Work Experience Or Education: You Choose!
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Abstract

Through time, many academic institutions have had to change their curriculums to please the hands on work experience demand made by employers. Nevertheless, employers have expressed negative attitudes towards the academic area and the young workforce of today (Stiwne & Jungert, 2010). Many organizations are asking for a minimum three to five years of work experience. Furthermore, some research has shown, that organizations are looking forward to hiring a more experienced employee rather than provide on the job training (Barham et al, 2009). This seems to be sometimes unattainable for today's graduate students who are coming out of their academic institutions with high academic qualifications and no work experience (Barham et al, 2009). However, students have the opportunity to compensate the lack of experience through internships (Barham et al, 2009). This research paper compared the answer between Floridians, Puerto Ricans as well as other nationalities. The data has been collected by paper and pencil questionnaire in two different demographic locations: Florida and Puerto Rico. The sample consisted of n=150 participants. A convenient sample method was used to collect the data. A comparison was established between the answers of the three groups. Are hiring managers looking to hire a more experienced or a more educated candidate? The purpose of this study was to describe the feelings people had towards education and work experience.

Keywords: employees, students, education, work experience, preference, international differences,

Introduction

Past generations often complain about the new work values of the current generation. A current example would be the so-called “Generation X” (North Americans born between 1963 and 1981). This generation claims to have worked harder and is more committed than their descendants (Pinder, 2008). However, “Generation X” works more than their successors, “Generation Y”; yet their successors have more formal education. The “Generation Y” (people born from 1980 to 2000) has managed a way to work and study at the same time. Nevertheless, “Generation X” finds themselves on top of the hierarchy for most of organizations (Pinder, 2008). However, now there is a more experienced but less educated generation (Generation X) and there is amore educated but less experienced generation (Generation Y).

Although, college education has always been synonymous of a fair salary and job security, the evidence of employment rates and salaries for just graduated students has fallen surprisingly (New York Times, 2011). Without instant hiring, students are not able to gain the necessary experience in their related field to keep moving on with their work life. However, a major debate currently taking place is which of the two looks better in a resume: work experience or a high education level. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2003), getting an education reduces the unemployment rates and increases the weekly earnings.

Nevertheless, many organizations look forward to hiring more experienced candidates (Barham et al, 2009). As a result of this phenomenon, it can be observed that many of these graduated students are taking on duties such as: tending bars, sweeping floors at department stores, or answering calls at call centers (New York Times, 2011). The tough economic crisis has had a great effect on the students’ lives, not only affecting them financially, but also
affecting their career path.

The once well-known correlation between higher education and job security is no longer established. In a study made in Europe, Núñez and Livanos (2009) displayed that even though students achieved higher levels of education, students would not find jobs immediately. These researchers demonstrated that higher education enhances the probability of being employed more promptly than those with less education.

In addition to the economic situation, hiring decisions are influenced by many irrelevant variables. The hiring managers have been focusing on irrelevant details such as: physical attractiveness, interviewer and interviewee similarities, and other characteristics (Aamodt, 2005). However, many organizations are failing to take education as a valid predictor of performance. In addition, Singer and Bruhns (1991) found that managers would usually utilize work experience as a measure to predict future work performance rather than educational achievements.

The dependent variable in this study is the state of origin. The scale of measurement of this variable is nominal. In the nominal scale, values are assigned to objects with identification purposes (Lammers & Badia, 2005). The independent variable is the instrument that will be used. The scale of measurement of this variable is the interval. The interval scale allows us to specify the order of the events and the distance between them (Lammers & Badia, 2005).

Furthermore, possible limitations of this study are: gender, the validation of the instrument, and response rate of the instrument. Since the sampling method is convenient, in which only the available participants answered the survey, there are discrepancies in the answers between males and females. This can be a possible source of confounding. In essence, the literature review presents articles assigning the same values to both variables. In some of the articles, education seems to have more influence over work experience, than others, where work experience seems to be more valuable than the level of education. This research intends to compare the relationship among variables, work experience and level of education between Puerto Rico, Florida and others nationalities. This study tries to match the feelings of people towards their education and work experience. The research question to be answered was: Is there any difference among the preference of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Other nationalities towards education or work experience? The next section includes research articles with more information about previous research done on education and work experience.

