

PERCEPTIONS OF HEALTHCARE HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTORS REGARDING
HIRING WITH COLLEGE DEGREES OR WORK EXPERIENCE: A NARRATIVE
QUALITATIVE STUDY

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The format and style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition* except where superseded by directions from the Director of the Doctor of Education in Executive Educational Leadership Program at Houston Baptist University.

DEDICATION

*I dedicate this thesis to my family for nurturing me with affection and love and their
dedicated partnership for success in my life.*

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ Who Strengthens Me

ABSTRACT

Wincher, Lesha. *Perceptions of healthcare human resource directors regarding hiring with college degrees or work experience: A qualitative study*. Doctor of Education (Executive Educational Leadership), May 2023, Houston Baptist University, Houston, Texas.

The purpose of this proposed research study was to examine and analyze the perceptions of Human Resource directors in the Healthcare field regarding hiring with college degrees or work experience, specifically, those in clinical vs. non-clinical positions. This study sought to uncover if employer demand for skills and education influence hiring and wage decisions. Many individuals question if it is necessary to obtain a college degree, given that many notable self-made entrepreneurs who skipped post-secondary education are deemed as successful.

This study examined the hiring process for entry-level hires regarding whether gaining practical work experience is more relevant than having a college degree. The specific variables that were investigated included whether receiving practical work experience is more prevalent in hiring decisions than receiving a college degree.

Specifically, some career fields require more practical work experience before being hired. Some career fields require a college degree and no practical work experience before being hired. This research study examined the hiring processes for entry-level hires who either have a college degree or only work experience. In this study, 75% of the participants stated that it is necessary to obtain a formal education as opposed to not having one. A few participants in this study shared that not only holding a formal education, but also having practical work experience prior to entering in the healthcare field is critical for success.

Key words: higher education, hiring, work experience, college degree, career,
workplace performance

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many young professionals have mastered their career competencies as well as their career resources to achieve early career success (Blokker et al., 2019). Very few healthcare candidates may potentially gain a start with just a high school diploma and on-the-job training; however, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022), obtaining a college degree is becoming more and more common. Given the fact that the workforce is increasingly impacted by the rising cost of education, which impedes degree completion, Capelli (2020) suggested that the question should no longer be “what is the payoff from a college degree,” but rather “what is the payoff from any amount of postsecondary education?” The amount and value of these benefits are still debated but, according to Capelli (2020), employees with at least some postsecondary education earn nearly 18% more than a high school graduate who never attended college. According to Carnevale (2020), 65% of all jobs in the economy require postsecondary education and training beyond high school. Carnevale (2020) asserted, “At the current production rate in higher education, we will fall 5 million short of the workers with postsecondary credentials we will need by 2020” ..

In recent years, policymakers have decided to increase their access to data to take a closer look at how higher education institutions are serving their students. According to Blagg and Blom (2018), measuring value in higher education relative to costs is important. Students need as much information as possible to decide whether and where to go to college. However, measuring the value of college, both at an individual level and an aggregate state level is a complex endeavor.

Policymakers have developed datasets that follow students from grade school into college and career to track how students and institutions perform. Research has shown that approximately 65% of jobs require postsecondary education (Center on Education and the Workforce, 2020). Still, many general managers in companies consider employment during college, internships, and volunteer experience a critical aspect of their hiring process. Employers want to see more than just prior work experience; they want to see degree programs that combine the most prestigious academics as well as work experiences to bridge the gap between employment and education (Cappelli, 2020). According to Cappelli (2020), looking at a more transformative approach, many individuals believe that a college education is useless; on the other hand, some individuals believe receiving a formal education is the key to unlocking a successful future, given that a candidate with a higher intelligence quotient (IQ) score would outperform a candidate with a college degree in most jobs, especially when those jobs require constant learning and thinking. A candidate's academic grades reveal how much he or she has studied, but the performance on an intelligence test shows how well they can learn, reason, and think logically (Cappelli, 2020).

Hart Research Associates (2013) conducted an online survey among 318 employers whose organizations had at least 25 employees and reported that 25 percent or more of their newly hired held either an associate degree from a two-year college or a bachelor's degree from a four-year college. When employees are looking for potential applicants, they tend to place a high value on innovation. According to Hart Research Associates (2013), 95% of employers surveyed said they give preference to hiring college graduates with skills that will allow them to be innovative at work. Nine out of ten

respondents agree that “innovation is essential” to their organization’s success (Hart Research Associates, 2013, p.12). “Pew Research Center and Elon’s Imagining the Internet Center conducted a large-scale canvassing of technologists, scholars, practitioners, strategic thinkers and education leaders in the summer of 2016, asking them to weigh in on the likely future of workplace training” (Anderson & Rainie, 2017, p.18). According to Anderson and Rainie (2017), a considerable number of respondents to this canvassing focused on the likelihood that the best education programs will teach people how to be lifelong learners. Accordingly, alternative credentialing mechanisms will arise to assess and vouch for the skills people acquire along the way. Furthermore, many employers gradually reduce their prejudice in hiring those who studied at a distance and moving in favor of such graduates who, in the workplace, demonstrate greater proactiveness, initiative, discipline, and collaboration (Anderson & Rainie, 2017).

According to Cappelli (2020), more and more students tend to spend more and more money on higher education, and their main goal is largely pragmatic: to boost their employability and be valuable contributors to the economy. Even if the value attached to a university degree is beneficial to those who obtain it, companies can help change the narrative by putting less weight on higher education as a measure of intellectual competence and job potential and instead, approach hiring with more open-mindedness. According to Anderson and Rainie (2017), several respondents argued that job training is not a primary concern at a time when accelerating change in market economies is creating massive economic divides that seem likely to leave many people behind. Some employers would prefer candidates with higher levels of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence determines an individual's ability to identify their emotions. As the impact of artificial

intelligence and disruptive technology grows, candidates who can perform tasks that machines cannot are becoming more valuable — and that underscores the growing importance of soft skills including active listening, work ethic, and adaptability. These are hard for machines to emulate (Cappelli, 2020).

Frequently, individuals take on leadership positions without much formal management training. Furthermore, if more schools invested in teaching skills such as numerous tasks which required teamwork, organizations would have more candidates with leadership potential.

According to Cappelli (2020), intelligence scores are a much better indicator of job potential. If there was an option to pick between a candidate with a college degree and a higher intelligence score, one can expect the latter to outperform the former in most jobs, particularly when those jobs require constant thinking and learning. Academic grades indicate how much a candidate has studied, but their performance on an intelligence test reflects their actual ability to learn, reason, and think logically (Cappelli, 2020). According to Carnevale et al. (2020), 35% of the job openings will require at least a bachelor's degree, 30% will require some college or an associate degree, and 36% will not require education beyond high school. "The United States will fall short by 5 million workers with post-secondary education – at the current production rate – by 2020" (Carnevale, 2020). Carnevale (2020) reported, "In 1973, workers with postsecondary education held only 28% of jobs; by comparison, they held 59% of jobs in 2010 and will hold 65% of jobs in 2020" (p. 10).

Background of the Study

According to Weiss (2014), graduates from higher education often enter the labor market with considerable work experience. “Even though field-related and voluntary work experience help graduates realize a fast integration into the labor market, it is not linked to higher chances for entering a favorable class position or higher wages in the long run” (Weiss et al., 2014, p.56). These results referencing field-related and voluntary work experience have provided evidence for the signaling explanation of educational benefits in the labor market rather than the human capital explanation (Weiss et al., 2014). With education becoming a prestigious recognition worldwide, there have been very competitive job placements among college graduates that are becoming more and more difficult for students to clinch the dream career position (Weiss et al., 2014). According to Weiss et al. (2014), a candidate’s work experience productivity is typically determined by his or her knowledge and skills. According to Vedder (2019), college is a necessity that allows individuals to secure their first critical job along with networking, and then propels them forward.

Statement of the Problem

The general problem to be addressed in this study is if there is a need for a formal college education or hands-on work experience. [Click here to enter text.](#)

According to Gould (2019), the steep and rising wage inequality can be blamed on the increasing demand for employees with a high level of educational achievements. The more education an individual has, the more they will be compensated with a fair and competitive salary than their peers. However, further research has shown that increasing pay has little to do with a return on education (Gould, 2019, p.5). It is obvious that the

gains in college wage premiums from the years 2000 to 2018 have been modest and have decreased compared to the steady growth of the 95/50 wage gap (Gould, 2019).

According to Cappelli (2019), many new hiring practices that have been set in place have not been proven to show if they produce satisfactory hires or not.

While the attainment of higher education pays off for many individuals, the exact returns on education are highly uncertain and may evolve over time.

The increase to pay employees from a four-year college degree is known as the college premium. (Ma, 2019, p. 9)

Investing in one's career through education may possibly lead to career success and greater employability. In contrast, the positive and negative unexpected events that individuals encounter on their career path may have minimal correlation to the individual's education (Blokker et al., 2019). Glied & Ma (as cited in Reisman, 2015) stated "The average nurse may earn around 40% more than a comparable worker in a different occupational setting." According to the National Library of Medicine (2011), healthcare education at all levels must be able to provide a clearer understanding of experience in care management, systems-level change management, as well as quality improvement. All licensing and educational institutions must be able to mandate the mastery of core skills as well as the completion of degree programs. The specific problem examines and analyzes the reasons for the wage gap in healthcare by exploring employers' demand for skills and education based on the type of healthcare job.

According to Health Management (2017), about 75% of CEOs have mentioned that there is a lack of individuals who do not have enough experience or have not been trained in

the healthcare environment. There is a need to raise more awareness that does not come to an end when individuals are in the midst of their careers.

The specific problem to be addressed in this study is it is unknown if the wage gap in healthcare is supported by a growing employer demand for skills and education based on type of healthcare position.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine and analyze the perceptions of Human Resource directors in the Healthcare field regarding hiring with college degrees or work experience; specifically, those in clinical vs. non-clinical positions. This study sought to uncover if employer demand for skills and education influence hiring and wage decisions.

According to Raychelle Lohmann of Psychology Today (2018), statistical studies have shown that for an individual to be successful in the real world, they must attend college and obtain a degree. The vast youth population is constantly hearing these statements throughout adolescence. Three of the fastest-growing occupations – STEM, healthcare professional, and community services – also have the highest demand for postsecondary education and training (Carnevale, 2020). According to employers, college graduates are more likely to possess the skills and preparation necessary for entry-level positions than for advancement. More than half of employers (56 percent) are satisfied with the efforts made by colleges and universities to prepare graduates for success in the workplace, but more than two in five feel there is room for improvement (Hart Research Associates, 2013). This study provides future planning for applicants in regard to choosing an occupation.

