

2022

CAREER READINESS OF RECENT GRADUATES

Bobby Stewart

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/etd>



Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Stewart, Bobby, "CAREER READINESS OF RECENT GRADUATES" (2022). *Murray State Theses and Dissertations*. 252.

<https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/etd/252>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Murray State's Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Murray State Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Murray State's Digital Commons. For more information, please contact msu.digitalcommons@murraystate.edu.

CAREER READINESS OF RECENT GRADUATES

by

Bobby Reid Stewart

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The College of Education and Human Services

Department of Educational Studies, Leadership, and Counseling

at Murray State University

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

P-20 & Community Leadership

Specialization: Postsecondary Leadership

Under the supervision of Dr. Terence Holmes Murray, KY

August 2022

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Terence Holmes for his support throughout more than twenty years of my post-secondary education. As a new undergrad student, I took classes offered by Dr. Holmes and have great memories of the lessons learned and his teaching style. I went on to take several more courses offered by Dr. Holmes while working on graduate courses. The patience that Dr. Holmes has demonstrated while leading me through the dissertation has been nothing short of amazing. Dr. Holmes has made himself available through difficult personal times, COVID, and other obstacles to provide great feedback and instruction. Dr. Holmes gave me positive encouragement when I felt I was not going to be successful.

I would also like to thank my friends and family for their support during the last several years. Working through my doctorate while working full-time, moving states, marriage, and welcoming a new baby has been an eventful experience I will reflect on for many years. There have been tough times and fun times. My family has sacrificed countless evenings and weekends to support my education and dream of becoming Dr. Bobby Stewart. Without my family's support I would not be where I am today.

Abstract

This study aimed to provide an understanding of skills that human resource managers viewed as the most lacking in newly hired employees. This research focused on the development needs of newly hired employees from the perspective of human resource leaders. The researcher hoped that the findings of the study would help educators better understand the variety of skills that new employees need. Understanding the development needs of the newly hired employees will better prepare administrators to provide education more geared toward real world needs in the workforce. A Google Forms survey was used to determine if the 78 participants viewed key skills as important and the possession rate of the key skills in newly hired employees. Findings revealed a high level of importance on the key skills, with communication being the highest rated skill. The possession rate was consistently lower in all the key skills surveyed. There were a wide range of development programs offered to address the skill development in the workforce. This study contributes to the efforts P-20 leaders will continue to make while formulating programs to better prepare students. Personalizing the skill development and ensuring the gaps that employers are seeing will continue to be a priority for P-20 leaders.

Keywords: Skill development, P-20 education, human resources

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables.....	viii
List of Figures.....	x
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Context.....	4
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Perspective Guiding Research.....	6
Research Questions.....	6
Significance of the Study.....	7
Summary.....	8
Chapter II: Literature Review.....	9
Introduction.....	9
Gottfredson's Theory.....	9

Counseling	12
Communication Skills.....	14
Career Development Programs	15
Leadership Development Programs.....	16
HEL Model	21
College and Career Readiness	22
Career Management Programs.....	25
Flipped Training Model.....	29
Conclusion	32
Chapter III: Methodology	34
Research Design	34
Purpose of the Study	34
Research Questions.....	35
Description of Population and Participants	35
Procedures Followed.....	36
Description of Risk and Participation	37

Description of Instruments (Questionnaires, Interviews, Focus groups) and Pilot	
Testing	38
Variables in the Study.....	38
Procedures for Data Analysis	39
Chapter IV: Findings and Analysis.....	41
Career Readiness Findings.....	41
Instrument	43
Sample Description.....	43
Research Question One.....	52
Research Question Two	57
Research Question Three	63
Survey Conclusion.....	66
Chapter V: Conclusions and Discussions	67
Purpose of the Study	67
Discussion of Findings.....	68
Research Question One.....	68

Research Question Two	69
Research Question Three	69
Practical Significance	71
P-20 Implications	71
Limitations of the Study	72
Participation	73
Social Media Group Sizes.....	73
Skill Limits.....	74
Recommendations for Future Research.....	74
References.....	77
Appendix A.....	86
Survey Instrument.....	86
Appendix B.....	94
IRB Approval.....	94
Appendix C.....	96
Informed Consent	96

List of Tables

Table 4.1 <i>Are you in a HR related position, e.g., position titled as HR, holds the responsibility of talent acquisition, hiring, or recruiting?</i>	44
Table 4.2 <i>What is your age in years?</i>	44
Table 4.3 <i>Gender</i>	46
Table 4.4 <i>What is your ethnicity?</i>	46
Table 4.5 <i>Education</i>	47
Table 4.6 <i>Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?</i>	47
Table 4.7 <i>How many employees does your organization employ?</i>	48
Table 4.8 <i>What is your organization's primary business activity?</i>	50
Table 4.9 <i>What was your organization's sales volume last year?</i>	51
Table 4.10 <i>How important is each of the following skills? Teamwork</i>	52
Table 4.11 <i>How important is each of the following skills? Critical Thinking</i>	53
Table 4.12 <i>How important is each of the following skills? Communication</i>	54
Table 4.13 <i>How important is each of the following skills? Attention to detail</i>	55
Table 4.14 <i>How important is each of the following skills? Ownership</i>	56

Table 4.15 *To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills?*

Teamwork58

Table 4.16 *To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills?*

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving59

Table 4.17 *To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills?*

Communication60

Table 4.18 *To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills?*

Attention to detail61

Table 4.19 *To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills?*

Ownership62

Table 4.20 *Does your organization have a career development program? If so, please select*

all that apply.65

List of Figures

Figure 4.1 *What is your age in years?*45

Figure 4.2 *How important is each of the following skills?*57

Figure 4.3 *To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills?*63

Figure 4.4 *Does your organization have a career development program? If so, please select all that apply.*64

Chapter I: Introduction

Skill development starts in childhood and continues through each person's life. Skills such as communication and teamwork are key skills for personal development. These skills that are learned at an early age continue to develop throughout the formal education process and are used in the workforce. Educators and leaders in the workforce are tasked with developing talent skills to an acceptable or above level.

Post-secondary education around the world is intended to further educate the next-generation workforce. There are many professions such as doctors, lawyers, business professionals, and educators that are options for students as they continue their education. Trade schools are also available for education in welding, plumbing, and many other trades. Some students have grand ideas of what they want to grow up to be and other students do not think about it until careers are started. Career aspirations change over time and can change quickly with new a new interest, hobby, or education level. There are numerous reasons that students or workers change their career aspirations. But at what point do educators and parents begin to sustainably introduce career readiness into the lives of their students and children? Around the world, there are school systems that will introduce career projections early in the formal education process and other school systems that will wait until the student has graduated.

Gottfredson (1981), discusses the different stages children go through when they are narrowing down their career options. Glenda Johnson (2016) listed Gottfredson's stages in her article:

- Stage 1 (ages 3 – 5) Orientation to Size and Power
- Stage 2 (ages 6 – 8) Orientation to Sex Roles

- Stage 3 (ages 9 – 13) Orientation to Social Valuation
- Stage 4 (ages 14 and older) Orientation to Internal Unique Self

There are some fields that children begin learning about much earlier in life, such as farming or coaching. The field of work that parents chose inevitably makes an impression on the lives of the young children being raised in these households. Exposure to a parent or guardian's work allows the children in these families to see the work first-hand and, in some cases, begin working in the field much earlier than traditionally allowed. According to the legal resource HG.org, "when a child is under fourteen, he or she is limited in what he or she may do within a company. Even if this is a family run business, the child labor laws still apply." (p. 1) This legal constraint makes working as a pre-teen an option, but with restrictions. With such exposure to the work and the impact on their personal work-life balances, children may favor the field or begin to yearn for a change in work from their family as the desired path.

As schools educate students, there are different levels of career planning that get introduced based on the culture and personal life the student lives. Universities have the challenge of educating students from all over the world with varying degrees of career planning and various starting points. Some of the students have a very direct career mapped out and others have not yet started planning. Nearly 30 percent of undergraduates in associate's and bachelor's degree programs change their major at least once within three years of their initial enrollment (Leu, 2017). With students having a varied amount of preparation into career planning, how are human resource leaders viewing the readiness of newly graduated students?

As graduates are moving into the workforce, there is a focus on employee development programs. According to Lindsey Updyke (2019):

According to our survey of 2019 grads, professional development ranked as the most influential factor when selecting a job, followed by location, company culture, and opportunities for advancement. As many as 57% of class of 2019 graduates accepted a job offer because of a company's opportunities for professional development. (p. 5)

Career related programs are an important factor once in the workforce. As the next generation of workers are researching development programs that are offered, many universities are spending more time developing programs for their students. In a 2015 study by Hart Research Associates of 400 employers, 37 percent thought the new employees were well prepared to work with others. Less than 30 percent of employers thought the college graduates were well prepared to make decisions. Less than 30 percent of the employers also thought college graduate's skills in written communication, critical thinking, complex problem solving, or oral communication were not well prepared (2015a, p. 13). The Hart Research Associates study is expanded on throughout this dissertation through the lens of the human resource professional. According to Hart Research Associates, "88% think that it is important for colleges and universities to ensure that all students are prepared with the skills and knowledge needed to complete an applied learning project" (2015b, p. 3).

Studies are showing most newly graduated college students are still in need of major development. Hart Research Associates (2015) found the following:

The majority of employers think that having both field-specific knowledge and skills and a broad range of skills and knowledge that apply to a variety of fields is important for recent college graduates to achieve long-term career success at their company. (p. 3)

As more universities are creating and spending more resources on career readiness programs, skills that employers are needing should be more consistently developed. One program that universities are using to help develop future graduates' real-world skill level is the internship program. Rutschow (2019) states that "internships have long been a tool that colleges have used to help students hone their workplace skills, and these opportunities have become even more important in recent years as employers and policymakers have become aware of the benefits of on-the-job training" (p. 3).

Context

Career and technical education (CTE) allow students to gain valuable work experience while gaining skills needed in the workforce. According to the US Department of Education (2019):

CTE refers to courses and programs designed to prepare students for careers in current or emerging professions. At the high school level, CTE provides students with opportunities to explore a career theme of interest while learning a set of technical and employability skills that integrate into or complement their academic studies.

Many high school graduates move directly into the workforce. Some high school graduates move onto post-secondary education or trade schools. According to the National Center for

Education Statistics, “In 2019, about 44 percent of high school completers immediately enrolled in 4-year institutions and 22 percent immediately enrolled in 2-year institutions” (p. 1). The CTE opportunities provided in high school will be the last exposure to formal education that some graduating high school seniors are exposed to.

Graduating school and entering the workforce for the first time is a very challenging part of becoming an adult. Every year, students make the decision to continue their education or enter the workforce and pursue a career. “Collaborative problem solving (CPS) skills are identified to be important for daily life, work, and schooling in the 21st century” (Oliveri et al., p. 1, 2017). CPS involves two different constructs—collaboration and problem solving. The assumption is that collaboration for a group task is essential because some problem-solving tasks are too complex for an individual to work through alone or the solution will be improved from the joint capacities of a team. (*Collaborative Problem Solving: Considerations for the National Assessment of Educational Progress*, p. 2, n.d.)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to provide an understanding of skills that human resource managers view as most lacking in newly hired employees and programs offered in the workplace to develop new employees. As students graduate high school and begin secondary education, there are many options. Students can attend community or technical colleges, vocational schools, or public/private universities. This research will focus on the developmental needs of newly hired employees from the perspective of human resource leaders and what kind of continuing skill development will be available for newly hired employees.

Perspective Guiding Research

In Florida, there is a career readiness initiative that is used to assess high school students for college readiness or career readiness. “Florida College and Career Readiness Initiative” (FCCRI) used the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT) to assess students. Mokher & Jacobson (2014) found three common findings from the study.

- Increasing student engagement is the key to reaching the central goal of the FCCRI, which is to have more students complete college programs that lead to fulfilling careers.
- Spending more time developing engagement may improve college readiness of CRS students, particularly those who would be the first in their families to attend college.
- Efforts to boost engagement and establish connections among school, college, and careers would be much more effective if started no later than ninth grade. (p. 8)

Student engagement and the exposure to programs early are the keys to success found by the Florida College and Career Readiness Initiative (2014).

Research Questions

The skills of newly hired employees vary by person. The perception of the skill level of new employees also varies between the employee and the human resource leaders who are interacting with the new talent. The following research questions are intended to gain more understanding regarding what level of skill employees possess compared with perception of the skill level from the human resource professionals’ lens.

Research question 1: What do managers define as the key skills needed for newly hired employees to be successful in their roles?

Research question 2: What are managers' perceptions of newly hired employees' possession of key skills needed to be successful in their roles?

Research question 3: What steps are managers taking to help newly hired employees develop key skills to be successful in their roles?

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this research is to provide an understanding of skills and qualities that human resource leaders view as frequently missing in new hires. The findings will help better understand the skills lacking among the workforce after formal education has ended. The research will identify what organizations are expecting from graduates and where the deficiencies lie. Understanding the study results will help students better prepare for the reality of the workforce environment.

The second part of the study seeks to understand the programs that are being utilized by organizations in the field. The educational system is evolving constantly to achieve the standards of the local, state, and federal requirements. Changes set forth from the government often dictate the amount of funding publicly funded schools are eligible for. By looking at the skills that are missing combined with the career readiness programs available, this study seeks to provide a better understanding of the skills employers are looking for. This study aims to identify potential gaps between the career readiness programs offered during post-secondary education with the skill development programs offered in the workforce.