**Work Experience Versus Education**

In a study about the effects of work experience and academic qualifications on hiring decisions, Singer and Bruhns (1991) reported that managers used work experience more frequently at the time of hiring a new candidate, rather than their academic credentials. Nevertheless, high academic qualifications enhance a candidate’s chance of being successful for the available position (Singer & Bruhns, 1991). Their study was carried out to determine the effect of an applicants’ work experience and education qualifications on hiring decisions. To draw different perceptions among work experience and education, Singer and Bruhns (1991) chose a group of students and managers as their sample. Their sample consisted of professional managers from six different organizations, along with managers that had suitable experience in personnel selection. The students were selected from University of Canterbury and were all undergraduate psychology students.

A resume was given to each group for review. After review, the group had to simulate an interview. The chosen position for the study was a sales representative supervisor. The work experience was set for five years of experience in a non-related job, holding a MBA (Masters of Business Administration) from a well-known university. The work experience of the other candidate was of ten years in a related position and holding a BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration).

In their sample of student interviewers, the students made frequent use of both variables, although they showed greater preference for educational qualifications. However, actual managers showed greater preference for work experience rather than educational level. Their study suggested that managers and students held different levels of preference between work experience and education.
Moreland and Angur (2006) studied the degree to which educational preparation helped new CPAs develop new competencies. Nevertheless, their results showed that work experience keeps contributing more in the development of new competencies such as: managerial, communication, organizational and technological. Educational preparation helps to develop competencies such as: knowledge auditing and financial reporting (Moreland & Angur, 2006). Their method consisted of identifying the necessary competencies needed for the development of new CPAs. Then, measure the extent in which educational preparation and work experience helps to develop these competencies. Their sample consisted of data from recently graduated CPAs and experienced CPAs. A list with all the competencies was administered in the form of an interview (Moreland & Angur, 2006). Their results displayed that work experience helps more to develop certain competencies rather than education. Moreland and Angur (2006) expressed their concerns on the education of CPAs shifting from one practical to one more conceptual. The combination of work experience and education helps CPA professionals to develop key competencies required to be successful in their career (Moreland & Angur, 2006).

Studies such as this prohibit academic institutions from replacing the value of work experience for an increase in classroom training.

In other studies related to work experience in the academic area, Pelech, Barlow, Badry and Elliot (2009), studied the quality of the work experience between the partial work practicum and the actual work position. Their sample consisted of two kinds of social worker students: the graduated students who had the previous work experience in a related field and the students without the previous work experience but doing their practicum. Pelech et al. (2009) argued that the students with previous work experience in a related field have the opportunity to develop more skills and knowledge than those students without the previous work experience. In addition, they established that the amount of time spent in a practicum was not enough to develop those important competencies.

Their results showed that the students with previous work experience in a related field could define their job task more clearly than those students working only in their practicum. Pelech et al (2009) demonstrated that previous work experience is important in the development of certain competencies and cannot be developed in the short amount of time during the practicum.

On the other hand, a study made by Stiwne and Jungert (2010) showed that not all the blame relies on the high demand of organizations. These researchers answered a concern made by a questionnaire sent to employers asking about the future of the job market. The questionnaire expressed the high dissatisfaction of employers toward the academic field of today. In many of these cases, employers prefer students with a more wide-ranging education than those with higher education (Stiwne & Jungert, 2010).

Their method consisted of a longitudinal study in a small university. The selected careers consisted of four different categories in engineering. The measurements used were questionnaires and interviews. Their results showed that many students did not have a clear definition of the role as an engineer (Stiwne & Jungert, 2010). In addition, many of these students did not have specific goals for their future. As a result, these flaws in the student’s careers force them to be a weaker candidate of employability in the future (Stiwne & Jungert, 2010). In this case we have another vantage point, perhaps the skill demands in the market have increased, but the lack of plans and the students inability to explain their chosen career, makes them weaker candidates in the future (Stiwne & Jungert, 2010).

