

The Hiring Preferences and Organizational Characteristics of Charter Schools: A Multiple Case Study Approach

Andromeda Hightower

University of Nevada, Las Vegas USA

Abstract: *Charter schools experience higher than average teacher turnover when compared with traditional public schools, with organizational characteristics cited as one contributing factor. This paper seeks to better understand organization characteristics by examining charter school recruitment. Through a multiple case study context, hiring materials produced by large, multi-school charter school networks across the U.S. were examined using content analysis and domain-taxonomic-componential analysis. Findings revealed that teaching content effectively and determining results from data were the most common elements between cases, while “eliminate the gap” missions and giving/receiving feedback were the most different. Future implications for hiring and retention are discussed.*

Key Words: charter schools, recruitment, organizational characteristics, retention, turnover, multiple case study, content analysis, domain taxonomic componential analysis

INTRODUCTION

The financial and social burden on schools losing their teaching body cannot be understated. Recruiting and training new teachers to help mitigate the losses due to turnover, and retaining existing teachers to help reduce the factors that influence turnover are both major international policy and research issues, as described by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Ainsley & Carstens, 2018). In the interest of better understanding how both of these large-scale factors interact and lead to high turnover rates, charter schools may prove to be a useful source of information to both the interests of policy and research.

Charter schools hold some advantages over traditional public schools in terms of the hiring process. They provide greater flexibility, allowing for a greater alignment of the school to a specific mission and to implement strategies to make the mission accountable without the need to consider for specialized licenses, district-specific requirements, or collective bargaining agreements (Cannata & Engel, 2012). Despite these advantages, however, charter schools have historically struggled with turnover when compared to traditional public schools, and there is evidence that this trend has not significantly changed in more recent years (Newton et al., 2018). Moreover, contextual factors arising from organizational dynamics, working conditions, and

characteristics play an important role in the retention of teachers in a charter school context, such as the disciplinary culture of a school (Torres, 2016) or less job security (Stuit & Smith, 2012).

This study explores one area of recruiting and retention interaction: the desirable hiring qualities of schools as described on their hiring materials for new position listings. The connection to recruiting is apparent, given that the desirable qualities for what a school seeks in their new potential candidates are reasonably evident in the hiring materials used during the process. The less obvious choice would be retention, since hiring materials are used for recruitment and not for retaining teachers. However, the interaction between these aspects is still evident and can be inferred from hiring characteristics; it is logical to assume that a school would include desirable characteristics for candidates that they perceive would mostly likely predict staying over a longer period of time. If a given teacher leaves a position as a result of being overwhelmed by the responsibilities, for example, then this indicates a retention issue (candidates who are easily overwhelmed by responsibilities predict higher turnover) as well as a recruitment issues (candidates who are able to manage multiple responsibilities predict lower turnover). Retention and recruitment, in the context of desirable qualities for candidates regarding teaching positions, are two sides of the same interaction. However, while the interaction between recruitment and retention has been studied previously (Wang et al., 2020), examining multiple school cases and contrasting/comparing their cases for different organizational characteristics has been less studied. Additionally, there are questions that remain seldomly explored in research regarding how charter school autonomy and agency manifests particular actions, ideologies, and strategies that charter schools utilize (Bickmore & Dowell, 2014), especially when examining issues outside of student achievement (Edwards & Hall, 2018).

This study intends to investigate the interaction between recruiting and retention as evident in charter school hiring materials. Through content analysis, followed by domain, taxonomic, and componential analysis, the cultural meanings evident in charter school desirable candidate qualities can be described and compared/contrasted to illustrate themes of the qualities and their interpretations. The study uses multiple case study approach for several reasons; it is defined by specific parameters (hiring materials found publicly on for-hire websites), instrumental in nature (examining the specific issue of charter school hiring preferences), and seeks to compare/contrast cases as part of identifying themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To guide this study, two questions will be addressed: what is the nature of the cultural meanings as described by the hiring preferences of charter schools in terms of retention and recruitment, and how do these meanings compare/contrast between different charter school systems? First, hiring practices, recruitment, and retention literature will be reviewed. Descriptions of the cases will be provided, followed by the results of the analyses on the data set. The study will conclude with discussion and further questions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CHARTER SCHOOLS

A charter school refers to schools which operate outside of traditional public school systems but are funded through public government funding. Compared to traditional public schools, charter schools are unique in their ability to make innovative choices and hold their own autonomy (Edwards & Hall, 2018, Gawlik, 2018), and these decision-making powers inform the choices they make strategically (Holyoke, 2008). Because of their perceived ability to respond in this way, charter schools have been empowered as a means for reconstructing local and state educational

systems that are underperforming (Bickmore & Dowell, 2014). However, the results of these innovative processes and practices as they relate to student outcomes are mixed (Bickmore & Dowell, 2014; Edwards & Hall, 2018; Newton et al., 2018; Zeichner, 2017). The popularity of charter schools has also started to gain international attention, with increased charter school development in the past few years (Edwards & Hall, 2018), but this study will focus specifically on the U.S. charter school context.

