Who Supports PRME Implementation?
An Analysis of Influences on Individual Faculty Commitment to PRME

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A sizable scholarly literature has developed which examines initiation and implementation of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) in higher education. Moving beyond school-level work previously done, we develop a model of predictors for individual faculty PRME commitment. We test our model in a small regional business school via a survey of faculty, a review of faculty research interests, and a content analysis of course syllabi. Our findings point to faculty discipline and gender as key predictors of PRME engagement. Implications of these findings for PRME implementation are discussed.

Keywords: *PRME Implementation, Faculty Commitment, Faculty Engagement*

INTRODUCTION

Over a decade after the 2007 founding of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), there are 785 business and related schools/programs that the PRME website lists as signatories (United Nations, 2019). The United States (US) houses the most of any nation-state signatories (109 college/university programs as of January 2019). But, signatories not based in the US make up 6/7 of the total, making this a global phenomenon. This global movement has been accompanied by a burgeoning international scholarly literature that has traced the beginnings of PRME (see for example: Alcaraz & Thiruvattal, 2010; Rasche and Escudero, 2010; and Kell and Haertle, 2011), PRME implementation case studies (for early examples, see: Prandini, Vervoort, & Barthelemess, 2012; Solitander, Fougère, Sobczak. & Herlin, 2012; Young and Nagpal, 2013), barriers to implementation (for initial statements, see: Maloni, Smith & Napshin, 2012; Solitander, Fougère, Sobczak. & Herlin, 2012; and Cornuel & Hommel, 2015), and also critiques of PRME and its implementation in various business schools (Louw, 2014; Millar and Konig, 2018; and Millar & Price, 2018). What has been less well studied, at least systematically, has been predictors and/or correlates of PRME commitment and involvement across individual faculty. To address this key limitation in the literature, in this exploratory empirical work we

analyze data from three separate studies at one school to help build a model of predilection for PRME activity among faculty. Such a model can then be used to assess readiness, potential resistance, and ultimately avenues for introducing PRME to the thousands of organizations not yet on board.

Below, we provide a brief overview of scholarly literature on PRME implementation to highlight the need for individual-level empirical work. From the studies reviewed, we identify fruitful avenues for empirical research and build an initial model of predictors of faculty support for PRME activities. Then we lay out preliminary research questions before describing our methodology of using three separate studies to empirically explore our model. Finally, we report on the findings of our three studies and then discuss implications for both the implementation of PRME in schools and scholarly literature about PRME.

SCHOLARLY LITERATURE ABOUT PRME

Much of the literature about PRME has taken the form of individual case study narratives about the journey to PRME signatory status. An early example of this literature is Prandini, Vervoort, & Barthelemess's (2012) study which showcased how a pedagogy using real-life case studies and real-life student projects at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences led to student buy-in for the Principles of Responsible Management Education. Solitander, Fougère, Sobczak & Herlin (2012:337) relayed their experiences as faculty champions of the signatory journey in two business schools in France and Finland, concluding that being able to "creatively 'make do'" served them well. Also early on, Young and Nagpal (2013) placed their case study of chasing PRME at LaTrobe University in Australia in the context of the need for curricular innovation at a time of increasing competition for domestic and international students. Narrative case studies of implementation have continued to be published in the second decade of PRME's existence. For examples, see contributors to the PRME Implementation section of The International Journal of Management Education's Special Issue on Principles of Responsible Management Education, including Beddewela, Warin, Hesselden & Cosle (2017) on challenges faced by a UK signatory; Cicmil, Gough, and Hill's (2017) case study of UWE Bristol; Greenberg, Deets, Erzurumlu, Hunt, Manwaring, Rodgers & Swanson (2017) on Babson College's eight-year journey to fully incorporate PRME; Kolb, Fröhlich & Schmidpeter (2017) on the private Cologne Business School in Germany and Wersun (2017) on the University for the Common Good.

