; Fernandes and Walter 2023), mobility and internationality before and after tenure (Röbken 2009; Bäker 2015) as well as requirements of publication quality (Graber and Wälde 2008; Röbken 2011; Fernandes and Walter 2023). Fernandes and Walter (2022) contribute to the research on publication behavior by identifying differences in the publication patterns across various subdisciplines within the field of business administration.

The academic landscape in Germany has been subject to relevant changes and reforms. To promote the internationalization of the German higher education system, a relatively new program is the „Bund-Länder-Programm“ incentivizing the posting of tenure track professorships which were relatively uncommon in Germany before the introduction of the program in 2017. Another noteworthy program is the „Exzellenzstrategie des Bundes und der Länder“ which is a public funding program for top research universities in Germany and which started as „Exzellenzinitiative“ in 2005/06. On the other hand, there have been major societal and economic shifts in recent years, particularly concerning subjects around sustainability and digitalization. These emerging trends bring a range of new topics into business administration research and therefore, could influence the hiring dynamics of professor positions at German business faculties.

Using data on 742 business administration job postings at 84 German universities between 2014 and 2022, sourced from Deutscher Hochschulverband (DHV), we aim to contribute to the existing literature on the job market of business administration professors in a three-fold way. First, we conduct an exploratory analysis and show that the overall number of job postings has decreased over the past years whereas tenure track positions have become more popular as a consequence of the Bund-Länder-Programm. We also identify differences across the subdisciplines within the field of business administration, where the share of professorships in Business Information Systems increased and the share of vacant Accounting and Management professorships declined. A geographical analysis shows a clustering in large university cities such as Munich, Berlin and Cologne.

Second, we emphasize the notable societal shifts, highlighting how sustainability and digitalization are being integrated into the titles of business administration professors. Thereby, we assume that an occurrence of terms related to sustainability and digitalization in the titles reflects a corresponding thematic focus of the professorships. We document an increasing appearance of „trend“ words such as ESG (i.e. environmental, social, governance) or digitalization in the job titles. A thematic shift of business administration research is also underlined by an increase in academic publications with a focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG)

¹ We would like to thank Thomas Frison from (DHV) for providing the newsletter "Ausschreibungsliste Wirtschaftswissenschaften". We also would like to thank Fabio Martin for the compilation of the data from the text data of the newsletters.