

# The acceptance of online education by human resource recruiters

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# Agenda

- Why - Background/History
- What - Research Problem
- How- Methodology
- When – Time line
- References

# Background/History

- Lily Conference – Multiple viewpoints
- What impact of online education on career?
- Adams, J. & DeFleur, M. (2005). The acceptability of a doctoral degree earned online as a credential for obtaining a faculty position – Only one administrator was willing to consider an online degree
- Reviewed research and found the following
  - Limited studies
  - Any human resource person as respondent
  - Mainly quantitative, limited qualitative
  - Most showed bias against online education, but a couple showed no bias
- Why obtain a higher education and what impact does it have on the hiring process?

# Background/History continued

- Human capital theory
  - Worker's knowledge is capital
  - Knowledge workers
- Signaling theory
  - Reduces pool size
  - Demonstrates
- Stakeholder Theory
  - Student
  - Academia / Administration
  - Business
- Hiring Process – Recruiters are gatekeepers

# Research Problem/Questions

- Lack of knowledge about the acceptance of online education by human resource recruiters
- How do HR recruiters perceive the acceptability of online learning compared with that of face-to-face instruction?
- What is the relationship between the type of position being sought and the perceived acceptability of online education based on recruiter's opinions?
- What do recruiters perceive as historical and future trends in acceptance of online degrees versus traditional degrees?
- How do recruiters perceive a difference between online courses/degrees at a non-profit school and a for-profit school?

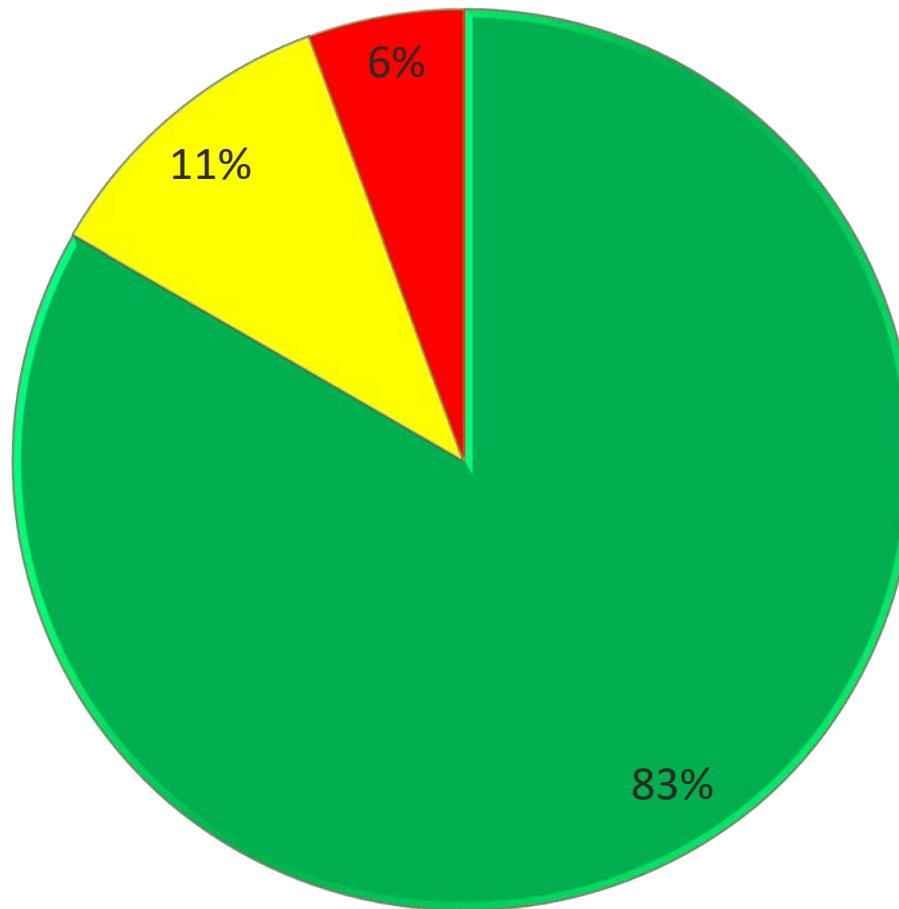
# Methodology

- Qualitative
  - help address any bias
  - richer fuller data
- Purposive sample
  - FindParticipants.com & personal contacts
  - 18 participants
  - Saturation achieved
- Phone interviews
  - Geographical limitations
  - Recorded & transcribed
- Coding
  - Themes & concepts
- Ethics
  - Data scrubbed for anonymity