Due to the frequent increase of the skill demand on the workforce, academic institutions have had to adapt their curriculum for todays’ work demands. Professors are being forced to add new methods to prepare students for the transition into the workforce (Rocco & Rountree, 2010). The new methods varied from campus to campus. For example, Rocco and Rountree (2010) proposed to investigate the effect of business computer simulations in classrooms. This business simulation seems to be a great help in teaching students conceptual and applicable knowledge. Nevertheless, no further research has been done on the effectiveness of this computer simulation.

Moreover, computer simulations are not the only way to fill the gap between education and work experience. Many organizations compensate the lack of relationship between the classroom and the real world during internships (D’abate, Youndt &Wenzel, 2009). Through internships, students see the direct relationship of the classroom with the real world more concretely (D’abate, Youndt &Wenzel, 2009). However, the duration and intensity of these
internships are not enough to please the skill demands of organizations (Pelech et al. 2009).

Hunter, Shah, Bollina and H. Bollina (2010) reported a new medical program called Medic Insight established in 2007 in Lothian, Scotland. The program provides students with a more realistic sight of a medical career. This program offers seminars to younger students (14-16 years old) who are planning to choose a medical career. In this case, the role of work experience is to ensure that the right students are placed on the right career path (Hunter et al, 2010). This program is of great help to those medical students and those who are planning to follow a medical career.

Other studies found that work experience and education complement each other. Krausz, Schiff, B. Schiff and VanHise (1999) reported that education and work experience together might improve student performance. The purpose of their research was to study the relationship in performance on students who entered to graduate accountant program with previous work experience over those without it. Krausz, Schiff, B. Schiff and VanHise (1999), hypothesized that those students who had previous work experience in the accounting field were going to perform much better during graduate school rather than those without previous work experience. Their sample consisted of one hundred and sixty seven students enrolled in the Masters degree program of financial accounting. The previous experience of students was determined by their resumes (Krausz, et al 1999). Their result displayed that prior exposure to the working environment of accounting can significantly enhances their performance during graduate school. This research shows that work experience and education level, together, help to develop more prepared professionals.

On the other hand, a similar research suggested that academic institutions should pay special attention to the dissatisfaction of hiring managers towards academic fields. Dreher and Ryan (2004) suggested to academic counselors of MBA programs to improve their student selection method. According to these researchers the selection processes of business schools are flawed and in need of second evaluations. Many academic institutions favor students with previous work experiences with the belief that they will do better (Dreher & Ryan, 2004). According to them and previous research, this is not always the case.

Their recommendation to these institutions is that academic counselors of MBA programs should use the same criterion that hiring managers use during the hiring process. The academic advisors must be conscious of the skills, knowledge and other characteristics that such career requires (Dreher & Ryan, 2004).

Another case with the MBA programs, Johnston and Whittingham (2010) explored the economic value of students with previous work experience in MBAs programs. Their study investigated the economic benefits of delaying the enroll process in the MBA to gain work experience rather than those student who enroll immediately after graduation.

Their data collection method was a questionnaire by mail to 1,902 students currently working on their MBA. Their results displayed that those students with prior work experience are more capable of apply their new skills immediately on the job rather than those students who have to wait till employment. Using this method, the students earn money per each learner skill while at the same time; work in their MBA (Johnston & Whittingham, 2010). However, this makes more experienced students have a better salary and give them the ability to apply their new skill in a short period of time (Johnston & Whittingham, 2010).

Paulsson and Sundin (2000) stated that the new technological advances to produce and manufacture products have currently changed the skill demand. They proposed to install a web-based program in their company to teach the employees how to deal with the up and coming software to place orders in the system. Their belief was not only educating the employee theoretically, but on the job with practice. In this case, it can be observe the employer’s belief in the classroom. Nevertheless, their teaching method does limit itself to the classroom, but on the job practice.

