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Digital Badge Credentialing Value: From An Employer Perspective

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Digital Badge Credentialing Value: From an Employer Perspective

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Background

Digital badging is an emerging credentialing system designed to validate skills and competencies achieved in nontraditional and traditional education settings. Badge initiatives have emerged as a pragmatic solution to reimagine education and build a highly-skilled workforce.

Research Goal

This qualitative case study explored the perceptions of IT service employers

- Utility of digital badges
- Acceptability of job applicants with earned badge credentials.

Significance

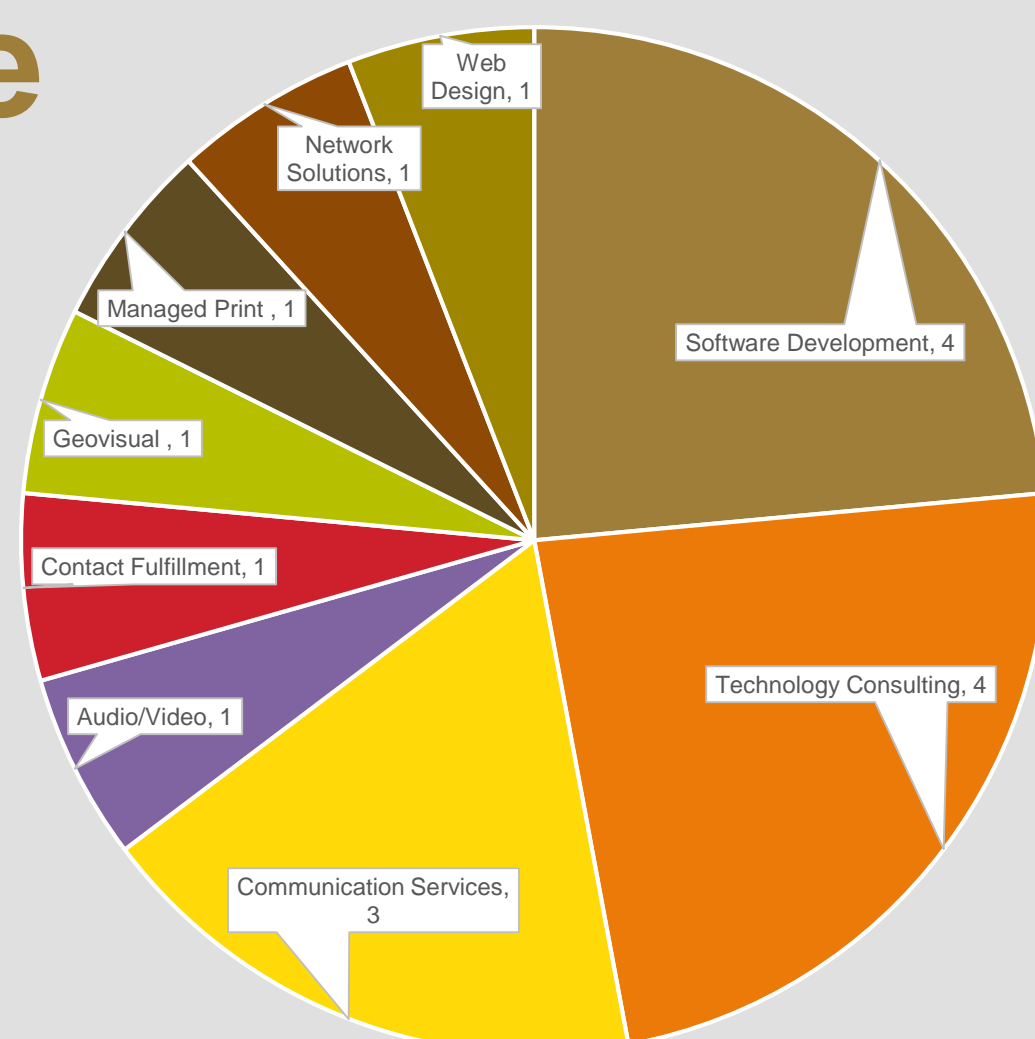
The success of education systems related to workforce development hold substantial social and economic consequence for government, employers, and job applicants.