Summary

Linda Gottfredson's four stages of circumscription show the progression through each stage of career development from the ages of three and up. Understanding the psychology that each child goes through as they develop is key to making a positive meaningful impact on the next generation of workers. As young adults make their way through the formal education system and start looking for work, human resource professionals are seeing the need for continuing skill development programs. Hart Research Associates (2015) suggests less than 40 percent of new employees are well prepared with key skills. Educators are making efforts to design programs to develop the skills employers are needing in the workforce. Collaborative problem solving (CPS) is an education process used to help develop key skills. The career and technical education (CTE) and the Florida college and career readiness initiative (FCCRI) are two examples of programs that have been formed to better prepare students for the workforce.

The research questions in this dissertation aim to provide an understanding of the skills that human resource leaders view as most often missing and what organizations are implementing to address the missing skills. Understanding the study results will help students, educators, and employers better prepare programs to address skill deficiencies.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

Leaders who build the depth of education through K–12, P–16, and P–20 will assist in creating a more diverse and productive workforce. Human development and career preparedness has many layers. Three types of education exist: formal, informal, and nonformal. Webster defines education as “the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university” (2018, para. 1). *Passion in Education* (2019) specifies that formal education is “given by specially qualified teachers they are supposed to be efficient in the art of instruction” (p. 4). Formal education includes primary schools, boarding schools, private schools, magnet schools, and colleges. These types of schools are formal and have guidelines that must be followed, such as attendance, behavior, and sometimes a dress code. Informal education involves real-world learnings. This type of learning may come from family, friends, and experiences that teach life lessons. Learning the culture of an organization, school, or workplace is an example of an informal education. Lastly, nonformal learning is the long-term process of learning from work, home, or the surrounding environment. Some examples of nonformal education are fitness programs and community-based adult education courses.

Gottfredson’s Theory

Oliveira et al. (2017) examined parents’ jobs in relation to children’s expectations of careers using Gottfredson’s (1981, 1996) theory. Gottfredson (1981) offered a theory of circumscription and compromise to explain the development of children’s career aspirations and expectations from fantasy-based conceptions into reality-based expectations. Parents have been

shown to affect children's career aspirations and expectations by serving as role models and by encouraging career exploration and career-related conversations (Liu et al., 2015; Young et al., 1997). During the compromise process, children revise the remaining acceptable alternatives and constrain the alternatives within a cognitive map of acceptable and possible occupations (Gottfredson, 1996). Previous researchers have suggested that parents can nurture children's enrollment in and exploration of multiple realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional (RIASEC) environments (Liu et al., 2015; Oliveira et al., 2017). Parents can nurture a child's exploration of careers and aspirations; however, parents may also have a negative impact on the child's career exploration. Parents can ensure that children are exposed to many career opportunities through nurturing practices such as enabling children to participate in community activities, supporting children's exposure to family and community members' careers, using gender-balanced language in conversations with children, and being responsive to children's curiosity (Peila-Shuster, 2018). Gottfredson's theory asserts that occupational aspirations reflect one's self-concept. People seek occupations that are congruent with their self-image and that reflect their knowledge of different occupations.

Gottfredson's (1981) theory of circumscription and compromise introduced four stages of career decision-making that occur as children are growing up. Each stage occurs during different age ranges and is dependent on a child's self-concept. Self-concept is the total of all the beliefs people hold about themselves, including personality, interests, and perceived place in society (Cochran et al., 2011). The four stages take place starting at the age of three and evolve into the teenage years.

Stage one of Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise occurs between ages three and five. Children begin to see occupations as adult roles and zero in on size and power. During this stage, the child transitions from dreaming of fairy tale situations to becoming more self-aware of real-life adult occupations.

Stage two occurs in the next 3 years of the child's life, between the ages of six and eight. During this time period, the child typically becomes gender aware and begins to self-identify with gender roles that have been marketed to them. An example of this stereotype would be that doctors are male, and nurses are female. Currently, some are actively working to reduce or eliminate these stereotypes on gender-specific roles. However, individuals in the United States still demonstrate career-related gender stereotypes that lead children between the ages of 6 and 8 to identify careers as being either male or female. Children in this age bracket begin to eliminate career choices based on stereotypes that have been introduced to them inside or outside the home.

Stage three occurs between the ages of nine and 13 years old (Gottfredson, 1981). The preteens and young adults in this age group are becoming aware of the prestige of careers, including the homes, vehicles, clothes, and lifestyles of others. These observations impact the decisions the young adult makes towards career selection. Post-high school graduation plans also begin to form during this timeframe and students start accepting and eliminating career fields depending on their desired or perceived status in the economy.

The last stage of Gottfredson's (1981) theory of circumscription and compromise starts at age 14 and continues through adulthood. The student starts identifying characteristics within themselves and their motivator's during this time. The student will have identified careers that

are not aligned with their values, abilities, or characteristics and eliminate them. While examining careers, the young student will also begin or may have already narrowed their potential careers to a select few that meet their mental and internal traits.

Students create their “social space” (Gottfredson, 1996, p. 187) by the time they near or graduate high school. Cochran et al. (2011) stated that “adolescents define their place in the social spectrum and spend the rest of their professional lives living out this perception, however inaccurate it might be” (p. 414). Others have researched and supported the theory of circumscription and compromise; for example, Cochran et al. listed research from Hannah and Kahn (1989), Helwig (2001), and Blanchard and Lichtenberg (2003) and the scholars’ different approaches as evidence to support Gottfredson’s theory.

Counseling

High school guidance counselors are critical in providing information and guidance to students as students begin looking to careers and colleges that may want to pursue or attend. Campbell and Hadley (1992) studied diversity in the school counselors. Campbell and Hadley shared that five participants participated in a “Creating Options” program at Ohio State University; the success of these participants warranted a repeat of the program. After the program, all five reported that the program has contributed significantly to their professional development. This is significant due to the limited number of minority career counselors available to students. Campbell and Hadley stated that “a random sampling of institutions with enrollments of more than 10,000 indicates that there is only one black professional per institute in the career planning and placement field” (p. 645). This limited guidance provided to

minorities may have negatively impacted the current generation of post-secondary education students or their children.

University leaders establish relationships with secondary school staff. When appropriate, university staff guide and provide resources to ensure students successfully transition to college. Faculty from Oakland University (OU) in Rochester, Michigan created a program called Accomplish Career Hopes Including Excellent Valued Employment (ACHIEVE). ACHIEVE launched in the fall of 2008:

The objective of the ACHIEVE program is to help students determine their selected business major and course plan, match their career choices with their talents, find employment within their chosen field, and make immediate and valuable contributions to their employers. (Majeske & Serocki, 2009, p. 60)

OU faculty identified four key program objectives of the ACHIEVE program. The four objectives are as follows:

- Assist students with relevant information in selecting a major,
- Provide students with networking skills to expose them to the business environment,
- Provide students connections to the alumni network so they can experience a business career perspective, and
- Help create a community of students exchanging ideas and concerns.

Students participate in the ACHIEVE program for the duration of their enrollment. Two main roadblocks were identified early on in the creation of the program. The first was how to require participation into the program without costing the students more money. The conclusion was that individuals would form a negative view to the program if the program cost money. The

second roadblock to overcome was how to establish the program as a requirement without displacing another curriculum. Ultimately, it was decided to make the program a non-credit hour requirement for all students. The small business association agreed to be a partner and offer services and seminars to help ensure the success of the program.

Communication Skills

Thomas (1980) states that “when a person is up for a promotion, his or her supervisor’s reference will carry more weight than anything that can be found by sorting through the junk paper that collects in personnel files” (p. 38). Many aspects of an employee’s work may warrant a reference or dissuade a supervisor from giving a reference. Communication between the subordinate and the supervisor is a key piece of the relationship between employers and employees. Anderson and Surman (2007) stated that “Communication expertise is one of the key qualifications employers look for when hiring” (p. 4). Every employer has their own expectations of new employees. Some employers prefer a head-down and working culture, whereas others expect a level of in-office and in some cases out-of-office relationship with staff. Some employers rely on educational institutions to provide communication skills training for their potential employees, and each employer has its own expectations of the kind of training graduates from different disciplines must attain before being hired (Al-Musalli, 2019). Employers have acknowledged that a growing gap exists between the communication skills of the recent bachelor’s degree graduates and the workforce skills needed to be successful.

Calonge and Shah (2016) maintain that there is a “mismatch” (p. 82) between the skills that new bachelor’s degree graduates have and what potential employers require; this problem is growing on a global scale. Employers will typically pay for five skills: leadership skills, project

management skills, people skills, communication skills, and sales skills (Fortier, 2007).

Communication skills are essential in the workplace. Workplace communication is required often; thus, a deficiency in communication skills becomes apparent very quickly. Many forms of communication are used in the workplace, such as verbal, electronic, memos, ad-hoc, and even nonformal. Understanding the preferred communication techniques and norms used within an organization are important pieces of the communication expectation.

Career Development Programs

Many organizations have development programs that employees can partake in; however, development of key areas such as communication starts early in K–12 education. K–12 institutions have opportunities for program development. The Center on Standards, Alignment, Instruction, and Learning (C-SAIL; 2019) administered a study in the spring of 2016 and uncovered some challenges facing educators in Kentucky, Ohio, and Texas. The top five challenges reported among teachers were (a) wide range of student abilities, (b) inadequate student preparation in prior grades, (c) lack of support from parents, (d) time, and (e) student absenteeism and tardiness. Many of the challenges that teachers face with students in grades K–12 roll over into the workplace if not addressed.

Downing and D’Andrea (1997) compared a career development program for parents in the United States to a similar program in Switzerland. Downing and D’Andrea found significant differences in the approach of both the school systems and the receptiveness of the parents in regard to their own involvement. The Swiss career development program starts early at age 11 and are consistent throughout Switzerland:

When children are approximately 11 years of age the 'assess and direct system' begins and is repeated at age 13 and again at age 15. In this system, assessments are made as to a child's academic ability, and the child is directed along the appropriate educational and career development path. (Downing & D'Andrea, 1997, p. 57)

The Swiss career development program was different than the career development program in the United States that Downing and D'Andrea explored. Out of the six schools that Downing and D'Andrea observed, only four had a written career development program. Parents from U.S. schools had little to no involvement in the career development program. Downing and D'Andrea asserted that the schools that had some job placement programs were limited to the specific guidance counselor and any direct or indirect contacts that the counselor may have with businesses: "Two thirds of the group described themselves as 'uninformed' about their child's potential and the opportunities available, and nearly one third expressed feelings of 'helplessness' in the process of helping their children with future career choices and decisions" (p. 60). Leaders of the U.S. school system, such as superintendents, focus on standardized testing and funding for the school systems through local, regional, and federal funding. Parent involvement in career choices can be limited if the school's focus is primarily "no student left behind." School leaders do not focus on individual student development for specific careers. Leaders in U.S. school systems use work-study placement to move problem kids out of the classroom rather than using the career development programs to benefit students' careers.

Leadership Development Programs

Company leaders develop leadership development programs (LDPs) for many reasons. Staff within these programs work closely with talent acquisition. Large and small companies

depend on their leaders to navigate through changes in the business environment, establish standards, evolve the business model, and adapt to changes. The lack of quality leaders has doomed many businesses, from K-Mart, Enron, Pan AM, and Compaq:

Competition for highly talented leaders, recent high-profile organizational failures, chaotic economic swings, and rapidly changing technology and demographics are a few of the motivators that highlight the need to develop employees in-house to become effective leaders. (Holt et al., 2018, p. 214)

Holt et al. (2018) studied the essential components of a LDP:

Results revealed that the skills most important in the development of future leaders are the ability to motivate others and communicate appropriately. Critical behaviors to be developed in leaders include treating employees as unique individuals and encouraging teamwork and collaboration. (p. 222)

Motivating others and communicating appropriately can be introduced and taught early in the K–12 structure. Holt et al. found that leaders in the workplace valued these skills when determining the future leaders in the company. Holt et al. examined a pharmaceutical company with over 11,000 employees. Holt et al.'s study was based on surveys from sales specialists, district managers, and regional managers. Study participants were diverse, with participant tenure ranging from 1 to 15 or more years:

Participants in this study reported that current or future leaders should be able to successfully foster teamwork and collaboration within the districts and regions of the organization. This behavior needs development through an academic learning lens, as well as a learning environment based on experience. (Fedor et al., 2003)

Two of the results from Holt et al.'s (2018) study appear to be opposite in nature. Treating employees as unique individuals and encouraging teamwork and collaboration did not seem to correlate; however, Holt et al.'s findings indicated that even employees in large companies expect the leaders to inspire their workforce while continuing to develop each team member. This sentiment is reflected by Holt et al., who stated: "Leaders are responsible for inspiring a workforce comprised of complex employees who need to be developed individually yet thrive in a sense of community" (p. 223). Holt et al. identified three components of an effective LDP: curriculum, time, and delivery. In regard to curriculum, Holt et al. "suggests that promoting teamwork and collaboration and treating employees as unique individuals, in addition to mastery of motivation and communication techniques, are essential elements in an LDP" (p. 224).

The three components identified by Holt et al. are not presumed to fit every LDP model perfectly. Each organization should evaluate their curriculum and ensure the topics match their needs. The time component of the study will change per organization; however, Holt et al. suggested that effective LDPs last at least 2 years. The 2-year window allows company leaders time to address concerns and allow for a saturation of the content. Lastly, Holt et al. discussed the delivery component of the LDP. The delivery of the LDP in an organization should be linked to the hierarchical levels that the leaders maintain. Education and learning should be tailored by organization and by position and level within the company. This method will result in better and more functional use of the development time.

