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Marjan Mazza

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, mazza611@erau.edu

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Airport CEOs and the Decentralized System of Airports: A Case Study

Dissertation Manuscript

Submitted to Northcentral University

School of Business

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

by

MARJAN MAZZA

San Diego, California

January 2020

Abstract

The job of the airport CEO is complex with responsibility for the security and safety of a large and dynamic facility and, yet the FAA does not have regulatory qualification and performance standards for the position. The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. The guiding conceptual framework of the study was to combine competency with the concept of training and development. Airport CEOs from six airport facilities were interviewed, and an additional 13 airport CEOs were surveyed during the study. The benchmarks to participate in the study was that the participants were the current CEOs of a major commercial airport and that the airport accounted for at least 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarking on a flight in the U.S. Data analysis was utilized to establish the themes from the data collection. There are 133 major commercial airports that handle 96% of all passenger traffic operations in the United States. There are 30 large, 31 medium, and 72 small hubs. The study participants represented 14% of the nation's major commercial airports. The results attained indicated the decentralized hiring practices at nations' major commercial airports. The findings identified the significance of industry knowledge, communication skills, and political astuteness as the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. Additional future research is recommended.

Acknowledgments

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Lord for giving me the strength to endure this arduous journey to complete my doctorate. I also would like to thank my Chair, Dr. Richie, for her hard work in assessing my papers and providing valuable feedback. Finally, I would like to thank my daughter Paris for never giving up on me throughout this journey and by showing patience and encouragement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the United States, commercial service airports are owned and operated by the local government, mainly city, county, or port authority, commonly referred to as public-use airports. According to Wright, and Pandey (2010), there are undeniable and negative claims regarding the significance of leadership in municipal governments; transformational leaders are expected to be less common and less pertinent in public district than in private sector because the public sector is influenced by more rigid methods of control. According to Jimenez, Claro, and Sousa (2014), airports have customarily been deemed as public service providers. Kutlu and McCarthy (2016) posit that every commercial service airport in the U.S. is owned and operated in the public arena, but each has a different proprietorship category. As reported by Suárez-Alemán and Jiménez (2016), airlines are users of airport facilities, just as passengers are users of airport facilities. Airports serve as transportation centers through which passengers and cargo are transported to and from airplanes, and serve as centers for air commerce.

In the United States, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under the Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) part 139 certifies most public-use airports to accommodate scheduled commercial air service for the carriage of revenue passengers (FAA Airport Certification, 2018). According to Arblaster and Hooper (2015), the private area has turned out to be crucial for the expansion of airport structure worldwide, but the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) upholds that in the end, all national governments are accountable for safeguarding users from the misuse of market control and therefore they need to create suitable regulatory provisions. Airports are multifaceted establishments supplying a wide range of amenities to a wide range of consumers (Arblaster, 2014).

The job of the airport CEO is complex with responsibility for the security and safety as well as efficiency and environmental stewardship of a large and dynamic facility and, yet the FAA does not have regulatory qualification and performance standards for the position of airport CEOs. As reported by Kutlu and McCarthy (2016), while all U.S. commercial airports are in the civic division, not all commercial, civic sector airports are uniformly effective. Jimenez et al. (2014) describe the intricacy of the airport profession, specifically in what distresses the function of the airports as a business that functions in a system of sponsors, to create a prearranged facility bundles directed at numerous kinds of consumers.

According to Mayer (2016), airports satisfy a dynamic purpose in the air transport organization by stipulating the significant foundation of commerce. As reported by Young and Wells (2019), more than half of the world's airports and more than two-thirds of the world's 400 busiest airports are situated in the United States. The sizeable number of airports puts the U.S. in the position of responsibility for establishing regulations, rules, and policies. It is remarkable that neither the FAA nor any other federal agency is accountable nor controls the hiring of airport CEOs. The federal government does not test, certify, or license airport CEOs as they do with airline pilots, mechanics, and air traffic controllers. There are no federal regulations requiring or identifying the basic criteria for an airport manager's post. There is a lack of national standardization of hiring practices and a lack of federal qualifying criteria for airport CEOs at commercial airports. The system of airports is decentralized since each airport CEO reports to their local governing entity. The potential negative consequences of a decentralized system of airports are the lack of sufficient uniformity of qualification of airport CEOs. According to Wiesel and Modell (2014), disparities in the perception of public area consumerism happen to be

inserted in dissimilar governance performance. There are limited inquiries that have been made on the topic of airports and airport CEOs. The majority of other studies concentrate on airline safety rather than the safety of passengers at airports. The topic of the research study is important to the applied field of airport management, public safety, and economics.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed by the study was the lack of national standardization of hiring practices of CEOs and the lack of federal qualifying criteria for CEOs at commercial airports. The study concentrated on major commercial airports that account for 0.05% and greater of all passenger traffic embarking on a flight in the United States. The federal government does not test, certify, or license airport CEOs. According to Young and Wells (2019), airport CEOs are in charge of safety, security, and infrastructure improvements. In most countries, but not the U.S., airports are managed completely by the federal government. Airport administrations in the U.S. are a component of local government with input from the FAA into airport operation (Bacot & Christine, 2006). FAA Regulations and Guidelines (2018), lacks federal regulatory standards for the hiring of the airport CEOs.

The safety and security of the traveling public, airline and cargo staff, and all employees working at the shops, restaurants, as well as federal employees working at airports, are impacted by the issue of qualifying criteria for the hiring of commercial airport CEOs. What was not known is the fact that the system of airports is decentralized since each airport CEO reports to their local governing entity. The potential negative consequences of a decentralized system of airports were the lack of sufficient uniformity of qualification of airport CEOs. If the problem were not addressed in this study, then the attributes that could be the leading indicators in the

event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports would not be well known. There are volumes of studies on the subject of the airport system, airport security, airport finances and, the airport and airline relationship; however, there was a gap in the literature that would highlight the appointment practices of airport CEOs at the U.S. top airports and the lack of federal qualifying criteria for the hiring of commercial airport CEOs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. The study concentrated on major commercial airports that accounted for 0.05 of a percent and greater of all U.S. passenger traffic embarking on a flight in the United States. The federal government does not test, certify, or license airport CEOs. As reported by FAA's NPIAS (2017), there are 133 major commercial airports in the U.S. that handle more than 0.05 of one percent of all passengers embarking on a flight. These 133 airports handle the majority of all passenger traffic. The target population was the major commercial airports in the U.S., and the sample size that was needed for this proposal was 12 airports, as identified by the FAA's NPIAS (2017). According to Özdemir, Çetek, and Usanmaz (2018), airports are the most vital feature of the air transport organization since they are the beginning and ending locals of air travel. Currently, there are no national qualifying criteria for the hiring of airport CEOs. There was a national need for the study, and the study adds to the field of airport management. The study results have safety, security, and economic implications that are relevant beyond the study. This multi-case study intended to search and examine the necessity for national standards for the hiring of CEOs at major commercial airports and the effects of a national

standard of qualifications and hiring practices of CEOs at major commercial airports. The airports where the research proposal was conducted were from the fifty states. The study was a sound, clear research response to the stated problem and the research questions that would follow. This qualitative multi-case study examined and explored the hiring practice by airports that appoint the CEOs. The study participants were the executives in charge of the airports.

Conceptual Framework

In this qualitative multi-case study, the lack of national standardization of hiring practices of CEOs within commercial airports was examined to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. The manuscript combined competency with the concept of professional training and development. According to Tomaževic, Tekavcic, and Peljhan (2017), public administration throughout the world face numerous demands to transform and develop proficiency and success, and to decrease their need on taxpayers, while upholding the level and attribute of amenities delivered to the public. The system of airports is decentralized since each airport CEO reports to their local entity. As reported by Kutlu and McCarthy (2016), while all U.S. commercial airports are in the civic division, not all commercial, civic sector airports are uniformly effective. Currently, there is a lack of continuity at the local level when all other aspects of the operations of an airport are regulated at the federal level. According to Yan and Oum (2014), commercial airports in the United States are controlled by local regimes either unambiguously as government divisions such as the Department of Aviation, or circuitously via airport authorities. According to Lawrenson and Braithwaite (2018), society safeguards itself via its legal plans, and like all rules, those overseeing safety and hazard management must determine

efficacy to be dependable. The study was indicated as to why the safety, security, and national welfare of our traveling public are left at the hands of airport CEOs whom the local government in turn hires. Local government officials who lack the federal knowledge of the airport systems handpick CEOs across the nation. The author deliberated justifications, planned associations with concepts, and inconsistencies, and irregularities, concerning outcomes linked to in the topic area.

As reported by McNeill (2014), neither airports nor their evolving rationalities or metropolitan locales can be cogitated as singular, uniform, or unconcealed units in isolation. Bacot and Christine (2006) posited that airport organizations in the United States are a strange but dynamic element of local governments. According to Enoma, Allen, and Enoma (2009), the airport safety necessitates an organized methodology between the numerous interest constituents and the government as well as the patrons and employees. Pierro, Raven, Amato, and Bélanger (2013) posited organizational duty is the joining of a person to their industry, there are adverse claims regarding the implication of leadership in municipal governments, transformational leaders are expected to be less pertinent in public district than in the private sector because the public sector is predisposed to more rigid methods of control.

Adikariwattage, de Barros, Wirasinghe, and Ruwanpura (2012) posited that airports are categorized in a variety of methods centered on a range of standards. The type of categorization differs subject to the specific function for which the grouping is made, such as the existing operational capability to yearly traveler passage, or practical role or geographic position or airport competition. Airports globally encompass a wide variety of specificities concerning the infrastructure, size, locale, terminal, amenities offered, and also administration and directive venues (Suárez-Alemán, & Jiménez, 2016). The FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport

Systems (FAA NPIAS, 2017) catalogs 3,340 airports that are important to national air transportation, of which 3,255 are public and of which only 382 are classified as primary airports. Further review finds that only 133 of the 382 primary airports are major commercial airports in the U.S. that handle more than 0.05 of one percent of all passengers embarking on a flight (FAA NPIAS, 2017).

The decentralized system of U.S. airports drove the research choice on the regionalized airport executives. According to Creswell (2006), the examiner may discuss how the analysis of a case or cases are to help enlighten the inquiry problem, consequently; the necessity for the study, or the predicament leading to it, can be linked to the exact application of one of the methods to research. The problem statement was a lack of national standardization of hiring practices of CEOs at major commercial airports; the study was a multi-case study of the U.S. airport CEOs. As reported by Yin (2016), a case study research systematically examines a real-life occurrence inside its environmental setting. As reported by Agee (2009), the contemplative and probing practices essential for developing successful qualitative research queries can give form and focus to an analysis in ways that are frequently taken too lightly.

Nature of the Study

In this qualitative multi-case study, the lack of federal qualifying criteria of the airport CEOs in the United States was examined to investigate the problem and adds original information to the body of knowledge. According to Chu and Ke (2017), it is essential for researchers to reflect on and select one or more methods grounded on what they propose to study for their academic undertakings. According to Cleary, Horsfall, and Hayter (2014), the solid idea of a qualitative study was that it provided the investigator the chance to investigate a subject

exhaustively. In contrast to quantitative research, which is focused on statistical examination (Chu & Ke, 2017), qualitative analysis pertains to situations where pertinent variables generating an outcome are not obvious and where researchers are concerned with the views, reasons, and actions of individuals, governments or establishments (Lakshman, Sinha, Biswas, Charles, & Arora, 2000). As reported by Lawrence and Tar (2013), a qualitative study provides an occasion for the assessor to increase understanding and collect conceptions that are possibly overlooked by conventional data calculation methods. According to Tetnowski (2015), case study research examines a current occurrence within its actual setting, particularly when the confines amongst experience and setting are intricately connected.

As reported by the Federal Aviation Administration NPIAS (2017), there are 133 major commercial airports in the United States. These 133 airports account for the majority of all passenger enplanements in the nation. The study concentrated only on the major commercial airports responsible for the majority of all passengers and a sampling of individual CEOs from the aggregate U.S. airports. The researcher used open-ended survey questions to provide more description and in-depth, wider, thicker responses from the airport CEOs who participated. The researcher surveyed the airports as identified by the FAA NPIAS (2017). A total of 115 airport CEOs were solicited from the FAA NPIAS. The researcher interviewed six airport executives and surveyed 13 to triangulate the data for the multi-case study. According to Enacott (2005), a certain subject to tackle with the written investigation are the steps needed to guarantee subjects are unidentified. The respondent airports were classified into small, medium, and large airports. The methods chosen for the study were appropriate for the type of analysis to respond to the lack of national qualifying criteria to oversee the appointment practices of CEOs at the U.S. top

airports. The author developed her survey since the information the author was seeking was first of its kind and, there were no existing surveys that met the needs of the study. The surveys used open-ended survey questions since it provided more description and in-depth, wider, thicker responses from the airport CEOs who participated. While the form of communication was via mail, the open-ended survey questions served as qualitative interviews.

Research Questions

The following research questions are in line with the purpose of this qualitative multi-case study.

RQ1. What are the essential functions of airport CEOs?

RQ2. What essential function should the federal government specify for airport CEOs?

Significance of the Study

The risk that the lack of qualifying criteria in hiring practices of CEOs at major commercial airports carries is the risk of an unstable network of the airport system. Clark, Murphy, and Singer (2014) posit the degree to which CEOs impact functioning hangs on some influences such as an association's ownership and control configuration, which owns and oversees the business. The airport CEOs are in charge of safety, security, and infrastructure improvement of our nation's airports, which serve as points of entry and exit, yet there are no federal standards or any national benchmarks for hiring the airport CEOs. The study adds to the fundamental facts and scholarly framework associated with the field of airport management as well as federal regulations governing the transportation industry. The study also has safety and security significance at the national level. According to Kenville and Smith (2014), airport executives cope with extraordinary political, environmental, and economic difficulties, which cause

modification; shifting an institute's configuration necessitates complete leadership and complex group effort.

Travelers depend on the federal government to provide a safe transportation system. However, the airports, which are points of entry and exit, are not uniformly run and operated. Addie (2014) posited that airports operate as significant interchanges via universal systems that are both profoundly assimilated with, and influenced by, the re-adjusted relationship generated by the aviation industry. As reported by Adler and Liebert (2014), airports have started to function as contemporary establishments engaging in commercial intentions. According to Crucke, Moray, and Vallet (2015), there is an accord that administrations are progressively subjected to several persistent and likely incompatible institutional rationalities.

The result of this applied study is significant to the U.S. travelers, the federal government, and the local governments hiring the airport CEOs. The study contributes to the literature as it relates to major commercial airports in the United States that handle the majority of total air passengers. The possible benefits of addressing the study problem are to explore and establish a national standard of qualifications and hiring practices of CEOs at major commercial airports, which will stabilize the system through uniformity for the safety and security of the traveling public. The study has social significance since commercial service airports move passengers and cargo. As reported by Florida, Mellander, and Holgersson (2015), airports influence local growth both by moving people and cargo. Since airport CEOs are in the leadership position, they are responsible for the safeguarding of local passengers. According to Gini and Green (2014), leadership is the utmost transcribed theme in political theory, social science, and management analyses.