How do HR recruiters perceive the  
acceptability of online learning  
compared with that of face-to-face  
instruction?

## Equally Acceptable

Equal Reputation Traditional





# Accreditation is assumed

- 10 participants based equality on accreditation
  - Apples to Apples
- 8 Participants didn't consider accreditation
- No formal process of validating accreditation at resume screening stage
  - Name recognition
  - Internet searches
  - Background check

# How do HR recruiters perceive the acceptability of online learning compared with that of face-to-face instruction?

- Gatekeepers are more positive regarding online education
- Concerns regarding lack of social interaction, but not enough to influence resume acceptance
- Bias toward specific online educational institutions based on reputation, not teaching methodology
- Time constraints make educational requirements a checkbox.

What is the relationship between the type of position being sought and the perceived acceptability of online education based on recruiter's opinions?

# Social skills matter

- Traditional schools provided social interaction
  - Sales, marketing, human resources positions
- Online schools more technical
  - Information technology, accounting
- 11% considered the education modality and position
- 89% considered it a checkbox or requirement to satisfy

# What is the relationship between the type of position being sought and the perceived acceptability of online education based on recruiter's opinions?

- Positions requiring social or soft skills and advance degrees were not the best suited for an online education.
  - marketing, human resources, sales, lawyer, nurses
- Information technology, accounting, finance, and administrative positions were better suited for online education
- Minor role, if any, on acceptability of resume with online education

What do recruiters perceive as historical and future trends in acceptance of online degrees versus traditional degrees?

## Gaining acceptance

- Previously looked down upon
- Evolved
- Recruiters with 5+ years experience have seen increase of acceptance

## Equality

- Online considered close to equal
- Technology has increased quality
- Increase in popularity contributes to equality
  - Costs of education
  - Working professionals
  - Online graduates entering work place

# What do recruiters perceive as historical and future trends in acceptance of online degrees versus traditional degrees?

- Historically less acceptable
- Trending to equality with traditional degrees



How do recruiters perceive the difference between online courses/degrees at a traditional school and a proprietary school?

# Proprietary status a non-factor

- Majority stated no influence/no consideration
- Traditional & online schools were the same
- Media coverage of proprietary schools failures & education cost had no impact on acceptability

# How do recruiters perceive the difference between online courses/degrees at a traditional school and a proprietary school?

- No perceived difference between traditional and proprietary schools.
- Recruiters do not know the proprietary status of schools
- News coverage of recent scandals made no impact

# Implications for Practice

- No supportable bias in sample population, but areas of minor concern were accreditation of institutions and lack of social interaction for online students
- Educational institutions should obtain and/or maintain accreditation
- Online students & academia should be aware of the perception of lack social interaction.
  - Academia could utilize technology or hybrid course to provide social interaction
  - Students could participate in activities – volunteering, professional memberships

# Recommendations for Related Research

- Similar study focused on hiring manager, not gatekeepers
- Quantitative study focused on gatekeepers
- Perception among participants as online education was less expensive, which is a potential area of study.
- Accreditation is important to gatekeepers, which is a potential area of study.

# Significance of the Study

- Less bias against accredited online education
- Perception of online students lacking social interaction
- Reputation plays important role in screen process
- Acceptance of online education among gatekeepers is close, if not equal, to traditional education

# Questions?

# References

- Adams, J. & DeFleur, M. (2005). The acceptability of a doctoral degree earned online as a credential for obtaining a faculty position. *The American journal of Distance Education*, 19, pp. 71-85.