Charter schools in the literature have traditionally been cast into a singular case, ignoring the variety that exists within and between charter schools (Holyoke, 2008). Holyoke (2008) investigated survey responses from four different U.S. states (N = 270) and found evidence against the binary perspective of charter schools either possessing a market orientation (where the school is run like a for-profit business) or a mission orientation (where the school is run like a non-profit organization), and that it was possible for charter schools to possess qualities of both orientations. These differing orientations affect the decisions that charter schools make, including recruitment and hiring practices. Because charter schools have the potential to vary considerably between each other, comparing and contrasting cases across multiple charter schools can better illustrate *charter schools as an overall case* than any singular charter school is capable of representing. That being said, no single sample of charter schools can be generalized to the whole, and given the varying orientations of charter schools, there will be exceptions to any overall case.

Charter schools are particularly unique in the power invested to administrators, particularly principals. Principals in many charter schools have the power to selectively ‘hire and fire’ the staff at their school, giving them control over the individuals that will represent their school (Gawlik, 2018), although this is not always the case (Torres, 2020). Gawlik (2018) used a multiple case study design to examine instructional leadership by principals in four different Florida charter schools. The findings revealed that themes of “developing a school mission, managing curriculum and instruction, promoting the school climate and culture, and barriers to instructional leadership” were consistent across the four cases, and that collective capacity was a particular strength found in the principals observed. Staffing as it relates to budget was seen as one of the major barriers to the instructional leadership process, and although principals could make their own decisions regarding what staff would be a part of their schools, these decisions were often restricted by managing the budgetary concerns for their schools. Principals have to make informed decisions regarding who they recruit for their schools, and as Gawlik (2018) describes, they are intertwined with the instructional leadership responsibilities, opportunities, and challenges of charter school environments.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN CHARTER SCHOOLS

There is some evidence that suggests the differences between the hiring practices between public schools and charter schools, as they are often compared in the literature (Holyoke, 2008), may not entirely be very different from each other. Charter schools may appear to experience a greater focus on hiring practices in the literature when compared to public schools because charter schools have difficulty retaining teachers (Cannata & Engel, 2012). However, because of the evidence for increased stake in both hiring and retention practices, I argue that charter schools merit particular attention towards better understanding the case they represent for both practices. There are several elements which help illustrate how recruitment and retention exist within the context of charter schools.

Charter schools experience market pressures in order to recruit and retain quality teachers in their schools. Farmer-Hinton (2011) conducted a four-year case study in an upstart urban charter

school, and of particular interest to this study is the evolution of retention and hiring practices in the school over time. In the beginning, retention was difficult, as the school was still under construction and there was a lack of alignment between the charter school's mission as a college preparatory school. Over time, recognizing the retention problem, administrators focused on providing a number of supports for teacher to meet these demands, including hiring a Direction of Instruction to support teachers with individualized professional development and shadow-teaching, and creating a common planning period for teachers to engage collaborative in the planning and assessment process. Further, and more instrumentally, administrators increased their selectivity of candidates in order to achieve the desired mission of the school more explicitly, including hiring from top-ranked academic institutions. There were still some retention issues, though, such as a perceived lack of autonomy by teachers in the curriculum which inspired some educators to join charter schools (Farmer-Hinton, 2011). Interestingly, hiring preferences for teachers graduating from top-ranking institutions is not consistent across other cases for charter schools (Cannata & Engel, 2012). Overall, there is evidence for the link between retention and hiring, and also shows how decisions made by administrators regarding the larger structures in the school can impact the nature of how teachers are retained as well as recruited.

When charter schools hire new teachers, a common theme in the literature is the focus on candidates' ability to increase student achievement scores. Bickmore and Dowell (2014) conducted a comparative case study between two different charter schools, specifically examining the roles of principals in school leadership. Specific to hiring, both principals (who were both novices in their respective positions) had expectations for what they desired from teachers, but this did not always translate into a positive school culture for teachers, as teachers felt they were seen mostly for their ability to produce student performance – a potential cost of the “data driven” approach. In the case of New Orleans, teachers are offered merit pay for increased student performance, and the teacher evaluation criteria in Louisiana use student test scores as a primary metric (Jabbar, 2018).

Charter schools are changing the way teachers are being hired and retained in the workforce. Jabbar (2018) describes the case of New Orleans as an example where charter schools have almost entirely taken over the educational system, with 90% of students enrolled in charter schools. Temporary teachers make up a majority of the teachers employed, and charter school teachers are not afforded the same protections as traditional public schools, nor the same pay scales or policies (Jabbar, 2018). Districts where a large number of teachers are hired by large charter school networks are known as “portfolio districts”, where the presence of large numbers of charter schools forces the market to change and adapt new hiring strategies, such as relying on external programs like Teacher for America to hire teachers outside of the surrounding area (Jabbar, 2018). Allowing for flexibility in hiring and retention practices, as mentioned previously, is part of why charter schools are intended to be innovative, but said hiring practices may reflect more about the demands of the market than innovation.