In addition to school-level case studies, some studies have searched for implementation trends across signatories. The first batch of comparative work seemed to focus mostly on the first hundred Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reports. One of the first comparative descriptive studies of PRME signatories was Stachowicz-Stanusch's 2011 search for best practices amongst the first hundred, or so, programs to submit SIP reports. Stachowicz-Stanusch compiled charts of the most common features of the SIPs arranged by PRME principle. At about the same time, and using the same dataset of the 100 first SIPs (representing 322 signatories at the time), Alcaraz, Marcinkowska & Thiruvattal (2011), used a grounded theory methodology to ultimately help prospective institutions implement PRME by defining categories by principle, illustrating progress, making suggestions and identifying tensions. In keeping with the "search for common practices" theme of the early analyses, Godemann, Herzig, Moon and Powell (2011) brought together a content analysis of SIPs from the first 100 signatories with a follow-up survey of English business schools and case studies of select institutions. Their data collection and analysis yielded twelve key messages from the SIPs, starting with a strong emphasis by PRME signatories on embedding sustainability in teaching (relative to research and operations).

After the first batch of "common practices" analyses designed to aid future implementation efforts, the comparative literature became more analytical. Perry and Win (2013) surveyed 108 of the original PRME signatories and assessed the SIPs of the same organizations to conclude that PRME has been the most effective effort to engage higher education in sustainability, but that PRME seemed to be used more to acknowledge a school's existing sustainability activities, rather than representing a step toward greater engagement. In a qualitative study of 50 "judgmentally" selected SIPs uploaded in 2012, Araç and Madran (2014), underscoring the predominance of United States and European business schools leading

the charge, determined that there was still much more work to do on sustainability. As opposed to the very early studies, the later studies, using the SIPs to analyze implementation, took a more hardened stance to the potential motivations of the signatories. Such studies paved the way for a more critical literature.

In one of the earlier critical studies of PRME implementation, Tripathi, Amann, and Kamuzora (2013) qualitatively reviewed data from a 2012 PRME survey to critically examine the role of current business education in responsible management. They found the Anglo-Saxon dominated model--emphasizing standardization to the detriment of context--wanting, and they suggested the value of infusing humanism into the extant responsible management model. Louw (2014) focused a critical lens on UK signatories of PRME, determining that PRME discourse, rather than being a paradigm for change, instead set management education up to serve the interests of the corporate sector. Burchell, Murray & Kennedy (2014), also in the UK business school context, questioned the existence of direct evidence of PRME in driving changes in curricula. These themes were further amplified in recent work by Millar and Konig (2018) and Millar and Price (2018), also focusing on the UK PRME signatory context, that found that PRME reproduced a dominant market ethic and was not able to produce a critical reflexivity necessary to drive fundamental transformations in management education, respectively. These critical studies point us toward contextual variables that may adversely impact or even sabotage PRME implementation. It is to a discussion of such contextual variables that we now turn.

A MODEL OF PRME COMMITMENT PREDICTORS: GENDER, RACE, AND DISCIPLINE

Haski-Leventhal, Pournader and McKinnon (2016) sought to understand some of the contextual variables contributing to PRME adoption by using a UN-supported PRME survey of almost 1300 student respondents. Their analyses suggested a role for gender as female students both placed a higher value on ethical responsibilities and were more welcoming of curriculum changes focused on responsible management, compared to their male colleagues. They further found that older students ranked transcendent values and positive corporate social responsibility attitudes higher than younger groups. Perhaps most relevant for our study, they set out to explore individual level predictors of the adoption of PRME mindsets. We take up the issue of predictors of faculty acceptance of and adherence to the PRME because it is faculty compliance that will ultimately determine the path to PRME implementation (Maloni, Smith & Napshin, 2012). Based on the work of Haski-Leventhal, Pournader and McKinnon (2016), coupled with a radical feminist reflection on academic women working within PRME contexts (Asirvatham & Humphries-Kil, 2017), previous research suggesting that female business students, at least, are more ethical and amenable to business's social responsibility (see, for example: Arlow, 1991; Borkowski and Ugras, 1998; Lämsä, Vehkaperä, Puttonen & Pesonen, 2008), and a more generic case that business ethics itself is becoming feminized (Larson and Freeman, 1997) we ask:

Research Question 1: Are female faculty more likely to report adherence to the PRME principles in their own teaching, research, and partnerships?