Holt et al. (2018) indicated that companies should have and maintain a relationship with a higher education institute. This relationship can be beneficial to both organizations: "Firms may

investigate linking the LDP with an educational institution that will enable participants to earn a master's degree or certificate in leadership upon completion" (p. 224). A certification or degree will encourage participants to take education more seriously and the educational institute will gain a partner to establish job and career links to future students. Additionally, the curriculum can change to become more current as business needs continue to change.

Neely (2009) completed a study on The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Leadership and Career Development Program (LCDP). Neely (2009) stated:

The ARL LCDP is but one of the diversity initiatives of the ARL. Although several leadership development programs exist to advance people into upper management in academic libraries, the LCDP is one of a few programs specifically targeting diverse individuals to expand the pool of potential future leaders. (p. 813)

Neely (2009) examined the LCDP mentorship program and found that:

Only 9 (20%) of the 44 responding that this relationship was "essential to overall learning, long-term relationship established." Nearly 30% characterized the relationship as "important knowledge shared, but no long-term connection," and the remaining 40% selected "very limited contact or communication" (27.3%) or "not at all." (p. 825)

Schools that introduce programs such as the LCDP to groups of students, including minorities, require support to maintain long-term success. NELI (Northern Exposure to Leadership Institute) was cofounded by Ernie Ingles. Ingles (2005) stated: "the mentors are what make NELI" (p. 1). Mentorship success depends on the mentors and the amount of support the program has. Mentors take their role much more seriously and the mentee gains more from relationship when deans are advocates of the program and the mentorships. Neely concluded "that the impact of leadership

institutes on participants appears to be much more personal in the arenas of confidence gained and self-awareness realized” (p. 832). Each program will have a culture of buy-in and participation; therefore, the program’s impact depends on the input from the participants, administrators, and mentors.

Parmer (2004) documented the needs of minorities, specifically African Americans, for a career development program that adequately addresses minority group’s career needs and development. Parmer asked the following question: “Specifically, has career development examined the cultural context, lifestyle, and identity issues from a holistic perspective of African Americans that is consistent with race and class issues across the life span and life context?” (p. 62). African Americans come from a history of slavery instead of immigration.

Goodman and Hansen (2005) asserted that Parmer “presented her holistic model of culture, identity and lifestyle, life span, and life context as a suggested way to improve career development models to better meet the needs of African Americans” (p. 62). Other groups of people from different areas of the world require a more specific career development program. For example, the indigenous population in Australia, such as the Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, face disadvantages in the workplace because indigenous people tend to be less educated and maintain high rates of unemployment (Lichtenberg, 2004). Goodman and Hansen discussed Lichtenberg, positing that, “Lichtenberg concluded that the usual Western models for career development seem to be less effective with this population and stated that new, collaborative, and more holistic research approaches may be required to identify appropriate career practices strategies and resources” (p. 63).

HEL Model

Larsson (2017) conducted a study to examine the benefits of the Healthy and Effective Leadership (HEL) model. The HEL model relates to the three-dimensional behavior theory. The three-dimensional behavior theory involves relation/employee, structure/task/production, and change management. The strongest connection of the three with the HEL model is the connection to the relation-orientation dimension (Larsson & Vinberg, 2010). Larsson conducted a review of 200 leadership development studies and studied where the leadership interventions were effective. Larsson identified three types of leadership theories: “(1) traditional leadership theories (TLT) such as the two-dimensional leadership behaviour theory, (2) newer leadership theories (NLT) such as transformational/ charismatic leadership and (3) Pygmalion based leadership (PBL) – higher expectations lead to better performance” (p. 1619).

Of the leadership theories reviewed by Larsson (2017), Pygmalion-based leadership (PBL) was the most successful after leadership intervened. Leadership interventions had strong effects for organizational performance, but the number of included studies was too limited to perform more detailed analyses (Avolio et al., 2009). According to Avolio, more studies need to be conducted to perform a more detailed analysis. The study conducted by Larsson was an effort to increase the effectiveness of the organization through productivity and learnings.

Larsson and Vinberg (2010) found nine behavior groups related to health and effectiveness: “These common nine groups are strategic and visionary leader role, communication and information, authority and responsibility, learning culture, subordinate conversations, plainness and simplicity, humanity and trust, walking around and reflective personal leadership” (p. 329). Larsson and Vinberg’s results showed increased scores for

interventions on topics such as successful organizations, reflective leadership, leadership values, and own subordinate health. Scores increased in Larsson and Vinberg's study both with and without manager and subordinate group development; this finding reaffirmed that LDPs help increase productivity within an organization if the leader attends and participates in HEL.

Larsson and Vinberg acknowledged that more research is needed to promote HEL behavior and learn about subordinate health and effectiveness.

College and Career Readiness

Pak and Desimone (2018) examined the implementation of college and career readiness standards in Kentucky, Ohio, and Texas. Pak and Desimone completed an analysis of 66 hour-long interviews through the distributed leadership theory lens. State and district administrators across the three states were interviewed and data were collected between Spring 2016 and Spring 2017. Pak and Desimone acknowledged the statewide focus of Kentucky, Ohio, and Texas on K–12 education and the focus to ensure the students are ready for college or career paths; the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA; 2015) helped push the state's agenda. State education agencies (SEA) have been left out of major studies on implantation of the education policies and reform.

Pak and Desimone (2018) referenced the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) from 2009. The national leadership's requirement to rollout such an initiative to all 50 states was demonstrated through the execution of standard increase tied to funding. The goal of the K–12 education system is to ensure the optimal success for all students. College and career readiness (CCR) standards help bridge the gap between K–12 and college or a student's first career. CCR officially became a fixture of the federal education reform movement when ESSA required states

to align their educational systems with CCR standards (Young et al., 2017). Pak and Desimone used the policy attributes theory when trying to understand how leadership effects CCR standards: “The policy attributes theory posits that the more specific, consistent, authoritative, powerful, and stable a policy is, the better implementation and effects will be” (p. 449).

Smith and Their (2017) discussed SEA officials:

[Officials] felt that they lacked the capacity themselves to take on the increasing number of responsibilities that ESSA allocated to states compared with previous federal requirements—for example, states now have more control over their accountability indicators and their interventions for low performing schools. (p. 450)

School districts need more collaboration. The leadership skills required to maintain and foster relationships through various levels of the school’s administration is a skill that can be taught and developed: “Educational change is contingent on productive leadership relationships that connect the various segments of a dynamic educational system: federal, state, district, school, and classroom” (Pak & Desimone, 2018, p. 451–452). Pak and Desimone (2008) indicated that leaders can increase the performance of the school by building the capacity of others. Leaders who build the capacity of others improve moral and the work environment within the school system and district.

Looking into the corporate world, Riceman (1982) proposed that providing employees with many career ladder options leads to more job satisfaction and employee retainment: “Most employees are initially placed on either the technical or the administrative ladder and may then advance vertically, diagonally, or laterally as opportunities exist and their interests and capabilities change” (p. 24). Riceman reviewed the career and development of Dan Woodman,

who started work with Braddock, Dunn & McDonald (now known as BDM International) out of high school and continued his career with the company. Riceman stated:

Woodman credits BDM's unique career development program for smoothing the way.

The BDM corporation, which provides diversified professional and technical services to clients in both the public and private sectors, designed a structure of multiple career ladders, allowing employees to pursue professional, financial, and personal rewards- without moving into management positions. (p. 21)

Woodman pursued and succeeded in his career development while at BDM due to the unique career development opportunities that BDM had available and the opportunities under BDM's educational aid program. Woodman used the options provided to him to stay and provide value to the company. Woodman's career is an example of how well a quality career program and options assists in the retention of valuable employees.

Iles and Mabey (1993) examined the effectiveness, availability, and acceptability of managerial career development programs in Britain. Iles and Mabey distinguished the difference between career planning and self-assessment programs and career management programs: "Career planning is usually seen as employee centered, involving self-assessment, assessment of opportunities and action planning in relation to career goals" (p. 105). Organizations can still play a role in employee-driven career planning. For example, supervisors can provide self-assessment tools, career planning workshops, career counseling and career reviews as part of the career planning process.

Career planning workshops can be interactive and often focus on experiential exercises. The self-assessment within this process encourages participants to have a much wider view for

career exploration. The exposure to the realities of jobs and careers inside and outside of an organization are likely to give career planners a much better range to select from. Employees will be setting their own goals and plans for their career; thus, it is important to introduce and submit plans to the organization they are working with. Employee-manager partnerships are key to ensure that job assignments, training, and mentorships are supporting the overall goal of the employee: “Self-assessment may be followed by workshops and follow-up meetings to allow evaluation, assess progress, set new goals and involve supervisors” (Iles & Mabey, 1993, p. 106). “Career planning workshops and work-books are often the first career planning exercises introduced, partly because career planning is a necessary first step for other career development systems to be effective” (Iles & Mabey, 1993, p. 106).

Iles and Mabey (1993) state that career counseling and reviews are also part of the career planning process. The types of reviews can range from informal to formal. These reviews can include yearly evaluations, 1-minute feedback, teaching moments, and informal conversations, among others. Supervisors’ focus on career development of their staff and team at different levels depending on the organization. Some organizations have implemented guidelines or suggestions for company leaders to adhere to. Other organizations offer rewards for supervisors who achieve their own career development goals or assist their team. Mentorship is key throughout an employee’s career.

Career Management Programs

Career management programs are organization-centered programs that are internally maintained. Company-driven programs offer information on career ladders and options for advancement. Company leaders focus more on the internal mentorship teams for new hires and

employees with a high level of potential. Mentors have typically been with a company for several years and are considered a veteran of the organization within their particular role. Mentors provide a great service to new hires and to the organization they serve. Additionally, mentees are more likely to ask questions to a peer than to a supervisor. The mentor can assist the mentee in adapting to the learning curve of the company culture and norms that a supervisor cannot or will not have time for. Additionally, “Mentors also need to be experienced and influential if they are to provide career benefits and need to show empathy and good interpersonal skills if they are to provide psychosocial benefits” (Iles & Mabey, 1993, p. 108).

Iles and Mabey (1993) discussed the usage of different assessment and career development techniques. Career reviews were used the most out of all the different techniques, with 77% of companies using career reviews of the 120 MBA managers in the UK. Informal mentors were second, with 43% of companies using this technique. The bottom three techniques used by companies surveyed were self-assessment (19%), development centers (18%), and career planning workshops (14%).

Ingham (1991) explored matching instruction with employee perception preference. Ingham found that truck drivers, truck mechanics, and managers all learned much more and were more engaged when teachers used the employees’ preferred learning method. Ingham cites three learning methods: tactual and kinesthetic, visual, and auditory. Ingham concluded that adults possess individual learning style preferences and that one’s learning style perceptual preference can be identified using learning style instruments. Learning and engagement are increased when an instructor’s style and instructional methods match the learner’s preferences.

Ismail et al. (2014) studied perceived career development support and workplace career programs. Ismail et al. posited that “the relationship between career planning and career management was positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction. Second, the relationship between perceived career development support was positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction” (p. 157). Ismail et al. concluded that events that employees perceived as career development increased employees’ job satisfaction. Furthermore, Ismael et al. stated that the “ability of managers to appropriately plan and manage career programs adequately will assist employees in developing career paths” (p. 159). Assistance with planning and managing an employee’s career will lead to positive behavior outcomes. Employee trust, job satisfaction, performance, and positive ethical behavior increased due to the perceived interest in the employee’s career development.

Ghosh et al. (2019) studied student veteran career transition readiness, adaptability, and life satisfaction. The 317 veterans who participated in the study indicated their desire to apply the knowledge they acquired in the military in the workplace after leaving the service. Ghosh et al. found that participants with a higher career adaptability were more satisfied with life. Cate et al. (2017) built on Ghosh et al.’s findings: “More recent findings with 850,000 student veterans utilizing their education benefits between 2009 and 2015 suggest a 28% attrition rate at which student veterans left higher education without certificates or degrees” (p. 366). Many careers have a standard tenure, and employees expect to make a career change later in life. Career adaptability is an important aspect of career development; the police force, the military, and athletics are just a few examples of common disciplines that employees work in with the understanding that they will have a second career later in life.

Gusain (2017) reviewed organizations' balance between talent acquisition and leadership development training. Both talent acquisition and leadership development training have pros and cons. High potential talent is in high demand; thus, companies are debating on whether to develop their own talent or purchase talent (Gusain, 2017). Most larger companies offer a varying degree of both options.

Some believe that the cost of such development programs outweighs the benefits for the organization. For example, Gusain (2017) stated that "Kuok and Bell studied HR LDPs at 16 organizations and found that the annual costs of sponsoring each program candidate ranged from \$90,000 to \$250,000 with large variations between programs" (p. 1). It is likely that newly trained leaders who participate in company-sponsored development plans will leave the company after two or three years. Employees leave for various reasons. For example, some leaders will not have the same type of investment in their careers after participating in development programs and may feel as if they have plateaued. Organizations that have a history of training top quality leaders also have many other company's talent acquisition teams looking at their leaders as options. Company A may not have a development program as strong as Company B. As a result, talent acquisition teams may pursue candidates that have been successful leaders with Company B for a period of a few years. The return on investment (ROI) for LDPs can be measured in a few ways. Each organization will collect and compare their data internally to ensure the results of their program are matching their business strategy. Indicators of success for these programs can include engagement scores, tenure, and promotions.