The flexibility of a charter school also can result in inconsistent messaging regarding the mission, overall culture, and job searching practices. Martin (2015) described the case of a charter school that originated in a mission focused on bilingual education and community. Over time, the mission changed, reducing the emphasis on these aspects of the school to more closely align with the metric of standardized testing results, in the span of three years (Martin, 2015, p. 10). In this way, the mission statement of a charter school can drift from its original intentions as school practices change over time. Torres (2014) describes how charter school teachers in the study tended to preference autonomy in their job search more so than traditional public school teachers,

but also frequently experienced conflicts with charter school models that did not permit teacher autonomy, particularly with how students are socialized. While this does not suggest that charter school mission statements are inherently problematic, it suggests that a charter school's mission and perception can exist in conflict with how the school actually operates at the teacher level.

Teacher retention is an ongoing issue for charter schools. Newton et al. (2018) used panel data for elementary (N = 4,788) and secondary teachers (N = 8,467) in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to examine teachers who left their schools, how long they stayed, and what teacher/school characteristics were conditionally related to teacher turnover. The findings revealed that, when conditioning for the different characteristics of both teachers and schools, charter schools were found to have significantly greater numbers of teacher turnover when compared to traditional public schools (Newton et al., 2018). Given the evidence, as described by Newton et al. (2018),

apart from the measurable characteristics of teachers, students, and schools, there could be something about working in a charter school that might have led to more frequent turnover than when working in a TPS. This finding points to the importance of further examining organizational factors and conditions of these schools instead of focusing solely on the characteristics of teachers and students when dealing with teacher turnover and staffing problems. (p. 28)

As part of their implications for future research, Newton et al. (2018) recommended examining organizational characteristics in greater detail as part of the ongoing need to examine the context of recruiting and retention practices (Stuit & Smith, 2012). In this case of the study in this paper, themes of organizational characteristics are ascertained from the hiring preference materials of charter schools.

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

A total of eight charter school systems were examined, with each containing several postings for several different teaching positions. Cases were obtained via key term searching and filtered searches on internet job listing pages and 'virtual snowballing', where additional recommended job offerings on job listings were also examined. Key terms for search and filters that were used included "charter school", "teaching position", "full time", and "U.S.". No distinction was made for grade level, subject matter, or location. Charter schools that did not have clearly listed hiring preferences for teachers (outside of basic qualifications, such as having a bachelor's degree) or otherwise required any kind of direct follow-up or contact were omitted. Due to the nature of the case identification and inclusion process, charter schools that were well-advertised and large enough to be featured in national job searches generally came up first – five of the eight charter schools in the sample could be found in more than one state, and all of the charter schools included were part of networks that comprised of more than one school building. "[S]mall 'mom and pop' charter schools" are unique enough to warrant their own separate research analysis for hiring preferences, as they are not as immediately comparable to the larger and more common charter school networks and have much more tailored needs for their specific communities (Holyoke, 2008, p. 304).

Once cases were identified, hiring information was collected directly from the website, with a particular focus on hiring statements in the form of qualifications, requirements, and/or

preferred characteristics. These in all but one case were found represented as bullet points with one to three sentences on each, with the exceptional case using short paragraphs separated by breaks. However, regardless of the way the data was found, each bullet point and/or short paragraph represented either singular ideas with additional details included, or a mixture of two or more ideas contextualized together. These ideas (or ideas that were found paired/associated with each other in a single bullet point/paragraph) were collected and listed inside of a large master document.