Methods

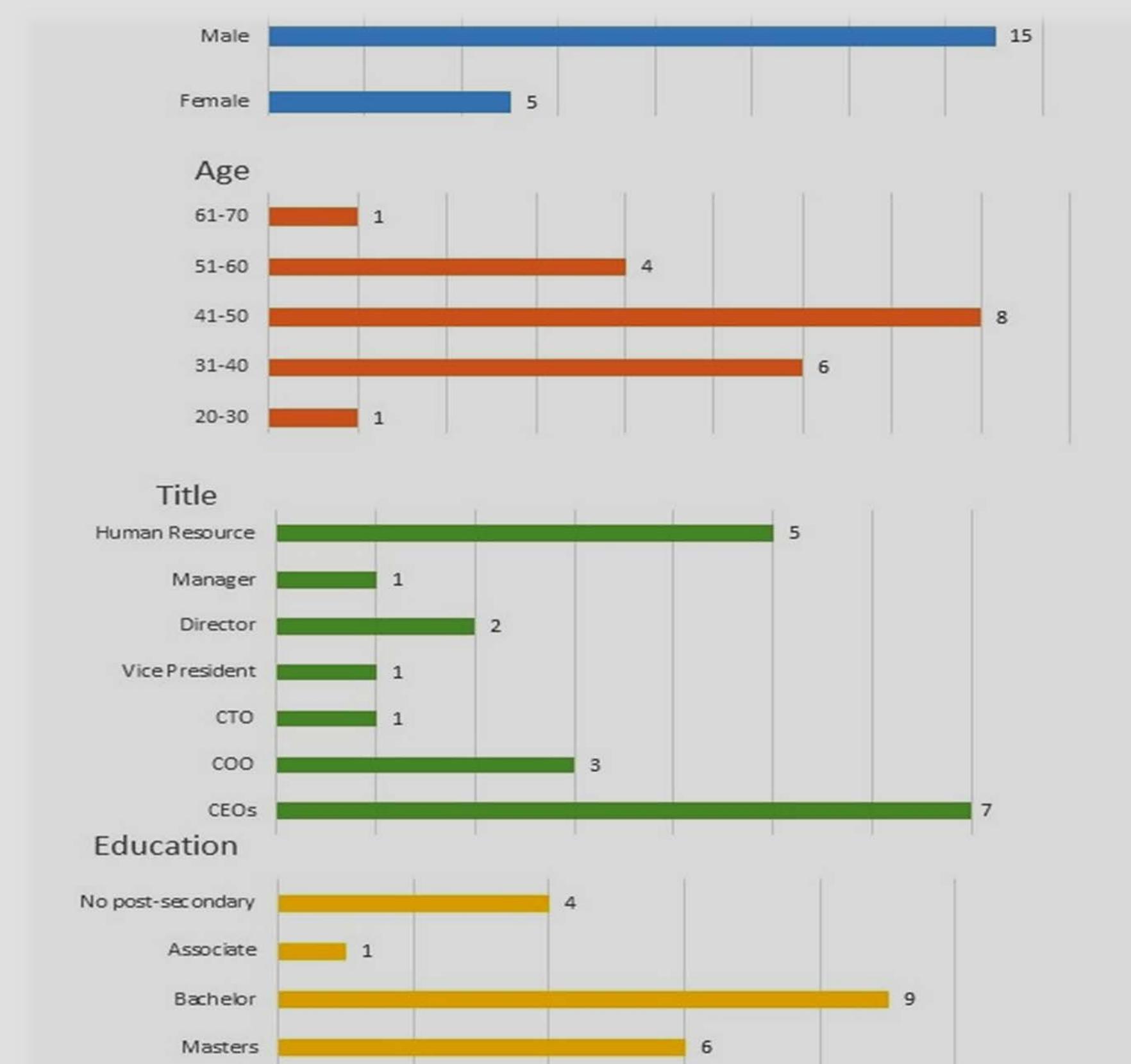
- Semi-structured interviews
- Document artifacts
- Analytic & reflective memoing

Population & Sample

- 20 Minnesota hiring directors
- Small to mid-size businesses
- Technology service providers