The scant research somewhat related to faculty race and proclivity to teach responsible management suggests that faculty from outside the white male United States context may also be more sympathetic to responsible management education. Certainly European business schools, reflecting European business leaders and students, favor socially responsible capitalism compared to the more pure market-driven variety (Thomas, Wilson, Thomas, 2013). Extrapolating from Verbos, Gladstone and Kennedy's (2011) case of indigenous peoples, if the norm of self-interest prevalent in Western cultures is not universal, we might expect that those not as embedded in those cultural assumptions might be more open to alternatives to business-as-usual. Yet, it may also be the case that faculty of color in the United States and beyond, facing multiple pressures of dealing with institutional racism, marginalization, alienation (Stanley, 2006; Sue, Rivera, Watkins, Kim, Kim, & Williams, 2011), may also tire of doing the "diversity work" on campus (Garrison-Wade, Diggs, Estrada, & Galindo, 2012). Indeed, research suggests that while faculty

of color may engage in sustainable development goal-friendly research that may benefit communities of color (affirmative action, inequality, ethics and culture), such research is often not rewarded at the tenure decision-level (Stanley, 2006; Dancy & Jean-Marie, 2014). Based on very little research about faculty of color teaching in US business schools we go out on a limb to ask:

Research Question 2: Are faculty of color more likely to report adherence to the PRME principles in their own teaching, research, and partnerships?

Whereas race and gender as predictors of PRME engagement and/or related research and pedagogy around business ethics and responsible management is scarce, there does seem to be a larger literature on which business school disciplines are best suited to take on issues of ethics and responsible management. Marketing (see for example, Shannon and Berl, 1997), accounting (see for example Blanthorne, Kovar, and Fisher, 2007), and management (see for example Pizzolatto and Bevill, 1996) educators have each advocated for their discipline as a potential home for business ethics and/or responsible management. Cagle and Baucus (2006) corroborate the observation that management, marketing and accounting instructors are the most prolific writers on teaching ethics, adding, based on Hess and Norman's (2004) work, that finance journals and textbooks have not kept pace. Keeping with the business ethics theme, Bush, Gutermuth, and West (2009) made note that because of AACSB guidelines, most management textbooks offer at least one chapter devoted to ethics and/or corporate social responsibility. That consideration, along with Bush, et al.'s observation that the Journal of Management Education had devoted an entire special issue to business ethics, suggests that management scholars were becoming accustomed to the mainstreaming of business ethics in the curriculum. At the same time, researchers of PRME initiatives have started to promulgate the idea of cross or transdisciplinary ownership of the principles (see for example, Maloni, Smith, and Napshin, 2012; Verbos and Humphries, 2015; and Tyran, 2017), yet the recency of such proposals likely underscores a more traditional disciplinary division of labor. For these reasons, we ask:

Research Question 3: Are faculty from accounting, management and marketing disciplines more likely to report adherence to the PRME principles in their own teaching, research, and partnerships?