Companies that have leadership programs must ensure that each participant meets their maximum potential and level of growth to increase the ROI: "Research shows that these people

often leave because they feel lost within the organization after the completion of their programs” (Gusain, 2017, p. 3). Continued development and engagement should occur in order to increase the benefits of the program and retain top talent. Mentorships have been identified as a source to follow-up with alumni of programs. Mentors provide advice and guide the newer leader through challenges that new leaders face outside of the program. New leaders may become a mentor for fellow leaders after participating in the program for a period of time. The mentor-mentee relationship works to keep both parties engaged and increase loyalty to the organization.

Flipped Training Model

The flipped training model has been popular when developing training for in classroom education. Instructors using the flipped training model expect all students to come to class prepared and considers each student to be responsible for their own learning. Conley et al. (2017) examined how the flipped training model can be used in a corporate setting. The flipped training model has six steps:

1. Get buy-in.
2. Determine the delivery.
3. Design incentives.
4. Assess learning.
5. Develop materials.
6. Prepare the space.

The flipped classroom model is used within many organizations in the corporate setting. Introducing this learning style early could lead to a smoother transition from formal education to the workplace. The flipped classroom model has been successful for many reasons and using this

model in the corporate setting is beneficial. One of the driving forces behind this technique is to improve retention of learned information by making information more personally relevant to the individual learner (Bergmann & Sams, 2014). The flipped approach relies on learner efficacy and self-inquiry; thus, this approach is an ideal training method worth considering for adults in the workplace (Smith & McDonald, 2013).

The purpose of Step 1 is to get the buy-in. Flipped instructional classrooms are learner driven, and learners who are not aware and willing to come to class prepared can have catastrophic results. With the potential for such varied results, the first step of the program is to get a sponsor to buy-in. The key to Step 1 is to set expectations, gather feedback, and document concerns and obstacles (Smith & McDonald, 2013).

Step 2 is to consider how learners will access the instructional content. Access points are key because the model requires students to learn on their own as the teacher becomes more of a guide. Some training can be expensive, and modules can be hard to access. Step 2 ensures that students can access the data and the material is current and accessible (Smith & McDonald, 2013).

Step 3 involves designing incentives that prompt learners to prepare outside the class; these incentives will encourage a positive learning experience. Coming to class prepared is critical in the success of the student and the flipped learning model, and commitment from the learner is a critical aspect. The communication plan conveys and reinforces expectations of the learners and the teachers and includes benchmarks and monitoring. Additionally, students are required to complete preclass objectives. These objectives must be relevant and provide learners

with choices. After preclass activities have been identified, the teacher must identify how the completion of the activities will be rewarded (Smith & McDonald, 2013).

Step 4 is to assess student learning in multiple ways. The flipped classroom can be a very successful method of teaching and learning; however, it is critical that teachers ensure that learning is taking place. In the corporate world, data from assessments can be used to validate the ROI on the program and the process. Validating the activities preclass and during class are relevant to achieving the goals of the program. Assessments must be available and administered by administrators to give feedback to learners and instructors about the gaps that have been identified in one's teaching or education (Smith & McDonald, 2013).

Step 5 is to develop the flipped class materials. Developing the objectives will depend on the program and what the corporation or sponsor is trying to achieve. The framework from popular instructors may be used to make sure the process is inclusive of pre-class, in-class, and post-class activities (Smith & McDonald, 2013).

Step 6 in the flipped class process is to prepare the physical space. The classroom time will not favor traditional lectures; thus, the classroom space may be nontraditional as well. Ensuring the space will be functional for activities and guidance through the learnings will be key in the space development. The space should be appropriate to demonstrate the questions that may arise from the activities (Smith & McDonald, 2013).

Flipping the classroom presents several challenges. Conley et al. (2017) discussed one of these challenges: "A new challenge for training professionals: keeping learners engaged during the entire learning experience, which includes self-directed learning followed by classroom experiences that focus on the application of knowledge and skills" (p. 25). The rewards for

teaching in a flipped classroom setting in a corporate development program include (a) having the most current information and (b) opportunities to plug current events into the guidance.

Conclusion

Schmidt (1994) shared that “Career development programs were originally developed after the recessions of 1979 and 1982 as a means of generating career stability and opportunity for individuals as well as identifying potential managers to meet organizational needs” (p. 22). Schmidt studied career development in the mid-90s and found that younger employees were less interested in promoting up and moving through the company ladder in comparison to the baby boomer generation. This put a strain on leadership within organizations to create programs that would help promote and develop internal employees. The post-boomer generation’s lack of interest in promoting has led to the programs that are still evolving and training employees in large companies today. Schmidt’s study results included the following:

The common assumption that people lose interest in development after age 40 was also disproved in this study. The survey reported that 80% of the participants under forty and 79% over 40 indicated they were currently involved in developmental experiences. A mentor for development was indicated by only 16% of the participants on the survey. (p. 25)

Schmidt (1994) made suggestions to implement some changes to current business models as results were identified.

Schmidt (1994) listed the following as examples of some of the changes that can be made to current business models.

(a) make use of day-today assignments where managers assign and encourage new risk taking and confrontational experiences; (b) provide training that increases opportunity for "within" task responsibility; (c) encourage development of all workers including the older workers; (d) express confidence and support for workers and increase their efforts by giving them new responsibilities; (e) teach people how to recognize developmental activities and opportunities in their present work. (p. 26)

Career development programs are beneficial for many reasons. Career development starts in K–12 and continues into college. College readiness and career readiness programs in college are key to students' successful transition into the workplace. Lastly, employees expect companies to continue to invest in them and develop them after employees depart from the formal education process.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Design

This was a quantitative quasi-experimental study. Human resource professionals were contacted through LinkedIn, Facebook, and the West Kentucky Workforce Board (KYSHRM) and asked to participate in the survey. Participants that were contacted either have held or currently hold a human resource title. A consent form was sent if they agreed to participate in the study. Participants were asked about their title and time in the field. Next, they were asked about their organizational demographics to understand the size and activity of the organization. The first of the three research questions were asked in the next section of the survey. The first question presented question using a Likert scale with five key skills that the participants were asked to rate from 1-5. The second research question presented the same Likert scale with the same five skills that asked participants to rate the possession of the skills by new hires. The last research question listed career development programs and asked the participants to select all that their organization offered. Demographic questions were asked and then the participant was debriefed with the purpose of the study and a thank you for participating.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to provide an understanding of skills that human resource managers view as most lacking in newly hired employee and what development programs are being offered to address the skill deficiency. As students graduate high school and begin secondary education, there are many options for students to follow. Students can attend community colleges, technical colleges, vocational schools, and public or private universities.

The current graduating workforce is lacking basic skills needed to have the best chance for success. The lack of preparation among students is due to the lack of knowledge on what to expect in the workforce. Understanding what development programs organizations are offering to their employees will help educators address these needs prior to students entering the workforce. This research focused on the developmental needs of newly hired employees from the perspective of human resource leaders. The participants used a Google Forms survey as the instrument to collect the data.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions that are going to guide this study:

Research question 1: What do managers define as the key skills needed for newly hired employees to be successful in their roles?

Research question 2: What are managers' perceptions of newly hired employees' possession of key skills needed to be successful in their roles?

Research question 3: What steps are managers taking to help newly hired employees develop key skills to be successful in their roles?

Description of Population and Participants

Human Resource leaders in organizations across the United States were asked to fill out the electronic survey using Google Forms. A quantitative approach was used to survey the leaders. Based on the literature review and the quantity of participants that have participated in previous studies listed throughout the literature review, there was an estimate of 50-100 research participants expected to take the survey. The recruiting for survey participants took place over

90 days from postings online throughout the human resource professional groups in LinkedIn and Facebook. The initial goal was to get the maximum amount of participation from diverse leaders in human resources. Another goal was to surpass participation estimates to collect data from the most diverse participation pool. All human resource professionals that qualified were encouraged to participate. The demographics for each participant were collected during the first phase of the survey instrument. The specific research questions were asked in the middle sections of the survey. Lastly, the organization size and data on the organization was collected for data analysis. At the conclusion of the data collection period there were a total of 78 participants that completed the survey.

Procedures Followed

The research questions and the instrument were drafted by the researcher with the counsel of Dr. Terence Holmes. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was then submitted. Once approval was granted from the IRB for the questions, methods, and type of study the researcher began recruitment. Professional groups on LinkedIn and Facebook were joined with the explanation of the researcher's intent to find participants for the study. Several groups declined admittance due to the request to recruit participants for a study. Once admitted into other human resource professional groups, the researcher began to post the recruitment portion of the IRB approved statement. A link was provided with each recruitment post to make participation as easy as possible for each human resource professional.

The first of the six sections included the introduction to the survey and request for the email address of the participant. Of the 78 participants, 73 opted to provide an email for the survey. An explanation of the length of the survey and some requirements were included in the

introduction. All participants were required be at least 18 years old and have held or currently hold a human resources role within their organization.

The informed consent was provided to all participants prior to starting the survey. The second section of the survey also included the informed consent document for each participant stating the purpose of the project, participant selection, explanation of the procedures, discomforts and risks, benefits, participation compensation, confidentiality, and refusal/withdrawal. Upon listing all the information to the participant, an option was provided to proceed or not. If the answer was no, the survey concluded. If the answer was yes, the participant moved on to section three. All 78 participants selected to participate and proceeded to the third section of the survey.

Description of Risk and Participation

There were no anticipated risks or discomforts for any of the participants. Each of the participants were provided with the information in the following format prior to continuing to the next section of the survey.

The survey was completely voluntary and remained confidential to the researcher and the chair of the study. The following disclaimers were made to each participant prior to completion of the survey.

- Benefits: The benefits of this study will help better prepare students for the career they plan to enter,
- Participant Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for their participation in this study,

- Confidentiality: Your participation in this study is confidential. Only the researcher(s) will be able to link your responses to you and,
- Refusal/Withdrawal: Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw/stop participating at any time. While participation is voluntary, all questions must be answered to be included in the study results.

Description of Instruments (Questionnaires, Interviews, Focus groups) and Pilot Testing

A survey was created by Google Forms was distributed to participants. The link was provided in the solicitation letters to make the survey as convenient as possible to take. Human Resource professional groups on LinkedIn, Facebook, and the Western Kentucky workforce board (KYSHRM) were used to solicit participation for the survey. Each of the participants that took the survey had the link and were encouraged to pass the survey link to fellow human resource professionals.

Per the Murray State University guidelines, all signed consent forms were stored in a secure location at Murray State University that is accessible to the University. Access to the data and documents was limited to the investigator and co-investigators, a representative of the IRB, the IRB Coordinator, authorized federal officials, and those persons that have a need to know.

Variables in the Study

For research question 1, the main independent variable was the perception of how important the five listed skills are key skills. Skill capability was assessed using a Likert scale, with a rating of 1-5. The question was asked using the measure on a scale of one to five with one being not important skill and five being a most important skill. The following skills were asked

about: teamwork, critical thinking/problem solving, communication, attention to detail, and ownership.

For research question 2, the main independent variable of interest was to what extent do newly hired employees possess the key skills. Skill possession was assessed using a Likert scale. Using the measure on a scale of 1-5, with a 1 possession as “not at all” and 5 being “possesses a high level.” The following skills were explored: teamwork, critical thinking/problem solving, communication, attention to detail, and ownership.

For research question 3, the primary independent variable of interest is the presence or absence of these career building programs or development programs. The following list was provided as options for participants to select from.

- continuing education
- skill-based training
- job assignment
- research
- job shadowing
- participation in professional organizations
- developmental relationships

Procedures for Data Analysis

There were five key skills that each participant was asked to evaluate importance and rank on a Likert scale between 1-5. The rankings were distributed with 1 being “not at all” important and 5 being the “most important.” A definition was added to each of the skill levels. The five skills to be rated on the survey were as follows:

- Teamwork: -The combined action of a group of people, especially when effective and efficient
- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving: -The ability to be resourceful and come to a solution with little to no guidance
- Communication: -The ability to discuss complex ideas or issues via verbal, nonverbal, email, and intercompany communications
- Attention to Detail: -Follow through on the minor details of a task or assignment
- Ownership: -The act of taking initiative to bring out positive results

All three research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Means and standard deviation were presented when relevant.

Chapter IV: Findings and Analysis

Career Readiness Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand where the newly hired graduates rate the importance of key skills needed in the workforce compared to where human resource professionals rate the actual skill level of the employee. Throughout the United States, future employees are graduating and entering the workforce with the understanding they have acquired the skills needed to be successful in the workplace. While many companies offer additional training and support for new hires, the view from human resource professionals that interact and hire many of the graduates show different results. Graduates and newly hired employees have studied many years in their field to have a working knowledge of the area they plan to work in. Understanding the variance in the skill importance versus the actual skills brought to the workforce was needed.

The five key skills selected to survey were based on a consensus of numerous studies, such as Dr. Marcel Robles 2012 survey, that list top skills from employers. The National Association of Colleges and Employers [NACE], (2017) listed eight competencies that employers rated as most critical. The following competencies were the top rated from the NACE survey:

- Critical thinking/problem solving
- Teamwork/collaboration
- Professionalism/work ethic
- Communication

- Leadership
- Digital technology
- Career Management and
- Global/multi-cultural fluency

Dr. Marcel Robles (2012) surveyed 90 executives in the fall semester of 2011 and spring semester of 2012. A total of 49 executives responded to the survey. According to Robles (2012), the following 10 skills were listed most often by executives in her survey:

- Communication: -Oral, speaking capability, written, presenting, listening
- Courtesy: -Manners, etiquette, business etiquette, gracious, says please and thank you, respectful
- Flexibility: -Adaptability, willing to change, lifelong learner, accepts new things, adjusts, teachable
- Integrity: -Honest, ethical, high morals, has personal values, does what's right
- Interpersonal Skills: -Nice, personable, sense of humor, friendly, nurturing, empathetic, has self-control, patient, sociability, warmth, social skills
- Positive Attitude: -Optimistic, enthusiastic, encouraging, happy, confident
- Professionalism: -Businesslike, well-dressed, appearance, poised
- Responsibility: -Accountable, reliable, gets the job done, resourceful, self-disciplined, wants to do well, conscientious, common sense
- Teamwork: -Cooperative, gets along with others, agreeable, supportive, helpful, collaborative

- Work Ethic: -Hard working, willing to work, loyal, initiative, self-motivated, on time, good attendance

The five most common skills were selected based on the previous research that listed and prioritized key skills for organizations such as Robles (2012) and National Association of Colleges and Employers [NACE], (2017).