Research Questions

This research study focused on the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of hiring managers about the benefits of formal higher education as it relates to fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare system?
2. What are the perceptions of hiring managers about the notion of hiring healthcare workers based on their on-the-job training, skills developed from prior work experiences, and soft skills as opposed to requiring a college degree?

Significance of the Study

This research provided insight into the hiring practices of healthcare Human Resource directors and the importance of work experience or college experience in their hiring decisions. Blokker et al. (2019) noted,

Young professionals have more of the ability to develop their employability based upon the career lessons that they have encountered. In this study, the literature which has been placed around employability is filling theoretical gaps. Firstly, by contributing to the debate surrounding scholarly predictors around young professionals' employability by examining the role of their career competencies in achieving both objective and subjective career success. (p. 3)

Marcus (2022) stated society would be less healthy if fewer people attended college. The economy would suffer as well. Because there will be fewer people in high-paying jobs, it will be harder to fill the future jobs. Tax revenues will also go down, and innovation will be more difficult to achieve (Marcus, 2022).

As noted by Bell (2010),

Women received most degrees awarded at the associate (60%), bachelor's (57%), and master's (59%) level; however, men continue to earn the majority of professional (54%) and doctoral degrees (55%). Further, African Americans and Hispanics are underrepresented in all levels of the educational pipeline. (Bell, 2010, p.21)

According to Perna (2003), an increase in lifetime earnings is the most easily observed benefit to individuals who invest in higher education.

Definitions of Terms

College Degree - A college degree is a two-year associate degree or a four-year program in a specific academic discipline requiring full-time academic college work (USNEI, 2008).

Higher educational degree- According to Encyclopaedia Britannica (2023), a form of education is provided by a postsecondary institution. Higher educational establishments include colleges and universities, and institutions in which professional schools provide certifications in medicine, business, art, and law.

Hiring – Cambridge English Dictionary (2023) states that hiring is the act of employing an individual.

Soft Skills -according to SHRM (2022) skills are made up of personality traits as well as work habits that includes: critical thinking, perseverance and communication, and collaboration.

Work experience – Cambridge (2020) explains that work experience is gained when an individual has had a job or the type of work that they have done in the past.

Workplace Performance – A type of evaluation indicating how well an employee is executing expected related work (What is Work Performance, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The human capital theory focuses on the idealization of humans increasing their productivity as well as efficiency through the lenses of education and training (Health Assured, 2021). According to Schultz (1979), this theory interprets the investment that is placed in education as well as training of the individuals. Shultz (1979) states that the abilities can be improved through education as well as training that enforces effected change in the performance of jobs. In other words, education, both quantity and quality, and on-the-job training should increase productivity, thus raising earnings as well (Schultz, 1979). Moreover, the human capital theory assumes that individuals will choose education among alternative investments if their anticipated lifetime earnings exceed their anticipated education costs by an amount sufficient to yield a rate of return greater than anticipated costs (Bell, 2010).

Limitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated that limitations are the factors that can potentially influence the interpretation of the findings. Only 15 HR directors participated in this study; therefore, the results may not be generalizable to all HR directors. The interviews only provided personal perceptions about hiring practices, and those perceptions are based on individual experiences, and may not share a holistic picture of the interviewee's companies hiring practices and policies.

Delimitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated that “delimitations are self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study.” Fifteen Human Resource (HR) directors in the healthcare field participated in this study. The 15 Human Resource directors were from the southeast area of Texas. Due to the small number of participants involved in this study, the results cannot be generalized to all healthcare organizations.

Assumptions

This study included the following assumptions: (1) individuals were honest in answering the questionnaires, (2) the participants fully understood the questions they were asked, and (3) It is an underlying assumption that those in clinical positions will more than likely need to have a college degree in the healthcare field.

Organization of the Study

This research study is presented in five chapters. Chapter I includes the study's background, statement of the problem, its purpose, its significance, definition of terms, theoretical framework, research questions, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions. Chapter II of the research includes a review of the current literature related to the following topics: work experience versus (vs.) formal higher education, increase in critical thinking skills, measuring success between degree and work experience, networking experience in higher education vs. general work experience, learn, work, or both. Chapter III describes the methodology that was used for this research study, as well as the study participants, analysis method, and ethical concerns. Chapter IV includes the study's findings, including demographic information, testing the research questions, and the results of the data analysis for the research questions. Chapter V includes a summary

of the research study, a discussion of the findings, implications for theory and practice, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review was to review perceptions of Healthcare Human Resource (HR) directors regarding hiring with college degrees or work experience. This literature review focuses on exploring employers' demand for skills and education based on the type of healthcare jobs, specifically, employer demand for skills and education decisions.

Data shows that the demand for college graduates has been decreasing since the mid-1990s. "The changes in skills that employers are now requiring have been increasing more in the 2000s than it has been in the earlier decades. There have been increases in inequality that has occurred over the past 18 years that researchers could not explain by what employers have been facing due to an increase in shortage of college graduates that have correlated to wage inequalities" (Gould, 2019, p.6).

Many business scholars have studied the concept of employability and the skills employees need to secure jobs within their chosen field (Lacatus & Staiculescu, 2020). Soft skills are an important part of employability. According to Lacatus and Staiculescu (2020), there is a general understanding among researchers that "in employers' opinion, university graduates do not have adequate developed soft skills that are directly related with their employability. Click here to enter text. Soft skills include "critical thinking, problem solving, ability to analyze and synthesize communication, together with capacity to learn" (Lacatus & Staiculescu, 2020, p. 7). Furthermore, employees must demonstrate an ability to collaborate, set goals, and achieve outcomes. Lacatus and Staiculescu (2020)

warned that effective collaboration and goal achievement depend on clearly defined roles for all team members.

Formal vs. Informal Education

In this study, formal vs. informal education depends on each individual, and what route they are taking for the chosen career occupation. According to Through Education (2020), formal education is a structured form of learning that takes place in standardized learning institutions such as: schools, colleges, and universities. Informal education is learning that takes place outside of the classroom taught by individuals who are not necessarily licensed to teach.

Non-Clinical vs. Clinical Job Positions

The hiring process for non-clinical vs. clinical job positions can vary depending on the position (as well as the requirements), which plays a role in the hiring process. Non-clinical job positions include: coders and billers, transcribers, hospital executives, receptionists, biomedical technicians, and any individual who works behind the scenes at hospitals such as human resources (Through Education, 2020). Clinical job positions include: physicians, hospitalist, nurse practitioners, surgical assistant, and nursing assistants (Santiago, 2020). “Low wages and part-time status keep roughly half of nursing assistants and home aides living in or near poverty. Many low-wage healthcare workers are independent contractors rather than employees” (Dermott, 2020, p.1). Dermott (2020) mentioned that 79% of employees in health services were women, and that healthcare work is typically undervalued due to it being associated with “women’s work”. Health care workers make up to 12% of the U.S. population as it relates to the labor force (Dermott, 2020). Healthcare skills needed in the healthcare field vary from the different

healthcare occupations. Healthcare administrators, for example, require at least a bachelor's degree at the very minimum. Although healthcare administrators do not work directly with patients, they do work very closely with all members of the healthcare team such as doctors, nurses, and technologists (Goodwin University, 2019).

Higher Education

Cahalan (2018) stated indicators of higher education equity in The United States have provided a great amount of insight, as well as a closer approach on the different trends that are seen in higher education. Skills will soon become even more necessary than degrees in the future, no matter what type of further education is (Kasriel, 2018).

According to Payton (2020), occupations that require more advanced degrees are more likely to prefer also to require intense qualifications, even though years of experience, as well as obtaining at least a bachelor's degree, is a basic requirement. It is necessary that one's resumé is aligned specifically with the type of job for which that applicant is applying.

Health Care Job Requirements

A wide variety of some of the most prestigious jobs in the healthcare field will experience rapid growth within the health care field. Many individuals can work as a medical or even a nursing assistant with only a certification or even an associate degree (Scholl, 2022). Furthermore, with a bachelor's or master's degree, individuals can work as registered nurses or even in more technical roles like laboratory technicians. Positions in occupational therapy and physical therapy are increasing at all all-time highs. However, a graduate degree can play a key role in qualifying candidates for more leadership positions like nursing home or hospital administrators (Scholl, 2022).

Health Care Hiring Practices

One of the first steps healthcare human resource directors proceed to take when hiring is understanding what the workforce needs to achieve their goals. One of the main hiring practices that is initiated is what attributes a potential employee needs to execute the solutions at hand (Butler & Kangovi, 2019).

Degree Inflation

Degree inflation has had one of the biggest effects on paying off a college degree. The main concept is that the wage premium for college graduates had quickly come to the rise when college degrees became a requirement for more workplaces. According to Cappelli (2020), the college wage premium in the United States was at the top of the ranking poll compared many other countries. While it is not a big deal about education vs. experience, when looking at an applicant's career progression, they complement one another. Many workplaces have become incredibly competitive. According to Blagg and Blom (2018), many students take longer than the designated two years to complete an associate degree or four years to earn a bachelor's degree, and some may never obtain a higher education credential. Students who drop out of school with a year or less remaining could earn 13 percent less than students who complete the degree (Blag & Blom, 2018).

Moreover, students taking out loans to pay for school may magnify the risk of noncompletion, finding themselves potentially financially worse off than if they had not attended (Blag & Blom, 2018). Generally, prospective students know that different degrees can lead to different earnings returns.

Graduate Employability

Currently, there is no uniform theory of employability. This is due to complexity, situational factors, the changing labor market, graduate's interest and attitudes, and their professional focus. Clarke (2017) proposed a comprehensive model of employability of graduates. Clarke (2017) further stated that while graduate employability primarily deals with aspects of human capital, such as knowledge, skills, and processes, the less specific and wider understanding of employability refers to individual variables (personality, attitudes, career-oriented behavior), labor market variables, and current employment. Therefore, Clarke (2017) proposed an integrated model of graduate employability, recognizing six key dimensions: human capital (skills, competencies, work experience), social capital (networks, social class, university ranking), individual behaviors (career self-management, career-building skills), individual attributes (personality variables, adaptability, flexibility), labor market (supply factors, demand factors), and perceived employability. This model helps identify the areas of individual responsibilities of students and graduates and those of cooperation between universities, employers, and industry (Lisá et al., 2019). According to Pew Research Center (2016), two-thirds of Americans (67%) think a traditional four-year degree prepares students at least somewhat well for a well-paying job in today's economy, but just 16% say it is excellent, and 29% say it is not very good. Among Americans, 58% think two-year community college degrees prepare students well for a job at a high-paying company, but 36% say they do not (Pew Research Center, 2016). Creating experiential learning opportunities right into an academic program is critical, as learners apply classroom skills to solve real-world problems for real employers (Knerl, 2019). College education has become so expensive

that the debt incurred by students is not outweighed by their future earning potential (Kasriel, 2018). The most common method for assessing employability skills is self-assessment, specifically generic and discipline-specific skills. Graduates' personal attributes represent their potential as individuals (Lisá et al., 2019).