The research questions answered what the most important qualities are in airport CEOs and what essential job functions (if any) should the federal government specify for airport CEOs of major commercial airports in the United States. The hiring standardization practices of airport CEOs will help improve the airport industry and bring uniformity to the system. As reported by Yan and Oum (2014), the culpability of public policy consequences is lesser in a more unethical milieu since voters are not well apprised about public policy effects. Freestone (2012) posited that there was a solid and intense conversion of airports from one-track to multi-modal transportation nuclei; however, modifications in the control and business models of airports have not essentially been associated with receptive changes in the governing setting.

Definitions of Key Terms

The key terminologies itemized below were fundamental vocabularies employed throughout this qualitative case study. The objective of the definition of terminologies is to elucidate and deliberate the key operative terms used in the inquiry report.

Airport CEO. The CEO of an airport is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the airport (Rivers, 1966).

Airside. A system of runways, taxiway, and apron spaces that are associated with aircraft operations (Özdemir et al., 2018).

American Association of Airport Executive (AAAE). The leading professional association for airport officials in the United States, denoting management personnel at public-use airports (Young & Wells, 2019).

Commercial service airports. Publicly maintained airports that have at least 2,500 travelers embarking each calendar year and have scheduled passenger facility (FAA, NPIAS, 2017).

Federal Aviation Administration. The Federal agency that sponsors and cultivates air commerce (Young & Wells, 2019).

Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) part 139. A code of federal regulation, controlling the certification of air carrier airports, which outlines certain rules, undertakings, and benchmarks for airfield administration (Young & Wells, 2019).

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The United Nations organization that delineate and propagate international necessities for airport design and functioning (De Neufville, 2013).

Landside. The terminal structures and surface transportation structures to the airport (Özdemir et al., 2018).

National Plan of Integrated Airport System (NPIAS). The Airport and Airway Improvement Act of 1982 mandated the FAA to create the NPIAS. The statute requested the documentation of national airport system needs, plus expansion costs (Young & Wells, 2019).

Primary airports. Public, commercial airports that board at least 10,000 annual passengers (Young & Wells, 2019).

Transportation Security Administration (TSA). The United States federal agency that is in charge of security (McHendry Jr., 2015).

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. The participants that were surveyed for data collection were from 13 different airports of various sizes and geographic locations identified in the FAA National Plan of Integrated Airport System (2017). To further triangulate the data, six airport CEOs were interviewed. The target population was the major commercial airports in the United States. The surveys were open-ended survey questions since it provided more description and in-depth, wider, thicker responses from the airport CEOs who participated. The form of communication was via mail, as well as phone interviews; the open-ended survey questions served as qualitative interviews. The study's conceptual framework combined competency with the concept of professional training and development. This manuscript examined the hiring practices for commercial service airport CEOs and the lack of national standardization of hiring practices of CEOs within commercial airports. The system of airports is decentralized since each airport CEO reports to their local entity. Currently, there is a lack of continuity at the local level when all other aspects of the operations of an airport are regulated at the federal level. The study utilized a qualitative multi-case study design to gather information and to develop a conclusion on the decentralized hiring practices and the lack of federal qualifying criteria of the airport CEOs in the United States. The study adds to the fundamental facts and scholarly framework associated with the field of airport management.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review provides a basic understanding of exploring the relationship between management tasks and responsibilities, leadership and the airports, and the FAA. In this study, the researcher focused on understanding the authority of airport CEOs and the local municipalities they serve. The literature review looked at the role the FAA plays to establish qualifying standards or criteria for the role of airport CEOs that may be used by boards of directors, boards of county commissioners, and a city/county administrator to establish policy for hiring airport CEOs. The impact that airports have on the surrounding community; and the implications of regulation and politics were also reviewed. The study aimed to define requisite performance standards for major commercial airport CEOs in the United States.

The search for scholarly literature on the topic of this study was performed utilizing the online library databases from Northcentral University (see Appendix A). These resources included EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and Sage Journals Google Scholar, ProQuest Dissertation and Theses, books, and Northcentral University's online journal. The results were additionally narrowed by scholarly/ Peer reviewed, a chosen span of years (2011 to 2018), English language, and full-text. Keywords included Public Administration Leadership, Public Sector Leadership, Public Sector Theory, Public Service Leadership, Leadership Theory, U.S. Airports, U.S. Airport Leadership, Airport Leadership Theory, Federal Agency Leadership, Code of Federal Regulation, U.S. Department of Transportation, FAA Leadership of Airports, CEO competency theory, and CEO Job Analysis.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual philosophies and backgrounds can deliver systems of inquiry to analyze the source and manifestation of a problem (Creswell, 2006). The guiding conceptual framework of the study was to combine competency with the concept of training and development. Human resource management (HRM) denotes the method of categorizing and defining the responsibilities, tasks, and stipulations of a specific post, level of knowledge, skills and, qualification (Wolfson & Mathieu, 2018). Ployhart, Nyberg, Reilly, and Maltarich (2014) discerned knowledge to be amongst the notions of human capital and human capital properties. Human capital is an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) that are pertinent for attaining economic results, while the human capital resources are, "individual- or unit-level capacities based on individual KSA's that are accessible for unit-relevant purposes" (Ployhart et

al., 2014, p. 373). Mintzberg (1989) opined that when we think of any institute, we think of the executive running that business.

Every structured human endeavor sets in motion two primary and divergent obligations; the separation of work into numerous tasks to be accomplished and the proficiency of those tasks to achieve the activity (Mintzberg, 1989). Drucker, Hesselbein, and Economy (2015) posited that management symbolizes an occupation, but also persons who discharge it; management signifies a public position and status but also specialty and branch of study. According to Robinson-Morrall et al. (2018), KSA-task association rankings necessitate raters to specify the level to which each KSA is linked to each position undertaking. The regionalism of airports reveals a multifaceted geography of constitutional supremacy comprising of unsettled networks of actors tangled in multi-government administrations; a network of universally detached; efficient passageways for aircraft movement that are frequently the cause of skirmish amongst opposing technical and societal strains; and observation bays through which personal movement, uniqueness and, concerns are built and disputed (Addie, 2014).

According to Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016), governing organizations have focused more on the topic of CEO proficiency, claiming that effective board administration of the evaluation of the CEO's potentials and efficient succession provision is vital to commercial upshots, as well as lessening the threat of regulatory non-compliance. Gwyn (2011) identifies leadership skills in two groups; hard skills are technical proficiencies that are mainly education or renowned certification plans that deliver the simple information for becoming an effective airport manager, and soft skills are personality qualities and comportments that are also essential to being a successful leader. Hard skills can be acquired, while soft skills are established through

practice (Gwyn, 2011). The modern arena of strategic management draws its origins from scholars like Mintzberg (1989), whose brand delivered methodical contexts and generic policies (Sharp & Brock, 2010). Jacobson and Sowa (2015) postulated that there is a noteworthy disparity in the degree to which metropolises are applying planned human capital management. Mintzberg (1989) posited that the number of strategies brought together explains the essential means in which administrations can manage their effort; these are the common adjustment, direct administration, standardization of job procedures, outputs, skills and, knowledge as well as patterns. These synchronizing means can be contemplated of the most fundamental rudiments of assembly, the bond that binds the business together.

Detjen and Webber (2017) denote knowledge as tangible essentials, comprising of processes, which may be specified in words, methods, simulations, or other symbols that can be gathered. Skill signifies the use of facts and processes that have been acquired through performance and repetition by mastery of the subject. According to Calvin (2015), it is vital to think methodically to perform on preeminent intentions and commitment when unfolding onward from regulatory proficiencies and managers' ideas keen on appropriating on the actual possibility of expanded learning fundamentals in governments. Mintzberg (1989) opined that administrations could organize their effort through standardization of skills and knowledge in which dissimilar jobs are corresponding by the quality of the associated training the staff has established.

Ployhart et al. (2014) distinguished amongst the notions of human capital and human capital resources, as the authors maintained that human capitals are a person's knowledge, skills, and capabilities, branded as KSAs that are pertinent for attaining economic results and human

capital resources are component-level measurements built on distinct KSAs that are available for organization pertinent objectives. The main difference is that while human capital can be labeled as an accrued member of KSAs, consecutively for them to produce human capital properties, they must be combined and be conceptually important for unit-relevant determinations. According to Baranowski and Anderson (2005), KSA assignment correlation valuations necessitate raters to designate the degree to which each KSA is associated with every job task. Robinson-Morrall, et al. (2018) posit that these links are believed to be best performs in job evaluation and suggest some legal necessities since they assist on inaugurating the job affiliation of particular KSAs.

According to Drucker et al. (2015), four decades ago, management was an extremely adverse word in public administrations. Management signified the business, and nonprofit making was not considered a business. Nowadays, nonprofits recognize that they necessitate supervision since they have no traditional outcome. Today they must ascertain in what way to utilize management so they can focus on their operation. As we start to recognize what facts are important and shift from activity-based recounting to evidence planning, management outlooks and engagements will necessitate constant improvement (Desenberg, 2013). According to Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016), each person exemplifies a certain quantity and makeup of capital assimilated within their practice that governs their position relative to the specialized field that they practice, those who lead an arena such as business leaders, regulators, presidents, and directors, control the capacity and the assembly of the affluence which is reflected to be the utmost treasured in the arena.

Bravenboer and Lester (2016) opined theory of competency and driving force is based on an individual's thoughts of personal capability, the ability to accomplish distinguished responsibilities to a standard. The theory of competence driving force enhances when an individual effectively masters a job; this driving force encourages the person to master more tasks (Bravenboer & Lester, 2016). Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey (2007) posit that demands for shift in CEO proficiencies have also transpired in reply to a more interrelated information economy that involves CEOs to transact with superior units of intricacy, leadership performances promoting partnership and enabling employee involvement are realized to be more appropriate in handling a business's social properties in this multifaceted and collaborative world. According to Detjen and Webber (2017), it is essential to have a basic organizational configuration, with tiers adequately broad and sufficiently limited to demand for administrators who are one classification in cognitive complexity over their direct underlings and who are functioning at a level of job intricacy that is correspondingly one class higher and it is crucial to have confirmed a range of managerial performs for managers to do, which can be instilled and which executives can with training, ascertain to practice without thinking about it. Detjen and Webber (2017) also point out that these executives must also have a reasonable sum of conventional knowledge, this knowledge can be concerning the makeup and the executives' role in that organization as well as understanding about the executive performs. Gwyn (2011) identifies the financial associations concomitant as part of leadership attributes significantly in gathering the trials confronting today's airport. According to Gwyn (2011), these might be in the shape of real estate contracts, examination of a concession proposition, a bond financing deal, cost-benefit correlated with a planned task, assessment of revenue streams for various plans, long-term fees of platforms under

contemplation and remuneration of construction expenditure. According to Sirisetti (2011), to satisfy the necessity for leaders within all levels of federal organizations, public district human resource directors are now appealed to cultivate state-of-the-art leadership training platforms. Emerging Leaders for the 21st century necessitates responsiveness to workforce tendencies as well as elasticity and innovation (Sirisetti, 2011). Federal government leadership trepidations of public agency managers include creative thinking, collaboration, and cross-organizational team building and leading for results (Sirisetti, 2011). The federal government should make it a priority to find ways to qualify candidates to fill airport management positions.

The System of Airports

Airports deliver considerable financial windfalls to the districts they serve and nearby areas and are the main structures of most of the economic growth policies for people, districts, and states (Bacot & Christine, 2006). According to Adikariwattage et al. (2012), airports are categorized by the existing operational capability to annual passenger traffic and operative function, such as being a regional or an international airport. Best categorizations use a mix of regional or yearly passenger traffic volumes for grouping of airports (Adikariwattage et al., 2012). Enhanced competition amongst entry hubs and former military airports have begun to focus on low-cost transporters in the catchment area of present airports has considerably altered the downstream airline market and is influencing the market (Adler & Liebert, 2014). Data for FY 2017 show that the reporting passenger carriers had a combined operating profit of \$21.6 billion (U.S.DOT FAA data & research statistics, 2018). The latest FAA NPIAS (2017) statistics indicate 610,796 pilots, 18,203 air carrier aircraft, and a total of 19,627 airport facilities. The system of airports handled 849.3 million passengers (U.S.DOT Bureau of Transportation

Statistics, 2018). This research emphasizes on the public, commercial airports in the United States. Commercial airports are identified by the size of the hub they serve, small, medium, and large and non-hub. The FAA is the agency responsible for airport classification and utilizes the classification to fund the airports. This study concentrated on major commercial airports in the U.S. that handle more than 0.05 of one percent of all passengers embarking on a flight which falls under the category of the small, medium, and large hub. A large hub airport must tally 1% or more of the U.S. passenger that board an aircraft commonly referred to as enplanement. To be classified as a medium hub airport, the airport traffic must account for 0.25 of a percent of the U.S. passenger enplanement. To be considered a small hub airport, the airport traffic must account for 0.05 of a percent to 0.25 of a percent of aggregate U.S. commuter enplanement. According to FAA's NPIAS (2017-2021), there are 30 large hubs, 31 medium hubs, and 72 small hub airports in the U.S, totaling 133 major commercial airports that handle 96% of all passenger traffic operation in the United States. The 30 large hubs tally for 72 percent of all passengers that board a flight in the nation, the 31 medium hubs account for 15 percent, and the 72 small hubs account for 9 percent of all passenger boarding in the nation (Table 1).

*Table 2. 1
Hub Airports And The Passenger Boarding*

Hub Airports	% Of all passenger boarding's at the hub airports	Number of Airports in the U.S.
Small	9%	72
Medium	15%	31
Large	72%	30
Total	96%	133

According to Mosbah and Ryerson (2016), local governments such as cities and counties own and manage the majority of large U.S. commercial service airports, and they have, for a long time, contemplated air traffic growth and airport growth as fundamental instruments to help regional financial progress. According to Florida et al. (2015), airports are a significant element of the linking of people and locales; airports are an essential part of regional economic growth. Addie (2014) posited that financing in airport facilitating municipal expansion is not a simple or justifiable solution for defies of commercial globalization. Worldwide airport amenities necessitate large and massive capital financing besides the place-based growth of technical comprehension and structural and geopolitical authority. Aviation connectivity opens up urban hubs to the dangers of terrorism (Graham, 2006) and increases susceptibility to worldwide epidemics (Ali & Keil, 2006). Physically bumpy economic growth, farther to concentrated environmental influences, evokes a multifaceted and disputed politics of gamut in airport organization (Stevens, Baker, & Freestone, 2010).

Young and Wells (2019) posited that airports are amongst the largest public amenities and play an important part in affecting the economic, political, and social backdrop of the communities they serve. According to Young and Wells (2019), airport CEOs must undertake the responsibility for leading the airport and having a positive impact to the local economy, providing good relations with the airport's users such as the airlines and the passengers they serve and the surrounding community as well as keeping up the operations of the airport itself. Florida et al. (2015) posit, it is challenging to separate causality amongst airports and economic growth, while airports can add to economic progress by transporting goods and people, airports

also tend to be situated in larger provinces with greater concentrations of economic development, more populace, larger businesses which raises the need for their service industries.