As presented above, these articles have displayed an important debate between education and work experience throughout the years. However, in the majority of the announcements for available positions, many
organizations are requesting a minimum on years of previous experience, depending on the job. The years of previous work experience seems to be overcompensating the years of educational preparation. Some organizations are asking for at least two to five year’s minimum in the related field excluding some graduate students with a well educational preparation and no experience out of the pool of candidates.

Summarizing, Nuñez and Livanos (2009) showed that higher education helps you to spend less time unemployed rather than those candidates with a more general education. Nevertheless, a great dissatisfaction with today’s education was expressed by hiring managers (Stiwne & Jungert, 2010). Moreland and Angur (2006) reported that work experience is necessary to the development of key competencies in CPAs. Stiwne and Jungert (2010) reported that the possible dissatisfaction of employers might explain the lack of understanding in student referent to their chosen degree. This lack of understanding is a result of no prior exposure to the field (Stiwne & Jungert, 2010). Rocco and Rountree (2010) recognized the importance of work experience in the classroom. They proposed to investigate the effectiveness of business computer simulation in the classroom. With these tools students are able to connect the classroom with a more realistic view.

D'abate, Youndt and Wenzel (2009) recognized the lack of realistic problems in the classroom. They proposed that this lack of realism could be recovered through internships. They believe that through internships students would be able to connect the classroom with reality. Hunter, Shah, Bollina and H. Bollina (2010) reported on a program called Medic Insight. Through this program students are able to gain work experience in the medical field. Not only medical students but also the program also provides work samples to those younger students who have interest in a medical career. The idea behind this is to provide the student a clear perspective on the career (Hunter et al, 2010).

Krausz, Schiff, B. Schiff and VanHise (1999), Dreher and Ryan (2004), Johnston and Whittingham (2010) and Paulsson and Sundin (2000) argued about the problematic of prior work experience during the process of getting a MBA (Master of Business and Administration).

Through the literature review, it can observe the different perspectives of all the authors. In some of the cases, work experience seems to be more important than educational qualification. In other cases seems that educational qualifications are superior to work experience and other cases both have equal values.

In the research context, this constant discrepancies over which is more important to make a candidate suitable for hiring, this takes research to the next questions: Is there any difference in preference for experience or education internationally? Are hiring managers looking to hire a more experience or educated candidate?

This study aims to measure the level of preferences by participants towards academic preparation and work experience. As mentioned in the literature review, work experience seems to play an important role on hiring decisions. Today, there are a lot of well-prepared students but without previous work experience (New York Times, 2011).

Method

Design

The instrument is a self-developed paper and pencil questionnaire (Appendix A). It was used to compare the level of preferences between work experience and education in two different demographic locations. The demographic locations are: Florida and Puerto Rico. Due to the excessive diversity of the state of Florida, a third option was included among the demographics in the instrument to classify all the participants born out of state or from different countries.

The instrument was developed with seven general statements about academics achievements (Bachelor’s, Master’s or Associates Degree) and seven general statements of work experience. The items of the instrument included statements such as: importance and value of education and work experience, hiring decisions, effectiveness of the candidate, efficiency, salary bases and organizational success.
The instrument is based on a Likert scale of five points (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree). The highest value in this scale is a 5 (Strongly Agree) and lowest is a 1 (Strongly Disagree). In this scale participants rate their level of agreement or disagreement. The scale captures the participant’s feelings towards the topic in question (Hartley & Betts, 2010).

Four variables, such as: gender, age group, country of origin and education were included for sample description purposes. The demographic items (Appendix D and E) were designed to keep the confidentiality of the participants. The instrument is intended to be used in a convenient sample to gather information from a general population. The data was collected from organizational and causal settings. The organizational setting consisted on: (1) offices (accounting, human resources, management and financial departments) from well-known organizations and (2) internal resources (such as: the regular employees and other department not included above). The casual setting consisted on: parks, restaurants, beaches and malls.

Participants do not have to sign the informed consent sheet. The instrument was developed in one language only, English. Neither of them (informed consent or instrument) was translated in Spanish. A frequency table per question was developed to display the results. The total average and the standard deviation were used to display the results per question.