Soft Skills

Soft skills are necessary to succeed in higher education, the workforce, and life (Browne, 2021). According to Hart Research Associates (2013), strong communication both verbally and written must be one of the most valuable soft skills obtained in new hires by employers. "Employers are looking for young professionals who are able to achieve the English language advanced enough to maintain as well as mold business relationships that primarily focus on superior communication skills" (Stewart, 2019, p. 277).

93% of freelancers who hold a college degree from a four-year university say that their skills were very useful as compared to the 79% who mention that their college degree was useful in the work that they currently perform (Kasriel, 2018). According to Mueller (2020), a four-year college degree program that is composed of top academics with real workplace experience is actually the best route to take when it comes to bridging the gap of education and employment. Students are able to obtain their academic credentials at the exact same time as they are getting and developing authentic workplace experience that will help them stand out as top employment candidates (Knerl, 2019). "However, earning a doctoral degree can earn an employee less than having a professional degree. This could be a result of many Ph.D.'s going the route of research as well as teaching, where salaries are oftentimes lower" (Mueller, 2020, p.8).

Allison et al. (2020) emphasized that many workplaces all around have been increasing tremendously and becoming more and more competitive. Employers have often had to increase their expectations and become more competitive in order to create more attractive job opportunities for candidates. Employers have also increased their expectations even for entry-level applicants, making it a requirement to obtain more certifications, experiences, and higher education. Many applicants have also had to compete even for a short-term employment contract to stay afloat due to the current economy. Being able to educate students on various marketing strategies in order to convert themselves to being more employable for higher salary positions has been a struggle. “For decades, at many companies that I worked for, I was not allowed to hire unless somebody had a four-year degree” (Lanahan, 2019, p.5). According to Torpey & Watson (2014), 6% of jobs in the United States had been where occupations required an applicant to have postsecondary education but did not have to have a four-year degree. Typically, this level of education, a four-year degree, is likely to be required for 39 career fields as listed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Becoming More Employable

Many prospective students know that different degrees can produce different earnings by obtaining a bachelor’s degree.

Recipients who have bachelor’s degrees will typically have higher earnings than an associate degree recipient. Oftentimes, the relationship between a student’s, major and institution can be complex, and some degree majors may not pay off until later in life, or ever (Blagg & Blom, 2018, p.18).

Applicants should be able to display their workplace experience and their college degree. This allows for the applicants to successfully find employment in their career field and continue to make advances and receive promotions within the field.

Candidates should be able to show not only their work experience, but also, their degree as well. This will help equip the candidate to perform exceedingly in the job/career that they are going for. This particular combination would detail the student taking a more cautionary route through tertiary education have time available for employment. Not only will this help an individual see the outstanding value of their educational achievements, but also play a huge role in their everyday lives. (Hossain, 2019, p. 3)

Today the problem has become even more complex because of growing globalization, ongoing computerization, and increasing competition. The relevance and quality of a graduate's education can significantly affect finding successful employment. In many cases, the educational system has not kept up with modern industrial trends, leaving graduates ill-equipped to compete for jobs (Perig et al., 2020).

Critical Thinking Skills

According to Increasing Students Critical Thinking Skills (Sari, 2021), critical thinking skills have been instilled in school learning since 2013 while implementing the national curriculum. Individuals feel the importance of learning for their development, for example, by having an interest in science and an orientation toward learning knowledge and skills related to science.

“External factors can influence self-motivated people, such as teacher quality, material weight, learning methods, classroom conditions, and facilities that support learning” (Sari et al., 2021, p. 2).

“Skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, ability to analyze and synthesize information, creativity, and innovation, cooperation and teamwork, communication, together with the capacity to learn, are extremely relevant not for finding a first job only but also for the professional development of employed persons” (Lacatus & Staiculescu, 2020, p. 4).

According to Hart Research Associates (2013), nearly all those surveyed (93 percent) agreed that a candidate has demonstrated capacity to think critically, ability to communicate, solving critical thinking problems, are more important components than their undergraduate degree. Nine out of 10 who were featured in a survey explained that it was very important that the individuals with whom they hire are able to demonstrate the right judgement that includes: integrity, intercultural skills, as well as understanding the capacity for continued education (Hart Research Associates, 2013). Hart Research Associates (2013), explained that more than three in four employers said they wanted colleges to emphasize helping students develop five key learning outcomes, including critical thinking, complex problem solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge in real-world settings. Many employers have partnered with higher educational institutions to prepare students for their success in the workplace. Four-year degrees take longer to fill jobs, and degree-holders change jobs more quickly. Nonetheless, according to Harvard’s survey of 600 business and human resource leaders,

61 percent of respondents reported tossing resumés without four-year degrees, even if the applicant was qualified (Lanahan, 2019).

Issues In Education

This also holds many students back who want to obtain a bachelor's degree due to not having the financial ability to enroll into college. Furthermore, due to many up-front fees with government-assisted bank loans, it could assist in providing more assistance to students without heavily relying on the financials they may not have.

The Chronicle of Higher Education (2022) and Pew Research (2016) have conducted several studies on the perspectives of college presidents on key issues facing higher education in America. In their survey of four-year college presidents (Selingo, 2017), the Chronicle questioned the presidents on areas including budget concerns and allocations, the value of America's higher education system, how well students are prepared to enter the job market, and their sense of preparedness for their role. Pew Research (2016) surveyed both college presidents and the general public to ascertain their perspective on areas including cost and value and the purpose of attending college. Presidents were questioned particularly on their perspective of student preparedness and who should pay for college. According to What America Needs To Know About High Education Redesign (2014) also sought to understand public opinion on current higher education issues. With assistance through Gallup, Lumina Foundation (2013) surveyed households to gain opinions on the following constructs: quality of higher education, the importance of earning a degree, college affordability, and barriers to access, among others. "The results of their survey demonstrated that while most respondents recognized

the value in earning a degree, a significant percentage of individuals without degrees indicated that it is unlikely that they would return to school to earn a degree” (Kaushal, 2020, p.55).

The worldwide surge in private higher education and the financing models for this sector has important implications for students and society. These trends have substantially led to a high increase in private universities as well as other post-secondary institutions. The increasing class sizes and teaching loads, substituting lower-cost part-time faculty for higher-cost full-time academic staff are problematic and heavily contested (Altbach et al., 2009).

According to Lisá et al. (2019), college graduates had overestimated the actual level of their skills as compared to their assessments that employers had taken. Even though many of the graduates were lacking practical skills, their salary expectations had been higher than those that were actually offered by employers. Many employers think that university students should directly learn in the field. However, many students expect schools to be more involved with their industry and employers.

A student’s certainty finds an honest job goes up hugely once he graduates not solely as an honest student, however one with expertise in his desired field. All graduate engineers need “on-the-job training” before turning into helpful to a corporation. A graduate is also skilled in arithmetic, physics, chemistry, mechanics, or technology, however till he will demonstrate that he will produce or accomplish one thing helpful by applying his data, he’s of very little use to the corporate. (Perig et al., 2020, p. 23)

Learn, Work, or Both?

According to Sydney Freeman (2012), the role of assessment and accountability in higher education doctoral programs is a much-needed topic. The actuality of research studies circling preparational leadership programs in higher education. The focus, according to Freeman (2012), is on being able to assess student learning outcomes.

During an extensive meta-analytic review that showed the actual correlation between both education levels and job performance has turned out to be weak. The research has displayed and demonstrated that intelligence scores are much of a greater indicator of a great deal of job potential (Butler, 2019, p. 2).

Americans with a four-year college degree are generally no more positive – or negative – than those with less education about the relationship between a four-year degree and a well-paying job:

13% of those with a bachelor's degree or more education say a four-year degree prepares people very well, as do 11% of those with a two-year associate degree, 12% of those with some college experience but no degree, and 17% of those with a high school diploma. Among those who did not complete high school, however, 40% believe that a four-year college degree does a very good job of preparing people for a well-paying job. (Pew Research Center, 2016, p. 35)

In the absence of basic familiarity, these applicants will require more extensive training, resulting in higher long-term costs. These entry-level jobs typically have lower starting wages and fewer benefits (Payton, 2020).

Therefore, it is a rather generally known “secret” that only about one-third or one-quarter of engineering graduates can pursue their professional employment in the

engineering sphere immediately after university graduation. The truth is that several years after university graduation, there are only occasional cases of successful continuing engineering employment of university graduates in a field related to their graduation major. As a result, the long-term yield of university efficiency is 5–20% of successful targeted employment of engineering graduates. For example, Sudakova and Mehedyuniuk (2016) reported that only 42% of university graduates in Ukraine have obtained specialized employment related to their university degree major (Perig et al., 2020, p.21).

A specific work placement is a chance to gain more insight into an applicant's chosen field. Applicants will be exposed to modern techniques and industrial practices. An important lesson is networking, which will prove invaluable in an applicant getting their first job and throughout your career. Study opportunities not only in an applicant's organization, but also through meetings with clients, and professional organizations can be advantageous (Emerald Publishing, 2021).

Hiring candidates who already have skills, in turn, becomes more important once one no longer has training and apprenticeship programs as an alternative (Cappelli, 2015).

Higher Education Degree

Even a higher education diploma does not guarantee sustainable employment for a young professional specialist upon university graduation. An ongoing need for guaranteed gainful employment is not only a problem of individual graduates and universities, but this burden also impacts the socio-economic condition of modern society itself (Perig et al., 2020). Furthermore, adults younger than 50 are much more likely than

older adults to have refrained from applying for a job they felt they were qualified for because they did not meet the formal educational requirements (Pew Research Center, 2016). About four in 10 non-college graduates ages 18 to 29 (41%) and ages 30 to 49 (44%) say this has happened, compared with 31% of those ages 50 to 64 and just 12% of those 65 and older (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Acemoglu & Autor (2012) make a convincing case that the kind of technological innovations that have revolutionized the economy over the last century have raised the demand for people with ever more years of formal schooling. Demand has won the latest round in the race between the demand for educated labor and the supply (Archibald & Feldman, 2012).