Each of these were examined and open coded, with statements (usually bullet points, sometimes paragraphs) extracted and collected on a central document. A total of 159 statements were collected. These statements were then organized into large, generic categories informed from the manifest content of the hiring preferences: outside of basic qualifications, such as experience and education, summarized as (a) passion for mission, (b) attitude, (c) producing results, (d) teamwork, (e) caring for students, (f) classroom management, (g) content knowledge, and (h) professionalism. The axial coding that followed and exemplary phrases of the codes are outlined in Table 1.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is a systematic process where texts situated in social communication are coded and analyzed based on emergent themes present in the data. This research referred to Berg's (2001) characterization of content analysis; in particular, this analysis relies on an interpretive framework. Open coding combined with joint theoretical analysis was used to generate potential hypotheses for the research questions while also taking into account negative and contradictory cases as the desirable qualities in the hiring materials for charter schools were coded. During the open coding process, the manifest codes in the surface structure were interpreted for latent codes based on the evolving theoretical framework as more data was collected. Berg (2001) describes that using a joint coding and theorizing approach allows for each method to address the weaknesses of the other, and is "a more honest way to present the findings and analysis" (p. 256). Once open coding was complete, axial coding was conducted to subcategorize the desirable qualities described in the hiring materials by the more general themes that emerged from the joint theoretical process, including their negative interpretations. The use of negative and contradictory casing in particular can assist with avoiding exemplification (a process that selects representative data before patterns emerge) and to better represent the findings of the data (Berg, 2001). This research study followed Berg's (2001) recommendations for avoiding potential flaws in the content analysis process by (1) random sampling examples of a given finding, (2) a minimum of three examples for each finding, (3) the use of an independent reader, and (4) inconsistencies that should be discussed as part of the findings. The random samples are provided in Table 1, with three for each of the categories listed. The content analysis was reviewed and commented on by an independent researcher and revised accordingly. Inconsistencies largely exist as hybrid associations in the data, where more than one category may apply to a statement; such instances are elaborated on later in the domain analysis.

Table 1

<i>Category</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Example Statements</i>
Mission	Commitment and Belief	"Belief in and commitment to the mission and core values" "Embody and maintain school's values, policies and culture" "Deep-seated belief in the mission and vision"

Attitude	Improve Quickly and Constantly	<p>“Has a propensity for action, willing to make mistakes by doing in order to learn and improve quickly”</p> <p>“Urgently and courageously takes actions in the best interest of students, even if they are new or unfamiliar”</p> <p>“Self-awareness, a regular practice of reflection, and a desire to continuously improve”</p>
	Give and Receive Feedback	<p>“Effectively respond to and implement constructive feedback”</p> <p>“Openness to observation and critical feedback with a desire to continuously learn and increase effectiveness as a teacher”</p> <p>“Seeks and responds well to feedback, which is shared often and freely across all levels of the organization”</p>
Producing Results	Objective Proof	<p>“Proven track record of ambitious results in previous roles”</p> <p>“When describing your work, make sure you highlight results and accomplishments”</p> <p>“Has demonstrated effective outcomes and results, and wants to be held accountable for them”</p>
	Determined by Data	<p>“Use data to inform instructional decisions”</p> <p>“Ability to work urgently in a fast-paced and results-oriented environment”</p> <p>“A data-driven analyst who reflects and takes swift action based on results”</p>
Teamwork	Collaboration	<p>“Work as part of the instructional team to design, deliver, and assess the ... curriculum”</p> <p>“Collaborate with all staff members to ensure that all students have consistent and well-coordinated support”</p> <p>“Our teachers are part of one of the nation’s most collaborative and professional learning communities”</p>
	Positive Motivation	<p>“Be the teammate you want next door. Emanate optimism, bring up the daily happiness quotient of the people around you, share feedback to solve problems, reflect on how your actions impact others, and take ownership over creating the staff culture you want to show up to each day.”</p> <p>“Evidence of self-motivation and willingness to be a team player”</p> <p>“Communicate effectively with colleagues and contribute to positive staff culture”</p>
Caring for Students	Regardless of Student	<p>“All students deserve a quality education, no matter what zip code they live in”</p> <p>“A steadfast believer that all students can achieve academic excellence, regardless of background”</p> <p>“Empowers young people to see beyond the lakefront and the skyline to all the opportunities their futures hold”</p>
	Relationship Building	<p>“Develop positive relationships with students, families, teachers and staff”</p> <p>“Communicate students’ progress with student and family on a weekly basis”</p>

		“Spread the love. Build deep relationships with students, families, and staff to foster a culture of joy and community. Maintain strong and consistent lines of communication with families about student progress, and go above and beyond to support and collaborate closely with teammates in the united pursuit of ... [our] mission.”
--	--	--

Table 1 (continued)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Example Statements</i>
Classroom Management	Implement with Fidelity	<p>“Code of conduct with fidelity - high expectations”</p> <p>“Provide consistent rewards and/or consequences for student behavior”</p> <p>“Implement a clear and consistent behavior management system that aligns to campus-wide initiatives while developing students’ character and sense of community in the classroom”</p>
Content Knowledge	Implement the Curriculum	<p>“Implement the [c]urriculum by designing effective and creative lessons and assessments to ensure students' education is internationally competitive”</p> <p>“Teachers implement the established ... [c]urriculum while tailoring specific topics to integrate their knowledge and passion for the subject”</p> <p>“Design a syllabus detailing course goals, learning objectives, and scope and sequence to be given to students during the first week of class”</p>
	Teach the Content Effectively	<p>“Developing rigorous lessons in your specific content area in order to prepare your students for college and beyond while bridging gaps for marginalized communities”</p> <p>“Ensure the day-to-day exceptional education of students by preparing and facilitating subject specific lesson plans”</p> <p>“Tutor students in content-specific knowledge and skills to heighten the trajectory of students' academic and career success”</p>
Professionalism	Maintain and Behavior	<p>“Maintain regular, full, predictable attendance”</p> <p>“Ability to maintain emotional control under stress”</p> <p>“We believe in education as a profession and hold ourselves to high level of conduct, professionalism and behaviors as models for our colleagues and students”</p>
	Manage Multiple Responsibilities	<p>“Ability to juggle multiple tasks and initiatives at once”</p> <p>“Support the execution of non-instructional functions, such as ‘Early Bird,’ ‘Late Bird,’ and lunch”</p> <p>“Attend professional development training before the beginning of the school year and during non-instructional days/times”</p>