The completion of the questionnaire will be considered as the participant’s agreement with the terms of the research. The sample method is convenient (the available participants only). As mentioned above, the responses of the questionnaire are completely anonymous.

The dependent variable is the country of origin and the scale of measurement for this variable is nominal. The independent variable is the instrument and the scale of measurement for this variable is the interval. And as mentioned above, the demographics variables (Appendix D and E) taken into account in this study would be: gender, age, educational level and country of origin.

Participants

The responses were gathered from hiring professionals, management teams, pedestrians and mall customers. However, in the instructions of the instrument, participants were asked to visualize themselves as a hiring manager. The hiring managers are employees who seek to fill an available position (Davis, 2006). The participants from Florida consisted of 25 males and 25 females for a total of n=50. The participants from Puerto Rico consisted of 29 males and 21 females for a total of n=50. The total of participants from another state or country consisted of 19 males and 31 females. The overall total of the sample was of n=150 participants. The locations of the offices where the data was collected were: from Florida and Puerto Rico.

The age group ranges from 18 years old to older than 58 years old. For the Florida sample there are: 21 participants between the ages of 18 and 27, 9 participants between the ages of 28 and 36, 8 participants between the ages of 37 and 46, 11 participants between the ages of 47 and 58 and 1 participants between the ages of 58 and older. The following samples were from Puerto Rico: 31 participants between the ages of 18 and 27, 7 participants between the ages of 28 and 36, 2 participants between the ages of 37 and 46, 8 participants between the ages of 47 and 58 and 2 participants between the ages of 58 and older. For the Other sample there are: 13 participants between the ages of 18 and 27, 7 participants between the ages of 28 and 36, 11 participants between the ages of 37 and 46, and 13 participants between the ages of 47 and 58, 6 participants between the ages of 58 and older.

The educational level varies from: Associates, Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate and other. The educational distribution for Floridians is: 9 participants with Associate’s degree, 22 participants with Bachelor’s degree, 9 participants with Master’s degree, 4 participants with Doctorate degree and 6 participants with other type of education. The educational distribution for Puerto Ricans is: 8 participants with Associate’s degree, 29 participants with Bachelor’s degree, 5 participants with Master’s degree, 0 participants with Doctorate degree and 8 participants with other type of education. The educational distribution for the others sample is: 4 participants with Associate’s degree, 17 participants with Bachelor’s degree, 17 participants with Master’s degree, 3 participants with Doctorate degree and 9 participants with other types of education.
The participation of the research was completely voluntary and as mentioned above anonymous. The sample setting was convenient (only the available participants). There are some parts of the population that are represented by other states. For purposes of this study only participants from Puerto Rico and Florida are going to be mention in the next couple of sections. Participants born in another country were categorized as “Other” in the instrument.

Procedure

The responses were gathered utilizing paper and pencil method. A n=150 research participants answered the survey voluntarily and anonymously. The sample was taken from management teams, financial departments, academics setting and customers at a convenience store. The instrument was broken down into 14 statements. A single factor Anova was applied to each statement to compare the answer among the three groups. The information was collected in Florida and Puerto Rico. Due to the high patterns of migration, a third option of “Other Country or State” was offered among the items on the demographics page.

Part of the activities of this research was: arranging meetings with the human resources director in some of the organizations, identifying hiring managers in the two locations and received permission from the mall manager to collect the data. The use of computer and other social medias to communicate and send the instrument was tried. As mention above, the informed consent form was attached to the instrument. This form is a paper arrangement explaining to the participants the nature of the investigation and the degree of exposure to risk (Lammers & Bandia, 2005). Since the instrument was answered anonymously, the fact of filling up the survey was enough for the agreement for the informed consent. Contact information of the researcher and research supervisor was provided to participants in case of any concerns or question. The participant can feel free to contact the researcher or research supervisor in case of any concern about this research project.

Results

The analysis utilized was a single factor Anova. The instrument was based on a Likert scale of five points. The number 5 (Strongly Agree) represents the highest value of the scale and the number 1 (Strongly Disagree) represents the lowest value of the scale.