Five key skills were assessed in the survey instrument for this dissertation.

Understanding the perceptions that newly hired employees have of their skill versus observations of the human resource professionals in the workplace is critical. By understanding the different levels of skill, educators will be able to take the information provided in this study and provide additional training to future employees.

Instrument

A Google Forms survey was used to collect the data. Participants went through six sections to answer the different portions of the survey. The first two sections were the introduction to the survey and the informed consent. Sample demographics, organizational demographics and research questions were asked in each of the following sections, followed by a conclusion.

Sample Description

Personal demographics were collected in the survey instrument. The first question was to ensure the participants were able to qualify for the survey. All participants needed to have held or currently hold some form of human resources position within their organization. Table 4.1 shows that 73 of the 78 participants answered they currently work in a human resource field. A

total of 6.40% or 5 of the participants answered they do not currently hold a human resources position.

Table 4.1

Are you in a HR related position, e.g., position titled as HR, holds the responsibility of talent acquisition, hiring, or recruiting?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, in a full-time capacity	65	83.30%
Yes, in a part-time capacity in addition to other roles	8	10.30%
No	5	6.40%
Total	78	100.00%

The mean age for the participants was 40.31 years old with a standard deviation of 9.956 years. The number of participants that answered the age demographic question was $n = 77$.

Table 4.2

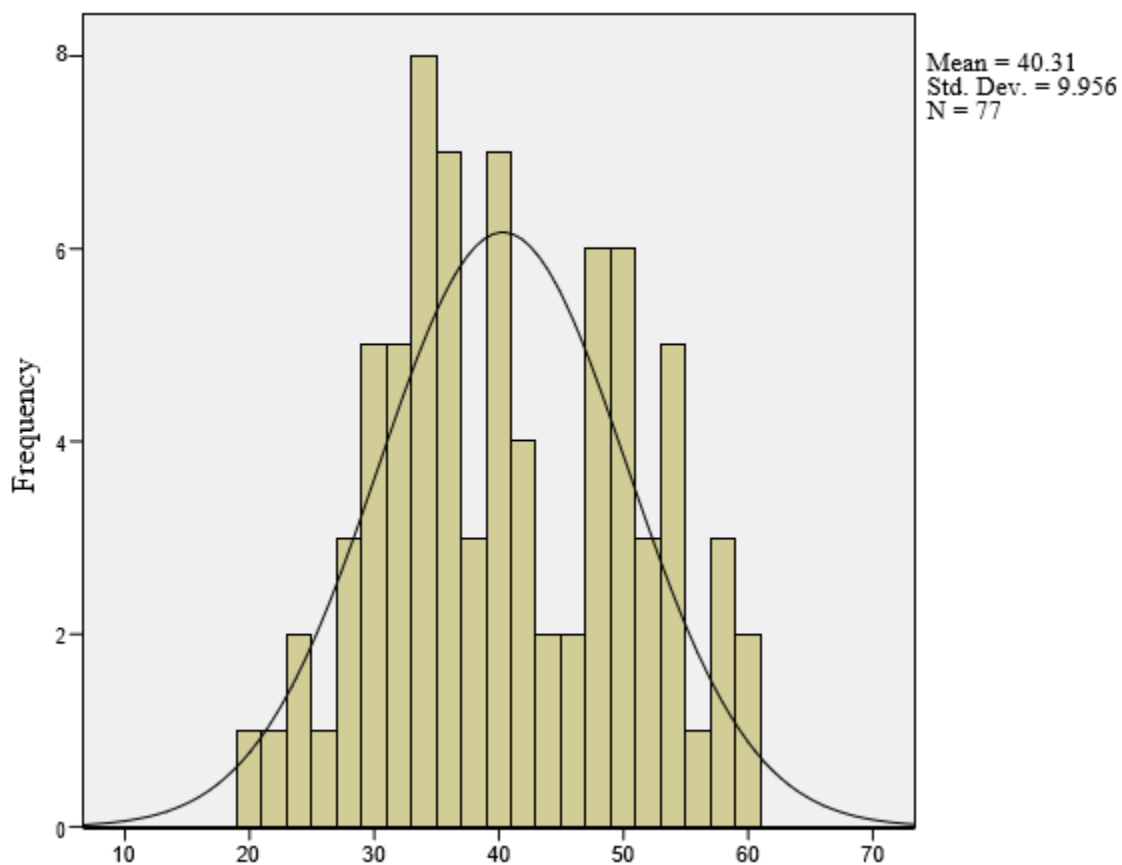
What is your age in years?

Valid Responses	77
Mean	40.31
Std. Deviation	9.956
Minimum	20
Maximum	60

There was a diverse participation pool in terms of ages. As shown in figure 4.1, participants' ages ranged from 20 to 60 years old ($M = 40.31$, $SD 9.956$).

Figure 4.1

What is your age in years?



A total of 78.2% of the participants identified as female, 19.2% identified as male, and 1.3% identified as non-binary as presented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3*Gender*

	Frequency	Percentage
Female	61	79.22%
Male	15	19.48%
Nonbinary	1	1.30%
Total	77	100.00%

79.5% of the sample identified as white, 7.7% identified as Other, 6.4% identified as African American, and 6.4% identified as Asian.

Table 4.4*What is your ethnicity?*

	Frequency	Percentage
African American	5	6.41%
Asian	5	6.41%
White	62	79.49%
Other	6	7.69%
Total	78	100.00%

47.4% of the participants reported having a bachelor's degree, 28.2% reported having a graduate degree, 7.7% reported some post-graduate education and another 7.7% reported some college but no degree. Another 5.1% reported an associate degree, 2.6% reported a high school degree, and 1.3% reported less than high school.

Table 4.5*Education*

	Frequency	Percentage
Associate degree	4	20.0%
Bachelor degree	37	0.0%
Graduate degree	22	0.0%
High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)	2	0.0%
Less than high school degree	1	0.0%
Post-Graduate	6	1.3%
Some college but no degree	6	2.7%
Total	78	100%

100% of participants surveyed stated they were employed. 96.2% stated they were employed and working 30 or more hours per week. 3.8% reported being employed and working 29 hours a week or less.

Table 4.6*Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?*

	Frequency	Percentage
Employed, working 1-29 hours per week	3	3.85%
Employed, working 30 or more hours per week	75	96.15%
Total	78	100.00%

Section three of the survey asked each participant about their organizational demographics. There was a total of three questions about the organization that the participant represented. The first question asked about the size of the organization through employee quantity. Table 4.7 indicates that 35.9% of participants represented an organization that employed 101-500 people. The second largest group was 501-10,000 with 25.6% of participants. The largest two respondent groups accounted for 61.5% of the participants from the employer size of 101-10,000. The third highest respondent category of 26-100 had 16.7% participation. The remaining four organizational sizes ranged from 2.6-9%. 100,001 and up had 9% participation, followed by 1-25 with 7.7% participation. 25,001-100,000 and 10,001-25,000 both had exactly 2.6% participation. There were 78 responses to this question.

Table 4.7

How many employees does your organization employ?

	Frequency	Percentage
1-25	6	7.7%
26-100	13	16.7%
101-500	28	35.9%
501-10,000	20	25.6%
10,001-25,000	2	2.6%
25,001-100,000	2	2.6%
100,001 and up	7	9.0%
Total	78	100%

The second question in the organizational demographics section was regarding the primary business activities. There was a total of 21 options listed for the participant to select from. Table 4.8 illustrates that 21 of the 14 available options were used by at least one participant. There were 75 responses to this organizational demographic question. The largest respondent group was the medical/dental/healthcare field with a 21.3% response rate or 16 total responses. The second largest respondent group was the manufacturing and process industries (non-computer) with 20% or 15 total responses. A total of 13.3% of respondents reported working in wholesale/retail/distribution. A total of 8 or 10.7% of respondents reported working in business services/consulting. The remaining business activities were represented between 0-9.3%. Internet Service Provider (ISP)/Application Service Provider (ASP), Online Retailer, Communications Carrier, and Aerospace all had zero frequency and zero percentage.

Table 4.8*What is your organization's primary business activity?*

	Frequency	Percentage
Manufacturing and Process Industries (non-computer)	15	20.0%
Banking/Finance/Accounting	1	1.3%
Insurance/Real Estate/Legal	2	2.7%
Federal Government (including military)	1	1.3%
State/Local Government	4	5.3%
Medical/Dental/Healthcare	16	21.3%
Transportation/Utilities	7	9.3%
Construction/Architecture/Engineering	5	6.7%
Data Processing Services	0	0.0%
Wholesale/Retail/Distribution	10	13.3%
Education	1	1.3%
Marketing/Advertising/Entertainment	3	4.0%
Research/Development Lab	1	1.3%
Business Services/Consultant	8	10.7%
Computer Manufacturer (Hardware, software, peripherals)	1	1.3%
Computer/Network Services/Consultant	0	0.0%
Computer Related Retailer/Wholesaler/Distributor	0	0.0%
Total	75	100%

The third question about organizational demographics asked for the organization's sales volume from the previous year. Eight options were provided to each survey taker in addition to the N/A option. 74 of the 78 respondents answered this question. All nine available options had representation from the participants. The highest percentage results were from the \$100,000,000 and more group, with 24.3% or 18 of the 74 participants selecting this option. The second highest participation came from the N/A group with 21.6% or 16 total respondents. The \$5,000,000-\$24,999,999 sales volume group accounted for 20.3% or 15 total respondents. The fourth largest group was the \$25,000,000-\$99,999,999 with 13.5% or 10 participants. The remaining 5 categories fell between 2.7% and 6.8%. Table 4.9 below shows the frequency and the percentages.

Table 4.9

What was your organization's sales volume last year?

	Frequency	Percentage
< \$10,000	2	2.7%
\$10,000-\$199,999	2	2.7%
\$200,000-\$599,999	2	2.7%
\$600,000-\$1,999,999	4	5.4%
\$2,000,000-\$4,999,999	5	6.8%
\$5,000,000-\$24,999,999	15	20.3%
\$25,000,000-\$99,999,999	10	13.5%
\$100,000,000 or more	18	24.3%
N/A	16	21.6%
Total		

Research Question One

Research question 1 asked, “what do managers define as the key skills needed for newly hired employees to be successful in their roles?” Table 4.10 shows the results of question 1 regarding the teamwork skill. Human resource professionals rated the skill teamwork to be among the “most important” skill a new candidate needs to be successful in the workforce. Zero participants ranked the teamwork skill as not at all important. As the scale of importance rises, the higher the rankings from the participants. Teamwork had the second highest ratings of a 5 with 38.46% giving teamwork a 5 or most important. (M = 4.0385, Std dev. = 0.932) The mean was 4.0385 with a standard deviation of 0.932 showing that the skill teamwork had a significant level of importance from participants. (n = 78)

Table 4.10

How important is each of the following skills? Teamwork

	Frequency	Percentage
1-Not at all	0	0
2	5	6.41%
3	17	21.79%
4	26	33.33%
5-Most Important	30	38.46%
Total	78	100.00%

Table 4.11 lists the results of the critical thinking skill. 26 participants rated critical thinking as the most important skill and another 26 rated it as the second most important skill. 21 participants ranked critical thinking as a 3 or neutral option. Only 5 or 6.41% rated the critical

thinking skill as below neutral on importance. ($M = 3.9359$, Std dev. = 0.93057) Critical thinking had a slightly lower level of importance from participants with a slightly smaller standard deviation. ($n = 78$)

Table 4.11

How important is each of the following skills? Critical Thinking

	Frequency	Percentage
1-Not at all	0	0
2	5	6.41%
3	21	26.92%
4	26	33.33%
5-Most Important	26	33.33%
Total	78	100.00%

Table 4.12 shows what the participants rated the communication skill. Communication had the highest number of participants select 5 for that skill. Over 40% of survey participants stated that communication was one of the most important skills. In addition, 27 more participants ranked communication as a 4 or above average for importance. 75.32% of total participants ranked the communication skill as above average or most important. There were 4 participants that rated communication as below average for importance in the workplace. ($M = 4.1039$, Std dev. = 0.89714) Of the skills participants ranked, communication was the highest ranked with the shortest standard deviation ($n = 77$).