The findings can be described in terms of their manifest and latent codes. The manifest content was generally consistent with the typical desirable qualities described in charter school hiring materials (Cannata & Engel, 2012). The categorizations were determined based on key terms in the statements themselves as well as how the statement overall best related to common charter school hiring practices.

The latent content was determined by reading the statements in similar categories (as well as reading statements sharing multiple categories) and comparing/contrasting their meanings. Meanings that were more similar were paired together, and codes were interpreted based on the consistency of the statement meanings. These codes represent the themes of the findings contained within each category. In the categories of Mission and Classroom Management, there was more unity between the different statements in terms of meaning. Other categories revealed different aspects of a desirable quality but were still largely consistent with the overall category (Attitude, Producing Results, Teamwork, Caring for Students, Content Knowledge, Professionalism).

DOMAIN ANALYSIS

Spradley's (2016) developmental research sequence was used to examine the data using domain, taxonomic, and componential analysis techniques in order to make sense of the cultural domains apparent within the data set, demonstrate their relationships and hierarchies, and to establish which components were found with the eight different charter systems. In this section, the methodological approach for each of the analysis methods is explored, followed with an explanation of the findings in the data and graphical displays for each method sequentially, built on the findings of the former.

The domain analysis was used in order to determine the cultural groups of meaning evident in the sample via semantic relationships (Spradley, 2016). The semantic relationships used in the domain analysis were determined by the research questions and by the nature of the data collected. *X is an attribution (characteristic) of Y* was the first selected, given that characteristics are the primary feature of how the data is presented and thus is an important feature for making sense of the data. The content analysis revealed the characteristics of charter hiring practices as themes within the sample via strict inclusion on the basis of open codes; these themes were re-utilized for this semantic relationship, given their identical associations within the content analysis findings. *X is a kind of Y* was the next semantic relationship used, because this involves the interpretation of the original terms based on the 'gist' of the statements inherent in each of the ideas. Similar to the first semantic relationship, the content analysis on the same data revealed the nature or quality of these themes based on the axial codes; again, these codes were seen as identical to the nature of the content analysis and further contextualize the nature of the cultural domains inherent in charter hiring practices. *X is a part of Y* was the last semantic relationship used, and this particular semantic area was not explored in the content analysis; one of the weaknesses of the content analysis approach is that it becomes difficult to categorize statements that are associated with more than one content area, or ideas that are closely associated with each other that could represent any of the ideas inherent in the statement. Using a spatial semantic analysis allows for these associations to become clearer in the data, and to better capture these hybrid ideas in order to further contextualize the cultural domains of desirable qualities of hiring charter schools in terms of their interactions within each other. Because these semantic relationships can vary depending on the different interactions evident in the data, both the X and Y will vary for each pair of hybrid terms. The results of the domain analysis can be seen in Table 2. Examples of the hybrid terms found most present in the data are presented in Table 3.

Table 2
Domain Analysis

Mission Attitude Producing Results Teamwork Caring for Students Classroom Management Content Knowledge Professionalism	... is an attribution (characteristic) of ... (Attribution)	a highly desired charter school teacher.

Commitment and Belief Eliminating the Gap Improve Quickly and Constantly Give and Receive Feedback Objective Proof Determined by Data Collaboration Positive Motivation Regardless of Student Relationship Building Implement with Fidelity Implement the Curriculum Teach the Content Effectively Maintain and Behavior Manage Multiple Responsibilities	... is a kind of ... (Strict Inclusion)	desirable characteristic.