The FAA, through the 14 CFR Part 150, provides information on the Airport Noise Compatibility Planning Toolkit, which implements the FAA Land Use Planning Initiative's proposals. The toolkit is aimed at helping FAA regional offices in supporting state and local officials and interested administrations for airport noise compatibility planning around the nation's airports. Addie (2014) posited that globalization might take off and land on the runways of main airports, but the multifaceted subtleties of the current state of the multidimensional and global network of movements concealed inside worldwide airports resound past the taxiways and terminals of these regional entries. According to Arblaster and Hooper (2015), the formation of regional governing associations is employed to reduce expenses in developing countries. Regional provisions can take the practice of mandatory official, advisory organizations or can be assemblies in which their authorities can impart experience, knowledge and, assets (Arblaster & Hooper, 2015). Methods are mixing international and local proficiency mixed with a phased methodology sanction for research and a steady build-up of human capital and functional capacity (Arblaster & Hooper, 2015). According to Bacot and Christine (2006), acknowledging the sum of primary airports in the U.S. and grasping the significance of these amenities to state and local authorities, and comprehending the management of these local organizations, which deliver important facilities is important given the fiscal and economic significances such bodies play for local districts.

Airport CEO

Fong and Law (2014) opined that amongst many means of travel, air travel continues to be a dominant and unique choice for tourists. As the global travel market grows, so too does air travel. The growth of air travel not only strengthens competition in the airline business but also affects the airport region, which has mainly been overlooked, airports are the first and last connection outlet for the majority of tourists, and play a vital part in the establishment of terminus image and the total travel experience (Fong & Law, 2014). The management of an airport is relevant not only for the airport's workers, and landlords, but also for the accompanying terminus (Fong & Law, 2014).

Yan and Oum (2014) posited that profession matters encourage the director of an airport authority, a not-for-profit unit; a high functioning in overseeing airport operation promotes the labor market's opinion of his skill and interprets it into potential job prospects. According to Wai and Rindermann (2015), one profession at the height of business success is the chief executive officer (CEO) of an establishment, the intellectual trial progression that is the route to becoming a CEO, as well as functioning on the post, is multifaceted, and packed with both specialized and individual encounters. Rivers (1966) compared the job of an airport manager to the manager of a company and posits that to run a medium or large hub airport, the manager must have a mix of training and experience in business administration. According to McNeil (2014), airports were in many locations governed by military or state government control developed to be more commercialized and discerning to the increasing influences of fiscal state properties. Ovidiu (2012) stated that at the majority of airports, the CEO is recognized as the landlord and the executive in charge of airport land and buildings, maintenance, public relations, and planner who

has financial oversight of the operation and capital development at the airport. Clark et al. (2014) discussed the governance and organizational exploration, which proposes that the degree to which the CEO's impact functioning mainly hangs on the existence or lack of particular influences. These influences are the extents of the mission, staffers, the institute itself, or the outside milieu. According to Wai and Rindermann (2015), the route to turning into a CEO can be regarded as a hard mental task.

According to Rivers (1966), an airport manager wears many different hats and is required to be proficient in budgeting, construction, public relations, and serve as the liaison with airlines, airport tenants and, the traveling public. The airport CEO manages the staff, budget, and is responsible for landside, terminal and airside of the airport and leases airport land to airlines, concessionaires and works with FAA and other federal entities, which operate from the airport (Young & Wells, 2019). Most airport passengers arrive via the airport roadway system by taxi, rental car or private vehicle and park their cars in the garage or surface parking facility. The airport roadway and the parking facilities are under the purview of the airport director. The passengers then walk on the sidewalk or moving sidewalks, which are also under the purview of the airport CEO. The passengers then check-in luggage at the terminal area where passengers wait for long periods until the departure time, the terminal facilities are also under the purview of the airport CEO. Passengers then board an aircraft, which is parked on the apron. While the airplane is under the purview of the airlines, the apron is under the purview of the airport CEO. The plane then taxies on a taxiway and takes off from a runway; both the taxiways and runways are under the purview of the airport CEO (Young & Wells, 2019).

Kenville and Smith (2014) posited that airport CEOs face extraordinary political, environmental, and economic burdens such as erratic operations, greater than before due to competition, changing governing concerns, and economic demands. Airport CEOs frequently select to operate with dissimilar markets to their likely competition in the neighboring catchment area to reduce the amount of competition (Adler & Liebert, 2014). According to Ford, Piccolo, and Ford (2017), the leader is also the mission administrator; the individual who conveys the objective of the company and its relationship to the mission. The larger the passenger traffic, the larger the size of the airport (Young & Wells, 2019), and the greater the duties of the CEO. According to Young and Wells (2019), “the size of the airport and the services it offers its tenants and the public play an important part in determining the airport manager’s specific duties” (p. 44). The role of the airport CEO is important as airports handled 849.3 million passengers annually (U.S.DOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2018). According to Pissaris, Weinstein, and Stephan (2010), the CEO is accountable for establishing the general strategic course of the organization and is responsible for how well the institute will operate.

Ford et al. (2017) posit that leaders act as a communication center for facts in and out of the crew to governmental management. Airport CEOs handle a variety of duties and work with various federal agencies such as the FAA, TSA, immigration and customs agencies, the traveling public, as well as the airlines, air cargo entities, airport vendors such as restaurants, shops as well as the state and local officials. According to Adams, Almeida, and Ferreira (2005), some organizations would trust the CEO to make all the main decrees related to the business. According to McGunagle, Button, and Zizka (2013), in today’s worldwide economy, a business's accomplishment can be affected by corporate social responsibility performances they

communicate with their patrons. According to Young and Wells (2019), the airport CEO “directs, coordinates and reviews through subordinate supervisors, all aircraft operations, building, and field maintenance, construction plans, community relations, and financial and personnel matters at the airport” (p. 36). Airport CEOs are in charge of the safety and security of the traveling public from the airport roadway to the parking garages and terminals.

Fong, Xing, Orman, and Mackenzie (2015) conclude that more must be done to scrutinize the value and advantages of straying from a CEO’s established labor marketplace scale. Malul and Shoham (2013) concluded that firms functioning in a less competitive area see a greater worth for higher proficiencies, so they are motivated to hire the most capable managers. Cowen, King, and Marcel (2016) suggest fresh prospects for governance and benefits specialists to tie CEO compensation contracts to key structural results. Wai and Rindermann (2015) posit that higher CEO education and rational aptitude are linked with the higher gross income of the CEO’s corporation. Fong et al. (2015) examined whether under or over funding CEOs distresses long-term firm assessment and if there is losing ground proceeds to these ventures.

Airports

Young and Wells (2019) opined that after World War II, many military airports were declared surplus, and the ownership was turned over to city/ county government with certain restrictive covenants. According to McNeill (2014), while the airport organization was governed by military or state governmental control, that practice is now more commercialized. The National Plan of Airports (today’s NPIAS) was first created in 1944 by the Civil Aeronautics Act to provide funding for the construction and improvements of the airports (Young & Wells, 2019). Jimenez et al. (2014) proposed that airports vie to entice and keep airlines. Airlines can function

in an airport as its hub, a transportation meeting point, station (Burghouwt, 2007). The features of the airport must balance with the necessities of the airline, rendering to the kind of desired process (Jimenez et al., 2014). According to Mosbah and Ryerson (2016), airport-based financial growth bestows various liabilities, such as economic threats, which can upset the entire territory. There are also equity and real estate worth perils, which are parochial since air traffic and airport development create negative effects for populous living adjacent to the airport. Lastly, airport expansion impends the price of homes, which is of central significance for municipalities near an airport endeavoring to stimulate economic growth. According to Jacquillat and Odoni (2018), essential distinctions occur amid busy airports nationally and internationally in three main regards, first the number of runways, runways are the critical driver of ultimate capability at an airport and can range from a single runway to as many as 8. Second, air traffic control procedures and processes significantly control the output that can be attained in peak times by prescribing the separations amongst sequential activities on the same runways, as well as how concurrently operational runways network with one another. Third, demand organization performs which span from mainly unrestricted entry at most airports in the United States to stringent schedule synchronization and slot controls at a countless number of busy airports with subsequent strong controls on flight scheduling designs (Jacquillat & Odoni, 2018).

CDM Smith (2013) opined U.S. commercial airports are valued mechanisms of this country's and the world's transportation systems. According to Arblaster, (2014), airports have a number of lucrative features which are dissimilar, or at least unlike in scale, from other regulated businesses, airports could be subject to some economic impacts comprising of the subsistence of smaller airports, airlines could have counteracting buyer control and possibly non-aviation

competitive amenities may affect the value of aeronautical facilities. According to FAA, (1992) financial findings determined that airports have definite effects on local markets grounded on direct, labor, commodities, facilities, contract services, indirect effects such as auxiliary facilities, such as hotels, rental-car facilities and generated multiplier properties of outlay stemming from direct and indirect consequences. The monetary activity to which airports subsidize locally comprises not only the standard corporate, profitable, and industrial influences to the proximate economy by moving people to and from the region, sales tax creation for the transient customers going through the airport, expansion projects and airport construction but less evident but correspondingly important is the economic influences through large disbursements to local establishments through utility disbursement. Bacot and Christine (2006) posited that airport management delivers important economic influences to local populations and their immediate constituency. According to Ensign (2014), airports can generate distinct economic recompenses for the areas they accommodate and significantly help industries within those areas. The financial activities created by repetitive undertakings, such as the functions of air carriers, concessionaires, and leaseholders situated on airport land, with tourist spending by travelers, direct and indirect employment and earnings, as well as income produced for local taxing authorities and capital improvement developments (Ensign, 2014).

Vasigh, Erfani, and Sherman (2015) posited that the production and proficiency of airports are contingent on market control, regulatory governance, and competitive settings in which the airports' function. According to Yan and Oum (2014), the policy formulation of an airport that is controlled as a local government division is shaped by numerous milieu.

Cataloging of airports indicates that they are mostly centered on the size of airports, geographic

location, service function, kind of traffic, operation and technical features, ownership, and system locus (Adikariwattage et al. 2012). The aviation commerce is extremely regulated but, each airport can easily choose how to function in the marketplace, the consequence of precise regulation on quality could steer to a better insight from the traveler's standpoint (Suárez-Alemán & Jiménez, 2016).

In 2018 the airlines had a combined operating profit of \$21.6 billion (U.S.DOT FAA data & research statistics, 2018), and commercial airports produced an annual output of \$1.1 trillion (CDM Smith, 2013), which makes the airports as a whole an economic engine. Numerous variables that are outside managerial controls influence productivity, airport types such as hub standing or traffic assembly, regulatory practices, and ownership configuration all can impact airport productivity (Adler & Liebert, 2014). According to Clark et al. (2014), a central exigency that has received slight pragmatic consideration is the establishment's proprietorship and authority configuration, and how distinctive proprietorship and authority configurations can restrain leaders impact and assess the degree to which CEO influence financial functioning. Kasarda (2012) scrutinized that airports signify a new standard of local economic growth and are one of the biggest investments a municipality can make and serve a significant function in linking the locations they serve to the global economy. Airports have an authoritative part in growing the connectivity of domestic regions, both within and worldwide; airports are the catalysts of globalization (McNeill, 2014). Airlines are for-profit entities that lease space from airports and operate at airports in exchange for tariffs known as rates and charges for the use of airfields, aprons, and gates and both exclusive and not exclusive terminal and cargo areas (Young & Wells, 2019). The fees charged by airports differ from one airport to the next. According to

Dobruszkes, Givoni, and Vowles (2017), the airlines choose which airports to serve, which is a fundamental stake in any business model since it affects operating costs, amongst other factors.

Airports facilitate the handling and processing of the passengers and their visitors and employees within the airport's landside roadway access, parking, terminal, and airside areas.

Airports are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the operating components such as terminals, runways, and airport roadways, and parking garages (Young & Wells, 2019).

According to Kutlu and McCarthy (2016), the type of proprietorship has expenditure proficiency inferences in certain settings. Crucke et al. (2015) conclude that board governance and progress actions are vital for accomplishing a shared idea on the objectives of the organization, and the possible negative properties of subgroup establishment must be decreased. Since airports are a subgroup of municipalities, the board of commissioners drives their missions. Airport management is responsible for passengers, airlines, airport staff, concessionaires, shops and restaurants, federal employees that work at the airport, the hotel and taxi industry, and much more (Young & Wells, 2019). According to Ensign (2014), the layout of airports situates them at a local transportation intersection with neighboring rail lines and highway. Airports generate exceptional occasions for the growth of intermodal, aviation-focused commerce in what turns out to be identified as an aerotropolis wherever the viable growth of a constituency transpires with the airport as the chief center for commerce (Ensign, 2014). Primary commercial airports are the main subjects of this study, which fall under the FAA's NPIAS. According to Bacot and Christine (2006), airports that receive federal funding need to observe and follow FAA compliance directives. All airports included in the NPIAS are subject to numerous FARs that are in Title 14 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations (Young & Wells, 2019).

Francis, Humphreys, and Fry (2002) scrutinized how airport managers were using benchmarking as a method of in-house functioning evaluation and progress. Benchmarking is a method to improve functioning, which is critical since airports encounter challenges in this area. The goal of benchmarking is to examine external arenas and learn from best perform and then apply it to the business. According to Haskel, Iozzi, and Valletti (2013), market configurations (i.e., low-cost airlines) have boosted competition even in crowded airports where external system factors are significant. Suárez-Alemán and Jiménez (2016) posit that traveler contentment has developed to be an essential aspect of the operation of an airport. Airports are individually run and operated by local governments. The local government hires the CEO, and the airport is treated similarly to other municipal departments within the jurisdiction. The Airport CEO is a public servant that wears many hats. The majority of times, airports CEOs report to a city/county manager and board of commissioners. Kutlu and McCarthy (2016) conclude that not all commercial, public airports are correspondingly proficient. According to Arblaster and Hooper (2015), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) upholds that all authorities are accountable for protecting consumers from the exploitation of market control, and these governments need to create suitable regulatory provisions. Even so, the financial regulation is challenging, it comprises risk of miscarriage, it can be expensive, and careful evaluation may propose that premises of significant market influence are not maintained by the specifics (Arblaster & Hooper, 2015). Emerging countries, face trials in delivering essential financial and competent human resources for their governing powers, but such regulation also has to function in a sub-ideal system (Arblaster & Hooper, 2015).

The FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport System

The particular statutory requirements of the legislation creating a regulatory organization are perhaps less significant than the overall direction of a group regarding law itself, cultures where the decree of law is steadfastly inaugurated, are groups where organizations function more autonomously from politics (Hanretty & Koop, 2013). The FAA, under the United States Department Of Transportation, has oversight of civil aviation. FAA's main mission is to oversee the safety of civil aviation through rules and regulations that govern ratings and certifications of pilots, certification of airports, and funding of airport improvement projects as well as, running the air traffic control system (towers) and navigational equipment (Young & Wells, 2019, P.9). According to Young and Wells (2019), the National Plan of Integrated Airport System (NPIAS) is a plan that recognizes public-use airports that are important to the community's need, and the plan categorizes the airports based on the number of passenger boarding and the kind of facility offered. The FAA is the responsible agency for putting together the NPIAS. The NPIAS is put together by local FAA offices working in union with the local airports (Young & Wells, 2019). The plan mainly identifies projects needed at each airport that qualify for federal grant funds (Young & Wells, 2019). FAA's local offices, also known as district offices, report to FAA regional offices and the regional offices report to FAA headquarters. The FAA offices are decentralized and are responsible for the interpretation and application of the federal guidelines and distribution of federal funds.

FAR's and Orders

According to Davis (2018), legal organizations are the establishment that publicizes, administer, or impose standards are among the organizational units that function at multiple

levels and has law-making groups at more than one level. Rhor (1989) determined the law as a representation of standards and denotes regime value as the central political command founded by the constitution. The value of a regime is the standards or high quality of products or services that the American governmental system is intended to protect (Rhor, 1989). In the United States, commercial service airports are owned and operated by the local government, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under the Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) part 139 certifies most public-use airport and is the governing authority of civil aviation. The FAA's Headquarters is accountable for the formation of standards when it comes to planning, design, constructions, environmental review, and operation of the airport system nationally (FAA, 2008). All airports included in the NPIAS are subject to numerous FARs that are in Title 14 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations (Young & Wells, 2019, P.20-21). There are over 100 chapters in 14 CFR, which are identified as parts, and each part provides regulatory directives that oversee different components of civil aviation such as regulation for pilots and airport environmental policies, planning, noise and, funding. In addition to the 14 CFR series, title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulation that covers the security of airports and civil aviation. Furthermore, the FAA also provides Advisory Circulars to assist airport managers in how to apply procedures ordered in the CFRs. This author reviewed the CFRs and, currently, there are no federal guidelines for the hiring of airport CEOs to establish uniformity in the hiring process.

The FAA endeavors to support a safe airport environment, effective relationships, and proper use of funds (FAA, 2008) yet, the FAA governing rules and regulations (Federal Aviation Regulation, FAR's) do not identify qualifications for airport CEOs. The FAA heavily regulates airlines, and airline pilots (14 CFR part 61) require pilot licenses/ certifications to operate. These

licenses also require annual renewal. Airlines also must comply with FAA regulations for aircraft certifications regularly; even aircraft maintenance checks must go through and pass rigorous FAA guidelines. Airport CEOs are hired by local government agencies and do not have a set of qualification standards. Airport CEOs handle a much larger number of passengers at their respective airports as compared to the number of passengers handled by each pilot. Airports must pass FAA certifications; however, there are no set guidelines for the airport manager's qualifications.

Safety

According to Enoma et al. (2009), airport safety necessitates an organized style amongst the numerous interest factions and the government as well as the patrons and employees. Lawrenson and Braithwaite (2018) opined society guards itself within its legal procedures, those regulating safety, and risk management is obligated to establish efficacy to be considered trustworthy, these criteria reveal degrees of public acceptance, usually of individual comportment but progressively of organizational or company conduct. A legal procedure is demarcated as a standard of comportment, which is the standard for its business division (Lawrenson & Braithwaite, 2018). A violation of the procedures may comprise of organizations, which attain minimum governing standards but after a fatal mishap are discovered to fall below the standards of reasonable acceptance of its citizens or the criminal justice system because of the propensity to administer a range rather than administer a risk decline (Tombs, 2014). Hopkins (2016) warns that an insufficient definition of safety philosophy could support the promotion of business' acceptable forms of the notion of safety philosophy or governmental explanation of accident causality. National aviation experts evaluate their safety philosophy that acclimates to

the specific traits of the country and its national and legal atmosphere (Lawrenson & Braithwaite, 2018). According to Kim and Jeong (2016), as the officials can establish improvement in a singular authority, then national social conduct are tailored into the regulatory assembly by delivering a yardstick within domestic ideals. Airports take positive actions to explain operative weakness through *modus operandi*, responsiveness, airport foundation, education, clarification, coaching, and expertise (Enoma et al., 2009).

Sunstein (2013) discusses the presidential order of January 18, 2011, following the Gulf of Mexico blowout promoting the implementation of safety case directive and points that any organization supporting new regulation needs to validate the regulation exercising cost-benefit scrutiny, although cost-benefit analysis might not always be instantly quantified and requires to be deliberated qualitatively. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was established in November 2001 to tackle concerns regarding airport security after the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington D.C. on September 11, 2001 (Young & Wells, 2019). The TSA is under the purview of the Department of Homeland Security that organizes the work of numerous organizations accountable for guarding the nation's homeland. These organizations include Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Secret Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Coast Guard, and the TSA (Young & Wells, 2019) but not the FAA. Up to 2001, there was no quantified need for the establishment of the agency. To fund the TSA, the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) of 2001 sanctioned a surcharge on air carrier customer ticket of \$2.50 per flight fragment, with a maximum fee of \$10 per round trip (Young & Wells, 2019). Another federal agency known as the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) establishes the reason or likely basis of transportation

accidents; and reconsiders on appeal the suspension, modification, revision, cancellation, or rejection of any certificate or license dispensed by the secretary of transportation or by an administrator (Young & Wells, 2019) such as an FAA airport license or a pilot license. NTSB, FAA and, TSA guidelines do not address national standardization of hiring practices of CEOs within commercial airports.

According to Reader and O'Connor (2014), the universal environment of various high-risk activities denotes that safety culture valuations are progressively directed at a global level. Hofstede (2010) opined that safety culture inside an association is perhaps guided by domestic cultural propensities to circumvent the concern triggered by perilous and vague circumstances. According to Noort, Reader, Shorrocks, and Kirwan (2016), the connection between domestic culture and safety philosophy has been given rather little consideration. It is necessary to postulate how domestic culture may impact safety philosophy and to deliberate inferences of this for safety culture valuation (Noort et al., 2016). According to Lawrenson and Braithwaite (2018), the causal role of safety culture in a number of high profile accidents depict that the calamity account or ensuing criminal analysis, has acknowledged one or more characteristics of safety philosophy as a causal influence. Many of the reports made definite mentions to operating, company, organizational, and safety philosophy, while further reports defined the tenets and approach comparable to the broader meaning of safety philosophy (Lawrenson & Braithwaite, 2018).

Hudson (2014) effectively emphasized the possible harm that delinquency instigates to exposing safety. Hudson (2014) espoused an explanatory interpretation of the purpose of law and highlighted a succession of unacceptable actions without any seeming mens rea (plan or

knowledge of a misconduct that composes portion of a crime, as opposed to the deed or comportment of the respondent) of the offender worker blamed of criminal action after a catastrophe. According to Lawrenson and Braithwaite (2018), an explanatory view of the law of regulating safety philosophy would mandate a flawless and ideal description, intended to increase safety enactment, anything less would be reprehensible as revelatory legal principles are determined by moral values regarding the possible loss of a person's life. The effectiveness of safety philosophy as a legal idea, the legal strength is possibly emphasized by the lack of a definite description or unified policy that would enable conventional regulatory methods (Lawrenson & Braithwaite, 2018). In multifaceted structures such as commercial aviation, cause, and effect are neither balanced nor innate (Hollnagel, 2014).

Corporate Social Responsibility

According to Zhu, Sun, and Leung (2014), from the patrons' point of view, ethical leaders enjoy the art of constructing and supporting good associations with all pertinent patrons. Their affiliations are linked within a collective appreciation of significance and commitment, which generates motivations to inspire dutiful partnership, increase stimulus, and obligation for attaining maintainable and accountable modification to internal and external customers of the institute. Carroll (2015) posited that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) signifies the entirety of "economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (p. 36). According to McGunagle et al. (2016), CSR is an idea, whereby establishments assimilate social and environmental interests in their occupational procedures and their communications with their patrons on a deliberate footing, the FAA through their advisory circulars, which is not regulatory in nature, can communicate and set guidelines for the airport

manager's qualifications. Drucker et al. (2015) opined that an important social responsibility for the executive is the affiliation of the industry and government; the correlation to government stems from what businesses do or fail to do. According to Hopkins (2015), due to international businesses and a toughening of social outlooks concerning business malfeasance, legal organizations have tailored notions of company accountability to come to terms with public expectations.

Colley, Morehead, and Perkins (2015) pronounced that ethics is fundamental in commercial and government, each has more than an economic effect on people; they are obligated to emphasize on both economic and public accountabilities and the community. People are concerned not only about revenues/losses in the industry but also consumer care, constancy, confidence, and responsibility (Colley et al., 2015). The FAA, through the establishment of a set of guidelines for the airport manager's qualifications, will set constancy in the hiring of the airport CEOs and will have acted responsibly in their role as the governing entity for civil aviation. Lawrenson and Braithwaite (2018) opined the developing likelihood of the business as a constituent, admits, or even urges the burden of larger social responsibilities. According to Murphy (2009), responsibility relates to a unit's aptitude for replying to an individual, state of affairs, or concern in a positive manner. The power-responsibility balance addresses the accountabilities of large establishments; it asserts that once authority and responsibility are out of equilibrium, powers (typically) government regulation will get them into stability (Davis. 1980).

Public Sector

According to Davis (2018), countless rationalizations for multilevel control assume that it is likely for many types of stakeholders to evaluate the functioning of different governmental

entities, whether those patrons are constituencies, residents, stockholders, or administrators in higher levels of government, without access to functioning processes, none of those shareholders will be able to impact the administration executives positively. Wiesel and Modell (2014) opined that the idea of public authority is indefinable and has been theorized in an assortment of methods by researchers espousing narrower or broader descriptions of this fact. According to Schragger (2017), there are numerous causes of citizen discontent with conventional politics, such as immigration, terrorism, and economic sluggishness. The additional effect is the failure of the nation's leaders and distant government administrations to deliver applicable reactions to the economic and social disorders triggered by the worldwide market economy (Schragger, 2017). According to Yan and Oum (2014), the delivery of public goods by the local administrations is deduced as a budget restraint. A local administration first chooses the independent quantities of public facilities such as transportations and public services; next, the budget and staff involvements are commissioned by the local administration to realize the goal levels (Yan and Oum, 2014). The price of delivering public commodities is influenced by influences such as sources of capital, competition and examining constituencies, and federal or regionalized public sponsorship and functional provisions (Yan & Oum, 2014).

According to Kim and Yoon (2015), many systems of public administration performs have been implemented by the local administration to improve the characteristic of public facilities and responsibility through management for results, human resources administration restructurings, and the decentralization of accountabilities to executives. The substantial necessity and request for governmental change and modernization in local authority has been intensified by the trials of globalization, decentralization, and increased civilian expectations

(Kim & Yoon, 2015). Non-profit institutes battle with being everything to the entire public; if an institute does not have the properties or qualifications to function with their existing customers, then they should not be in business (Clark, 2012). According to Amdam (2014), innovation modifies in thinking, commodities, procedures, and institute, and there is a necessity to cultivate a system of improvement in the public sector. Expansive innovation calls attention to the effect of public sector production, and municipal district constituents need to work in partnership to achieve societal necessities and public subdivision principles and operations (Amdam, 2014). In the United States Confidence in local government has been rather unwavering in the past years (Weinschenk & Helpap, 2015). According to Knatz (2017), decentralized governing of ports denotes that the leading local organizations make monies to benefit the economic growth of their province, competing against other districts. Regionalized control could be substituted by a new unified provincial or state administration jurisdiction as a method for ports to subsist. Airports are similar to ports since their operation includes the passage of public and cargo.

Michaels (2018) questions in what way a government entity must be both regulatory and profitable and provides examples of the duo and contradictory standing as a federal rulemaking body and moneymaking revenue-generating entity, Michaels' examples can be applied to the relationship between the FAA's rulemaking task and the airports' revenue generation task. Haskel et al. (2013) stated that in the last twenty years, competition has increased amongst airports those report to the revenue generation. According to Holcombe (2013), economic guidelines issues frequently split by pro-business and pro-government lines, Holcombe (2013) argued that crony capitalism is instigated by government engagement in the economy, and further government participation makes the setback critical. Michaels (2018) identifies the need for fundamental

regulatory intervention, whereas Fontana (2018) theorizes that federal regionalization safeguards that federal bureaucrats in Washington strive with and restrain one another. While all state associations might favor the proficiency that derives from policy delegation, voter legislatures obligate particularly robust reasons to pass imprecise legislation, launching the common objectives and the purpose of the regulation, although trusting knowledgeable bureaucrats to supply in specifics through rule formulation (Boushey and McGrath, 2017).

While the decentralized system of airports has been in existence in the past century, there is no evidence as to the reason why the FAA chose to exclude commercial airport CEO qualification from the long list of federal rules and regulations as it relates to the airports. Jimenez et al. (2014) study concluded that the elaboration of competing policies must be based on the appropriate interpretation of the interface amongst various stakeholders and the corporate tactics selected by airport managers. Airport CEOs are not autonomous and are controlled by regional bodies (Young & Wells, 2019). Crucke et al. (2015) attempted to integrate a key encounter of mixed organizational methods and undertook the authority trial in mixed organizational systems by contemplating board subtleties within the paradigm of internal depiction and concluded that the probable unfavorable effects of subgroup progress would be decreased. Burns (2010) and Peters (2015) documented the political environment of the public district, accentuating the divergence in agency authority by managers, which is swayed by the present-day political environment and philosophy, and noted that authority inefficiencies cannot be limited to policymaking by a single individual, rather by obstruction by folks who are in the positions of power. According to Sirisetti (2011), proficiency denotes the set of comportment configurations that an official needs to convey to a situation to achieve its duties and roles

proficiency, particular proficiencies, specified comprehension, demands and qualities that are contemplated to be significant in performing chores to the needed criteria reinforce proficiencies. Training and skills improvement of the existing crop of upcoming public sector executives is particularly significant because public administrations have conventionally focused on developing executives who can function in a setting directed by particular procedures and methods.

Leadership

Leadership denotes to the actual practice of control in causing attitude or social adjustment (Pierro et al., 2013). According to Baccini, Li, Mirkina, and Johnson (2018), there is an association between the types of current political leaders and their policy views. According to Wright, and Pandey (2010), there are undeniable and negative claims regarding the significance of leadership in municipal governments; transformational leaders are expected to be less common and less pertinent in public district than in private sector because the public sector is influenced by more rigid methods of control. Wallach (2017) opined administrative development and education is fundamental for businesses as it is professed as one of the most significant resources of sustainable competitive improvement as well as a vital component of advancement and corporate functioning. Leadership has been classified as a significant element in organizational success in institutes (Wallach, 2017). Leadership is defined as the aptitude of a person to impact, encourage, and empower others to play a part concerning the success and accomplishment of the establishments of which they are affiliates (Chnokar, Brodbeck, and House, 2009; Girard, Brizzi, Drake, Graham, Kosmider, & Lloyd, 2014). Drucker (2011) determined that the chief drive of all business groups and the bases and justification for all

methods of managerial power is to construct the human situation safer, more acceptable, and more industrious. Van Wart (2013) described leadership as a multifaceted set of practices that are challenging to achieve effectively. According to Caulfield (2013), “the purpose of leadership is to achieve and sustain true narratives that teach us how to make a life” (p.275). Leadership is continuously fluctuating due to new circumstances and theories and trepidations by different views (Van Wart, 2013).