Bringing together the predictors of gender, race, and discipline, we posit the following generic model of adherence to PRME as shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
MODEL OF PREDICTORS OF FACULTY ADHERENCE TO PRME
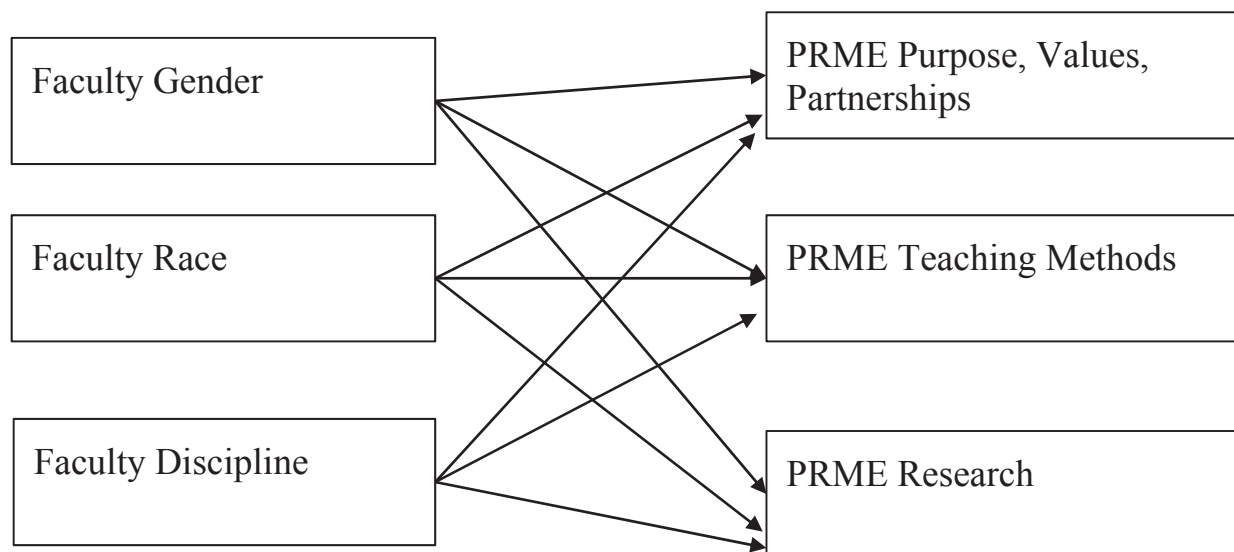
METHODOLOGY

To address our research questions and model we conducted three separate exploratory studies. We chose, as our study site, the AACSB-accredited business school of a small public liberal arts college. The school had become a signatory to PRME one year prior to the launch of the study, but had not yet filed a Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) report, nor had it initiated any strategic or visioning exercise regarding PRME integration. The three studies were approved by a vote of the faculty and were subsequently approved by the college's Institutional Review Board. The first study, designed to measure actual research interests of faculty (the focus of PRME principle 4), centered on data collected from full time faculty online profiles (N=42). Table 1 presents descriptive statistics derived from that study.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF FACULTY RESEARCH INTEREST STUDY

Faculty (N=42) Characteristic	Percent (%)
Female	45.2
Non-White*	45.2
Accounting	21.4
Economics / Finance	26.2
International Business	7.1
Information Technology Management	9.5
Management	26.2
Marketing	9.5
Listing social/ethical issues as research interest	45.2

* Non-white is based on the United States Census Definition of persons NOT having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

The second study involved a content analysis of every digitized syllabi (n=99) of the business school faculty for Fall 2018. To explore the PRME principles embedded in syllabi we drew conceptually upon PRME's partnership with the United Nation's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A summary of descriptive statistics for the study of PRME/SDG in syllabi is provided in Table 2.