Commitment and Belief Give and Receive Feedback Teach the Content Effectively	... is a part of ... (Spatial)	Implement with Fidelity Caring for Students Collaboration Improve Quickly and Constantly Eliminating the Gap

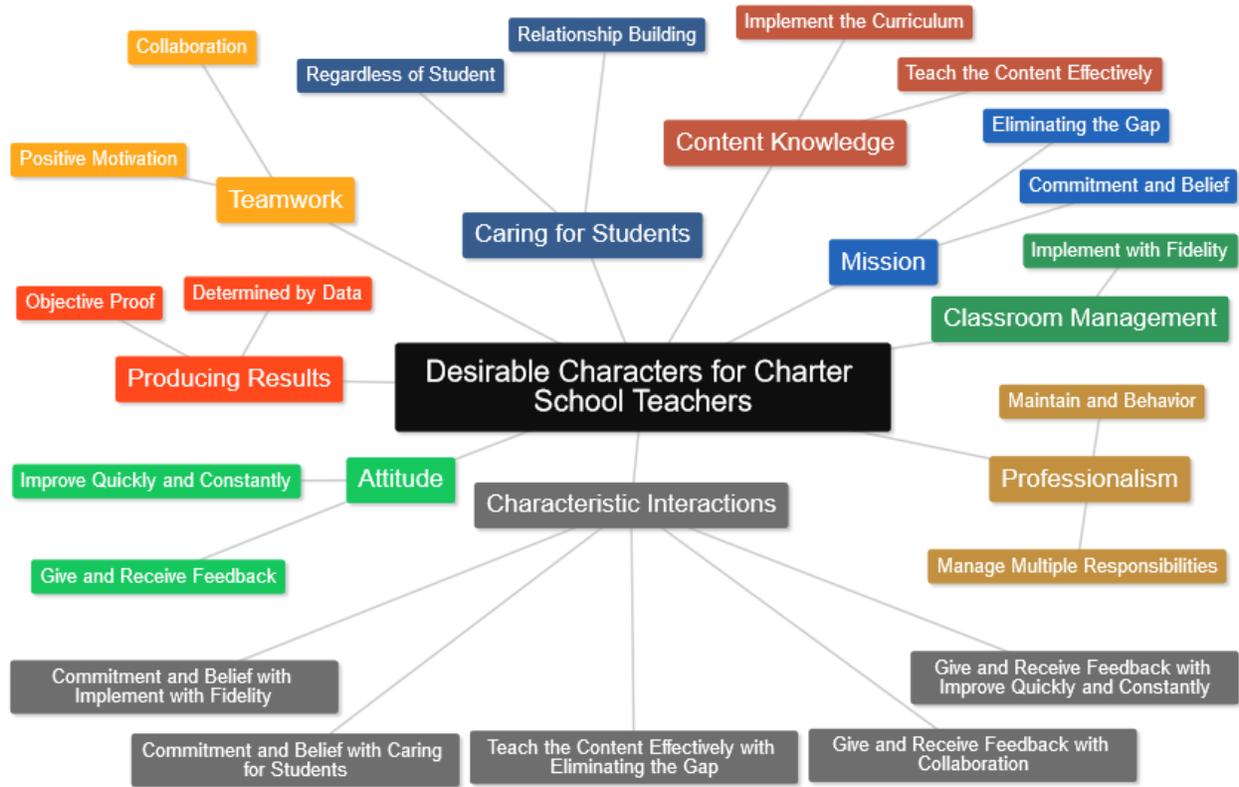
Table 3
Examples of Characteristic Interactions

<i>Characteristic Interaction</i>	<i>Data Sample</i>
<i>Commitment and Belief with Implement with Fidelity</i>	“Reach higher – and sweat the small stuff. Develop, uphold, and implement ... [our] values and systems to effectively manage a classroom, create a consistent experience for scholars across the school, and lead students to meet sky-high academic and behavioral expectations.”
<i>Commitment and Belief with Caring for Students</i>	“Hold all students to the highest expectations in order to ensure college readiness and a commitment to developing a school-wide culture that fosters a productive, enthusiastic learning environment”
<i>Give and Receive Feedback with Collaboration</i>	“Give and receive positive and constructive feedback with your colleagues”
<i>Give and Receive Feedback with Improve Quickly and Constantly</i>	“Never stop growing. Offer and receive constructive feedback from colleagues in order to create a professional working atmosphere that aspires to excellence and is conducive to constant improvement”
<i>Teach the Content Effectively with Eliminating the Gap</i>	“Developing rigorous lessons in your specific content area in order to prepare your students for college and beyond while bridging gaps for marginalized communities”

TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS

With the domain complete, the next step of the analysis was to create a taxonomy of associations and hierarchies in the data structure. The taxonomic analysis is an important step in the process as it utilizes the domains from the previous step to organize the ideas into distinct areas (Spradley, 2016), which are later used for comparing and contrasting between cases in the componential analysis. Taxonomic analyses are particularly useful as they can incorporate both folk and analytic terms (Spradley, 2016). Terms were examined from the data set as a whole as well as in their axial coded categories, and then broken into different hierarchies based on associations. These associations were then recreated as a visual map (Figure 1) in order to more clearly examine how different concepts related to each other. The hybrid terms were included in their own category so as to keep the associations more legible.