Othman and Abdul Rahman (2014) opined that leadership in relation to control of a business is defined as effectiveness, rectitude, accountability, transparency, and culpability. Levine and Boaks (2014) argued that good governance is seldom seen as an inherent or even unexpected combination following and attaining objectives that are both ethically virtuous and operative; more accurately, it is concerning being successful in search of aspirations and goals that one supports mainly for their supposed values. According to Detjen and Webber (2017), effective leadership is the utmost respected of all human accomplishments; to be identified as an effective leader is a great honor. The arena of public administration has highlighted the important function of leadership in the framework of government functioning, modernization, and public administration reorganization appointments (Kim & Yoon, 2015). According to Ford, Piccolo, and Ford (2017), robust team managers ensure they concentrate on the technicalities of the team’s effort; they concentrate on the human necessities of staff by emboldening ambitious performance, and the self-value desired to continue challenging assignments. Leaders stimulate affiliate’s identity, institute group objectives, and concentrate on associate’s needs, mitigate disagreements, and improve teamwork (Ford et al., 2017).

Ljungholm, (2014) opined the trepidation of leadership progress in public administration is on crossing governmental, jurisdictional, and branch boundaries as a fragment of public management and governance. Giraudou and Mclarney (2014) discoursed that public organizations and government policies yield what is important to the public, and they are obligated to meet their goal to convey usefulness to the population they assist. According to Moynihan and Ingraham (2004), in the public arena, the leaders have inadequate control. Raelin (2005) posited that these leaders collaborate in a dependent and independent style. Bryson and Roering (1988) stated that in public organizations because of demands for public responsibility, determinations are built at the uppermost level. According to Lemay (2009), different leaders interrelate corresponding at diverse levels of the exercise of leadership. While the significance of leadership has been extensively acknowledged in the public administration writing (Fernandez 2005; Moynihan and Ingraham 2004; Van Wart 2013), very little has been discussed in the relationships of airport CEOs and how it contributes to the national airport system in the United States. Behn (1998) posited that leadership by public managers is essential since the legislative office of government provides public organizations tasks that are ambiguous and incompatible and frequently fail to offer sufficient capital to follow the federal guidelines thoroughly. Public authorities are regularly reluctant to apply public policies, particularly when these strategies concentrate on business standards (Tummers, Vermeeren, Steijn, & Bekkers, 2012).

The dominant belief of governing is that elected officials keep administrators accountable for functioning, most recently pushing organizational changes in how governments are structured (Giraudou & Mclarney, 2014). These changes suggest a reason for personalized accountability for government leaders to use performance processes to keep the public administrators more

responsible for outcomes (Nielsen & Moynihan, 2017; Rotberg, 2014). The ability of governments to devise systems and guidelines is critical for nations' economic growth and citizens' safety; it is the administration that produces regulations for the marketplace to function effectively and that delivers the maximum of the public commodities and structure (Bartolini & Santolini, 2017). Reid, Brown, McNerney, and Perri (2014) argued that attaining outcome processes necessitated by stakeholders presents challenges for non-profit administrations, non-profit success is understood in terms of achieving a mission instead of an emphasis on profit. According to (Bartolini & Santolini, 2017), a disseminated leadership viewpoint embraces the possibility for better comprehending the intricacy of the circumstances, the volatility of the precincts, and the assortment and concentrated powers involved in public arrangement leadership. Bennis and Thomas (2002) are persuaded that one of the utmost unfailing displays and forecasters of actual leadership is a person's knack to find sense in adverse incidents and to ascertain from the most difficult of situations, the abilities needed to overcome hardship and arise sounder from the occurrence are the same ones that make a great leader. According to Sirisetti (2011), one important certainty is that if developing countries are to grow in their pursuit of excellence, it is significant to have a methodical strategy to grow public sector governance to strike a synergistic equilibrium between all conflicting objectives in a modernizing economy.

According to Osula and Ng (2014), leadership is an essential element of public capability, which is significant to social modification. Due to its community function, non-profits are generally held by a community district board of governors as a product of dissemination of power and liability (Osula & Ng, 2014). Osterman (2011), argued that the implementation of certain in-house workforce perform the product of political competition in administrations in

which clusters support for rules that are in their best interest. The influence of these factions is formed by their influence in the organization, and by the desires of the business and its spirited setting, and also by properties, governing and legal, that is delivered by the external milieu (Osterman, 2018). According to Zhang, Fadil, and Baynard (2013), a unit's governance is perceived as the entity that empowers the boards of directors to institute power over administration to warrant justifiable formation of enduring worth for the business; the board is accountable for directing top managers and regularly stipulating strategic guidance, whereas CEOs are accountable for the daily function of commerce. Bennis and Thomas (2002) debated that the aptitude for learning is an essential trait of a person, and the capability to remain learned is an important aptitude of leaders, real knowledge is the outcome of time, practice, work, education, contribution, attaining victory, and most significantly, facing hindrances and actual failure. The power to be a manager is the product of preparation, time on the post, enduring the test of both minor and major fiascoes, and the forte to abstract both knowledge and skills from these occurrences (Bennis & Thomas, 2002).

Public Service Incentive

Wiesel and Modell (2014) hypothesized that over the previous decade, the importance in the texts on public administration reorganizations has progressively transformed from concentrating on the management of individual governments to far-reaching involvements with the governance of complicated systems of service providers. This occurrence has been defined as a move from the New Public Organization to New public Authority, indicating a relatively basic transformation in reform philosophy throughout a number of countries (Wiesel & Modell, 2014). Michaels (2018) posits that federal, state, and municipal governments are widespread and

progressively uncompromising market members and cutting-edge CEOs disembark on the political platform insistent on running government similar to a business. Separation within organizations, although not profoundly embedded in our constitutional philosophy, guarantees that administrative control is not combined and separated (Michaels, 2018). Clark et al. (2014) posited that a manager matters highest when proprietorship and authority assembly matches with an inadequate or vague organizational logic. Boushey and McGrath (2017) determine that worn down legislative/executive equilibrium should steer to bigger governmental guidance in policy improvement. While the FAA constantly improves upon the existing policies in place, it has not put in place a policy to delineate the credentials of the commercial airport CEOs and have left the task of individual hiring with the individual municipalities.

Elected politicians have solid motivations to assign policy-formulating power to governmental authorities, particularly when lawmakers encounter opacity in the proposal, amount, and possible consequences of policy modification (MacDonald & Franko, 2007; McGrath 2013). Wiesel and Modell (2014) conjectured that the propensity to conceive of citizens and recipients of public facilities as customers, whereas earlier public management reorganizations often associated such fluctuations with the proficiency of recipients to carry out options under viable market settings, the notion of public area consumerism has since increased to undertake broader values and does not essentially necessitate the continuation of market-like provisions. Statutory law entrusts on the dissemination of controls with various entities in diverse institutes to yield many necessary functional properties, checks and balances, responsibility, and efficient administration (Fontana, 2018). According to Mahdavi and Westerlund (2017), the U.S. structure of economic federalism has seen a progression of tunneling some federal obligations to

the state and local authorities. In a propensity score matching analysis of metros, Florida et al. (2015) posit the susceptibility score of metros with airports and metros deprived of airports implies that metros which have airports achieve economically better than metros with related prerequisites and assemblies that do not have an airport. Holcombe (2013) argued that the federal government gets involved in economic performances, but that is an economist's job and not the government's. Bacot and Christine (2006) concluded that airport authorities have a tiny slice of special-purpose government, and their huge debt volume is the outcome of its massive revenue generation and, they should be removed from the examination of local special-purpose government issues and strategies concerning financial and fiscal concerns.

According to Wiesel and Modell (2014), the shift from public administration to public management involved fluctuations in the formation of citizen interests from those of voters or with well-described constitutional privileges and responsibilities to those of clients or customers easily selecting service suppliers to fulfill their needs and penchants, such emergent philosophies of consumerism were often reinforced by reform programmers intended at substantial deregulation as a methods of cultivating the economic functioning of the public division. Wiesel and Modell (2014) opined that deregulation indicates a move in legislative penchants whereby concerns with economic enhancements, voiced to enhanced efficiency, take priority over the more conventional functions of public organizations in realizing citizen's amenability with the regulation. According to Sirisetti (2011), successful leadership is essential to directorial triumph. Effective managers generate positive structural values, reinforce provocation, and explain the assignment and managerial goals, and direct establishments to more dynamic and high functioning consequences. Michaels (2018) opined the government contribution environment is a

tense and absolute trial of legal and statutory law trepidations, normative queries surrounding correct pricing and appraisal, economic issues of marketplace competition and malfunction, and architectural inquiries of commercial and official governmental enterprise. The outlines expose a concurrently socialistic and capitalist administration performing unscrupulously, out of some actual or apparent need, in reaction to particular governing gap or inadequacy, or as a result of some path-dependent mishap of past (Michaels, 2018).

The Decentralized system of Airports

Drucker et al. (2015) opined that when an entity can be established as a business, no policy standard could equal federal decentralization. Replicated decentralization arranges organizational components that are not businesses but are nevertheless established as though they were companies with fully achievable self-government, with their own administration, and with at least a model of profit and loss accountability (Drucker et al., 2015). According to Jimenez et al. (2014), airports are public organizations and have a modest possibility to grow.

Municipalities, port authorities, or airport authorities run the airports in the United States. Bacot and Christine (2006) examined the consequences of keeping airport authorities in analyses on special-purpose governments and determined that airport authorities do not track nor operate the orthodox form of special-purpose governments. Locally run airports can be deemed eligible to receive FAA funding for improvements if the airport is identified in the FAA's NPIAS (Young & Wells, 2019, P.9). The grant funds are derived from excise taxes of aviation fuel and aircraft tires.

The commercial service airports' budgeting and financials are categorized as enterprise funds, which means they are self-sustaining and do not tap into local taxes. The revenues at the airport pay the airport manager's salary and the entire airport staff along with airport projects, in

addition to federal and state aviation grants, Passenger Facility Charges (PFC) and capital bonds are utilized to cover any funding shortage. According to Arblaster (2014), the unique characteristics of airports also suggest that the management of conventional regulation comprising direct regulations on prices has obvious challenges. Malul and Shoham (2013) built a model in which the purpose of reparation hangs on three elements: the CEO's abilities, the level of opposition in the division, and the proprietorship assembly of the company. A high level of indecision in CEO reliance implies a high possibility that board influence over the CEO is established on a figurative level, while a low level of doubt in board reliance proposes CEO control over the board (Malul & Shoham, 2013).

Rodríguez-Déniz, Suau-Sanchez, and Voltes-Dorta (2013) estimated \$42.5 billion of FAA grants to fund airport infrastructure between 2013 and 2017. In the NPIAS investment needs, subsidy precedence is established according to a typology centered on each airport's commerce share over total U.S. passenger aircraft boarding (Rodríguez-Déniz et al., 2013). The remaining needs for maintenance and improvement of airports are derived from airport revenue bonds. The operating budget of an airport relies on fees and charges such as landing fees, concession revenues, leases (that are restricted by the FAA) as well as state grants.

According to Young and Wells (2019), airport CEOs are either appointed to the post or are civil service employees of a local government and states, "the best college program to follow is one that leads to a degree in aviation management" (p.45). Each airport runs autonomously and follows the rules, regulations, and policies of the individual municipality as well as basic regulations as assigned by the FAA, TSA, and EPA. According to Jimenez et al. (2014), airports are public organizations and have a modest possibility to grow. The modernism of the air

transport marketplace around the world has presented new subtleties to the airport business. Local government land use can hamper the future growth and development of airports.

The decentralized systems of airports have a unique organizational structure, yet the airport customers expect a certain level of a cohesive system as they travel from one airport to the next. Freestone (2012) posited that the airport zone and local planning methods have managed to be politically confined, functionally disjointed, and frequently diverged. There is a notable union in the central sorts of planning problems encountered, and Freestone concluded the need for the concerted methodology for regional airport planning and recommends a new method to convey airport planning, municipal and county planning, and corporate planning in a cooperative way. Freestone (2012) concludes that a new method is essential in bringing together airport planning and site planning in a collaborative way so that progress will be more economically effective. Suárez-Alemán and Jiménez (2016) study supports more focus on the market and requires further study to examine the effect of more comprehensive management and regulatory structures. The airports serve as a national system for the movement of passengers and cargo (Young & Wells 2019). The federal government heavily regulates the aviation industry. There is currently no federal/ national standard model to measure the capabilities of the large, medium, and small hub airport directors. Insufficiency of qualifying criteria for the hiring of commercial airport CEO's in the U.S. is a fuzzy stoic approach. Mosbah and Ryerson (2016) posit that growing and upgrading an airport can swing business growth intra-regionally or inter-regionally instead of sparing new improvement. Since airlines are private entities run by private corporations and regulated by the federal government, airport economic growth is directly dependent on the airlines that operate from the airports.

Accountability

According to Weinschenk and Helpap (2015), while examining political trust in the administration, the government can be categorized as rule makers, elected administrators, or bureaucrats in the federal regime. Patil, Tetlock, and Mellers (2017) posit arbitration and decision-making intellectuals are cynical of the importance of holding individuals responsible for outcomes while concurrently adopting the qualities of being responsible for the course of action (Chang, Atanasov, Patil, Mellers, & Tetlock, 2017). According to Weinschenk and Helpap (2015), throughout the 1960s the American public conveyed 70 percent trust in the federal government and, that number has declined to less than 20% in recent years, on the other hand, the trust that the public has conveyed for state and local government has increased drastically. Elected bureaucrats, such as members of Congress, know how to gain trust once they perform in a truthful and principled style in the domain of a public or private setting (Schieberl & Nickles, 2013). An element in attaining the nations' trust is the society's confidence that the government is sensitive to their needs (Weinschenk & Helpap, 2015). According to Marien and Hooghe (2011), "political trust also has a direct effect on the capability of government systems to fulfill their basic tasks toward the population" (p.283).

The decentralized system of airports may be the result of the level of public trust or lack thereof placed on federal vs. local government. Trust and accountability go hand in hand. According to Chang et al. (2017), accountability is not an absolute good, the framework in which responsibility occurs signifies to whether it advances the adjudications of those who should live under the present government's guidelines. Detjen and Webber (2017) opined that organizational management responsibility is the implementation of governance accountability from one to

many; it comprises accountability for establishing a course. Gilpin, Palazzolo, and Brody (2010) described accountability as associated with the organization's engagements of presenting their data for public analysis, and Rawlins (2009) posited that organizational accountability stipulates the needed evidence to make educated choices. Detjen and Webber (2017), described responsibilities as those characteristics of a position that order the articles that the CEO is mandated to perform by virtue of the function, victory in carrying out the missions for who is accountable will usually indicate positive acknowledgment from the party who has authorized the role.