Those with a postgraduate or professional degree are more likely to say that their college education was very useful compared with four-year degree holders, who are in turn more likely than those with a two-year associate degree to say that their education was very useful across each of these measures (Pew Research Center, 2016).

As mentioned in the survey results from Lumina Foundation Gallup Poll (2013), public opinion still considers earning a college degree as one necessary foundation on which to build a successful livelihood. This pattern tends to rely on peers rather than government authorities to break from the past. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes project (2006) focused on the interaction between student and faculty, career expectations, completion, and success in finding a job (Altbach et al., 2009).

Increase in Earnings

The vast increase of earnings that are associated with higher education focuses on aggregates for all individuals who graduate from college. Further, African Americans and Hispanics are underrepresented in all levels of the educational pipeline (Perna, 2003). The societal benefits of investing in higher education are fundamental to the wellbeing of our society; however, they receive less attention than the individual benefits.

On average, the salary for individuals who attained a graduate degree with work experience between one to six years was \$65,244. The average salary for individuals who attained a graduate degree and whose work experience was seven to twenty-eight years was \$54,010 (Bell, 2020, p.20). The comparison for individuals who attained a graduate degree and whose work experience was one to six years compared to those who attained a graduate degree and whose work experience was seven to twenty-eight years was statistically significant ($t=4.28$, $p < .05$) (Bell, 2010).

Moreover, graduates who desperately want a job are usually willing to say or do anything necessary to get a job. However, the student does not know any truth about the company, and the company knows very little about the graduate (Perig et al., 2020).

While 35% think its main purpose should be to help students grow and develop personally and intellectually and 13% volunteer that these objectives are equally important. The public's views on this issue have shifted slightly in favor of skills development since Pew Research Center asked this question in 2011. At that point, 47% said the main purpose of college should be to teach specific skills and knowledge, and 39% said it should be to promote personal and intellectual growth. (Pew Research Center, 2016, p. 28)

Consequently, a university education is desirable for job opportunities. People with a university education will probably have more chances to find a job and to earn more income (Lacatus & Staiculescu, 2020). From 2010 to 2014, the proportion of listings asking for a four-year degree dipped a quarter of a percentage point for every 1 percent drop in a region's unemployment rate (Lanahan, 2019). On average, the salary for those individuals who have obtained a bachelor's degree as compared to those who have one to six years of work experience was \$57,474. As a result, there was no direct comparison with those who have a baccalaureate and work experience that was relevant (Bell, 2010).

A substantially larger share of the public has positive attitudes towards certification programs in a professional, technical, or vocational field in the context of workforce development (Pew Research Center, 2016). Some 78% of Americans think that these programs prepare students well for a job in today's economy, including 26% who think they prepare students very well. Just roughly one-in-five (19%) think they do not prepare students well. It is important to note, however, that respondents were not asked about the effectiveness of certification programs instead of a college education (Pew Research Center, 2016). According to Pew Research Center (2016), positive assessments of certificate programs have shown to be a way to prepare workers in today's society for those who did not obtain a high school diploma. One-third of Americans without a bachelor's degree have elected to not apply for a job they felt they were qualified for because it required a four-year degree (Pew Research Center, 2016). While it is technically possible to start a business without a college education, one must consider whether it is the right path for one's future. It is important to answer several key

questions before deciding to start a business versus pursuing higher education (Schooley, 2019).

Furthermore, there are many college graduates that share their own educational experience in positive terms, the public as a whole – including a substantial share of college graduates – expresses concern regarding the seriousness in which different higher educational institutions are preparing their students for their future in the workplace.

There are about 15% of Americans who believe that obtaining a four-year college degree prepares students in the future in a great way to obtain a high-paying job in today's economy. It is mentioned that about 51% explain that this type of degree prepares students in an "ok" way. Some 12% think that a two-year associate degree prepares students very well (46% say somewhat well), and 26% feel that certification programs in a professional, technical, or vocational field prepare students very well (52% say somewhat well). (Pew Research Center, 2016, p.52)

Earnings differentials by student demographics are evident when examining overall earnings six years after students first enter higher education (College Scorecard, 2017). These earnings reflect the institutions and majors' students select based on their skills (and completion of the credentials) and personal preferences and potential (dis) advantages in the labor market (Federal Data to Measure and Improve the Performance of US Institutions, 2015). Eighteen percent of employed male students report making more than \$50,000 in personal income six years after entering higher education, and just 7 percent of employed students report making as much (Dickler, 2022). Without any controls for personal background or institution, employed White and Asian students are

likely to earn more six years after entering higher education than Black and Hispanic students (Blagg & Blom, 2018).

Traditional Job Interview

Studies from as early as 1915 revealed that ancient interviews do not afford correct assessments concerning the longer-term success of candidates (Buckley, 1971). Even the terribly early researchers found that interviews were prophetic of very little over an applicant's look, manners, and likability (Buckley, 1917). This lack of validity may be a result of a mix of things together enquirer bias and the impact of first impressions, that area unit usually the first determinants of the victorious human (Kimbrel, 2019).

Americans who have engaged in some type of formal education beyond high school (short of obtaining a bachelor's degree) are particularly likely to believe they have been adversely affected by difficult requirements that have been required as individuals work their way up the educational ladder (Pew Research Center, 2016, p.1).

According to Pew Research, some 25% of Americans with a high school diploma or less and no additional schooling beyond that have not applied for a job because of a bachelor's degree requirement. However, that figure rises to 34% among those with a high school diploma plus additional vocational schooling, 38% among those with some college experience but no degree, and 44% among those with a two-year associate degree. Put somewhat differently, as people receive additional formal education without actually obtaining a bachelor's degree, they may develop relevant skills without the on-paper credentials to match (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Entrepreneurship

It is not a requirement to have a college degree to start a business; however, it may be beneficial to the entrepreneur. Especially for more technical and complex industries, a college degree can be very beneficial, sometimes even necessary, for success. If one has little to no knowledge about how business works or plans on managing complex documents and processes, it may be in the entrepreneur's interest to brush up on related skills with a few college courses (Schooley, 2019).

Furthermore, if an individual is unsure if they can start a business without obtaining a degree, it is critical to consider which industry you are looking to get into in order to gain experience. It is recommended volunteering with someone in the field before starting your own business to learn if you like the industry, people, hours, etc. People in some industries benefit from an apprenticeship or an internship (Schooley, 2019).

Unemployment

A major benefit of education in the labor market is the lower risk of unemployment at higher levels of education. To better understand this, many aspects of unemployment that combine to produce the usually reported unemployment rates should be analyzed.

By reducing the incidence of unemployment, that is, of the probability of experiencing unemployment in a calendar period, is far more important than the reduced time stamps of unemployment that has created different educational differences that has vastly effected unemployment rates. Although this is not a new or surprising analysis, the components and factors that were included in the

incidence and duration of the unemployment data has yielded much insight into the relevant behaviors of both workers and firms in the labor market. (Mincer, 1991, p.22)

According to Zickuhr (2022), the available evidence does not support the idea that there are serious skill gaps or skill shortages in the U.S. labor force. Constantly high levels of unemployment have reflected the fact that many employers still outnumber available job openings. It is in fact true that a larger supply of cheaper labor would be useful to employers. However, it is not clear that such a situation would be useful for the country (Cappelli, 2015).

Conclusions

Society has held the importance of obtaining a college degree very critical in the workplace. “The research is detailed that the value of a degree is increasing, but public skepticism of the value is growing at the same time” (Mrig & Sanaghan, 2018, p.45).

Although this answer is sufficient, some analysts claim, in addition, that school education is a complementary factor to job training in producing human capital. In other words, education enhances the productivity of job training at work. It is clear, however, that schooling can also be a substitute for job training: thus, the decline in apprenticeships has been attributed to growth in educational levels over the long run. (Mincer, 1991, p.10)

According to Mincer (1974), there has been a correlation in which details the earnings as well as schooling that would offset work experience if it came down to postschool investment costs. Net earnings are less than gross earnings, but both rise as postschool investments cumulate. After some years, therefore, net earnings begin to

exceed the level of initial gross earnings. Hence, this point is reached before the first decade of experience is over. This is also the approximate time when we observe the highest correlation between earnings and schooling (Mincer, 1974).

In explaining the lesser conditional unemployment of educated workers and the somewhat shorter duration of their unemployment, indirect evidence is provided that (1) costs of on-the-job search for new employment relative to costs of searching while unemployed are lower for more educated workers; (2) that these workers are also more efficient in acquiring and processing job search information; and (3) that firms and workers search more intensively to fill more skilled vacancies (Mincer, 1991).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research study was to examine and analyze the perceptions of Human Resource directors in the healthcare field regarding hiring with college degrees or work experience; specifically, those in clinical vs. non-clinical positions. This study sought to uncover if employer demand for skills and education influence hiring and wage decisions.

This chapter contains a presentation of the methodology that was used to test the research questions identified in Chapter 1. The study included gathering the perceptions of managers about the factors used to determine employability when selecting candidates for nonclinical and clinical healthcare positions.

A vastly widening wage inequality gap between nonclinical and clinical employees in the healthcare industry is fueled by an increasing demand for employees who have obtained a high level of educational achievement. Additionally, within each sector (nonclinical and clinical), there are wage differences based on education that may contribute to a wage disparity among employees performing similar tasks (Barry, 2021). For example, Barry (2021) pointed to the wage gap between registered nurses and certified nursing assistants: “While increased requirements can raise salaries for highly experienced registered nurses, such credentials do little for improving the pay of certified nursing assistants” (p. 2). A recent article published by Psychology Today (Lohmann, 2018) indicated that many empirical studies still herald the benefits of a college degree for obtaining a job and becoming successful in today’s society. Students in high school and in the early years of postsecondary education are told that a degree is still the best

way to ensure employability and a sustainable income. Yet, it is unknown if hiring managers place more emphasis on educational status when hiring in both nonclinical and clinical positions. There is a need to understand how hiring managers perceive the benefits of postsecondary education, work experiences, soft skills, or on-the-job training when determining the best candidate to fill positions in the healthcare field.

The chapter includes the research questions and a presentation of the selection of participants, and instrumentation. Additionally, the trustworthiness of the data, the data collection process, and data analysis procedures are presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of researcher bias and a chapter summary.

Research Questions

This research study focused on the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of hiring managers about the benefits of formal higher education as it relates to fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare system?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of hiring managers about the notion of hiring healthcare workers based on their on-the-job training, skills developed from prior work experiences, and soft skills as opposed to requiring a college degree?