Figure 1
Taxonomic Analysis



COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

Utilizing the hierarchies and relationships between terms in the taxonomic analysis, a table was created, with columns representing each of the eight charter school cases. With all of the attributes listed in a table, each case and its respective data was reexamined individually using the terms from the prior analyses. Cases with clear indications (whether through the presence of folk terms, associations with analytic terms, or a combination) and binary values (in other words, yes, the attribute was present in a given charter school’s hiring materials or no, it was not present) were marked with an ‘X’ in the table, indicating a component that was present in the respective location within the paradigm (Spradley, 2016). This process was repeated multiple times until no further changes were made. The component analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Componential Analysis

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Taxonomy</i>	<i>CS*</i> <i>1</i>	<i>CS</i> <i>2</i>	<i>CS</i> <i>3</i>	<i>CS</i> <i>4</i>	<i>CS</i> <i>5</i>	<i>CS</i> <i>6</i>	<i>CS</i> <i>7</i>	<i>CS</i> <i>8</i>
Mission	Commitment and Belief	X	X	X			X	X	X
	Eliminate the Gap		X	X				X	X
Attitude	Improve Quickly and Constantly	X		X		X	X	X	X

A. Hightower

	Give and Receive Feedback		X	X			X	X	
Producing Results	Objective Proof	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
	Determined by Data	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Teamwork	Collaboration		X	X		X	X	X	
	Positive Motivation						X		
Caring for Students	Regardless of Student						X	X	X
	Relationship Building		X	X		X	X	X	
Classroom Management	Implement with Fidelity	X			X	X	X	X	
Content Knowledge	Implement the Curriculum	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
	Teach the Content Effectively	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Professionalism	Maintain and Behavior	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
	Manage Multiple Responsibilities		X	X	X				
Characteristic Interactions	Commitment and Belief with Implement with Fidelity	X					X	X	
	Commitment and Belief with Caring for Students	X	X				X		
	Give and Receive Feedback with Collaboration		X				X		
	Give and Receive Feedback with Improve Quickly and Constantly				X		X		
	Teach the Content Effectively with Eliminating the Gap				X			X	

*CS stands for Charter School.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

From the componential analysis, several findings were evident in the desirable characteristics of charter school hiring materials. First, the Determined by Data and Teach the Content Effectively associations were the only two extant in the hiring materials of every charter school case. The essence of effective teaching practices informed by formative and summative data appeared to be of specific and frequent interest across all of the charter school cases. This suggests that (a) teachers who are not retained may also be teachers who struggled with implemented these practices effectively, and that (b) teachers who are recruited may also be teachers who already have demonstrated strengths in these areas. A need for highly qualified

teachers is reflected in one of the factors influencing teacher turnover in charter schools (Stuit & Smith, 2012).

Second, the Eliminate the Gap and Give and Receive Feedback associations were present in four out of the eight cases; this suggests that these qualities were the most 'contrasted'. While this does not afford a ready interpretation based on the present data, the nature of this conflict invites further questions: what do these associations look like as they directly relate to retention and recruitment data, especially as they compare across different schools with opposing positions on these statements? The concept of eliminating 'the gap' is problematic, particularly when considering the distinction between what is traditionally described as the achievement gap versus the opportunity gap. The former, and much more commonly used, can conflate achievement as somehow inherent to other factors, particularly race, while the latter more readily describes the discriminatory forces that shape opportunities for students (Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2016). In terms of receiving feedback, feedback is a critical component of teacher education and preparation, and yet the quality of the feedback received is typically more summative and evaluative in nature rather than development oriented (Lichtenberger-Majzikné & Fischer, 2017).

Third, Commitment and Belief could be characterized also in terms of Implement with Fidelity and Caring for Students, Give and Receive Feedback could be characterized also in terms of Collaboration and Improve Quickly and Constantly, and Teach the Content Effectively could be characterized also in terms of Eliminating the Gap. Based on the other findings, the last hybrid term in particular suggests that, while teaching content effectively is a widely-accepted desirable characteristic of teachers in charter schools, the nature of what the effective content teaching purports to serve (eliminating the achievement gap specifically, or just effective teaching on its own merits) may vary across cases. Because one of these aspects is more universal (Teaching the Content Effectively) while another is divisive (Eliminating the Gap), this suggests a unique interaction in the case of charter schools. When teacher turnover is high, could the moderating factor of an achievement-gap-elimination philosophy impact the way that effective teaching is interpreted (and thus evaluated) by charter school hiring personnel looking for new candidates to fill positions? Are more teachers retained when effective teaching aligns with a school-wide mission to eliminate the achievement gap, or is the reverse true? Again, when considering the issue of the gap, if the gap is not adequately problematized and considered more critically (Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2016), then school missions may serve to exacerbate the gaps rather than ameliorate them. Given the vague nature of how governmental systems and schools interpret equity issues like the opportunity gap (Chu, 2019), it is all the more important that charter schools adapt and respond quickly to aligning their missions with more critically-oriented framing, and to translate the reflective and complex nature of equity into how teachers are developed and supported within the school to teach effectively. However, the mission statements and overall perceptions of a charter school can be misleading (Martin, 2015; Torres, 2014), and as such caution should be advised when evaluating a charter school's efficacy based on outward appearances alone. This study was limited by the type of data collected (only hiring materials that were publicly listed), so more research is needed to explore the relationship between a charter school's mission versus the practices that are performed in day-to-day teaching.