Table 4.12

How important is each of the following skills? Communication

	Frequency	Percentage
1-Not at all	0	0
2	4	5.19%
3	15	19.48%
4	27	35.06%
5-Most Important	31	40.26%
Total	77	100.00%

Table 4.13 shows the results of the survey for the attention to detail skill. This skill was rating a (4) 35.06% of the time. This skill was the only skill to have a higher rating of a 4 than of the 5 (most important). Only one participant rated attention to detail as not at all important. Attention to detail was the only skill to have a participant state that it was not important at all. Attention to detail had the second highest standard deviation among the five skills in question. (M = 3.9351, Std dev. = 0.97788) Out of the five skills that participants ranked, attention to detail was the lowest of the five on the scale of importance. (n = 77)

Table 4.13

How important is each of the following skills? Attention to detail

	Frequency	Percentage
1-Not at all	1	1.30%
2	5	6.49%
3	18	23.38%
4	27	35.06%
5-Most Important	26	33.77%
Total	77	100.00%

Table 4.14 shows the results for the ownership skill in the survey. Ownership was the last of the five skills that participants were asked to rank on the Likert scale. ($M = 3.9744$, Std dev. = 0.97999) The participants surveyed ranked ownership as the third most important skill with the $m = 3.9744$. The skill “ownership” had the highest number of participants rating of (2) out of the skills listed. There were seven participants that ranked attention to detail a (2). This contributed to the skill having the highest standard deviation among the skills being surveyed.

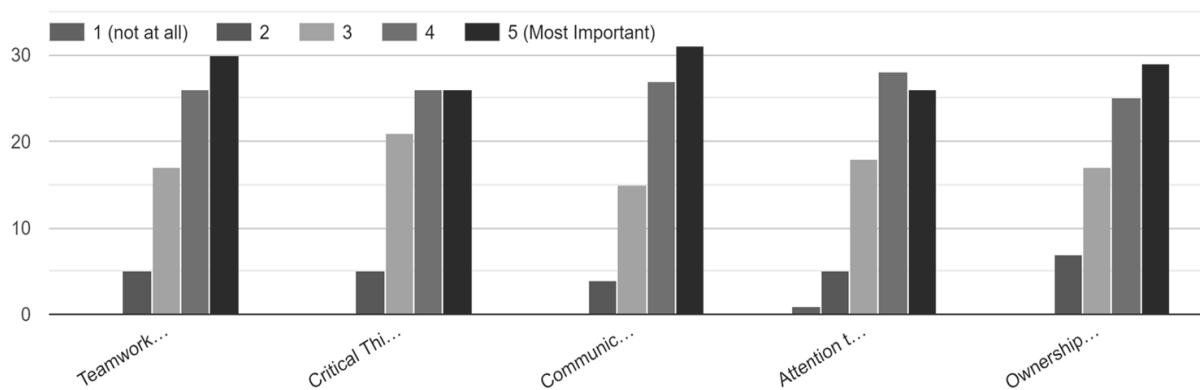
Table 4.14*How important is each of the following skills? Ownership*

	Frequency	Percentage
1-Not at all	0	0.00%
2	7	8.97%
3	17	21.79%
4	25	32.05%
5-Most Important	29	37.18%
Total	78	100.00%

Figure 4.2 shows the results of the 5 skill rankings combined in one chart. As mentioned above, the skill “attention to detail” was the only skill to have a participant rate as not important at all. Attention to detail was also the only skill to have the ranking of a (5) to not be tied for or the highest rating of the available options. Communication had the highest quantity of participants selected (5) with 31 total.

Figure 4.2

How important is each of the following skills?



Research Question Two

The second research question in the survey was asking the human resource participants the possession rate of the key skills discussed in the previous question. The goal of these questions was to see what the skill level of the newly hired employees have been from the viewpoint of the human resource professionals. Table 4.15 shows the possession rate of the newly hired employees from the human resource participants. ($M = 3.4026$, Std dev. = 0.92138) Human resource professionals rated the skill “teamwork” as the skill that was possessed most frequently from newly hired employees $m = 3.4026$, with the second lowest standard deviation at 0.92138, $n = 77$. While comparing the rankings from the first and second research questions there was a shortfall in the level of importance of teamwork and the possession level of the new hires. Human resource professionals stated that teamwork was a 4.0385 on a scale of importance and that the possession amount from new hires was a 3.4026.

Table 4.15

To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills? Teamwork

	Frequency	Percentage
1-Not at all	0	0.00%
2	13	16.88%
3	30	38.96%
4	24	31.17%
5-Possess high amount	10	12.99%
Total	77	100.00%

Critical thinking/problem solving was the second skill that human resource professionals were asked to rate. The possession rate of the skill was $m = 2.7792$, $std\ dev. = 0.94065$. The critical thinking/problem solving skill only received 2.60% of participants that felt new hires possessed a high amount. The skill was rated a $m = 3.9359$, $std\ dev. = 0.93057$ on importance level by participants, but only have a possession level of 2.7792. 9.09% or $n = 7$ possess no skill in relation to critical thinking/problem solving.

Table 4.16

To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills? Critical

Thinking/Problem Solving

	Frequency	Percentage
1-Not at all	7	9.09%
2	21	27.27%
3	33	42.86%
4	14	18.18%
5- Possess high amount	2	2.60%
Total	77	100.00%

Communication was the third skill in research question 2 that participants were asked to rate. Communication was frequently rated as a “3” regarding the possession number of new hires out of a max rating of 5. ($m = 3.0260$, $std\ dev. = 0.88814$) There were only three participants that rated the new hire skill as a 5 (possess high amount). 3 or 3.90% also rated the new hires as having no communication skill level at all. 35 participants or 45.45% rated the skill level as a 3. Communication had the lowest standard deviation of all the skills that participants ranked.

Communication was the highest rated skill on the level of importance with $m = 4.1039$, $std\ dev. = 0.89714$ from research question one. Communication was the second highest possession skill that new hires had with the 3.0260.

Table 4.17

To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills? Communication

	Frequency	Percentage
1-Not at all	3	3.90%
2	17	22.08%
3	35	45.45%
4	19	24.68%
5- Possess high amount	3	3.90%
Total	77	100.00%

Attention to detail was the fourth skill that participants were asked to assess. Attention to detail was rated as the least important of the five skills in research question one with $m = 3.9351$, $std\ dev. = 0.97788$. Attention to detail had a range of 1-5, $m = 2.9481$, $std\ dev. = 1.06247$ in research question 2. Attention to detail had the largest standard deviation of the 5 skills surveyed in research question 2. As shown in table 4.18, there was the same number of participants that stated new hires “possess high amount” of the attention to detail skill as there were that stated, “not at all”.

Table 4.18

To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills? Attention to detail

	Frequency	Percentage
1-Not at all	7	9.09%
2	17	22.08%
3	33	42.86%
4	13	16.88%
5- Possess high amount	7	9.09%
Total	77	100.00%

Ownership was the final skill that participants were asked to rate in research question 2. The skill “ownership” had the lowest rating from participants of the skills listed. ($M = 2.7273$, $Std\ dev. = 1.04675$) Participants rated the possession of the ownership skill a “2” 40.26% of the time. On a scale of 1-5 with five stating the new hire “possess high amount” only 20.78% rated the possession rate above a 3. Ownership was the third skill that had the same variance between the frequency of rankings of “1” and “5”.

Table 4.19

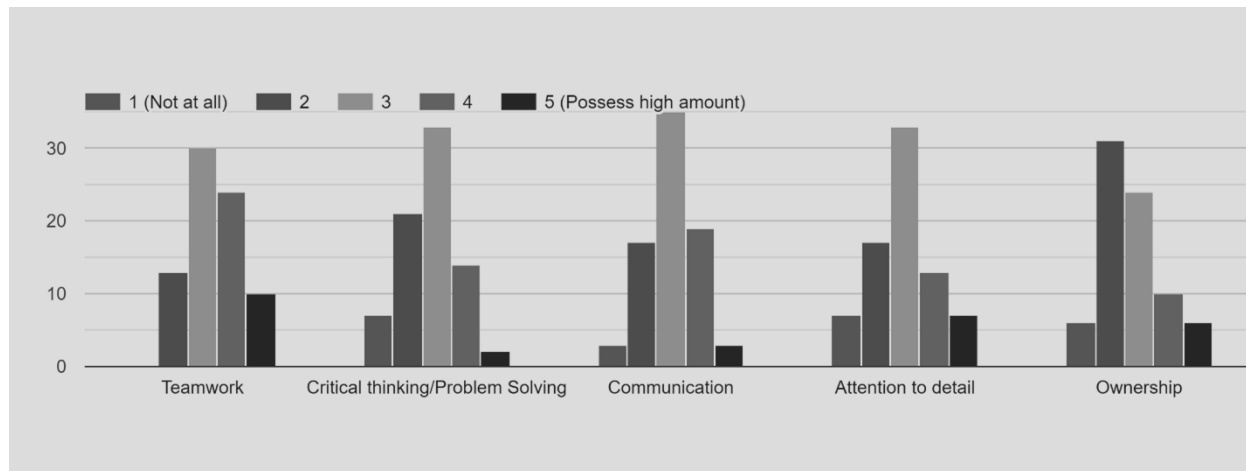
To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills? Ownership

	Frequency	Percentage
1-Not at all	6	7.79%
2	31	40.26%
3	24	31.17%
4	10	12.99%
5- Possess high amount	6	7.79%
Total	77	100.00%

As shown in figure 4.3, there are several key statistics that can be seen. Teamwork was the only skill surveyed that did not have any participants select a “1-Not at all”. The skill ownership saw a significant spike in the rankings of “2” and was the only skill the ranking “2” had more rankings than “3”.

Figure 4.3

To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills?



Research Question Three

The third research question's goal was to understand what steps managers are taking to help newly hired employees develop key skills to be successful in their roles. Figure 4.4 shows the results of the third research question. 63.8% of the participant's organization offer continuing education and skill-based training as additional career development programs.

Skill based training was tied for the highest frequency of training offered by employers. Continuing education offers similar skill development in a more formal setting. Job assignment training was offered by 36.2% of organizations who participated in the survey. 8.7% of the participants offered research as an additional career development program. This development program is more specific to education and certain fields. Research oriented professions have the need for skill development. Ownership is one example of a skill researchers will need to develop while working towards publishing. Job shadowing was offered by 53.6% of the organizations

represented in the survey. Participation in professional organizations and developmental relationships were both offered in 40.6% of the organizations.

Figure 4.4

Does your organization have a career development program? If so, please select all that apply.

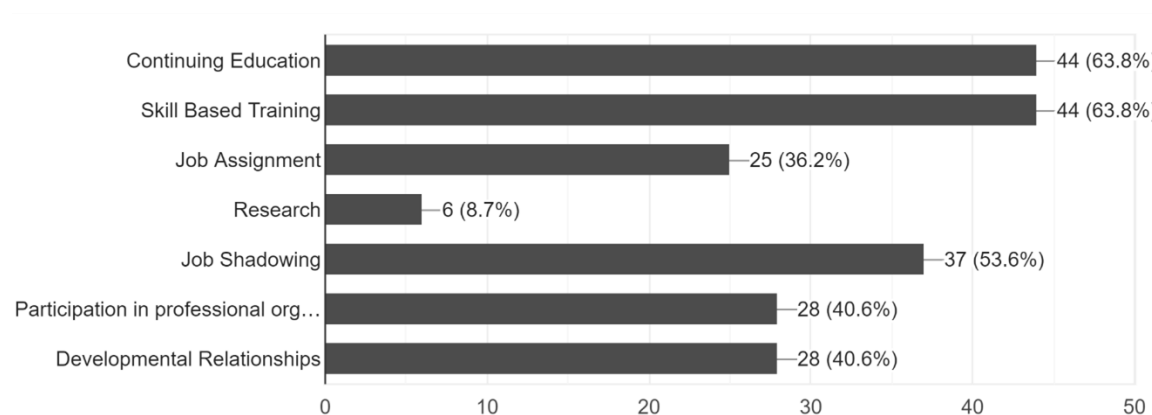


Table 4.20 shows what the frequency was of each of the 78 participants. Each participant had to fall in one of the options below. Their organization could have offered no career development programs or up to the seven listed. The difference in the figure 4.4 and table 4.21 was the participants could select more than one career development program. Figure 4.4 shows the accumulation of all the participants for each of the programs available. Table 4.20 shows where the 78 participants ranked in frequency of the programs offered.

There were nine participants or 11.54% that stated their organization did not offer any of the career development programs listed. 15 participants or 19.23% offered at least one of the seven programs. The highest percent of participants at 23.08% or 18 stated their organizations offered two career development programs. Three career development programs were offered in

organizations by 10.26% of the participation pool. 13 or 16.67% of the human resources professionals stated their organization offered four career development programs. Five career development programs were offered by 9 or 11.54% of the organizations. The lowest amount of career development programs offered was six. 2 or 2.56% offered six of the career development programs listed. Lastly, four or 5.13% of the participants stated their organization offered all seven career development programs listed.

Table 4.20

Does your organization have a career development program? If so, please select all that apply.

Quantity of Career Development Programs	Frequency	Percentage
0	9	11.54%
1	15	19.23%
2	18	23.08%
3	8	10.26%
4	13	16.67%
5	9	11.54%
6	2	2.56%
7	4	5.13%
Total	78	100.00%

Survey Conclusion

The final section concluded the survey and thanked all participants for their contribution. The following statement was given in section 6: “Thank you for your time taking the survey today. Your contribution today is valued and will help the next generation of newly graduated new hires.”

Chapter V: Conclusions and Discussions

In Chapter V, the researcher will discuss the implications from the research conducted in the study. The researcher will also discuss the findings from each of the research questions and discuss limitations of the study. The practical significance of the study will be discussed with the P-20 implications and how the career development of next generation leaders can be improved. The researcher will also give recommendations for future research to conclude the chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to provide an understanding of skills that human resource managers view as most lacking in newly hired employees. As students graduate high school and begin secondary education, there are many options for students to follow. Students can attend community colleges, technical colleges, vocational schools, and public or private universities. After completing this education, are newly hired graduates prepared for the workforce? This research focused on the development needs of newly hired employees from the perspective of human resource leaders. A Google Forms survey was the instrument used to collect information from participants. The researcher hoped that the findings of the study would help educators better understand the variety of skills that new employees need. Understanding the development needs of the newly hired employees will better prepare administrators to provide education more geared toward real world needs in the workforce.