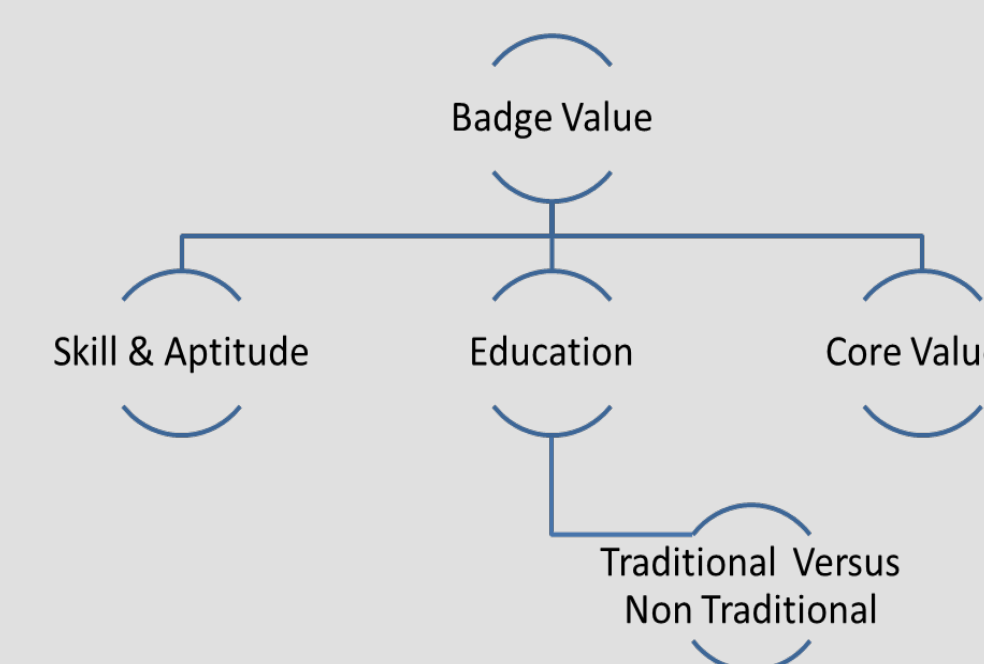
Demographics



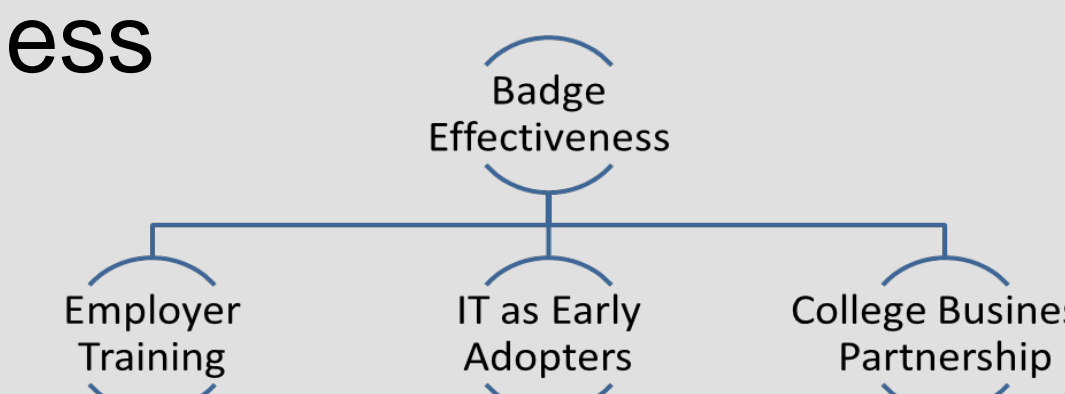
Emerging Themes

Three significant themes and 10 subthemes emerged:

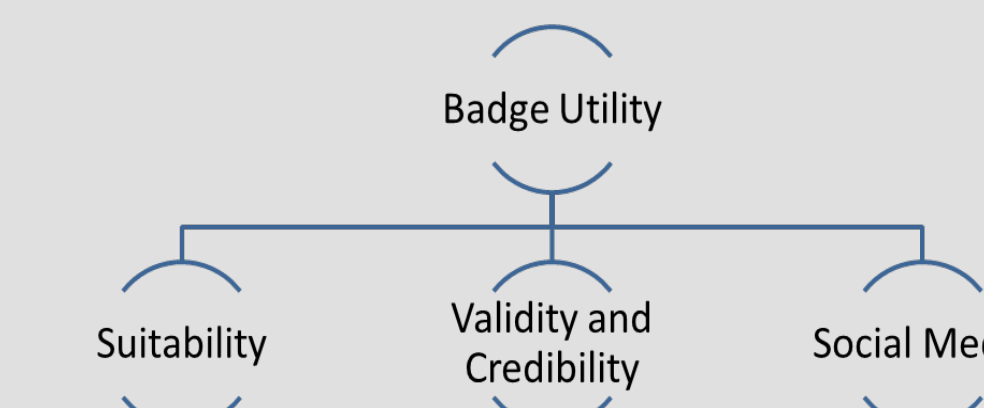
1. Badge Value



2. Badge Effectiveness



3. Badge Utility



Findings

- Growing endorsement for non traditional learning and alternative credentials
- Badge systems are thought to maximize likelihood of hiring qualified job candidates
- Potential for reducing business costs for professional training
- Interviewees questioned validity and credibility due to absence of clearly defined badge standards

Conclusions

Although traditional education remains a valued determinate of qualifications for many of the interviewees in this study, it appeared acceptance for nontraditional credentialing may be at a crucial tipping point.

Ever-changing technology, pervasiveness of online learning, and workforce trends will continue to influence employer attitudes towards nontraditional education and credentialing, thus increasing badge acceptance in the workplace.

Employer utility of digital credentials hinges on:

- Business and college partnerships to improve alignment of educational programming with business demands
- Need to establish badge system standards to safeguard quality and increase trust among employers

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