According to Chang et al. (2017), the framework of accountability signifies how industries respond to being accountable for their choices and decisions. Miller and Sinclair (2009) concluded that accountability correlates to the organizational obligation for actions, inducted by public rules or regulation. Hanretty and Koop (2013) opined that by allocating to regulatory organizations, politicians not only choose on the abilities of these administrations but correspondingly on the level to which these skills can be implemented autonomously from politics. In dynamic settings, folks need to change amongst complying with regular performs in periods of constancy and diverging during periods of adjustment (Bigley & Roberts, 2001). According to Auger (2014), accountability is a term often established in dialogues of candidness and frequently related to financial accountability. Accountability is postulating the substantiation behind resolutions and deed (Auger, 2014).

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are

pursued at major commercial airports. This study proposed a comprehensive picture of the shortcomings of the present system, which lack federal standards. Suárez-Alemán and Jiménez (2016) study supports more focus on the market and requires further study to examine the effect of more comprehensive management and regulatory structures. Gifford and Kudrle (2017) conclude that market functioning will mainly work on the control provided by the low-cost carriers and their backing by legal authority. The FAA is the legal authority and, the FAA regulates low-cost carriers; it only makes sense that the airport managers who are running the airports, which the airlines operate from, also be regulated by the same federal agency.

According to Auger (2014), trust is grounded in belief and opportunities, which comprise those linked to the organizational capability to direct business or deliver a service or outcome. The main concept that this author used is in this study is the decentralized system of U.S. airports and the regionalized hiring of airport CEOs.

Gwyn (2011) identifies leadership skills in two groups; hard skills are technical proficiencies that are mainly education or renowned certification plans that deliver the simple information for becoming an effective airport manager, and soft skills are personality qualities and comportments that are also essential to being a successful leader. Hard skills can be acquired, while soft skills are established through practice (Gwyn, 2011). The guiding conceptual framework of the study is to combine competency with the concept of job analysis. Leading an organization incorporates the undertaking of making decisions by organization leaders.

Individual municipally run airport CEOs reporting to local government leaders does not allow the act of decision making by the CEO. Miller and Sinclair (2009) concluded that accountability correlates to the organizational obligation for actions, inducted by public rules or regulation.

Hanretty and Koop (2013) opined that by allocating to regulatory organizations, politicians not only choose on the abilities of these administrations but correspondingly on the level to which these skills can be implemented autonomously from politics.

According to Lawrenson and Braithwaite (2018), an explanatory view of the law of regulating safety philosophy would mandate a flawless and ideal description, intended to increase safety enactment, anything less would be reprehensible as revelatory legal principles are determined by moral values regarding the possible loss of a person's life. Tummers et al. (2012) posited that policy enactment is a consequence of leading, and public experts can be reluctant to put into practice strategies due to various influences. Miller and Sinclair (2009) concluded that accountability correlates to the organizational obligation for actions, inducted by public rules or regulation. The growth of passenger traffic and insufficient government regulations motivated the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This chapter comprises of an explanation of the research method and strategy. The problem to be addressed by the study is the lack of national standardization of hiring practices of CEOs and the lack of federal qualifying criteria for CEOs at commercial airports. The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. The chapter consists of a discussion of the population and sample size, materials and instrumentation, study procedures, data collection and analysis, assumptions, limitations, delimitations and, ethical assurances. The study concentrates on major commercial airports that account for 0.05 of a percent and greater of all U.S. passenger traffic embarking on a flight in the United States. The problem addressed by the study is the lack of national standardization of hiring practices of CEOs and the lack of federal qualifying criteria for airport CEOs at commercial airports. The federal government does not test, certify, or license airport CEOs. According to Young and Wells (2019), airport CEOs are in charge of safety, security, and infrastructure improvements. In most countries, but not the U.S., airports are managed completely by the federal government. Airport administrations in the U.S. are a component of local government with input from the FAA into airport operation (Bacot & Christine, 2006). FAA Regulations and Guidelines (2018), lacks federal regulatory standards for the hiring of the airport CEOs.

The problem addressed by the study is the lack of national standardization of hiring practices of CEOs and the lack of federal qualifying criteria for airport CEOs at commercial airports. The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes

that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. The study concentrates on major commercial airports that account for 0.05 of a percent and greater of all U.S. passenger traffic embarking on a flight in the United States. Airports are multifaceted establishments delivering a wide range of amenities to a wide range of consumers (Arblaster, 2014). As reported by FAA's NPIAS (2017), there are currently 133 major commercial airports in the U.S. that handle more than 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarking on a flight. These 133 airports handle the majority of all passenger traffic. According to Özdemir, Çetek, and Usanmaz, (2018), airports are the most vital feature of the air transport organization since they are the beginning and ending locals of air travel.

The goal of this study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. Social traits of our world are delivered with qualitative research, while quantitative research is more cause and effect related. According to Baškarada (2014), qualitative research is concerned with views, experiences, and opinions of folks, which yield subjective data. The qualitative approach is suitable for my study since the manipulation of variables does not occur in non-experimental research, but instead, variables transpire naturally. This study is not experimental in nature, and inquiry variables were not be controlled; qualitative research is the correct choice for my study. Endacott (2008) posited that qualitative research observes the natural circumstances and defines the unknown themes from data. The qualitative research method constructs meaning from the facts while constructing ideas, themes, and theories. In this qualitative study for an applied research study, the method chosen to gather data is through

questionnaire surveys sent to airport CEOs, as well as interviews with airport CEOs. The data from the surveying of the CEOs established evolving breakthroughs through triangulation utilizing the mail-out survey, and phone interviews, the multiple sources data collection enables data triangulation, adding validity to the study,

Research Methodology and Design

A qualitative multi-case study was chosen to uncover information involving fundamental reasons, versus a course of qualifying information that would be a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2006). According to Foley and Timonen (2015), quantitative inquiries do well at scrutinizing theories stemmed from existing concepts. While qualitative research does not employ mathematical data to articulate a complete interpretation, it does apply various approaches to communicate an all-inclusive account regarding an occurrence by conveying a vivid and focused account that recreates an event and reveals an account. Quantitative research summarizes facts, edits the number of variables, and branches from exact quantities. On the other hand, the qualitative study develops evidence, states topics and, synopses, and grows from papers and reports. As reported by Lawrence and Tar (2013), one of the central efforts of managing qualitative interpretative study is to choose a suitable beginning point for the investigation and the primary outline within which the evidence will be collected and scrutinized.

The foundation of the qualitative method is to obtain an in-depth classification of the logic behind the facts. The quantitative research analyzes the data by applying computable methods anywhere something can be calculated in the form of arithmetical data to test the theory (Goldberg & Allen, 2015). In qualitative sampling, a small population is sampled to handle in-depth understanding, whereas, in quantitative sampling, randomly selected samples are gathered

from a large population to signify the entire population. As reported by Madill (2015), the qualitative study suggests an association of devices that can be delineated as not statistical. According to Lawrence and Tar (2013), a qualitative study conveys an occasion for the assessor to expand interpretation and collect knowledge that was ignored by the usual data assessment methods. The research questions and hypotheses are empirical, systematic, and substantiated in the specific analysis. According to Baskarada (2014), unlike a quantitative study that focuses on statistical inspection and examination of hypotheses, qualitative inquiry concentrates on the interpretation of the character of the study endeavor.

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. According to Creswell (2013), there are various approaches to qualitative research such as phenomenology, ethnography, narrative, grounded theory, and case study. A phenomenological proposal is employed when the examiner reports the lived encounters of many individuals (Moustakas, 1994). According to Creswell (2013), ethnographic proposal is employed to concentrate on the collective beliefs, performances, and understandings of a group whereas a narrative proposal is employed to categorize the life stories and occurrences as narrated chronologically by folks, and a grounded theory proposal is employed to create or uncover concepts that are grounded in data. As reported by Martin (2017), a grounded theory stems alongside the jurisdiction of facts far more boldly than does a utilitarian theory.

According to Yin (2016), case study research systematically examines into a real-life occurrence and inside its environmental setting. As reported by Tumele (2015), under any study

design and choice of approaches rests and must endure an investigator's perspective, meaning his observation of the characteristics of the domain and how it must to be evaluated. According to Ridder (2017), a case study assessment systematically examines real-life happenings within its environmental locale. Gog (2015) posited that the inspiration for leading a study forms a positive study inquiry, and it is crucial to position one's research stance, which is also indicated as research theory. According to Tumele (2015), the difference between a regular party and an examiner is an official and systematic analytical method to the realization of information to expand credibility. A case study can be a person, a company, an association, an occurrence, or a setback or an inconsistency. Yin (2016) described the case study inquiry design as a process of inquiry used to examine a phenomenon concerning a specific participant or unit. The multi-case study design was most appropriate, as it induced on the themes and patterns from airport CEOs to target triangulation.

According to Ridder (2017), in quantitative analysis, a case is selected for its conceptual purposes as compared to qualitative analysis, where the importance in data assembly is on interviews, documents, and contributor statements. A case study is an analytical approach that focuses on comprehending the details present in specific settings. The convincing idea of a qualitative study is that it provides the researcher with the chance to investigate a subject comprehensively (Cleary et al., 2014). A case can be a single being, a group, an institute, an occurrence, a predicament, or irregularity. According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011), the case study is employed in countless disciplines to develop on or generate new theory, to argue or test the theory, to elucidate a state of affairs, to deliver a foundation to put into operation solutions to circumstances, to discover, or to define a phenomenon. The circumstantial surroundings are not

demarcated and or measured but are a segment of the study. In a qualitative study, data collection and analysis transpires synchronously. A major advantage of qualitative study over quantitative research is the ability to add new evidence while concurrently scrutinizing outstanding data. In the data-gathering stage of the study, the author takes notes and carry out dialogs and collect everything that can better explain the study and to grasp group subtleties.

Creswell (2013) posited that case study inquiry is a qualitative method in which the researcher discovers a bounded classification or multiple bounded procedures over time, through comprehensive, in-depth data compilation connecting several resources of material and arrives at a case-based idea that tackles research challenges within the explanatory theories rather than the positivist theory. This research design is suitable because the researcher cannot influence nor manipulate the perception of participants of the lack of national standardization of hiring practices of CEOs and lack of federal qualifying criteria for CEOs at commercial airports. As reported by Lawrence and Tar (2013), a qualitative study provides an occasion for the assessor to increase understanding and collect conceptions that are possibly overlooked by conventional data calculation methods. The case study process outlines a plan by signifying an organized approach to establish or accumulate the possible explanation of considered cases.

According to Yin (2016), an applicable case study research proposal encompasses five sections: research questions, study purpose, units of evaluation, the rationality that generates a connection between facts and proposals, and standards for deducing findings. First, the researcher categorized the purpose of the study. Secondly, the researcher decided the survey questions (Appendix C). Third, the researcher classified a unit of analysis. The fourth phase was to connect data that were gathered to the purpose of the study that resulted in the development of

themes and produced answers to the research questions. The final step was to establish criteria for deducing outcomes. According to Yin (2016), researchers code the data prior to forming patterns and themes. In this study, the researcher collected the results through open-ended survey questions and looked for connections to draw value and establish proposals. As reported by Agee (2009), the contemplative and probing practices essential for developing successful qualitative research queries can give form and focus to an analysis in ways that are frequently taken too lightly. According to Tetnowski (2015), case study research scrutinizes a current occurrence within its actual setting, particularly when the confines amongst experience and setting are intricately connected.

Population and Sample

The focus population for this qualitative multi-case study comprised of airport CEOs that account for 0.05 of a percent and greater of all U.S. passenger traffic embarking on a flight in the United States. As reported by FAA's NPIAS (2017), there are 133 major commercial airports in the U.S. that handle more than 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarking on a flight. Each airport CEO represents a component of the evaluation. According to Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013), the fundamental in sampling size is to guarantee there is sufficient assimilated information to assess and account in the study's discoveries. The sample size needed for this proposal was 12 airports. According to Boddy (2016), the sample size is suitable because of the similar makeup of the population. The commercial airport CEOs have similar makeup because the participant's job responsibilities and organizations are similar (Robinson, 2014). Guest, Brunce & Johnson (2006) posited that saturation is normally achieved with fewer than 12 contributors, especially when the participant group is fairly uniform. Traditionally proposal for

sample sizes in case studies is grounded on the idea of saturation. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), saturation transpires at the instant when the compilation of data from other contributors would not significantly modify the conclusions of the analysis. According to Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, and McKibbon (2015), smaller samples are used in qualitative studies as compared to large sample sizes used in quantitative studies. The goal of analysis in qualitative research is to attain evidence that is beneficial for comprehending the intricacy, gravity, discrepancy, or background encompassing the observable fact. The proposal's participants were recruited from a list acquired from the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE). The participants ranged from small, medium, and large hub commercial airports.

Materials and Instrumentation

Data for this qualitative multi-case study was collected through open-ended survey questions that were sent to airport CEOs as well as phone interviews with airport CEOs. The target population was the major commercial airport CEOs in the U.S., and the sample size needed for this proposal was 12 airport CEOs. The researcher utilized the participants as the lens of validity and authority; the CEOs are experts based on their level of responsibility within the agency and their job duties. According to Boddy (2016); Robinson (2014), the sample size is suitable because of the similar makeup of the population because the CEOs' job responsibilities and organizations are similar. The data from the surveying of the CEOs established evolving breakthroughs through triangulation utilizing the mail-out survey, and phone interviews, the multiple source data collection enables data triangulation, adding validity to the study,

As reported by Jansen (2010), the qualitative survey examines the range of member characteristics within a populace. The survey concentrated on exploring the insight and

experiences of airport executives working at a major commercial airport. According to Jansen (2010), the unique characteristic of survey research is not the method of data collection or the types of the data but the four-sided variables by case matrix configuration of the data set. The first screening inquiry was to confirm that the contributors were suitable, and they were the lead CEOs at a major commercial airport. The survey consisted of fifteen questions (see Appendix C); the questions spoke to the contributors' understanding of hiring standards for airport CEOs, in line with the purpose statement. The main concept that is used in this study is competency, which is the foundation for the survey questions, as they are designed to find themes in a logical provocation. As reported by Agee (2009), the contemplative and probing practices needed for developing successful qualitative research queries can give form and focus to an analysis in ways that are frequently taken too lightly. According to Tetnowski (2015), case study research examines a current occurrence within its actual setting, particularly when the confines amongst experience and setting are intricately connected. As reported by Jansen (2010), many qualitative reports are grounded on a specific one-shot survey, which contains one empirical cycle comparable to the usual illustration of a statistical survey. The researcher used open-ended survey questions to provide more description and in-depth, wider, thicker responses from the airport CEOs who participated. According to Enacott (2005), a certain subject to tackle with the written investigation is that the steps needed to guarantee subjects are anonymous. Margarian (2014) proposes the use of small-scale resolutions with survey data for qualitative data, which are amassed for an in-depth examination of certain cases rather than for quantitative assessment.