Qualitative Research Procedures

According to Creswell (2013), a qualitative research study focuses on an in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. This qualitative research procedure is considered a narrative design and involved collecting and analyzing one-on-one interviews with 15 HR Directors within the Healthcare field. Narrative research is a particular type of research that consists of obtaining and reflecting individuals' lived

experiences (Cresswell, 2013). The narrative research design allowed an understanding of different opinions as well as observations from current HR Directors placing the interview process in chronological order for the audience to understand.

Selection of Participants

The context and setting of this study included 15 Human Resource (HR) Directors from various healthcare companies in Southeast Texas. The focus was placed on the Human Resource directors because this study sought to understand the perceptions that go into the hiring process of healthcare employees. Fifteen Human Resource directors from the healthcare field were selected. This narrative design used the interview method to gain perspective of the hiring process for both clinical and non-clinical employees. In order for the HR directors to participate in this research, they must have been in the HR field for 5 or more years.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was created to be used during the one-on-one interviews (Appendix A). A sample questionnaire was conducted and reviewed by a current Human Resource Director in the healthcare field to test reliability and validity. These questions are labeled in Appendix B as 1A, 2A, etc. A demographic survey was given to each interview prior to the one-on-one interviews (Appendix B). Each participant was asked to honestly answer the ten questions based on their personal experiences. Each question sought to gain the perspective of the participant as it related to the advising relationships as well as its effect on their professional careers in the healthcare field.

Trustworthiness of Data

To establish trustworthiness within this study, incorporating an efficient protocol using interview questions as well as observations was necessary. To evaluate trustworthiness, ensuring that the analysis is taking place in a precise and consistent environment was critical. To ensure that there are no mistakes or carelessness in conceptualizing the study and collecting the data there was an inquiry audit performed. An inquiry audit involves having a researcher outside of the data collection examine the process. ToPhonetics.com was used to transcribe the interviews. The data was organized based on the recurring themes from the participants' answers to the protocol questions. The data was used from both the interviews as well as the transcripts to combine the sources of information.

Data Collection and Observations Processes

This study was conducted using an interview process in which Human Resource directors are asked about the hiring process of both non-clinical and clinical staff members. Before data collection began, written consent was obtained from each participant. Human Resource directors were selected by having at least 5 years of experience in the healthcare field. First, an email was sent out asking for participation in the study. Once confirmed, a time and date were scheduled for the one-on-one interview. Some interviews took place at the participants' workplace and some were conducted via zoom.

The data was collected from 15 current Human Resource directors who play a major role in the hiring process in the healthcare fields. Each Human Resource director was interviewed individually in a face-to-face process, and their body language, facial

expressions, as well as tone of voice was noted. A voice recorder was used to conduct the interviews. The interviews were concluded within a two-week period. Following the interviews, the participants had access to the transcripts for the purposes of a test of trustworthiness. This process was called member checking. Member checking is a specific technique which is used to check the credibility of the results (Birt, 2016). The data was collected from current Human Resource directors who played a major role in hiring within the healthcare field. The individual interviews were conducted to gain a true perspective of the qualifications required to be a top candidate in the healthcare field. No names or employee identification numbers were included in any summary information. Interviewees were identified with numbers, numbered 1-15.

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2013), the first step in the data analysis process is organizing and preparing the data for transcribing interviews, reviewing material, and cataloging each visual material. The next step is to gain a sense of the information given to secure the opportunity to reflect on the overall meaning. The third step is to code all the data by ensuring that the collected data is categorized appropriately such as: categorizing the applicants in their perspective fields, by experience, as well as tenure in their field of work. In the fourth phase, a combination of categories/themes for analysis was made. In the last step there was an interpretation of the findings and/or the results for the audience to understand the information that has been gained.

Researcher Bias

As a current Human Resources director, to eliminate any researcher bias or influence on the findings, cautionary measures such as selecting participants from other

organizations and utilizing guided protocol questions for the purposes of ensuring the validity of this study was taken when conducting the one-on-one interviews and analyzing the findings.

Data Storage Policy

Houston Christian University (HCU) data storage guidelines were followed. The data collected in this study was used for dissertation purposes. The HCU guideline is the 3-2-1 rule: (a) three password-protected copies of the data, (b) two copies with two storage options (one copy on a personal laptop and one copy on a USB drive at personal residence kept for two years), and (c) one copy kept at HCU's Center for Research and Doctoral Studies. The copies on the personal laptop and USB drive will be kept for two years.

Summary

The data collection procedures were discussed in this chapter. Lastly, the methods of data analysis for each of the research questions were presented. Results of the data analysis are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this research study was to examine and analyze the perceptions of Human Resource directors in the Healthcare field regarding hiring with college degrees or work experience; specifically, those in clinical vs. non-clinical positions. This study sought to uncover if employer demand for skills and education influence hiring and wage decisions. Many individuals question if it is necessary to obtain a college degree, given that many notable self-made entrepreneurs who skipped post-secondary education are deemed as successful.

The participants described the qualifications they look for when interviewing applicants in the healthcare field whether it is a clinical or non-clinical position. 75% participants stated that it is necessary to obtain a formal education as opposed to not having one. It is necessary that one's resumé is aligned specifically with the type of job for which that applicant is applying. The participants found this statement to be true. Participant 1 who had 20 years of experience and participant 5 who had 21 years of experience both discussed the same statement in their interviews. Participant 1 and 5 shared completely different perspectives than the participants who had between 5-8 years of experience. They were sterner and more serious when it came down to the required education and work experience they look for in applicants during the interview process. With participant 1 holding a college degree and participant 5 only holding a high school diploma it was intriguing to see their outlook on the qualifications they look for in applicants. They both discussed the importance of holding both a formal education as

well as gaining practical work experience prior to entering in the healthcare field regardless of the position they are interested in.

Research Questions

This research study focused on the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of hiring managers about the benefits of formal higher education as it relates to fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare system?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of hiring managers about the notion of hiring healthcare workers based on their on-the-job training; skills developed from prior work experiences, and soft skills as opposed to requiring a college degree?

This chapter opens discussion regarding three major themes from the analysis of the interviews which included the following: a) perceptions of hiring managers about the benefits of formal education b) skills developed from prior work experiences as opposed to a college degree c) formal education as it relates to fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare field.

Fifteen Human Resource Directors were interviewed for this study. Appendix A indicates the participants' demographics detailing the years of experience each participant has, as well as the highest level of education in which they have completed. All the participants were in fields that had both non-clinical and clinical team members within their company. The accumulated years of experience of the Human Resource participants varied from five to twenty-one years in the industry. Participants with 5-10 years of experience (50%), 11-15 years of experience (40%), participants with 16+ years of

experience (10%)10 participants of the study were employed in a private sector healthcare business, and the other five participants were part of a public sector healthcare business.

Data Collection

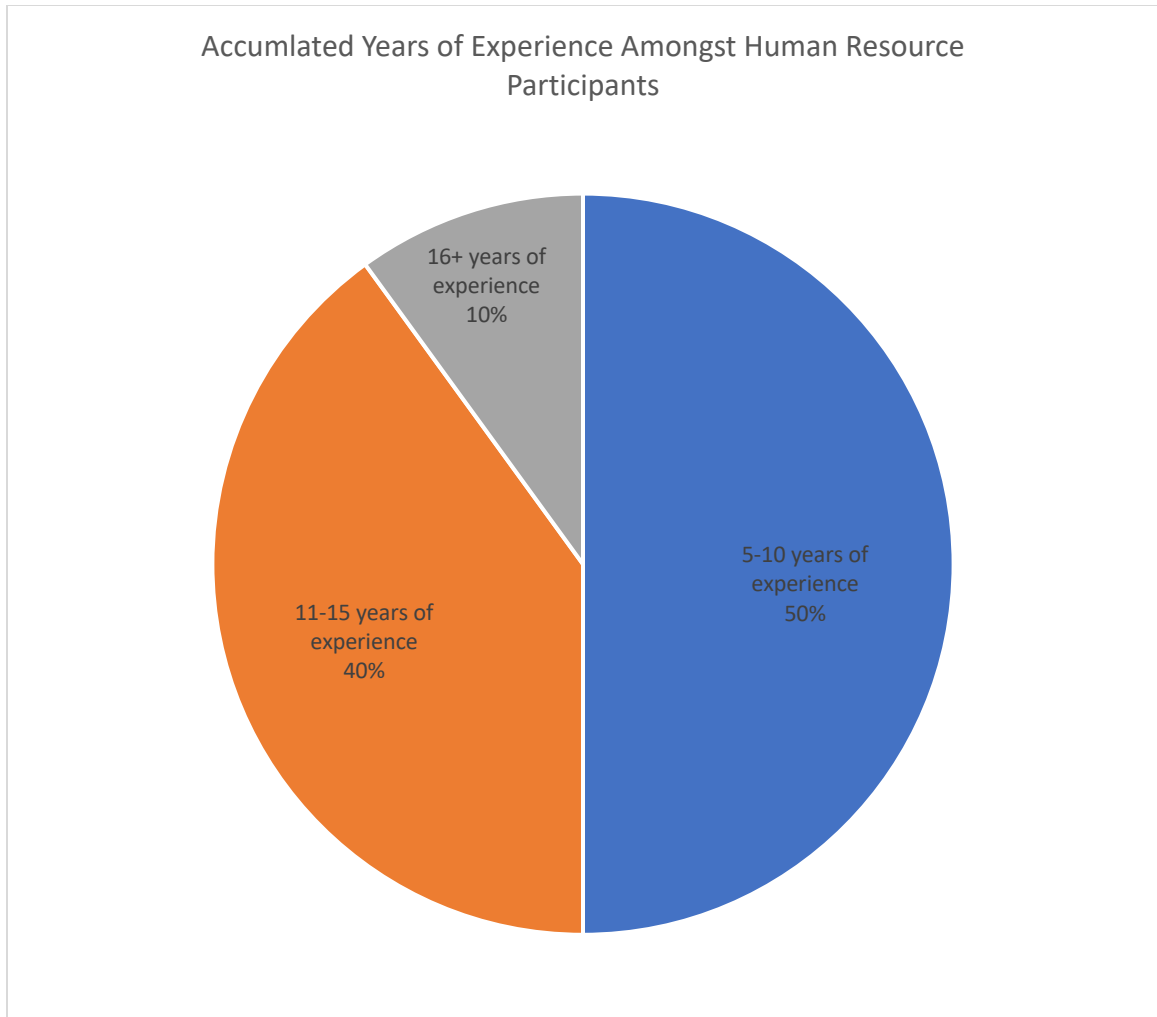
The fifteen research interviews with the Human Resource Directors currently employed in healthcare fields served as the primary source of research data. The demographic questionnaires served as supporting research data.

