

Does the Relationship of Texas School District Hiring Managers' Age moreover, Experience Impact their Perception of Academic Accomplishments of PK-12 Campus Administrator Applicants?

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This study was designed to test if educational leadership degree earned through an online program was related to Human Resource (HR) Directors' hiring decisions of administrators in Texas public school. The research questions addressed in this study are:

1. What is the relationship of Texas school district hiring managers' age to their perception of academic accomplishments of PK-12 campus administrator applicants?
2. What is the relationship of Texas school district hiring managers' experience to their perception of academic accomplishments of PK-12 campus administrator applicants?

The research design was a cross-sectional survey that was a revised replication of Adams, Lee, and Cortese (2012). The sample is a stratified sampling of Human Resource (HR) Directors or designee for hiring administrators for the school district by Regional Educational Service Centers (ESC). Despite the increasing number and quality of online degrees, many employers are still not willing to hire applicants who earned a degree online (Adams, 2008; Adams, 2016; Adams & DeFleur, 2005; Adams & DeFleur, 2006; Adams, Lee, & Cortese, 2012; Bailey & Flegie, 2012; Birdwell, 2013; Columbaro & Monaghan, 2009; DeFleur & Adams, 2004; Glover, 2005; Guedoo, 2007, 2008; Mandelbaum, 2014; Richardson, McLeod, & Dikkers, 2011; Seibold, 2007; Thompson, 2009; Udegbe, 2012; Zuppek, 2010).

This study will provide information to assist individuals within the area of higher education to gain a perspective of how their online programs will be received in the job market by their graduates. Also, this study allows individuals, to look at data to assist in making degree or certification choices. Furthermore, this study will allow individuals to have a better perspective of how to respond to prospective employers, by knowing the opinions of Human Resource Directors.

Research Design

The cross-sectional survey research design was a replication study of Adams, Lee, and Cortese (2012), with the exception that this study investigated perceptions regarding the hiring of Pk-12 administrators instead of teachers. Additionally, this was a regional study (Texas) instead of a national study. According to Creswell (2012), cross-sectional survey research design is used to discover an individual's opinion, ascertain essential beliefs, and determine attitudes as well as community needs. Babbie (2010) suggested that survey research was one of the best ways for a researcher to collect original data when a population is too large and in too vast of a geographic expanse to observe directly.

Sample

Stratified sampling was used to select a representative sample from the total population of

Texas school districts ($N= 1,012$) to participate in the study. The sample was stratified by educational service center (ESC) region, of which there are 20 within the state of Texas. ESC centers are regionally located throughout the state of Texas and act as a liaison between the individual school districts and the Texas Education Agency (TEA), which is the headquarters for the state of Texas. The ESCs provide support to school districts through workshops and technical assistance of directives by TEA. ESCs also provide school districts with information in an advisory capacity. The actual number of participants who responded to the survey was 115 with a 41.37% response rate of the cross-sectional stratified sampling from the total population of Texas public school. Since this was a blind study, knowing the identity of the school district and location of the participants was impossible. We do know the participants were primarily from rural school districts of Texas by their response to the setting of their school district.

Using Ocher's (2007) sample size formula to maintain proportional representativeness in the stratification process, respondents from 278 districts were found to be an appropriate sample size with a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error. Ocher's formula is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of districts in ESC Region}}{\text{Total number of districts in Texas}} = \frac{x (\text{Number of districts per Region})}{\text{Number of districts in sample}}$$

For the purpose of this study, the respondents were serving as either an HR Director or the designee for hiring administrators within the selected school districts. Table 1 shows the number of schools and required sample size identified for each regional service center needed, based upon Ocher's (2007) formula.

Data Collection Procedures

The survey was administered via the Internet using *SurveyMonkey* and participants were provided an electronic link to the survey in the

initial contact email. Respondents were given the option of exiting the survey or participate. All questions were set up to require a response. Respondents were given the option to make comments on selected questions throughout the survey and were able to make any follow-up comments on the final page of the survey. To increase response rates, a follow-up email letter was sent after one week of the survey being available (Dillman, 2007, 2014).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics, extracting the raw data collected from *SurveyMonkey*, where respondents completed the survey questions. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the sample. Means, standard deviations, and content analysis of comment sections throughout the survey. Chi-square analyses were used to test the relationship between applicant selection and the respondents' demographic traits and their background information as were completed in original survey (Adams et al., 2012). The survey instrument contained both close-ended and open-ended questions. Since the focus of this study was to look at opinions, beliefs, and attitudes, it was important to allow the respondents to maintain anonymity, which the survey questionnaire allowed (Patten, 2001).