For item number 1 (Education), Florida average was of 3.28(1.14), Puerto Rico average was of 3.42(1.03) and Other’s average was of 2.96(1.05). There was no significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2, 147) =2.40, p=3.06. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants felt neutral about education being more valuable than work experience.

For item number 2 (Education), Florida average was of 3.20(1.11), Puerto Rico average was of 3.14(1.04) and Other’s average was of 2.94(1.11). There was no significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2, 147) =0.78, p=3.06. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants felt neutral about hiring someone with a Master’s degree for a management position.

For item number 3 (Experience), Florida average was of 2.94(1.06), Puerto Rico average was of 3.53(0.99) and Other’s average was of 2.84(0.87). There is a significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2, 147) =7.07, p=3.06. Most of the in Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants felt neutral about work experience being more constructive than four years of education.

For item number 4 (Education), Florida average was of 4.22(0.82), Puerto Rico average was of 4.26(0.92) and Other’s average was of 4.14(0.90). There was no significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2,147) =0.24, p=3.06. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants agreed with the statement of educated employees are essential for the success of any organization.

For item number 5 (Experience), Florida average was of 2.42(1.11), Puerto Rico average was of 2.38(1.10) and Other’s average was of 2.4(0.99). There was no significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2,147) =0.0175, p=3.06. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants disagreed with the statement of newly hired employees are destined to fail unless they have an educational background.
For item number 6 (Experience), Florida average was of 2.90(1.23), Puerto Rico average was of 3.16(1.02) and Other’s average was of 3.18(1.02). There was no significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2,147) =1.02, p=3.06. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants felt neutral about finding experienced employees to be more efficient than those with an academic background.

For item number 7 (Experience), Florida average was of 2.52(0.86), Puerto Rico average was of 3.0(1.09) and Other’s average was of 2.46(0.89). There was a significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2,147) =4.84, p=3.05. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants felt neutral about work experience being more important than education.

For item number 8 (Education), Florida average was of 3.2(1.14), Puerto Rico average was of 2.88(1.22) and Other’s average was of 2.8(1.03). There was no significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2,147) =1.73, p=3.05. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants felt neutral about educated employees getting pay more than experienced employees.

For item number 9 (Education), Florida average was of 3.02(1.25), Puerto Rico average was of 2.86(1.01) and Other’s average was of 2.68(1.06). There was no significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2,147) =1.17, p=3.05. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants felt neutral about academics backgrounds being like working backgrounds.

For item number 10 (Education), Florida average was of 3.06(1.20), Puerto Rico average was of 3.36(1.16) and Other’s average was of 3.02(0.94). There was no significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2,147) =1.41, p=3.05. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants felt neutral about newly hired employees being more costly than experienced employees.

For item number 11 (Experience), Florida average was of 2.5(0.97), Puerto Rico average was of 3.0(0.93) and Other’s average was of 2.56(0.97). There was a significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2,147)=4.06, p=3.06. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants felt neutral about experienced employees making the company growth more than educated employees.

For item number 12 (Experience), Florida average was of 2.32(0.96), Puerto Rico average was of 2.56(1.01) and Other’s average was of 2.6(0.88). There was no significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2,147) =1.27, p=3.06. Most of the Floridian and Puerto Rican disagreed with the statement of educated employees being more trustworthy than experienced employees. Other participants felt neutral about the same statement.

For item number 13 (Experience), Florida average was of 2.58(0.95), Puerto Rico average was of 2.72(0.95) and Other’s average was of 2.56(0.84). There was no significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2,147) =0.46, p=3.06. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants felt neutral about the statement of experienced employees getting pay more than educated employee.

For item number 14 (Experience), Florida average was of 3.0(1.07), Puerto Rico average was of 3.18(0.98) and Other’s average was of 2.92(0.94). There was no significant difference among the answers of Floridians, Puerto Ricans and Others, F (2,147) =0.89, p=3.06. Most of the Floridian, Puerto Rican and Other participants felt neutral about work experience looking better than education on the candidates resume.