Participant Information

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Name	Years as HR Director	Clinical or Nonclinical Field	Highest Level of Education
Participant 1	20	Clinical	Bachelor's
Participant 2	6	Nonclinical	Bachelor's
Participant 3	8	Clinical	Bachelor's
Participant 4	14	Clinical	High School Diploma
Participant 5	21	Nonclinical	High School Diploma
Participant 6	5	Clinical	High School Diploma
Participant 7	7	Clinical	Bachelor's
Participant 8	6.5	Nonclinical	Master's
Participant 9	5	Clinical	Bachelor's
Participant 10	5	Clinical	Bachelor's
Participant 11	13	Nonclinical	Bachelor's
Participant 12	11	Nonclinical	Bachelor's
Participant 13	9	Clinical	Bachelor's
Participant 14	5	Clinical	Bachelor's
Participant 15	6	Clinical	High School Diploma



Participant 1

Participant 1 graduated college with her bachelor's in business. She landed the Human Resources generalist role at a Healthcare company in Southeast, Texas. After working in the generalist role for about three years, she then decided to pursue her master's degree in human resource management. She has now been with the same company for the past twenty years. She describes herself as: hardworking, sincere, and ambitious.

Participant 2

Participant 2 did not realize until she was a junior in college that she knew she wanted to be on the business aspect of a company. After taking several finance, accounting, and businesses course, she was still unaware of what she wanted to do after she graduated college. It was not until she went to a college career fair, and she saw a company was hiring for a Human Resources entry level position that she realized that was a position of interest to her. She started working in that position until she graduated, where she was offered another Human Resources role with a healthcare company where she has been for the past six years.

Participant 3

Participant 3 has been working in the Healthcare field for eight years. She pursued the Human Resources field due to being a people person and loving all aspects of start-up businesses. She started out at a private sector healthcare company, where she then gained knowledge and experience working in the healthcare industry.

Participant 4

Participant 4 did not attend college nor obtain a formal educational degree. Finances played a major role in her decision not to pursue a college education. She mentioned, however, that a college degree had always been her goal. Nevertheless, she knew she did not want to bear the financial stress. Soon after graduating high school, she began looking for roles that did not require any kind of formal education. Although she knew she had to work harder than others, she finally landed a role as an assistant at a medical office. After working as an assistant, and handling the day-to-day duties and

tasks, she was then offered the Human Resources role, where she has been for the past fourteen years.

Participant 5

Participant 5 did not have any formal education. She explained that twenty-one years ago, it was not as necessary to obtain a formal education, regardless of the field. Positions within the healthcare field that did not involve being a physician, a nurse, or medical doctor were plentiful and did not require a formal education.

Participant 6

Participant 6 has been in the Human Resources field for the past five years. Although he wanted to pursue a formal education, finances were a huge struggle. However, he believes that educational experience and its' relation to the Healthcare field is extremely critical and important.

Participant 7

Participant 7 has seven years of experience in the Healthcare industry. She began work as an administrative assistant, and after 4 years of experience, she worked her way up to the Human Resources manager role. Soon after, she was promoted to the Human Resources director position.

Participant 8

Participant 8 has been in the Human Resources field for the past six and a half years. After graduating from the University of North Texas, she completed a master's degree to obtain more experience in her role in Human Resource management.

Participant 9

Participant 9 has been the Human Resources director for the past five years in Southeast Texas. Her passion for HR continuously grows more and more every day. At the moment, she is working to earn her Society for Human Resource Management certification.

Participant 10

Participant 10 has been in the Human Resources industry for five years. After obtaining her college degree from the University of Houston she has always known that she wanted to work on the business side of the Healthcare industry. During her time at the University of Houston, after visiting a job fair she was able to meet a company who were hiring a Human Resources generalist to immediately begin. That is where her journey to the Human Resources industry began.

Participant 11

Participant 11 has been the Human Resources director for the past 11 years. Although she did not obtain a formal education due to financial burdens, she believed that just because one does not have a college degree does not mean they are any less than someone without a degree, it just means they must work a little harder.

Participant 12

Participant 12 has 12 years of experience and spent the early years of her career as a personal assistant to a physician. After learning the ins and outs of working in the health care industry, she decided to go back to school, after her second year of being in healthcare, to obtain her formal education. She was adamant about learning more about business, which led her to wanting to pursue a college degree.

Participant 13

Participant 13 has been in the Healthcare field for nine years now. Although she did not obtain a formal education personally, she believes that it is very important for someone who is thinking of getting one and is able to ~~is very important~~. She mentioned that “if someone is able to obtain a college degree to do it”. Getting a formal education cannot hurt anyone but can only excel someone even further in their career.

Participant 14

Participant 14 has worked in the Healthcare industry for the past five years. She obtained her college education from Texas Christian University. She takes a lot of pride as well as dedication in being the Human Resources Director at her Healthcare company located in Southeast Texas. She explained that in the Healthcare field, if you do obtain a formal education, the opportunities are endless. There are many more opportunities in the healthcare field once an applicant has a formal education.

Participant 15

Participant 15 has a total of six years of experience being the Human Resources Director in the Healthcare field. Although he did not obtain a formal educational degree, it is still very high on his list. He mentioned, “being able to still obtain my formal education is still very important to me”. As a Human Resources Director, it is not as necessary for him to have a formal education; however, a lot of the positions he recruits for is a definite a must for a lot of applicants seeking more clinical positions.

Themes

The findings and results are presented in accordance with the three themes that emerged. They were as follows: a) perceptions of hiring managers about the benefits of

formal education b) skills developed from prior work experiences as opposed to a college degree c) formal education as it relates to fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare field.

Perceptions of Hiring Managers Regarding the Benefits of Formal Education

Participants discussed the key components of what they believe to be the benefits of higher education. Participants offered different views on what they believe to be the benefits of obtaining a formal education. 85% believed that gaining work experience in place of obtaining a college degree was sufficient.

Participant 3: “Before I even bring a candidate in my office for an interview it is important that I first must check if they have a formal education or not.”

Participant 5: “A formal education will give an applicant the skills they need in the workplace, that they can’t gain just by having workplace experience.”

Some participants were more vocal than others as they discussed the benefits of a formal education.

Participant 8: “It’s simple if a candidate doesn’t hold a formal education, we simply just don’t bring them in for their one-on-one interview. There’s no point in wasting anyone’s time if they don’t have the necessary qualifications. I can’t speak for everyone in my position, but rather hiring for a clinical or non-clinical position if they don’t have a formal education, we don’t put them through the next step of the interviewing processes. I believe that obtaining a formal education comes with many benefits that are beyond useful in the workplace. Educational experience as it relates to the Healthcare field is always beneficial. The experience that you gain in any educational setting is always important and critical and allows you to excel in your position even more.”

Several of the participants in this section indicated that at the beginning of the application process, they already have their eyes set on whether the applicant has a formal education. This sometimes becomes one of the main components for eliminating those who do not have a formal education from the pool.

Participant 8: “By obtaining a formal education in the Healthcare field you can receive better job opportunities, salary advancements, a variety of different healthcare paths, and you can utilize your degree wherever you go.”

Participants 9 and 10 had both been Healthcare Human Resource Directors for the past five years and shared very similar outlooks when it came down to the benefits of higher education. The benefits of obtaining a formal education prior to entering the workforce is critical component during the hiring process. Not only is obtaining a formal education critical, but the soft skills gained, and critical thinking skills gained are additional factors that HR directors feel there are benefits from a formal education.

Participant 9: “Higher education is one thing that no one can ever take away from you, even if a candidate decides they no longer want to be in the Healthcare field any longer, they still have a chance and opportunity to use their education in another career field.”

Participant 10: “A formal education is more than just getting a healthcare job, it’s about the critical thinking, soft skills, and the knowledge you obtain while getting your formal education which is so beneficial in the workplace.”

Participant 14: “When I am looking for the top-of-the-line candidates, we first make sure that they have in fact, obtained a formal education.”

To better understand the importance of obtaining a formal education, the participants described why obtaining a formal education is so important.

Participant 6 described obtaining a formal education as “one of the biggest accomplishments than someone can ever achieve. Obtaining a formal education can get you into doors that those without a formal education have a more difficult time doing.”

Participant 1: “It is a great factor if an applicant does in fact have their formal education. This is considered a high value applicant. When I am reviewing resumes, and I see someone has a formal education of a bachelors’ degree or higher education, I am immediately impressed.”

Skills Developed from Prior Work Experiences as Opposed to A College Degree

In this section, the Human Resource Directors had different qualifications/requirements that they look for when interviewing a potential applicant based on the feedback, they gave during their interview. They described the different components on how skills developed from prior work experience play a large role in the hiring process.

Participant 1: “I’ve noticed that prior skills that candidates have developed from their other work experience helps greatly in the hiring process. As a director, these are aspects that I look for as well, considering it’s much easier training someone new.”

Participant 4: There are a lot of our high value applicants who don’t have a formal education but have years and years of training from certification courses, work experience, and practical’s which qualifies them for some of our entry-level clinical positions such as: home health aide, phlebotomist, and medical assistants. The skills that

applicants have gained from prior work experience are just as important, because in college you don't get as much hands-on experience.”

The desire to obtain certifications, take education training courses, as well as trying to start off at entry level jobs are very motivating to see from the Human Resource Director prospectives. Participants 1, 2, and 11 discussed other types of education.

Participant 1: “In today’s day and age, there are so many credentialing programs online and in-person that a formal education is just not required for everyone.”

Participant 2: “In our programs here, we will train an applicant on everything that we need to know for the position, however we do look at important aspects such as prior work experience, and if they have any hands on experience.”

Participant 11: “During the interview process looking to see if they do have a formal education or do they have more work experience is critical within the initial hiring process. It is also based on what do we really need at the moment. If they are urgently hiring, they are typically looking for someone we don't have to spend hours and hours training, it's easier to hire someone who has prior work experience. Work experience allows applicants to have more formal skills in my opinion. Candidates with more work experience, I have noticed have a greater deal of work ethic.”

Formal Education as It Relates to Fair and Competitive Salaries and Opportunities for Promotions Within the Healthcare Field

When discussing formal education as it relates to fair and competitive salaries, as well as opportunities within the healthcare field, there were differing outlooks from the participants. Some of the participants discussed whether an employee has a formal education or not, everyone gets the same chance at competitive salaries and promotions.