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE FACULTY SYLLABI STUDY

Syllabus Author Characteristics	Percent (%)
Female	43.2
Accounting	23.6
Economics / Finance	17.3
International Business	8.2
Information Technology Management	10.9
Management	29.1
Marketing	10.9
Sustainability Development Goal (SDG) Categories	SDG elements in x% of Syllabi (%)
SDG 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17	x = 0 to <10%
SDG 3 - Good health and well-being; SDG 9 - Infrastructure, innovation, industry	x = 10 to 25%
SDG 5 - Gender equality; SDG 8 - Decent work, economic growth	x > 25 to 50%
SDG 16 - Peace, justice, strong institutions	x = 72%

The final study was based on data collected from a 21-item Likert-scale Qualtrics survey, a link to which was distributed electronically to 58 full time and adjunct faculty. The survey was designed to ascertain faculty adherence to each of the 6 PRME principles across different types of programs and courses. Descriptive statistics for the completed responses (N=34; Response rate = 58.6%) to the faculty survey are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE FACULTY PRME STUDY

Question about PRME practice	Average Faculty Response (1-4 scale)
Q1 - Q5: To what extent do courses / programs^ reflect PURPOSE?	2.24 - 2.31
Q6 - Q10: To what extent do courses / programs^ reflect VALUES?	2.03 - 2.24
Q11 - Q15: To what extent do courses / programs^ reflect METHOD?	2.32 - 2.55
Q16: To what extent does your research reflect RESEARCH?	1.93
Q17: To what extent does school's research reflect RESEARCH?	2.11
Q18: To what extent does your practice reflect PARTNERSHIP?	1.83
Q19: To what extent does school's practice reflect PARTNERSHIP?	2.00
Q20: To what extent does your practice reflect DIALOG?	2.00
Q21: To what extent does school's practice reflect DIALOG?	2.22

^ Questions asked about undergraduate and graduate programs and about graduate, required major and elective major courses

ANALYSES

Our first study used faculty online profiles to explore how faculty from different disciplines and different demographic groupings presented their research interests to internal and external audiences. As seen in the chi-square statistical analysis summarized in Table 4, results suggested that female faculty members have a greater likelihood of describing their research interests as having social/societal impact and/or focused on ethics in business/professions, providing support for a positive answer to Research Question 1.

TABLE 4
CORRELATES FOR FACULTY SOCIAL/ETHICS RESEARCH INTEREST

Correlate	χ^2	p
Gender (Female = 1)	4.49	.03**
Race	0.69	.41
Accounting	2.92	.09*
Economics	0.92	.34
Finance	2.25	.13
Information Technology Management	1.23	.27
International Business	0.31	.58
Management	0.94	.33
Marketing	0.00	.96

** = significant at the $p < 0.05$ level
* = significant at the $p < 0.10$ level

Race of faculty member was not significantly statistically related to societal impact research interests, providing no support for a positive answer to Research Question 2. We also looked across disciplines and, although our sample size was small, we were able to observe a significant relationship. We observed that accounting faculty were more statistically significantly more likely to report research interests in ethics/social impact issues than other faculty. Given the small size of the total full-time faculty, we can also make the observation that a preponderance of female faculty in accounting who are interested in ethics were influencing both significant findings. This study is somewhat supportive of a positive answer to Research Question 3, as well.

For the second study carried out, a content analysis of syllabi contents and language showed significant differences between faculty of different disciplines in their level of concerns for and adherence to the PRME principles as demonstrated by the inclusion in syllabi of UN 2030 SDG concepts; looking across the five SDGs for which statistics are given in Table 5, significance levels suggest a positive answer to Research Question 3. In contrast, statistical findings showed no significant difference between genders and across races, providing no support for positive answers to Research Questions 1 and 2 in the syllabi study. Considering these results it may be that a high degree of similarity exists among syllabi even when the gender and race of instructors may differ because of conformance to institutional policy about syllabus design and content for particular courses.