Discussion

The average for most of the items was between 2.50(1.11), and 3.20(1.14). However, most of the participants are in the neutral range. There was no significant difference in the answers among the participants from Florida, Puerto Rico and other countries or states. The results displayed that education or work experience does not make a difference at the time of hiring. As mentioned in the literature review, a possible explanation could be that students are not being hired due to the bad economic climate. In addition, instead of searching directly for education or work experience, hiring managers could be looking for the abilities or knowledge a candidate displays at the
moment of the interview. However, most of the participants agreed with item number 4 of the survey. Most of the participants believe that educated employees are essential for the success of any organization. This means that people still believe education is important for the development of the organizations.

On the other hand, most participants disagreed with item number 5. This means even though people feel that education is important for the development of the organization, having an educational background is not necessary for the success of employees in the organization.

For item number 12, most of the Floridian and Puerto Rican participants disagreed with the statement of well-educated employees are more trustworthy than experienced employees, which means that participants do not believe education makes candidates more trustworthy. On the other hand, other participants felt neutral about this statement.

Moreover, further research needs to be done about this topic. The instrument for this study was not validated or tested before the data collection. The gender ratio was not controlled in any of the samples. This study was restricted to Puerto Ricans and Floridians. However, the participants from other states or countries were part of the sample but their state or country of origin was not taken into account. In addition, the instrument was developed in English and not translated to any other language.

Summarizing, with the results of this study it can be conclude that at the time of hiring, average people do not display preference for any of the variables (educational background or work experience) offered in this study.

References

Appendix A

Research Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study. You are eligible to participate if you are at least twenty-one years old and have experience as a recruiter or hiring manager. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is of great importance that you read the following information. At the bottom of this paper you will find the contact information of the researcher and supervisor to answer all the questions needed to be sure you understand what you would be asked to do.

Investigators

The investigator of this study is Joshua Aulet, graduate student at Carlos Albizu University.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to measure the level of preferences between work experience and educational preparation. A comparison will be drawn with the data collected in each country.

Confidentiality

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The responses you provide will not be associated with your identity in any way.

Questions about the research

If you have any questions about the research please feel free to contact me (Joshua Aulet) via email at: jaulet517@sunmail.albizu.edu. If you have any concern that cannot be answered by the author, please contact research supervisor Dr. Toni Didona via email at: tdidona@albizu.edu.

Appendix B

Instructions

Put yourself in the position of a hiring manager. Read each statement carefully; then circle the response that indicates your level of agreement.

1. Formal education is more valuable than previous work experience.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

2. If hiring for a management position, I would rather find someone with a Master’s Degree over one with only previous work experience.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

3. I believe four years of hands on work experience are more constructive than four years of education.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

4. Educated employees are essential for success in any organization.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

5. A newly hired employee without previous work experience is destined to fail unless he/she has an educational background.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree
Appendix C

6. I find experienced employees to be more efficient than those with only an academic background.
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

7. Work experience is more important than formal education.
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

8. I believe an educated employee deserves a higher pay grade than uneducated one, even if they have more experience in the field.
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

9. An academic background is very much like a working background.
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

10. When newly hired, an educated employee without previous work experience will be more costly in terms of time and effort spent on training, than a new employee without education but previous work experience.
    Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

11. Uneducated employees with previous work experience are more likely to make the company grow than educated ones.
    Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

Appendix D

12. A well-educated employee without work experience is trustworthy than one without education but many years of work experience.
    Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

13. An uneducated employee with previous work experience deserves a higher pay than an employee with formal education but no previous work experience.
    Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

14. At the time of the interview, I believe previous work experience looks better on a resume than formal education in the field.
    Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

Please circle one and do not put your name in this paper.

1. Please select your gender.
   Male   Female

2. What is your age range?
   18-27   28-36   37-46   47S-58   58-older

3. Which of the following is your state of origin?
   Florida   Puerto Rico   Other

Appendix E

4. Please select your educational level
   Associates   Bachelor   Master   Doctorate   Other

Thank you for your time! This information will be used only for purpose of accountability. Once again thank you for your time and enjoy the rest of your day.