However, some participants mentioned that typically the employee with a formal education is deemed most favorable when it comes to competitive salaries and promotions.

Participant 8: “Considering all our employees have formal education when it comes to promotional advancements as well as competitive salaries, depends on their work experience. It also depends strictly on how they are excelling in their current position as well.”

Participant 15: “When looking at giving a team member a promotional advancement, I always start with how they are doing at the current position. Are they going above and beyond? Are they getting positive guest feedback? Do they want to have more job duties/responsibilities?”

Participant 8: “As important as obtaining a formal education is, I have personally seen employees who don’t have a formal education have higher salaries than those who do have a formal education.”

Participant 14 shared: “When it comes down to competitive salaries as it relates to job promotions within the healthcare field that comes down to looking at past work experience. It’s important to ensure that when analyzing competitive salaries and job promotions, I am critiquing everyone fairly to ensure that there is no favoritism.”

Participant 7: “Wage summaries are probably one of the hardest parts of my job. At least every day with as large as our company is with over 100 employees, at least one employee is coming to me regarding analyzing their pay structure, and asking, ‘Am I eligible for a salary review?’ Furthermore, that all comes down to their department lead, to make those calls to give to me, taking the necessary steps. When looking at the wages

between a clinical and non-clinical employee, of course those in the clinical positions such as: RN's, Doctor's, Lab technicians their wages are always higher.”

Participant 4: “Just because they don’t necessarily require a formal education doesn’t mean you shouldn’t have one. However, when it comes to competitive salaries and wages, there could be slight comparisons to other employees who do have a formal education.”

Participant 4: “Not requiring an education is just one component we look at. We could have two applicants one without a formal education and one with a formal, and of course we would look at the next major component is their past work experience. There are multiple steps that go into the hiring process. However, typically if someone has a formal education, there is more likely to be favored more.”

Overall, the participants held contrasting perspectives on how formal education relates to both fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare field.

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions about the benefits of formal education as it relates to fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare system?

Participant 4: “Not requiring an education is just one component we look at. We could have two applicants one without a formal education and one with a formal, and of course we would look at the next major component is their past work experience. There are multiple steps that go into the hiring process. However, typically if someone has a formal education, there is more likely to be favored more.”

Participant 8 shared: “As important as obtaining a formal education is, I have personally seen employees who don’t have a formal education have higher salaries than those who do have a formal education.”

Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of hiring managers about the notion of hiring healthcare workers based on their on-the-job training, skills developed from prior work experiences, and soft skills as opposed to requiring a college degree?

Participant 1: “In today’s day and age, there are so many credentialing programs online and in-person that a formal education is just not required for everyone.”

Participant 11: “During the interview process looking to see if they do have a formal education or do they have more work experience is critical within the initial hiring process. It is also based on what do we really need at the moment. If they are urgently hiring, they are typically looking for someone we don’t have to spend hours and hours training, it’s easier to hire someone who has prior work experience. Work experience allows applicants to have more formal skills in my opinion. Candidates with more work experience, I have noticed have a greater deal of work ethic. Participant 8 shared: “soft skills are great components individuals learned in college. Skills such as critical thinking skills, time management, and adaptability are all great skills that one can obtain by earning a formal education before entering the workplace”.

Summary

This chapter presented the results and findings of the study, analyzing each interview individually and then comparing the interviews to establish similar themes. The findings and results were presented in accordance with the three themes that emerged: (a)

perceptions of hiring managers regarding the benefits of formal education, (b) skills developed from prior work experiences as opposed to a college degree, and (c) formal education as it relates to fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare field. Direct quotes were presented from the participants, allowing them to explain their processes and share their interview process, which also opened the findings to be further interpreted by the readers. The demographics, including how many years the Human Resource Director has in their career fields, their highest level of education, and the educational experience they have as it relates to the healthcare field were analyzed and reported.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research study was to examine and analyze the perceptions of Human Resource directors in the Healthcare field regarding hiring with college degrees or work experience; specifically, those in clinical vs. non-clinical positions. This study sought to uncover if employer demand for skills and education influence hiring and wage decisions. This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to help answer the research questions:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of hiring managers about the benefits of formal higher education as it relates to fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare system?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of hiring managers about the notion of hiring healthcare workers based on their on-the-job training; skills developed from prior work experiences, and soft skills as opposed to requiring a college degree?

There were common themes discussed throughout chapter IV that served as major factors in motivating future candidates to gain practical work experience or a higher educational degree. The findings and results were presented in accordance with the three themes that emerged. They were as follows: a) perceptions of hiring managers about the benefits of formal education b) skills developed from prior work experiences as opposed to a college degree c) formal education as it relates to fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare field.

In this study, Human Resource directors discussed various components of an applicant holding a formal education as it relates to competitive salaries as well as the

notion of skills gained from prior work education or obtaining a college degree.

Throughout most of the interviews, the directors explained that they have seen applicants who do not have a formal education, but have years of experience in the field, as well as many certifications.

There was a slight difference to the responses from the Human Resource Directors where a degree is required than the Human Resource Directors where formal education was not necessary for job positions. On the other hand, the Human Resources Directors where formal education was necessary for salary advancements, promotions, etc. were very stern with the fact that a formal education was necessary.

Perceptions of Hiring Managers About the Benefits of Formal Education

Participants in the research study discussed the requirements/qualifications they look for as they are hiring a new candidate to their company. Having a college degree was one of the main requirement components when recruiting a new applicant. Most of the applicants consistently mentioned that obtaining a formal education was one of the key components that they look for when reviewing an applicant's application. According to Gagnon (2022), obtaining a college degree will allow an individual to grow the soft skills by engaging in experiential learning opportunities that are critical, as well as hands-on opportunities to translate into the professional world, a fact that was confirmed by the participants in this study. The issue of an applicant not having a college degree was mentioned by a participant as one of the key barriers that could hold a participant back from getting a position in the healthcare field. The participants had different levels of education, the lowest level being a high school diploma. The participants discussed in

length the importance of obtaining a formal education or gaining practical work experience as it relates to hiring potential applicants.

Skills Developed from Prior Work Experiences as Opposed to A College Degree

Participants talked about the skills that are developed from prior work experience as opposed to a college degree.

In fact, data shows that only 25% of college graduates would choose to pursue the same educational path if they could do it again. And on top of that, 41% say they would instead get a certificate that would instantly qualify them for an in-demand job (Kaplan, 2023, p.1).

Less than 50% of the participants deemed this fact to be true. The participants appreciated the importance of applicants having work experience beyond a high school education. These reasons include the desire for applicants to gain as much work experience as they can prior to applying for a position in the healthcare field, as well as to have a better social status and improved social skills, and the desire to add all their prior work experience to their resumes for a better chance of getting their career of choice. Participant 13 discussed the importance of the skills that are acquired from prior work experience. Participant 13 stated, “Applicants who have more than four years of work experience can jump right into their position with very little training needed.” Interestingly, a participant stated that gaining work experience can sometimes be even more beneficial than having a college degree. Participant 6 mentioned, “Applicants who come in for an interview with work experience have skills such as: critical thinking skills, time management, and communication skills that those who only have a formal degree don’t have.” The process of pursuing a formal education can be very difficult as well as

financially challenging to some applicants. The participants discussed these have been some of the challenges that they have seen among applicants in the past. Participant 6 mentioned, “I have interviewed several applicants who did not have a college degree, and one of the primary reasons why they don’t have one is due to financial challenges.”

Participant 12 added, “From what I have seen in my interviews, those candidates who don’t have a formal education mentioned how time consuming getting a formal education is, and that an applicant would much rather just gain work experience.” The participants concluded that skills developed from prior work experiences is always very beneficial in the workplace.

Formal Education as It Relates to Fair and Competitive Salaries and Opportunities for Promotions Within the Healthcare System

The participants reflected on their past experiences on what Human Resource Directors look for as it relates to fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare system. The participants affirmed that there are several components that go into the performance reviews to provide competitive salaries and opportunities to employees in the healthcare field. The participants mentioned that they were driven to ensure that each employee has an equal opportunity for promotions and competitive salaries during their employment term. According to participant 15, “Any candidate who has a formal education are always most sustainable to benefiting from competitive salaries due to their higher educational achievements.” This assertion was agreed upon by participant 8 who mentioned, “Having a formal education inserts you in competitive salary brackets that not having a college degree couldn’t get you in.”

Implications

The intended purpose for this research was to take a closer look at the perceptions of Human Resource directors in the Healthcare field as it relates to hiring candidates with a formal education or practical work experience. The participants fit the set criteria, having worked in the Human Resources healthcare field for five or more years. The research study was guided by two research questions that sought to investigate the barriers about the notion of hiring healthcare workers based on their on-the-job training and skills developed from prior work experiences as well as soft skills as opposed to requiring a college degree.

Findings in this research study have implications for future potential applicants in the healthcare field forming a basis for the necessity of obtaining a formal education or gaining practical workplace experience. According to Oswald (2021), applicants who have received a formal education with work experience enter the labor market more smoothly. This contradicts the perception that the other participants had as it relates to not obtaining a formal education at all.

The feedback from this research will be shared in publications to create awareness on the perceptions Human Resource Directors may have for an applicant looking to enter the Healthcare workplace. Future applicants can use the findings in this research to create the route that they should take as it pertains to the healthcare field. They can also see the perceptions of Human Resources Directors as it relates to the importance of obtaining a formal education or gaining practical work experience. The participants were given an opportunity to reflect on their hiring processes regarding the weight that is placed on an applicant who has a college degree and those who just have general work experience. The

implications relating to the findings in this research study can be adapted and applied in various areas to address the importance of obtaining a college degree or gaining practical work experience depending on the career position in the healthcare field. This research also benefits future applicants as it relates to the importance of obtaining a higher educational degree for benefits including competitive salary and wage promotions, improved skills, networking, and employment benefits.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research study used one-on-one interviews with 15 Human Resource Directors who have five or more years' experience in the healthcare field. These participants were in the Southeast region of Texas. Future researchers could consider also interviewing employees in the healthcare field who either have work experience or a formal education to compare and contrast them to the view of the Healthcare Directors. The feedback from the applicants would be a source of discussion, and the conclusions would also be a form of basis for future research. Click here to enter text. Participants in this research study contradicted this assertion and indicated that there are not that many positions in the healthcare field where a formal education is not necessary. The participants spoke about the importance of obtaining a formal education in the healthcare field, especially as it relates to competitive salaries as well as promotions. Ultimate Medical Academy (2022) stated the truth is that you can train for some of today's fast-growing healthcare jobs in under a year. The participants in this study contradicted this statement, believing that this would only be true for the more entry level positions that are non-clinical. The participants spoke of the important aspects regarding hiring individuals with a college degree or those who have more work experience. Future

research could explore the outlook of what future applicants believe are most necessary for them to obtain a career in the healthcare field as it regards to a college degree or work experience.