TABLE 5
FACULTY CHARACTERISTICS AND SOCIAL IMPACT (UN 2030 SDGs) IN SYLLABI^

	Gender		Race		Disciplines (AIMM vs EFIs)	
	χ^2	p	χ^2	p	χ^2	p
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	1.36	0.24	0.29	0.59	4.86	0.03*
SDG 5: Gender Equality	1.75	0.19	0.89	0.34	7.85	0.01*
SDG 8: Decent Work, Economic Growth	0.06	0.80	1.35	0.25	9.32	<0.01*
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure	0.82	0.37	0.04	0.84	2.82	0.09
SDG 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions	0.86	0.35	0.85	0.36	27.24	< 0.01*

^ All SDGs not listed here appeared in under 10% of syllabi. Thus, we believe restriction of range issues drove findings of statistical insignificance for all SDGs not listed here.
* = significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

To further explore the results of the third study (faculty responses to a survey), re-visiting Table 3 highlights some interesting variation in where PRME is most reflected in practice. For instance, faculty gave the highest average rankings (2.32 - 2.55) to all questions related to the "Method" PRME principle. These responses stood above and apart from answers to all other questions, with only responses to questions about the "Purpose" PRME principle coming close in the average values of their responses. In contrast, the lowest recorded average score (1.83) in Table 3 was for the "Partnership" PRME principle. Reflecting on these results, it may be that while faculty may perceive freedom to engage in partnerships, at a public liberal arts college with a teaching mission faculty find it difficult to prioritize such external interactions. Looking across the variety of responses summarized in Table 3, we anticipate that faculty adherence to specific PRME principles will probably vary at least somewhat in accordance with a school's mission.

Moving beyond the variation shown in Table 3 to looking at more aggregated patterns, as shown in Table 6 the average faculty response to all survey questions about how practices at the business school reflected PRME was 2.20 (between "to a small extent" and "to some extent"). Thus, a key observation from the third study is the overall sense that responsible management education is, indeed, a school-level concern.

When we parse the data by discipline, a different set of issues comes into focus. First we note the relatively high ranking of PRME reflectivity within information technology management, yet this represents the response of only one particularly PRME-engaged faculty member. All other discipline averages were based on rankings by at least three faculty members.

TABLE 6
AVERAGE ADHERENCE TO PRME BY FACULTY DISCIPLINE

Faculty Discipline	Average Score Across 21 PRME measures (1-4 on a likert scale)*
All Faculty	2.20
Accounting	2.10
Economics	1.60
Finance	1.75
Information Technology Management	3.00
International Business	2.17
Management	2.21
Marketing	2.57

* 1 = not at all; 2 = to a small extent; 3 = to some extent; 4 = to a great extent

Aside from information technology management, we note that marketing, management, and accounting had 3 of the 4 highest averages (International Business rounded out the top 4), which is quite in line with our last research question. Economics and finance faculty averages were between "to no extent" and "to a small extent." However, to better test research question 3 we turned again to chi-square analysis.

TABLE 7
CHI-SQUARE STATISTICS OF FACULTY PRME RESPONSES BY FACULTY DISCIPLINE*

Question about PRME practice	χ^2	p
Q1 - Q5: To what extent do courses / programs^ reflect PURPOSE?	0.52 - 4.84	.91 - .30
Q6 - Q10: To what extent do courses / programs^ reflect VALUES?	1.07 - 10.47	.78 - .03*
Q11 - Q15: To what extent do courses / programs^ reflect METHOD?	2.46 - 12.26	.48 - .01*
Q16: To what extent does your research reflect RESEARCH?	4.36	.36
Q17: To what extent does school's research reflect RESEARCH?	3.35	.34
Q18: To what extent does your practice reflect PARTNERSHIP?	12.56	.01*
Q19: To what extent does school's practice reflect PARTNERSHIP?	9.52	.02*
Q20: To what extent does your practice reflect DIALOG?	12.24	.01*
Q21: To what extent does school's practice reflect DIALOG?	5.88	.12

* Accounting/International Business/Management/Marketing vs. Finance/Economics
^ Questions asked about graduate courses, required undergraduate major courses, and elective undergraduate major courses, as well as about undergraduate and graduate programs

To better address research question 3, we grouped faculty responses into two disciplinary clusters: accounting, international business, management and marketing (AIMM) versus economics and finance (EF). We removed the one information technology management respondent outlier. The subsequent chi-square test unearths statistically strong positive associations between AIMM disciplines and both the "Values" and "Methods" PRME principles for undergraduate required major courses. Findings for these two questions show up as the "endpoints" for two sets of five questions in Table 7. Among the first fifteen questions about PRME practice (Q1 - Q15 in Table 7) no other faculty responses showed up as significantly different across disciplines (ie: questions about undergraduate major elective courses did not show up as significant, nor did questions about graduate courses or about either undergraduate or graduate programs as a whole).