The results of this study suggest a number of potential attributes that describe the nature of charter school hiring practices. Further, the comparison between different cases revealed several potential themes of investigation and further lines of inquiry for future research. The theme of effective teaching practices guided by data was present in all eight charter school cases, and themes of eliminating the achievement gap and teachers giving and receiving feedback were the most

contrasted between the cases. The hybrid terms revealed an interaction between teaching content effectively and the mission of eliminating the achievement gap, indicating directions for future questions regarding the mediation of achievement gap elimination missions as they pertain to effective teaching. By examining these themes in closer detail, in combination with further exploration of other aspects in the data, a better picture of charter school hiring and retention meanings and cultural domains can be drawn for further research.

REFERENCES

- Ainsley, J., & Carstens, R. (2018). Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS) 2018 conceptual framework. Paris, France: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]. <https://www.doi.org/10.1787/799337c2-en>
- Berg, B. L. (2001). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bickmore, D. L. & Dowell, M-M. S. (2014). Two charter school principals' engagement in instructional leadership. *Journal of School Leadership*, 24, 842-881. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/105268461402400502>
- Cannata, M. & Engel, M. (2012). Does charter status determine preferences? Comparing the hiring practices of charter and traditional public school principals. *Education Finance and Policy*, 7(4), 455-488. https://doi.org/10.1162/EDFP_a_00076
- Chu, Y. (2019). What are they talking about when they talk about equity? A content analysis of equity principles and provisions in state Every Student Succeeds Act plans. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27(158), 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.27.4558>
- Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Edwards, D. B. & Hall, S. M. (2018). Neglected issues: How charter schools manage teachers and acquire resources. *Teachers College Record*, 120, 1-40. <https://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=22248>
- Farmer-Hinton, R. (2011). On being college prep: Examining the implementation of a "college for all" mission in an urban charter school. *Urban Rev*, 23, 567-596. <https://www.doi.org/10.1007/s11256-010-0168-4>
- Flores, O. & Gunzenhauser, M. G. (2016, April 8-12). *Justice in the gaps: School leader ethics and the use of data to address the opportunity gap* [Conference session]. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, DC, United States.
- Gawlik, M. (2018). Instructional leadership and the charter school principal. *School Leadership & Management*, 38(5), 539-565. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2018.1439467>
- Holyoke, T. T. (2008). Dimensions of charter school choice. *Journal of School Choice*, 2(3), 302-317. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/15582150802371515>
- Jabbar, H. (2018). Recruiting "talent"; School choice and teacher hiring in New Orleans. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 54(1), 115-151. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/0013161X17721607>
- Lichtenberger-Majzikné, K. & Fischer, A. (2017). The role of feedback in developing reflective competence. *Practice and Theory in Systems of Education*, 12(3), 119-127. <https://www.doi.org/10.1515/ptse-2017-0012>

- Martin, P. C. (2015). Contradictory reforms: When NCLB undermines charter school innovation. *Current Issues in Education*, 18(1), 1-13. <http://cie.asu.edu/ojs/index.php/cieatasu/article/view/1346>
- Newton, X., Rivero, R., Fuller, B., & Dauter, L. (2018). Teacher turnover in organization context: Staffing stability in Los Angeles charter, magnet, and regular public schools. *Teachers College Record*, 120, 1-36. <https://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=22074>
- Spradley, J. P. (2016). *Participant observation*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Stuit, D. A. & Smith, T. M. (2012). Explaining the gap in charter and traditional public school teacher turnover rates. *Economics of Education Review*, 31(2), 268-279. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2011.09.007>
- Torres, A. C. (2014). "Are we architects or construction workers?": Re-examining teacher autonomy and turnover in charter schools. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, 22(124), 1-23. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v22.1614>
- Torres, A. C. (2016). Teacher efficacy and disciplinary expectations in charter schools: Understanding the link to teachers' career decisions. *Journal of School Choice*, 10(2), 171-199. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2016.1152528>
- Torres, A. C. (2020). Push, pull, tap, and switch: Understanding the career decisions of charter school leaders. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 19(2), 171-189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2018.1513155>
- Wang, J., Straubhaar, R., & Ong, C. (2020). Teacher and administrator experiences with teacher recruitment, retention and support in a California charter-led turnaround school. *Inquiry in Education*, 12(1), 1-17. <https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/ie/vol12/iss1/13>
- Zeichner, K. M. (2017). *The struggle for the soul of teacher education*. New York, NY: Routledge.