Discussion of Findings

Three research questions were used to guide the study of the career readiness of recent graduates. The skills listed in the research questions highlight a difference in the perception of the skill level and the actual skill level. As organizations are finding skill gaps, there are many programs they are utilizing, such as skill building courses, to help address the deficiencies. As P-20 leaders review the research in the skill gaps, more education can be provided to students prior to entering the workforce. The flipped training model is an example of a skill development model that organizations are using in the workforce that can be introduced early in the education system. None of the skills surveyed showed the accurate perception of the skill level compared to the human resource professional's view of what candidates are demonstrating.

Research Question One

What do managers define as the key skills needed for newly hired employees to be successful in their roles? This research question in the study focused on understanding the importance level of five key skills from the human resource professional lens. The five key skills discussed in research question 1 were:

1. Teamwork
2. Critical thinking/problem solving
3. Communication
4. Attention to detail
5. Ownership

The results showed high importance for all five of the key skills when entering the workforce. Interestingly, four of the five skills were all rated the most important with attention to detail

being the only skill rating slightly less important by the majority. Critical thinking/problem solving had a tie for the skill being rated the most important (5) and slightly less important (4).

Research Question Two

What are managers' perceptions of newly hired employees' possession of key skills needed to be successful in their roles? The second research question focused on what the human resource professional perceived the actual skill level to be from newly hired employees. The five skills discussed in research question 2 were:

1. Teamwork
2. Critical thinking/problem solving
3. Communication
4. Attention to detail
5. Ownership

The results showed the possession of each of the skills were rated less than the importance level. Comparing the results from the first research question and the second, the researcher found the human resource professionals rated skills much higher than the skill levels the new hires were entering the workforce with.

Research Question Three

What steps are managers taking to help newly hired employees develop key skills to be successful in their roles? This research question studied the options that are available in the workforce to address the potential skill gaps organizations are seeing with new hires. Research

question three focused on the available options to newly hired employees for continued development in the workplace. Career development programs were offered in 88.46% of the organizations surveyed. 69 of the 78 participants selected at least one of the continued education options for employees. There is significant research on the need for continued education in the workforce and throughout a person's career.

Professional continuing education is expanding rapidly to meet the needs of workers who see the need to maintain or strengthen their skills. Cantor (2006) states "the PCE market has expanded to meet the needs of various adult learner constituencies for upgrading skills, new knowledge and information, relicensing requirements, certifications, occupational cross training, and lifestyle enhancement" (p. 3). A total of 63.8% of the participants listed their organization has continuing education as an option for their employees. Depending on the career area and future demand of the workforce, employers are looking to solve their staffing needs by establishing a route to higher education as a benefit. Some fields require continued education for workers such as the medical field and educators. A total of 63.8% of the participants stated that their organization offers skill-based training. For fields that are skill-specific such as electricians, plumbers, or other fields, the job cannot be completed without a specific skill. For many reasons such as minimizing liability, cross-training, or continued skill development for emerging technology, organizations are finding the need for skill-based training. Job shadowing was offered in 53.6% of the participants organizations.

The research question responses highlight that the organizations are actively trying to address the need for skill deficiency. As key skills continue to need refinement into adulthood and throughout the careers of the employee, many programs will need to be introduced to assist.

Skill refinement is not finished once formal education, or a development program concludes. P-20 leaders will continue to develop and implement programs that organizations and educators will use throughout the careers of students and adults.

Practical Significance

This study cannot conclusively show that changes in the education offered will significantly increase the skillset in the workplace. However, the study does show support for more skill-based training prior to an employee entering the workforce. The skill level that candidates feel they have, is not the perceived level of skill that human resource leaders are seeing in the workplace.

The study conducted has many uses for educators and organizations. Organizations will be able to take an inventory of their skill development options and compare them to the skill development opportunity their employees are facing. With the research provided, organizations can see the differences in the perception of skills that new hires have and can provide them with more transparent feedback. The feedback of history data from prior new hires can establish a realistic benchmark for the skills, performance, and expectations during the new hires first year of employment.

P-20 Implications

P-20 connects with the economy, business, and community beyond even starting a career. Guiding a child's educational journey is complex and there are many contributors. Throughout the life of the child and into adulthood, there are many factors, such as competency and environmental situations, that need to be considered when trying to best prepare today's youth for their work as an adult in society.

This study contributes to the efforts P-20 leaders will continue to make while formulating programs to better prepare students. Personalizing the skill development and ensuring the gaps that employers are seeing will continue to be a priority for P-20 leaders. This study highlights the need for systematic skill surveys that employers can report on statewide and regionally. The findings of this research found the human resource professionals rated skills much higher than the skill levels the new hires were entering the workforce with. Based on the findings in this study, educators will be able to use the information provided to prepare their students more adequately. Using innovation, implementation, diversity, and leadership, P-20 leaders should consider what skill gaps employers are identifying and addressing after students complete their formal education. By looking at the additional needs' organizations are seeing, P-20 leaders will be able to use the research to align the funding with the actual needs being demonstrated.

Limitations of the Study

During the course of the study the researcher faced limitations. Price & Murnan, (2004) state that:

Study limitations are the constraints placed on the ability to generalize from the results, to further describe applications to practice, and/or related to the utility of findings that are the result of the ways in which you initially chose to design the study, or the method used to establish internal and external validity or the result of unanticipated challenges that emerged during the study (p. 66-67).

The first limitation that the researcher faced was the lack of participation. Many human resource professional groups were made to be a mentor service and advice solicitation tool. As a result, the researcher was not granted permission into several of the larger

human resource professional groups on LinkedIn and Facebook. The second limitation was the opposite of the first. The researcher was granted access into some human resource groups with over a million members. However, due to the size of the groups, the post for the survey was quickly lost or not readily available unless a professional sought it out. The third limitation the researcher experienced was the skill limits. There are a tremendous number of skills that are equally important that could not be included in the research due to the scope. The 5 skills listed were just several of many skills organizations are needing development programs for.

Participation

A total of 78 participants from the human resource field participated in the survey. While many fields of work were represented, there were seven of the 21 fields not selected for representation. With a sample size larger than 78, potentially more data could have been mined from the results. The large variation in the fields also presented challenges narrowing the skills listed. A more specific field of study (retail, technology, etc.) could potentially provide more accurate data for the field in the study.

Social Media Group Sizes

The researcher was granted access to several larger groups on Facebook and LinkedIn that specialized in human resource professionals. Due to the size of the groups, there were several that had so many posts that the researcher's post looking for participation was quickly moved down the list and went unseen by almost all members. Other groups were so large that the administrators of the groups did not have time to accept or decline the request to post for participation throughout the duration of the study.

Skill Limits

The number of skills needed to be successful in the workplace vary and are abundant. The researcher found the limited number of skills surveyed as a limitation. A more specific field of work and a broader scope for the skill set studied would be recommended for future research. The instrument did not allow for an open-ended response if participants wanted to add a skill that they felt needed to be listed as important. With the variety careers, the larger number of skills that can be discussed can be more beneficial when communicating findings back to educators or policy/law changes.

Recommendations for Future Research

After conclusion of the research and on the results provided, the researcher is suggesting the following recommendations for future research. The recommendations mainly are focused on the deficiency of skills being developed in K-12 and post-secondary education and the need of certain skills in the workforce.

A qualitative interview design needs to be researched regarding the skills that the newly hired employees are lacking from the perspective of the employer. Focusing on a more specific field of work, a researcher needs to be able to align the study results to a field of study at the university level. To provide more skill-based feedback from the workplace, a study should be narrowed to the academic job market. For example, a researcher should use the interview format for criminal justice careers and focus the skills assessment on that field of careers to better focus the results to aid in the development of more functional skill development.

Development and use of an instrument that will be more inclusive of the variety of skills employers may mention as key or important skills they are envisioning when completing the survey. An instrument that is qualitative will allow for an in-depth in the understanding of the mentality of the newly hired employee and why they feel their skills are at the level they need to be for the workforce. There is a disconnect based on the research provided in what newly hired employees feel their skill level is and what companies are experiencing.

More research needs to be completed on worldwide education standards and what systems are better preparing the next generation of workers. There are cultural standards in different countries that have found success in preparing highly skilled workers. Downing and D'Andrea (1997) compared the development programs of the United States to that of the Swiss education system. There were key differences throughout the comparison as was expected. Parental involvement and receptiveness of parents were significantly different in the two countries. Further research to find the optimal involvement and receptiveness to education programs specific to each child needs further research.

Additional research needs to be completed on the impact of funding based on standardized testing. The no child left behind act and requirements on education systems to have students pass standardized testing limits the abilities of educators to focus on key skill development and functional learning. "Oppressive barriers related to the misalignment with policy and practice issues based on what is intended by the policy and that which is a reality for disabled students" (Williams, 2018, p. 8). Learning tax filings, personal financial care, minimal banking knowledge, vehicle maintenance, and mortgage exploration are examples of knowledge

that most educators in America cannot provide learnings due to time constraints. The time constraints are tied back to funding that will be impacted without adherence to test standards.

References

- Al-Musalli, A. (2019). Rethinking business communication skills education: Are communication courses preparing students for the workplace? *College Quarterly*, 22(2), <http://collegequarterly.ca/2019-vol22-num02-spring/rethinking-business-communication-skills-education.html>
- Anderson, P. V. & Surman, K. (2007). *Technical communication: A reader-centered approach*. Nelson.
- Avolio, B. J., Reichard, R. J., Hannah, S. T., Walumbwa, F. O., & Chan, A. (2009). A meta-analytic review of leadership impact research: Experimental and quasi-experimental studies. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 20(5), 764–784. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2009.06.006>
- Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2014). *Flipped learning: Gateway to student engagement*. International Society for Technology in Education.
- Blanchard, C. A., & Lichtenberg, J. W. (2003). Compromise in career decision making: A test of Gottfredson's theory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 62(2), 250–271. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791\(02\)00026-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791(02)00026-X)
- Calonge, D. S. & Shah, M. A. (2016). MOOCs, graduate skills gaps, and employability: A qualitative systematic review of the literature. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 17(5), 66–90. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v17i5.2675>
- Campbell, N. K., & Hadley, G. B. (1992). Creating options: A career development training program for minorities. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 70(5), 645–647. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1992.tb01679.x>

- Cantor, J. A. (2006). New Demands and New Opportunities for Professional Continuing Education: A Mission in Flux. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 32(2), 1–100.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/aehe.3202>
- Cate, C. A., Lyon, J. S., Schmeling, J., & Bogue, B. Y. (2017). *National Veteran Education Success Tracker: A report on the academic success of student veterans using the post 9/11 GI bill*. Student Veterans of America. https://nvest.studentveterans.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NVEST-Report_FINAL.pdf
- Center on Standards, A. I. and L. (C-S. (2019). Common Challenges to Implementing College- and Career-Readiness Standards. In Center on Standards, Alignment, Instruction, and Learning. Center on Standards, Alignment, Instruction, and Learning.
- Cochran, D. B., Wang, E. W., Stevenson, S. J., Johnson, L. E., & Crews, C. (2011). Adolescent occupational aspirations: Test of Gottfredson’s theory of circumscription and compromise. *Career Development Quarterly*, 59(5), 412–427.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2011.tb00968.x>
- Collaborative Problem Solving: Considerations for the National Assessment of Educational Progress. (n.d.).
https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/researchcenter/collaborative_problem_solving.pdf
- College & Career Readiness & Success Center at American Institutes for Research, & National High School Center at American Institutes for Research. (2013). College and Career Readiness and Success: Inventory of Policies, Programs, and Initiatives. In College and Career Readiness and Success Center. College and Career Readiness and Success Center.

- Conley, Q., Lutz, H. S., & Miller, C. L. (2017). The Flipped Training Model: Six Steps for getting employees to flip out over training. *Performance Improvement, 56*(5), 18–31. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.21692>
- Downing, J., & D'Andrea, L. M. (1997). An effective career development program for parents. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 34*(2), 55–64. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.1997.tb00459.x>
- Fedor, D. B., S. Ghosh, S. D. Caldwell, T. I. Maurer, & V. R. Singhal. (2003). The effects of knowledge management on team members' ratings of project success and impact. *Decision Sciences 34*(3), 513–539. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5414.2003.02395.x>
- Fortier, J. (2007, March 5). Business students need hard facts about soft skills. *Ottawa Business Journal, 12*(22), 15.
- Ghosh, A., Kessler, M., Heyrman, K., Opelt, B., Carbonelli, M., & Fouad, N. A. (2019). Student veteran career transition readiness, career adaptability, and academic and life satisfaction. *Career Development Quarterly, 67*(4), 365–371. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12205>
- Goodman, J., & Hansen, S. (2005). Career development and guidance programs across cultures: The gap between policies and practices. *Career Development Quarterly, 54*(1), 57–65. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2005.tb00141.x>
- Gottfredson, L. S. (1981). Circumscription and compromise: A developmental theory of occupational aspirations. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 28*(6), 545–579. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.28.6.545>
- Gottfredson, L. S. (1996). Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (p.179–232). Jossey-Bass.