The questions related to the airport CEO's qualification in terms of education and credential. CEOs specialized background in aviation, such as an undergraduate degree in airport

management and or a graduate degree in aviation. The questions were about licensure, such as an FAA issued piloting or air traffic control license to reflect higher education qualifications in the field of aviation. The next set of questions inquired about CEOs' understanding of what they deem to be their most significant capability to qualify them as an airport CEO. The follow-up questions engaged the CEOs and the essential functions of an airport CEO's position. And how should the federal government specify essential job functions for airport CEOs of major commercial airports? And what essential functions should the federal government specify for airport CEOs of major commercial airports? What training programs should the federal government require as part of the skill sets for the airport CEOs?

A unique identifier distinguished each of the participants. All surveys were sent to CEOs for completion and returned by airport CEOs to maintain the confidentiality of the respondents. The respondent airports were classified into small, medium, and large hub airports. The triangulation design is meant to gather data, combine the data, and apply the outcomes to fill the gap pronounced in the problem statement. Crowe et al., 2011 posit that the multiple source data collection enables data triangulation, adding validity to the study, in this study, there were 19 different airport CEOs reporting to 19 different local government entities from various states that added to the validity of the study. The researcher interviewed airport CEOs from the various hub airports to complete the essential job function to further triangulate the data for the multi-case study. According to Creswell (2006), the researcher concurrently collects data, compares the analysis results, and interprets whether the results support or contradict each other. The methods chosen for the study are appropriate for the type of analysis to respond to the lack of national qualifying criteria to oversee the appointment practices of airport CEOs at the U.S. top airports.

The author developed her survey since the information the author was seeking was first of its kind and, there were no existing surveys that met the needs of the study; the author gained IRB approval in advance. While the initial form of communication was via mail, the open-ended survey questions served as qualitative interviews with airport CEOs.

Study Procedures

The major data collection in this study was an open-ended survey with long questions to provide more description and in-depth, wider, thicker responses from the airport CEOs. The Northcentral University Institutional Review Board approval was attained before data collection. The author gained all the required consents with the agency, participants, and IRB as identified by the IRB before data gathering. Traditionally proposal for sample sizes in case studies is grounded on the idea of saturation. According to Boddy (2016); Robinson (2014), the sample size is suitable because of similar make up of the population since the CEO's job responsibilities and organizations are similar. Guest et al. (2006) posit that saturation is normally achieved with fewer than 12 contributors, especially when the participant group is fairly uniform. A letter of invitation was sent to airports (see Appendix B). The study contributors were notified of their rights as participants via the Informed Consent Letter (see Appendix D) as well as the projected timeframes for the study, results, and the ability to pull out from the study at any time (Baškarada, 2014).

The author developed her survey since the information the author was seeking was first of its kind and, there were no existing surveys that met the needs of the study; the form of communication was via mail; the open-ended survey questions served as qualitative interviews. The questions were in a specific order to help the participants through the process. A final

question allowed the participants to elaborate on their unique situation. A distinct identifier distinguishes each of the airports. The respondent CEOs were classified into small, medium, and large hub airports. The de-identification of each CEO surveyed was achieved through a coding associated with each survey (Gibbs, 2014). The naming precept included a letter and number pattern that was assigned to each airport CEO. The naming practice was based on the hub size of the airport S, M, L, and the number indicated the passenger traffic in millions, so when a survey response from a medium-sized airport that has six million passengers is received, then the designation was M6. Only the researcher has a master list, which links the CEO with the code associated with the data from the survey. Airport CEOs were chosen from each small, medium, and large hub airports and were only identified by the airport hub size for interview purposes. According to Gibbs (2014), preserving the confidentiality of the data and keeping confidentiality are the main ethical concerns in research. According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011), identifying which analysis to use with various types of study questions and numerous types of data can be puzzling. In this study, NVivo computer software was used to organize and analyze the data and determine the themes. Computer software instruments are efficient in supporting the qualitative researcher with multiple varieties of analysis so that the primary theories and associations in the data can arise (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). The surveys were recorded to NVivo software to organize and analyze the data; the information was only available to the researcher and secured with a password. The files were named as participant CEO one through 19.

The population of interest in this multi-case study research design was CEOs employed by major commercial airports. After signed permission from each CEO was obtained (see

Appendix D), all CEOs were mailed the survey (see Appendix C). According to Merriam (2016), triangulation comprises of exercising multiple informants of data to determine and establish evolving discoveries. Each airport CEO is a single informant, and 19 CEOs represented multiple informants. The data from the surveying of the CEOs established evolving breakthroughs through triangulation by means of the mail-out survey, and phone interviews (Appendix E). Crowe et al. (2011) posit that the multiple source data collection enables data triangulation, adding validity to the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The major data collection in this study was open-ended survey long questions to provide more description and in-depth, wider, thicker responses from the airport CEOs who contributed. Prior to the collection of data, the Northcentral University Institutional Review Board approval was attained. According to Cleary, et al., (2014), when formulating a qualitative study, it is imperative to establish the richness of data collection method, breadth, depth, and span. Open-ended survey questions were used instead of the close-ended questions because the latter is leading in the description and cannot be beneficial in an in-depth investigation (Esterberg, 2002). The questions in this study related to the airport CEOs' qualifications, background, opinion, and knowledge as commonly used for qualitative case studies (Merriam, 2019). Participants who were chosen to contribute to this multi-case qualitative study were promised confidentiality. According to Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger (2015), it is imperative to conceal the identities of all contributors and the facts revealed by the participants.

Cleary et al. (2014) suggested that when ascertaining the participants, it is important to keep in mind the very purpose of the study and the understanding the investigator is seeking to

attain and the expected results. The sample size that was needed for this proposal was projected to be 12 airport CEOs from the list of 133 airports; if one or more of the airport CEOs from the first mail-out do not agree to participate, then a secondary mail-out was sent out. The secondary mail out fulfilled the vacancy by small, medium, and large commercial airports from the list of remaining 133 airports. The airports were selected as identified by the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (FAA NPIAS, 2017) by hub size. The participants received the open-ended survey (see Appendix C) along with an informed consent form (see Appendix D) via U.S. mail.

The CEOs completed and returned the survey along with informed consent in a returned addressed envelope. The variety of facts to be gathered in this study comprised of participant's qualifications, experience, perception, and understanding of the job and the environment of the airport industry. The responses were read, organized, cataloged, and analyzed using the pattern matching approach recommended by Yin (2016) to identify emerging themes from participants' responses. This examiner used qualitative data software to manage a particular system of evaluation. According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011), computer software instruments are efficient by aiding the qualitative examiner with multiple forms of probes; hence, the essential concepts and connections in the data are to surface. Gibbs (2014) posited that there are numerous popular Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis platforms accessible to examiners, including Atlas.ti, Dedoose (2016), Nvivo, MAXQDA, QDA Miner, Qigga, Qualrusit, Saturate, and Weft. In this study, NVivo was used to organize and analyze the data and determine the themes. The data analyzed qualitatively using coding. First, the researcher read the responses and searched for descriptions of views and proficiencies of airport CEOs. This researcher sorted the

data and categorized them into themes about educational background, experience working at airports, and certifications. The third step required choosing key classifications using a method between theory and data, followed by decoding the categories to define answers and draw a conclusion.

According to Merriam (2016), triangulation comprises of exercising multiple informants of data to determine and establish evolving discoveries. Each airport CEO is a single informant, and multiple CEOs represent multiple informants. The data from the surveying of CEOs, as well as phone interviews (see Appendix E), established evolving breakthroughs through triangulation. Crowe et al., 2011 posited that the multiple source data collection enables data triangulation, adding validity to the study, in this study, there were various airports reporting to different local government entities from various states that added to the validity of the study. For this qualitative multi-case study, there were three groups of participants, each group was coded as S, M, and L, and the names of the airports and the names of the airport CEOs were kept confidential. It was important to this study that the data be managed in a timely fashion so, the results are up to date.

Assumptions

For this qualitative multi-case study, various assumptions exist. First, the researcher in this study assumed that at least 12 airport CEOs would be willing to participate and would respond to the survey questions truthfully. The second assumption was that the airport CEOs from the three groups have a working knowledge of their respective airports as well as the aviation industry and understand the survey questions. Thirdly, those being surveyed (CEOs) are

interested in the subject concerning airport leadership. The fourth assumption was that the participants were interested in shaping a set of professional standards or qualifying criteria.

Limitations

External forces that include the reliability of the study cause limitations. This study did not include a representative sample since the sample size that was needed for this proposal was projected to be 12 airport CEOs. The second limitation of this qualitative multi-case study was that the data from the inquiry was contingent on the participants' trustworthiness and motivation to share their experience and knowledge (Lakshman et al., 2000). Although a qualitative study approach determines the presence of themes from data, the study hangs on the adeptness of the researcher to stipulate an understanding of the data. The study's themes do not have a described lifespan or phase of worth that could be a potential threat. The participants could have had personal biases in responding honestly to the questions. Another limitation was that the study results were specifically aimed at the aviation industry and cannot be replicated because of the unique nature of the study.

Delimitations

Delimitations tackle how a researcher confines the study in scope or how it should be delimited. The first delimitation is the narrow scope given this qualitative multi-case study; the sample size that was needed for this proposal was projected to be 12 airport CEOs from the list of 133 airports. The projected limit of sample size (12) rather than expand the sample pool to all airports was purposeful to provide the best answer to the research question of this study. Furthermore, the decision to choose projected 12 CEOs from the small, medium, and large hub major commercial airports as the study participants allowed for a mix of airport CEOs from

various sizes across the nation and utilized a variety of samples. The criteria for judging the success of the study's input is that study evidence from qualitative generalization would be applicable to a wider population than the study's limited population with comparable results.

Ethical Assurances

Several processes were taken concerning ethical warrants. First, as part of preparing to conduct this qualitative multi-case study, the researcher completed all of the required CITI training as well as updated training. Second, the formal Northcentral University Institutional Review Board (IRB) consent for the study was attained before data collection. Third, an informed consent and release form was provided to the participants (Appendix D) along with the survey questions. The information that was provided was kept confidential to the extent allowable by law. Some steps I took to keep the CEO's identity confidential are: I assigned a number to identify each CEO, and the CEO's names were not associated with the data. The people who had access to the information were the researcher. The Institutional Review Board may also review the research and view the CEO information.

Fourth, the participants were advised that the facts stipulated were exclusively used for the intention of this report and the individual responses would not be connected with any of the CEOs in any of the reports linked to this study; the participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point. Fifth, the researcher secured the information by keeping the hard copy data in a locked cabinet on the researcher's property when not in the researcher's presence during the data collection phase. The electronic forms of data were kept on an encrypted and password-protected flash drive and were only accessible by the researcher. The researcher was the only person with computer access and, work was only conducted from a personal, not public

computer. The researcher will keep CEO data for seven years. Then, the researcher will delete the electronic data from the flash drive and destroy paper data by shredding.

The main point of the survey questions was for the participants to share their experience, training and, education for serving as the CEOs of major commercial airports; the risk level to the participants of this qualitative multi-case study was less than minimal. All surveys were sent to CEOs for completion and returned by airport CEOs to maintain the confidentiality of the respondents. The respondent airports were classified into small, medium, and large hub airports. The triangulation design is meant to gather data, combine the data, and apply the outcomes to fill the gap pronounced in the problem statement. Crowe et al., 2011 posit that the multiple source data collection enables data triangulation, adding validity to the study; in this study, 19 different airport CEOs reporting to 19 different local government entities from various states that added to the validity of the study.

Summary

This chapter comprised of an explanation of the research method and design that was expended in this study. The problem addressed by the study is the lack of national standardization of hiring practices of CEOs and the lack of federal qualifying criteria for the CEOs at commercial airports. A qualitative multi-case study method was chosen for this study due to the necessity to uncover information involving fundamental reasons, versus a course of qualifying information that would be a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2006). The focus population for this study comprised of CEOs from large, medium, and small commercial airports; the sample size that was needed for this proposal was projected to be 12 airport CEOs from the list of 133 airports

Data for this study was collected through open-ended survey questions that were sent to airport CEOs. The survey concentrated on exploring the insight and experiences of executives working at a major commercial airport. The questions related to the airport CEO's qualification in terms of curriculum and credentials. The author developed her own survey since the information the author was seeking was first of its kind and, there were no existing surveys that met the needs of the study; the form of communication was via mail, the open-ended survey questions served as qualitative interviews, and phone interviews (Appendix E). The data from the surveying of 19 CEOs established triangulation (via multiple means) by means of the mail-out survey, and phone interviews; the multiple source data collections enable data triangulation, adding validity to the study.

The major data collection in this study was open-ended survey questions to provide more description and in-depth, wider, thicker responses from the airport CEOs who contributed. According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011), computer software instruments are efficient with aiding the qualitative examiner with multiple forms of probes; hence, the essential concepts and connections in the data can surface. The study employed the use of the software NVivo 12 for mac to organize and analyze the data, determine the themes, and ensure that the data gathered were managed effectively. Various assumptions took place; such as the airport CEOs would respond to the survey questions truthfully. The purpose of the research, the study's techniques and safeguard of confidentiality were emphasized to make sure the participants answered the questions genuinely and that the airport CEOs from the three groups had a working knowledge of their respective airports as well as the aviation industry and understood the survey questions and were interested in the subject concerning the airport leadership.

Limitations were usually imposed by external forces, which included the generalization of the study. This study did not include an all-encompassing representative sample since the sample size that was needed for this proposal was projected to be 12 airport CEOs from the list of 133 airports. Delimitations tackle how a study confines itself in scope or how it should be delimited. Several processes were taken concerning ethical warrants through CITI training and compliance with Northcentral University Institutional Review Board (IRB) rules and regulations. An informed consent and release form was provided to the participants, along with the survey questions and, individual responses would not be connected with any of the CEOs in any of the reports linked to this study.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. The study concentrated on major commercial airports that accounted for 0.05 of a percent and greater of all U.S. passenger traffic embarking on a flight in the United States. As reported by FAA's NPIAS (2017), there were 133 major commercial airports in the U.S. that handled more than 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarking on a flight. These 133 airports handled the majority of all passenger traffic. Data were collected through interviews with six airport CEOs as well as mail surveys completed by 13 different airport CEOs at major commercial airports in the U.S.

Özdemir, Çetek, and Usanmaz (2018) opined that airports are the most vital feature of the air transport organization since they are the beginning and end of air travel. According to Young and Wells (2019), the airport CEOs are in charge of safety, security, and infrastructure improvements. In most countries, but not the U.S., airports are managed entirely by the federal government. Airport administrations in the U.S. are a component of local government with input from the FAA into airport operation (Bacot & Christine, 2006). The criteria for eligibility to participate in the study were based on being an airport CEO at a major commercial airport, which accounted for at least 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarked on a flight in the U.S.

The methodology utilized in this study is a qualitative multi-case study; a case study research thoroughly examines a real-life fact inside its environmental setting (Yin, 2016). Each CEO interviewed was asked the same nine interview questions. Each CEO surveyed answered 15

survey questions. The nine interview questions and the 15 survey questions were constructed to answer the two research questions. The research questions are:

RQ1. What are the essential functions of airport CEOs?