Research question one. Research question one asked, "What is the relationship of Texas school district hiring managers' age to their perception of academic accomplishments of P-12 campus administrator applicants?" The data seemed to demonstrate a slight difference of opinion within the age groups. The two middle age groups, 35-44 and 45-54 age groups, had the most open mind toward a non-traditional mode of education, at least in the area of comparison of 100% traditional to hybrid hypothetical hiring scenarios. Looking at the hypothetical hiring scenario of 100% traditional as opposed to 100% online, all four age

groups elucidated their opinion toward traditional results in detail. at 80% or above. Table 1 and Table 2, give the

Table 1: Results of Chi-Square and Descriptive Statistics for Age Group by Applicant for Hiring Situation One

Age Group Response	Hiring Situation One	
	Applicant A (Traditional) % (n)	Applicant B (Fully Online) % (n)
25-34 Age Group	1.74 (2)	0 (0)
35-44 Age Group	18.26 (21)	3.48 (4)
45-54 Age Group	33.91 (39)	10.43 (12)
55+ Age Group	29.57 (34)	2.61 (3)

Note. $\chi^2 = 4.116$, $df = 3$, $p = .249$

Table 2 Results of Chi-Square and Descriptive Statistics for Age Group by Applicant for Hiring Situation Two

Gender Response	Hiring Situation Two	
	Applicant A (Traditional) % (n)	Applicant B (Hybrid) % (n)
25-34 Age Group	1.74 (2)	0 (0)
35-44 Age Group	6.09 (7)	15.65 (18)
45-54 Age Group	17.39 (20)	26.96 (31)
55+ Age Group	20.87 (24)	11.30 (13)

Note. $\chi^2 = 11.851$, $df = 3$, $p = .008$

Research question two. Research question two asked, “What is the relationship of Texas school district hiring managers’ experience to their perception of academic accomplishments of P-12 campus administrator applicants?” When examining the research about experience, which was linked to a survey question which asked if respondents had ever been a principal, data demonstrated that 80% of respondents had principal experience. Furthermore, when broken down by gender, the respondents with principal experience were males by a 10% margin. When hiring, educational administrators having principal experience is an asset, if for nothing more than knowing what behaviors to expect and how to evaluate a candidate’s reply in an interview situation. Table 3 and Table 4 give results in detail.

Table 3 Results of Chi-Square and Descriptive Statistics for Experience as a Principal by Applicant for Hiring Situation One

Principal Experience Response	Hiring Situation One	
	Applicant A (Traditional) % (n)	Applicant B (Fully Online) % (n)
Yes	66.96 (77)	13.04 (15)
No	16.52 (19)	3.48 (4)

Note. $\chi^2 = .016$, $df = 1$, $p = .900$

Table 4 Results of Chi-Square and Descriptive Statistics for Experience as a Principal by Applicant for Hiring Situation Two

Principal Experience Response	Hiring Situation Two	
	Applicant A (Traditional) % (n)	Applicant B (Hybrid) % (n)
Yes	35.65 (41)	44.35 (51)
No	10.43 (12)	9.57 (11)

Note. $\chi^2 = .429$, $df = 1$, $p = .513$

Conclusions

Based on this quantitative, cross-sectional stratified sampling survey, there were several conclusions about the increased number and quality of online degrees and the many employers still not willing to hire applicants who earned an online degree (Adams, 2008l; Adams, 2016; Adams & Defleur, 2005; Adams et al., 2012; Columbaro & Monaghan, 2009; Guedoo, 2007, 2008; Monaghan, 2009; Tharpe, 2014; Thompson, 2009; Udegbe, 2012; Zupek, 2010). The respondents to this study seemed to imply a preference to candidates with traditional coursework; however, the findings appeared to suggest that online learning, or, at least, hybrid coursework, has gained favor with a greater percentage than the Adams et al. (2012) study revealed. Nonetheless, online education coursework and degrees are far from widely accepted within the field of public, not for profit education.

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