Conclusions

This research study was designed to take a closer look at the perceptions of healthcare Human Resource directors regarding hiring with college degrees and/or work experience. The research study used open-ended questions to collect the data from 15 participants who had more than five years of experience in the healthcare field. Each interview was analyzed individually then compared to one another to bring out themes. The themes were (a) perceptions of hiring managers about the benefits of formal education, (b) skills developed from prior work experiences as opposed to a college degree, and (c) formal education as it relates to fair and competitive salaries and opportunities for promotions within the healthcare field. The findings from this study affect secondary education in a variety of ways. Secondary educational institutes should help young people to understand both the importance of obtaining a formal education, but also the options for different types of formal education. By doing so, students will have more information to make decisions on what will be the best decision for them, both personally and financially. This also will give applicants the benefits of obtaining higher salaries and more promotions, as well as a broad range of employment opportunities.

The participants explained the process of what they look for in an applicant during the interview process and how they look for key components such as critical thinking skills, the ability to be a self-starter, formal education, and past work experiences. The participants also recommended taking a closer look at the aspects of

individuals with and without a college education to take a closer look at their insight as well. This research study has added new perspectives for future applicants seeking to gain a career in the healthcare field to analyze if it is more important to obtain a college degree or practical work experience.

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APPENDIX A:**Demographic Questions**

1. How long have you been a Human Resource director in Southeast Tx?
2. What is your highest level of education?

APPENDIX B:

Interview Questions

1. What are the first five requirements you look for in a candidate for a clinical position?
 - 1A: What are the protocols if a candidate doesn't meet the requirements, but they have work experience?
2. What are the first five requirements you look for in a non-clinical position?
 - 2A: What are the protocols if a candidate doesn't meet the requirements, but they have a college degree?
3. What are the perceptions of HR Directors in the Healthcare field regarding their hiring practices?
 - 3A: What are the procedures when hiring in the Healthcare field? What characteristics do you look for?
4. Within the HealthCare system, what do you believe are the benefits of higher education?
 - 4A: Within the healthcare system, what do you believe are the benefits of work experience?
5. What educational requirements in the healthcare field do HR Directors look for?
 - 5A: What other components play a critical role in the hiring process?
6. As it relates to competitive salaries, what degree/certification do HR directors in the Healthcare field look for in an applicant in order to receive a promotion?
 - 6A: What other factors go into increasing the wages for a clinical or non-clinical employee?

7. When viewing clinical vs. non-clinical healthcare positions, what do HR directors look for as far as educational credentials?
- 7A. How does work experience also play a role when filling clinical vs. non-clinical healthcare positions?

APPENDIX C

Components of Emerged Themes

I. Perceptions of hiring managers about the benefits of formal education

a) Financial struggles that could prevent someone from pursuing a formal education

b) An applicant not needing a formal education due to their career position in the healthcare field

c) Lack of knowledge a candidate may not receive by not getting a formal education degree

II. Skills developed prior to work experiences as opposed to a college degree

a) Skills can be developed in a workplace experience as well, not just in a formal education setting

b) Feeling the need that a formal education doesn't give you as much training as the workplace

c) Advanced skills are formed in the workplace

d) Having the hands-on training knowledge by having workplace experience

III. Formal education allows for competitive salaries

a) More advances by having a formal education

b) Formal education allows for more opportunities

c) Building networks

d) Various benefits

APPENDIX D

ADULT SUBJECT CONSENT FORM AND INTRODUCTION LETTER

Thank you for participating in this study, “Perceptions of Healthcare HR Directors Regarding Hiring with College Degrees or Work Experience: A Narrative Qualitative Study”. The purpose of this study is to determine if formal education or practical workplace performance play a role in an individual’s hiring success. By taking part in this study, you will assist in providing critical feedback that will assist the readers on whether it is necessary to pursue a higher educational degree or gain workplace experience.

Background Information

The purpose of this research study is to examine and analyze the perceptions of Human Resource directors in the Healthcare field regarding hiring with college degrees or work experience; specifically, those in clinical vs. non-clinical positions. This study seeks to uncover if employer demand for skills and education influence hiring and wage decisions.

Procedures

Should you agree to be a participant in this study, you will be requested to participate in a one-on-one interview for 45 minutes to 1 hour. We would like to make an audio recording of you during this study. Audio recording is required for this study. If you do not want to be recorded, you should not be in the study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Taking part in this study is your choice. You are free not to take part or to withdraw at any time for any reason. No matter what you decide, there will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are entitled. If you decide to withdraw from this study, the information that you have already provided will be kept confidential. You cannot withdraw information collected prior to your withdrawal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

A risk of taking part in this study is the possibility of a loss of confidentiality. Loss of confidentiality includes having your personal information shared with someone who is not on the study team and was not supposed to see or know about your information. The researcher plans to protect your confidentiality. No first or last names will be used during the duration of the study.

Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality

We will keep the records of this study confidential by HCU data storage guidelines will be followed. The data collected in this study will be used for dissertation purposes. The HCU guideline is the 3-2-1 rule: (a) three password-protected copies of the data, (b) two copies with two storage options (one copy on my personal laptop and one copy on a USB drive at personal residence kept for two years), and (c) one copy kept at HCU’s Center

for Research and Doctoral Studies. The copies on the personal laptop and USB drive will be kept for two years. We will make every effort to keep your records confidential. However, there are times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of your records.

Researcher Contacts and Questions

As a participant, you may ask the researcher any questions you have before the study begins, during the study, or after the study. Her email address is wincherld@hbu.edu. You may also contact her supervisor, Dr. Vickey Giles at vgiles@hbu.edu for any clarifications on your rights as a participant. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this signed consent form for your records.

Primary Investigator: _____

Student Researcher(s): _____

Title of Project: Perceptions of Healthcare Human Resource Directors Regarding Hiring with a College Degree or Work Experience

I acknowledge that on (date), I was informed by (name) of (institution or department) of a project having to do with the following:

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project and the possible risks involved or arising from it. I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this project at any time without prejudice or penalty of any kind. I hereby agree to participate in the project.

Participant's Name

Participant's Signature

Date

RESUME

Lesha Danielle Wincher

Objective

Highly Effective Human Resources Manager with over 10 years of experience specializing in establishing productive business relationships. Offering an array of skills in accurate employee job performance assessment, recommending, and implementing action plan strategies to meet HR needs, interdepartmental coordination, consultative relationship building, coaching, training, communication, and schedule planning. Proven ability to successfully multi-task in a dynamic, fast-paced environment while meeting all deadlines.

Experience

Win & Associates Medical Billing Company

Human Resources Manager

January 2014- Present

- Over 6 years of Workday of experience including, but not limiting: design, support of workday and business applications, implementation, configuration, and production support of Workday HCM applications
- Highly efficient with HCM functionality to configure and maintain business processes, staffing models, job profiles, positions, cost center, and reports
- Created and enhanced existing reports by working with standard and custom reports, assigning security to the reports primary and related business objects
- Lead design sessions for enhancements and changes to Workday functionality
- Support the design, testing, maintenance the Workday HCM system globally
- Leveraging Workday business knowledge, best practices, and expertise to identify opportunities for process improvements and helping to define both short-term and long-term product strategies
- Provides all weekly reports to the CEO
- Directed all human resources functions including recruitment, hiring, training, onboarding, and employee relations
- Managed all employment, medical and worker's compensation files and claims
- Ensured compliance of human resource policy, employee benefits, and employment law at both local and federal level
- Manages all aspects of HR office including learning and development as well as designed necessary professional development plans
- Transformed HR department into a well-functioning, cost efficient, and highly utilized entity as evidenced by 40% improvement in service scores over prior year's employee survey data

- Provide guidance to managers on employee relations and performance management issues, ensuring a consistent level of service and approach is taken
- Coordinated management training in interviewing, hiring, terminations, promotions, performance review, safety, and sexual harassment
- Manages payroll using software Quick Books
- Reviews all enrollment forms as well as benefit packages
- Provides all onboarding for the company
- Experience verifying monthly billing statements for employee benefit packages
- Experience using HRIS systems as well as HR software applications
- Scheduling interviews including coordinating travel, working with candidates, agencies, and recruiters
- Complete understanding of all laws including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, ADA, FMLA, ADEA, FLSA, and EEO regulations
- Address employee concerns regarding human resources issues, rules, and regulations
- Perform special projects as needed
- Manages all compensation including executive compensation and labor allocations
- Assist in scheduling interviews and communicating interview confirmations to the team
- Assist in recruitment and selection process working closely with managers to develop job descriptions and manage requisition process
- Maintains employee information and personnel files
- Assist in recruitment and selection process working closely with managers to develop job descriptions and manage requisition process
- Proficient in HRIS systems, applicant tracking, online recruiting, and advance experience using ADP software

Human Resources Generalist

January 2013-14

- Managed and assisted in the development of personnel policies and procedures and policy training
- Conducted exit interviews to determine reasons behind separations, administered drug-free workplace
- Coordinates a variety of administrative duties including facilitating, recruiting, hiring, payroll, performance reviews, and orientation
- Provides support for all functional areas, including day-to-day operations, data and records management, and project support

Houston Texans**April 2013-April 2017****Houston Texans Cheerleader**

- 3-year team captain
- Completed over 1,000+ voluntary community service hours
- Voted by the Houston Texans Organization, Coaches', and Teammates to the 2017 NFL Pro Bowl held in Orlando, Fl.

Education**Doctorate of Executive Educational Leadership****May 2023**

Houston Christian University

Master of Human Resource Management**December 2019**

Houston Christian University

Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies**May 2017**

University of Houston

Key Qualifications

- Workday HCM Core Concept, Organization, Staffing Module, Jobs and Position, Compensation, Hiring, Configurable Security, Business Process, and Reporting
- Advanced knowledge of MS Excel (pivot tables, macros, data visualization)
- Proficient in MS Word (styles, templates, data charts) types 70+ WPM
- 10 + years experienced expert in Microsoft PowerPoint and Outlook
- Extremely trustworthy and capable of handling highly sensitive and confidential information
- Excellent interpersonal skills with ability to build relationships at all levels