Also significant are the positive associations between the AIMM disciplines and both the "Partnership" and "Dialog" PRME principles. Summing up, faculty in accounting, international business, management, and marketing report greater emphasis on the PRME principles in the values and methods incorporated into their undergraduate required major courses, in contrast to economics and finance faculty. As well, the same accounting, international business, management, and marketing faculty also report greater adherence to the PRME principles of partnering and dialog in their own professional practice. Thus, the chi-square analysis of the faculty survey also provides support for a positive answer to Research Question 3. Ultimately, given the small size of the faculty and concomitant small Ns in our samples, we are quite encouraged that any of our studies yielded statistically significant results in answer to our literature-derived research questions. That each of the small studies yielded some findings of significance--mostly in terms of faculty discipline, though some in terms of gender of researcher/educator--suggests a fruitful path for further study and potential application as we discuss in our conclusion.

DISCUSSION

Three different studies were conducted to explore the impact of gender, race, and discipline of faculty members on the incorporation of social impact into research, incorporation of coverage of the 2030 UN SDGS in syllabi, and adherence to PRME principles in teaching, research and practice. Our analysis revealed the most consistent support for a positive answer to research question 3, suggesting that faculty discipline could be a strong predictor of individual-level faculty support for and practice of the PRME principles, as it was supported across all three studies carried out. Specifically, we noted consistent support for the idea that accounting, international business, management, and marketing faculty would be significantly more likely to support and incorporate PRME principles into their practice than would finance and economics faculty.

Our studies also provided considerable support for a positive answer to research question 1, suggesting that gender of faculty may play a role in support for and implementation of PRME principles. While the (opinion) survey data did not reveal significant gender differences in adherence to PRME principles, observational data of actual practice (research interests and syllabi content) revealed that female faculty were significantly more likely to adopt PRME principles in their work. Throughout our three studies, we found no support for a positive answer to research question 2 that asked whether the race of faculty members would predict adherence to PRME principles. Small sample size may explain some of the lack of significance or, perhaps, faculty race in the business school context is just not particularly predictive of adherence to PRME principles in faculty teaching.

CONCLUSION

Our analytical results show some significant degrees of variability across disciplines, which can help to guide those who would like to support PRME implementation toward those faculty who are most likely to be amenable to such. Our results can also help toward understanding where faculty resistance might be strongest. In addition, findings of high across-individual variability and mixed findings for gender

(significant differences observed) and race (no significant differences observed) highlight possible risks associated with anticipating who is likely to support PRME implementation based on broad stereotypes.

Thinking specifically about administrators, these results can help when considering such issues such as where to direct resources, in which department to house a center focused on the issues connected to PRME, and in efforts to find faculty allies who might be particularly amenable to help with fund-raising connected to PRME initiation and implementation.

Based on the results of this initial study, a useful follow up research project could involve a multi-school replication of the methodology followed here, which would increase the sample size and build more confidence in the generalizability of results. Further avenues for research could also include exploring the relationship between PRME commitment and faculty experience (ie: new to their field vs experienced), plus more deeply exploring the influence on PRME commitment of the degree of alignment between PRME and faculty research interests. Another potentially valuable avenue for future research would be to take a step beyond looking at influences on the level of faculty commitment to PRME and to begin examining ways of directly influencing faculty commitment to PRME through visioning events, structural arrangements, and other approaches.

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