- Gusain, N. (2017). Talent acquisition vs development: With a focus on leadership development programs. *Cornell HR Review*. <http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/chrr/99>
- Haag, S., Cummings, M., McCubbrey, D., Pinsonneault, A., & Donovan, R. (2006). *Management information systems for the information age*. McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Hall, D. T. (1987). *Career development in organizations*. Jossey Bass
- Hannah, I., & Kahn, S. (1989). The relationship of socio-economic status and gender to the occupational choices of grade 12 students. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 34(2), 161–178. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791\(89\)90012-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(89)90012-2)
- Hart Research Associates. (2015). *Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success. Selected Findings from Online Surveys of Employers and College Students Conducted on Behalf of the Association for American Colleges and Universities*. Washington, DC: Hart Research Associates.
- Helwig, A. A. (2001). A test of Gottfredson's theory using a ten-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Career Development*, 28, 77–95. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1012578625948>
- Holt, S., Hall, A., & Gilley, A. (2018). Essential components of leadership development programs. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 30(2), 214–229.
- Hunt, D. M. & Michael, C. (1983). Mentorship: A career training and development tool. *Academy of Management Review*, 8(3), 475–785. <https://doi.org/10.2307/257836>
- Iles, P., & Mabey, C. (1993). Managerial career development programmes: Effectiveness, availability and acceptability. *British Journal of Management*, 4(2), 103–118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.1993.tb00051.x>

- Ingham, J. M. (1991). Matching instruction with employee perceptual preference significantly increases training effectiveness. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 2(1), 53–64.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.3920020108>
- Ingles, E. (2005). *Northern Exposure To Leadership*. Northernexposuretoleadership.Ca.
<http://northernexposuretoleadership.ca/index.html>
- Ismail, A., Adnan, N. H., & Bakar, R. A. (2014). Perceived career development support in workplace career programme. *Ekonomski Anali*, 59(201), 157–175.
<https://doi.org/10.2298/EKA1401157I>
- Johnson, G. S. (2016, October 1). *Using Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise at the elementary level*. The National Career Development Association. https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news_article/127816/_PARENT/CC_layout_details/false
- Larsson, J. (2017). Healthy and effective leadership behaviour through a leadership development programme. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 28(13/14), 1617–1631.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2016.1216310>
- Larsson, J., & Vinberg, S. (2010). Leadership behaviour in successful organizations - Universal or situation-dependent? *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 21(3), 317 – 334. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14783360903561779>
- Leu , K. (2017). *Data Beginning College Students Point*. Beginning College Students Who Change Their Majors Within 3 Years of Enrollment. Retrieved April 16, 2022, from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018434.pdf>

- Lichtenberg, A. (2004, June). *Practical steps and guide for developing and adapting resources for an indigenous audience*. Paper presented at the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance and the National Career Development Association, San Francisco.
- Liu, J., McMahon, M., & Watson, M. (2015). Parental influence on child career development in mainland China: A qualitative study. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *63*(1), 74–87.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2015.00096.x>
- Majeske, K. D., & Serocki, J. S. (2009). ACHIEVE: A career and professional development program for undergraduate business students. *Business Education Innovation Journal*, *1*(2), 59–67.
- Mokher, C., & Jacobson, L. (2014, December). *Assessment of the florida college and ... - files.eric.ed.gov*. Eric.ed.gov. Retrieved April 16, 2022, from
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED555558.pdf>
- NACE. (2017, December 11). *Employers rate career competencies, new hire proficiency*. NACE Center for Career Development and Talent Acquisition. Retrieved April 26, 2022, from
<https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/employers-rate-career-competencies-new-hire-proficiency/>
- Neely, T. (2009). Assessing diversity initiatives: The ARL leadership and career development program. *Journal of Library Administration*, *49*(8), 811–835.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01930820903396830>

- Oliveira, I. M., Porfeli, E. J., & Taveira, M. C. (2017). Children's career exploration and development: Overview and agenda. In M. Watson & M. McMahon (Eds.), *Career exploration and development in childhood: Perspectives from theory, research and practice* (pp. 73–86). Routledge.
- Oliveri, M. E., Lawless, R., & Molloy, H. (2017). A Literature Review on Collaborative Problem Solving for College and Workforce Readiness. ETS Research Reports Series, 2017(1), 1–27. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.waterfield.murraystate.edu/10.1002/ets2.12133>
- Pak, K., & Desimone, L. M. (2019). How do states implement college- and career-readiness standards? A distributed leadership analysis of standards-based reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 55(3), 447–476. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X18799463>
- Parmer, T. (2004, June). *Career development programs for African Americans: A holistic wellness approach*. Paper presented at the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance and the National Career Development Association, San Francisco.
- Passion in Education. (2019, September 20). *Types of education: Formal, informal & non-formal*. <https://www.passionineducation.com/types-of-education-formal-informal-non-formal/>
- Peila-Shuster, J. (2018). Fostering hope and career adaptability in children's career development. *Early Child Development and Care*, 188(4), 452–462. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2017.1385610>
- Price, James H. and Judy Murnan. (2004). Research Limitations and the Necessity of Reporting Them. *American Journal of Health Education* 35 (2004): 66-67

- Riceman, J. P. (1982). How to operate a successful career development program. *Management Review*, 71(5), 21.
- Robles, M. M. (2012). *Executive perceptions of the top 10 soft skills needed in today's workplace*. homepages.se.edu/cvonbergen. Retrieved April 26, 2022, from <https://homepages.se.edu/cvonbergen/files/2013/01/Executive-Perceptions-of-the-Top-10-Soft-Skills-Needed-in-Todays-Workplace.pdf>
- Rutschow, E. Z., Taketa, J., & MDRC. (2019). College to Work: Findings from a Study of the Career Readiness Internship Program. In MDRC. MDRC.
- Schmidt, S. (1994). The new focus for career development programs in business and industry. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 31(1), 22–28. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.1994.tb00409.x>
- Smith, C. M., & McDonald, K. (2013). The flipped classroom for professional development: Part II. Making podcasts and videos. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 44(11), 486–487. <http://doi.org/10.3928/00220124-20131025-93>
- Smith, J., & Thier, M. (2017). Challenges to Common Core State Standards implementation: Views from six states. *NASSP Bulletin*, 101(3), 169-187.
- Storey, W. D. (1976). *Career dimensions*. General Electric Company.
- Thomas, W. C. (1980). A career development program that works. *Management Review*, 69(5), 38.

Updyke, L. (2019, November 19). *12 companies that offer exceptional professional development programs for entry-level employees.*

RippleMatch. <https://ripplematch.com/journal/article/companies-that-offer-exceptional-professional-development-programs-for-entry-level-employees-f53abebf/>

US Department of Education. (2019, September). *insights into how CTE can improve students' income after they graduate.* <https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/cte/index.html>.

Walker, J. W. & Gutteridge, T. G. (1979). *Career planning practices: An AMA survey report.* Amacom.

When Can I Legally Have My Children Work in the Family Business? Hg.org. (n.d.). Retrieved April 14, 2022, from <https://www.hg.org/legal-articles/when-can-i-legally-have-my-children-work-in-the-family-business-44852>

Williams, J. (2018, December). *An evaluation of no child left behind act: Are special education students represented in policy goals.* CSUN electronic theses & dissertations. Retrieved May 6, 2022, from <https://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.2/285>

Young, M. D., Winn, K. M., & Reedy, M. A. (2017). The Every Student Succeeds Act: Strengthening the focus on educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 53(5), 705–726. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X17735871>

Appendix A

Survey Instrument

Section 1: Introduction

Researchers at Murray State University are seeking participants for a study about the career readiness of recent college graduates in the workforce. You must be at least 18 years old and hold or have held a human resource role within your organization to participate.

The study activities include a survey with questions related to skill sets and skill level of recent graduates. The survey should take about 5 minutes to take and can be completed at a time and place that is convenient for you.

Additionally, feel free to forward the email to anyone you know who qualifies for participation.

1. What is your email address?
-

Section 2: Consent

Do you wish to participate?

- Yes
- No

Section 3: Organizational Demographics

How many employees does your organization employ?

- 1-25
- 26-100
- 101-500
- 501-10,000

- 10,001-25,000
- 25,001-100,000
- 100,001 and up

What is your organization's primary business activity?

- Manufacturing and Process Industries (non-computer)
- Online Retailer
- Internet Service Provider (ISP) or Application Service Provider (ASP)
- Communications Carrier
- Aerospace
- Banking/Finance/Accounting
- Insurance/Real Estate/Legal
- Federal Government (including military)
- State/Local Government
- Medical/Dental/Healthcare
- Transportation/Utilities
- Construction/Architecture/Engineering
- Data Processing Services
- Wholesale/Retail/Distribution
- Education
- Marketing/Advertising/Entertainment
- Research/Development Lab
- Business Services/Consultant

- Computer Manufacturer (Hardware, software, peripherals)
- Computer/Network Services/Consultant
- Computer Related Retailer/Wholesaler/Distributor

What was your organization's sales volume last year?

- < \$10,000
- \$10,000-\$199,999
- \$200,000-\$599,999
- \$600,000-\$1,999,999
- \$2,000,000-\$4,999,999
- \$5,000,000-\$24,999,999
- \$25,000,000-\$99,999,999
- \$100,000,000 or more
- N/A

Section 4: Career Readiness

How important is each of the following skills?

■ 1 (Not at all)
 ■ 2
 ■ 3
 ■ 4
 ■ 5 (Most important)

Teamwork-The combined action of a group of people, especially when effective and efficient	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Critical Thinking/Problem Solving-The ability to be resourceful and come to a solution with little to no guidance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication-The ability to discuss complex ideas or issues viaverbal, nonverbal, email, intercompany communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attention to Detail-Follow through on the minor details of a task or assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ownership-The act of taking initiative to bring out positive results.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent do newly hired employees possess each of the following skills?

	1 (Not at all)	2	3	4	5 (Possess high amount)
Teamwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Critical thinking/ProblemSolving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attention to detail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ownership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Does your organization have a career development program? If so, please select all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- Continuing Education
- Skill Based Training
- Job Assignment
- Research
- Job Shadowing
- Participation in professional organizations
- Developmental Relationships

Section 5: Personal Demographics

Are you in a HR related position, e.g., position titled as HR, holds the responsibility of talent acquisition, hiring, or recruiting?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes, in a full-time capacity
- Yes, in a part-time capacity in addition to other roles
- no

What is your age in years?

What is your ethnicity?

Mark only one oval.

- White
- African American
- American Indian
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian
- Other

Gender

Mark only one oval.

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

- Other:

Education:

Mark only one oval.

- Less than high school degree
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate degree
- Post-Graduate

Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

Mark only one oval.

- Employed, working 1-29 hours per week
- Employed, working 30 or more hours per week

Section 6: Thank you

Thank you for your time taking the survey today. Your contribution today is valued and will help the next generation of newly graduated new hires.


Appendix B

IRB Approval

Institutional Review Board

328 Wells Hall
Murray, KY 42071-3318
270-809-2916 • msu.irm@murraystate.edu

TO: Terence Holmes, Management Marketing and Business Administration

FROM: Jonathan Baskin, IRB Coordinator 

DATE: 9/21/2021

RE: Human Subjects Protocol I.D. – IRB # 22-024

The IRB has completed its review of your student's Level 1 protocol entitled *Career readiness of recent graduates in the workplace. Human resource's perspective on the new hire's skills and readiness.* After review and consideration, the IRB has determined that the research, as described in the protocol form, will be conducted in compliance with Murray State University guidelines for the protection of human participants.

The forms and materials that have been approved for use in this research study are attached to the email containing this letter. These are the forms and materials that must be presented to the subjects. Use of any process or forms other than those approved by the IRB will be considered misconduct in research as stated in the MSU IRB Procedures and Guidelines section 20.3.

Your stated data collection period is from 9/21/2021 to 9/20/2022.

If data collection extends beyond this period, please submit an Amendment to an Approved Protocol form detailing the new data collection period and the reason for the change.

This Level 1 approval is valid until 9/20/2022.

If data collection and analysis extends beyond this date, the research project must be reviewed as a continuation project by the IRB prior to the end of the approval period, 9/20/2022. You must reapply for IRB approval by submitting a Project Update and Closure form (available at murraystate.edu/irm). You must allow ample time for IRB processing and decision prior to your expiration date, or your research must stop until such time that IRB approval is received. If the research project is completed by the end of the approval period, then a Project Update and Closure form must be submitted for IRB review so that your protocol may be closed. It is your responsibility to submit the appropriate paperwork in a timely manner.

The protocol is approved. You may begin data collection now.

**Opportunity
afforded**

murraystate.edu

Appendix C
Informed Consent

1. **Nature and Purpose of Project:** The purpose of this study is to better understand the need of skills for newly hired graduates. The survey will ask you questions about your organizational structure, skill-based questions, and personal demographics.
2. **Participant Selection:** Participants must be at least 18 years old and currently hold a Human Resource position.
3. **Explanation of Procedures:** To participate in the study, you must read this document in its entirety and confirm that you wish to participate in the study. The study activities include a survey with questions in regards to the skills employee possess and the value of each. The study will take about 5 minutes to complete.
4. **Discomforts and Risks:** There are no anticipated risks and/or discomforts for participants.
5. **Benefits:** The benefits of this study will help better prepare students for the career they plan to enter.
6. **Participant Compensation:** Participants will not be compensated for their participation in this study.
7. **Confidentiality:** Your participation in this study is confidential. Only the researcher(s) will be able to link your responses to you.
8. **Refusal/Withdrawal:** Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw/stop participating at any time. While participation is voluntary, all questions must be answered to be included in the study results.