RQ2. What essential function should the federal government specify for airport CEOs?

After each interview, the facts from the interview were instantly reviewed and probed to guarantee a clear understanding of the answers. After receiving each completed questionnaire, the data was immediately assessed and analyzed to ensure a clear understanding of the survey answers. Key terms that materialized from the six interviews and 13 questionnaires were used as themes.

Trustworthiness of Data

The data utilized for this qualitative study derived from interviews and surveys with a broad range of participants with a wide range of attributes such as age, geographic locations, and experiences at airports of various sizes. According to Gaya and Smith (2016), it is essential to stipulate methods to ascertain trustworthiness in qualitative research. The interviewees consisted of 6 males. The survey consisted of six females and seven males. All participants were between the ages of 18 to 65. Participants were from 19 different airports across the nation. The technique utilized to organize the interviews was by querying each participant the same nine-interview question. All interviewees were conducted similarly, in the same sequence, with no changes from the questions. There was no forcing of participants to reply to questions in a particular manner or to dole out particular preconceptions. The participants had a choice to skip any question they did

not wish to answer. According to Harvey (2015), member checking is a means to strengthen trustworthiness.

The technique utilized to organize the mail survey was by querying each participant fifteen questions. All mail survey participants were asked the same questions. A number of actions were appropriated to address matters of trustworthiness in qualitative research. The strategy used in the report is the time devoted by the researcher in attaining, organizing, and scrutinizing the data. Hyett, Kenny, and Dickson-Swift (2014) posited the extent and concentration of the researcher's commitment to a study enhanced the intensity of descriptions and amplified the trustworthiness of the study. As reported by Yin (2016), a case study research thoroughly examines an everyday occurrence in its environmental locale.

Credibility. The participants for the study were from 19 different airports of various sizes and geographic locations. The participants spent up to 30 minutes on the interview or questionnaire surveys. The researcher ensured transparency by providing the interview questions to the participants who had asked to review a copy of the interview before the interview. The researcher was also asked to provide a copy of her resume by another participant before the interview as the CEO wanted to know her background. The survey results were transcribed from handwritten, electronic, and typed correspondence. The transcripts from the phone interviews were based on the researcher's exhaustive notes.

The researcher complied with the guiding principle as delineated by Northcentral University and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) manual that contributes to ethical assurances. To safeguard integrity, credibility, and confidentiality, the researcher kept close communication with the dissertation chair. The study participants were sought according to

Northcentral University's IRB procedures. A total of 115 airport CEOs were solicited from the FAA NPIAS (18 airports were excluded since many airports had CEOs that oversee multiple airports in the same jurisdictions). Letters explaining the study were sent to CEOs at airports across the nation. A total of two airport CEOs responded by stating that they decline to participate. A total of 33 airports responded by agreeing to participate in the study. Twenty-five of the 33 CEOs who had previously agreed to participate responded by following up to the survey while the other eight never responded to the survey. Six of the 25 participants were excluded; in one case, the response was received after the data collection had concluded. In the second case, the consent was mailed after the data collection had ended. The third participant submitted the survey without signing the consent form. The fourth respondent was not the airport CEO. The fifth respondent changed his mind about participating after he mailed the signed consent. The sixth consented to the phone interview, which was received after the data collection had ended.

Transferability

Thick description of the data as well as specific information of data compilation methods added to warranting transferability. According to Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013), thick explanations that comprise of particulars of data and compilation methods assist readers in drawing deductions. Cope (2014) posits using multiple interviews and comprehensive descriptions, and the reader is likely to associate the results to their experience. Transferability stipulates information about the number of CEOs participating in the study from various establishments and the disclosure of the data collection process applied.

Dependability

Dependability signifies the evidentiary of research to permit the reviewers to assess the thickness of the research practice. The dependability process included in this multi-case research study included taking thorough transcriptions throughout the participant's interviews. The dependability process also included transcriptions of the survey responses from handwritten, electronic, and typed correspondence. Dependability was also achieved through the detailed coding of the data (Creswell, 2013) within NVivo 12 software. Dependability was ascertained by postulating a thorough account of the research proposal and application of data gathering and evaluation practices and by tackling the exhaustive distinctions of data collection throughout the study. The purpose is that the results could show the data will produce stable and reliable data over time.

Confirmability

According to Beuving and Vries (2015), confirmability is the course of supporting the study results. Confirmability was established by conveying study limitations and possible researcher bias. This consisted of the utilization of thorough methodological processes and descriptions for methodology selections that were made in the study. The researcher stayed mindful of biases about the topic of review throughout the multi-case research study.

Results

In an effort to maintain the participants' information unidentified, codes were devised to ascertain each unit: Interviewee participant, Survey participant. Then numbering identifiers were assigned as each member consented to be interviewed or agreed to complete the mail survey. According to Saldana (2016), a code is a brief word or expression that metaphorically allocates a cumulative, significant, fundamental nature-encapsulating characteristic for a segment of writing

ascertained on graphical information. The entire data gathered was transcribed then read until a complete understanding was reached. After getting accustomed to the data, data were categorized by a listing of key points. Data was later consolidated by research questions, and themes and subthemes of shared practices were described. The word-based narrative from participant interviews and surveys were assimilated to reveal key points, as shown in Appendix F.

Assessment method. Assessment methods for hiring airport CEOs varied across the 19 participants from various city/county run airports. A majority of CEOs stated that it is usual for the boards of commissioners to agree on a proper job description, function, and future goals for the airport. The assessment method in hiring airport CEOs varied; some hired recruitment firms or outside consultants, and some hired industry experts or a combination of the two. In most cases, posts were advertised nationally to get a large pool of candidates. Candidates must have industry knowledge, along with appropriate education and experience. A majority of CEOs stated that it is essential for everyone considering this type of position to find whether it genuinely fits his or her interest, passion, personality, and desire. The more detailed assessment methods varied; some performed an IQ TEST, while others looked at psychological profiles, background checks, and personality evaluation. Candidates that showed well-established connections across the industry were usually favored.

Background and proficiencies.

Background and proficiencies varied across the 19 participants. There was a combination of undergraduate and graduate degrees from various specialties, i.e., Business, Political science, Accounting, Engineering, and Public policy. One participant had earned a Juris Doctorate while

another held a piloting license. Most candidates spoke of industry certifications as the only remaining qualifier. Table 2 summaries the proficiencies amongst the participants.

Table 4. 1

Proficiencies

Participants	Highest degree earned	Area of specialty	Licensure
Participant 8	Bachelor's degree	Mechanical engineering	
Participant 9	Bachelor's degree	Business	
Participant 10	Master's degree	Public Policy	
Participant 11	Master's & Jurist Doctor	Political Science & Law	
Participant 12	Bachelor's degree	Accounting	
Participant 13	Master's degree	Business & Engineering	
Participant 14	Master's degree	Business Management	
Participant 15	Bachelor's degree	Business & Marketing	
Participant 16	Bachelor's degree	Mechanical engineering	
Participant 17	Master's degree	Applied Behavioral Sciences	Piloting
Participant 18	Bachelor's degree	Management & Finance	
Participant 19	Bachelor's degree	Aviation Business Administration	

Note: Seven participants did not provide information on degree acquired

CEO characteristics.

In examining the characteristics of the CEO's reputation, credibility, and integrity were revealed. Also serving people and working in the aviation business. CEOs reported that they enjoyed working in public service that allowed them to develop and influence municipal infrastructure plans and improve overall mobility throughout the nation. CEO's also described

that they found great personal value knowing that they were entrusted to provide a tangible benefit to society, which annually touches millions of passengers.

One CEO said, “I wanted to work at an airport.” The CEOs with engineering degrees stated that they were looking for the opportunity to design, build, and maintain significant infrastructures, and the public sector was a natural fit since it is the custodian of the vast majority of our transportation infrastructure. Another CEO reflected that public service is the highest calling an individual can provide, “I have enjoyed the work under the premise of making things better for our country and the people in it, the big things in this country still happen through government and public service. I’m proud to be a part of the public service”.

Most participants agreed that they enjoy the industry, and while public service was never part of the equation, the passion for aviation certainly made it worthwhile. A large number of CEO participants mentioned: “leadership to lead the hot topics, be charismatic, visionary and responsible.” Being a strategic leader was also important. Airport CEOs must have knowledge of the aviation industry, must be decisive but thoughtful, good with the public, a team builder. The most recurring theme with the participants was that the CEO must see to it that the goals of the board of commissioners are achieved, which led to political responsibilities.

Challenges.

In discussing the challenges of an airport CEO’s position, one participant stated that the greatest challenge is “Being responsible for safety and security but not having total control,” while another participant noted, “to advance change as quickly as necessary in highly regulated, highly visible organizations that may be encumbered by political systems.” Another challenge mentioned was “industry knowledge, and the ability to analyze a situation and make decisions

quickly and confidently.” One recurring theme was to “Balance and properly prioritizing multiple stakeholder interests that may be aligned or not with airport needs.” and “Understanding politics and being politically astute,” “Must cultivate the politics, which is the most difficult part of the job,” “It is very difficult to stay independent of the political motivation,” “The CEO controls a large staff, and the politicians try to control the airport. FAA guidance is that airports are to be independent of the government, i.e., FAA policy on revenue diversions; however, it is very difficult to stay independent of political influences”. Appendix G lists the challenges the airport CEOs face.

Designating the CEO.

In discussing the designation of airport CEOs, one participant stated, “Someone with proven success record,” while another participant identified “having strong business acumen is critical in today’s world. Not that a strong knowledge of airport operations and regulatory requirements, that isn’t important, but airports today are big businesses that generate big economic impacts for their communities and regions.” Appendix H lists the understanding of the participants for what it takes to designate someone as an airport CEO.

Essential Functions.

The participants identified safety, politics, and accountability as the essential functions of the CEO, “The CEO is the ultimate decision-maker and the one whose head is ultimately on the chopping block,” “The CEO is the chief strategic officer and the final, authoritative spokesperson and representative for the airport,” “Operating a safe and secure airport for its passengers, tenants, and employees,” “Safety is always #1, but next would be economic development that

compliments your region”. Appendix I lists the understanding of the participants for the essential functions of an airport CEO.

Demographic Characteristics. Airport CEOs from six airports were interviewed, and an additional 13 airport CEOs were surveyed during the study. The benchmarks to participate in the study was that the participants were the current CEOs of a major commercial airport and that the airport accounted for at least 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarking on a flight in the U.S., and the participant’s age ranged between the age of 18 and 65 years old. As shown in table 2, the study participants are identified by their airport size that they represent. A large hub airport must tally 1% or more of the U.S. passenger that board an aircraft commonly referred to as enplanement. To be classified as a medium hub airport, the airport traffic must account for 0.25 of a percent of the U.S. passenger enplanement. To be considered a small hub airport, the airport traffic must account for 0.05 of a percent to 0.25 of a percent of aggregate U.S. commuter enplanement. According to FAA’s NPIAS (2017-2021), there are 30 large hubs, 31 medium hubs, and 72 small hub airports in the U.S, totaling 133 major commercial airports that handle 96% of all passenger traffic operation in the United States. The 30 large hubs tally for 72 percent of all passengers that board a flight in the nation, the 31 medium hubs account for 15 percent, and the 72 small hubs account for 9 percent of all passenger boarding in the nation.

Table 3 identifies the study participants from each airport hub system, and the total number of participants is representative of 14% of the nation’s major commercial airports.

Table 4. 2

Study Participants

Hub Airports	% Of all passenger boarding's at the hub airports	Number of Airports in the U.S.	% Of CEO participants to the overall number of hub airports.
Small	9%	72	14%
Medium	15%	31	19%
Large	72%	30	10%
Total	96%	133	14%

Research question 1. What are the essential functions of airport CEOs? The interview questions that corresponded to the first research questions were questions 1, 6, 7, 8, and 9. The survey questions that corresponded to the first research questions were 5,6,7,10,11 and 12.

Interview Question one asked: “What do you believe your employer was looking for when they hired you?” Participant 1 responded, “My employer was looking for a replacement for a successful director who ran the airport for 24 years. My employer was not looking for a change but rather someone who understood the previous success and would continue on the same path. Someone with high integrity who is a known entity, trustworthy, someone, who can manage a 7.4 billion dollars capital program. Participant 2 stated, “My employer was looking for changing of the guard, someone whose management style was different than the previous director. Participant 3 answered, “My employer was not looking for technical competence. My employer was looking for a visionary leader who could convey that vision and build excitement group of people. Participant 4 responded, “My employer was looking for someone to lead the organization strategically, someone who understood the industry technically well. Participant 5 opined, “My employer was looking for a transformational leader.”

Survey Question 12 asked: “What do you deem to be a candidate’s most significant capability to qualify for as an airport CEO?” Participant 7 responded, “Years of experience, leadership abilities, ability to develop and maintain relationships in the aviation ecosystem and local communities. Participant 8 answered leadership: Ability to manage and direct a disparate team towards a shared vision of success. Participant 9 responded, “Ability to lead with confidence.” Participant 10 stated, “Ability to see what needs to get done, and to develop a plan to get there by input from others.” Participant 12 replied, “Strong knowledge of government relations, airport operations, business, personal management, and people skills, honesty, integrity, work ethic, leadership qualities, and the ability to juggle many balls under pressure. Participant 13 answered, “What is desirable is a demonstrated experience in developing and leading an airport team through complex and challenging airport issues, requiring strategic vision, buy-in from various entities, and working within a limited set of time and resources.” Participant 14 responded, “Leadership qualities and experience at a commercial airport.” Participant 15 stated, “Love managing airports. If you do it just because it is a job, that lack of passion for airports will be detrimental.” Participant 17 answered, “I can’t overstate the importance and value the ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing. The ability to speak effectively and persuasively to groups is important, in my opinion, though I’ve seen CEOs who were still effective and didn’t have that particular skill. They usually have others who are good at it by their side.” Participant 19 responded, “Must be positive and focused.”

Survey Question 7 asked, “What are the essential functions of an airport CEO’s position that can only be performed by the CEO?” Participant 7 replied, “None, all duties require some level of participation of the leadership team and members of the governance structure.”

Participant 9 responded, “Major decisions on development that have a lasting impact. Community presence with executive-level interaction and overall strategic planning.” Participant 10 stated, “Making the hard decisions that can not in fairness be delegated to others, keeping an eye on the big picture and making sure nothing important, i.e., languishing” Participant 11 replied, “Essentials functions: It is imperative that the CEO has a good, competent, and dedicated staff and that the staff be empowered to do their job. The CEO is the ultimate decision-maker and the one whose head is ultimately on the chopping block. The CEO is the chief strategic officer and the final, authoritative spokesperson and representative for the airport. They must assume the responsibility for all that could go wrong and distribute praise to the staff that is the one who makes things happen on a day to day basis.” Participant 12 answered, “Vision is critical. I steer the rudder, guide the ship. I get a lot of input, but I am the one who must articulate and sell the vision to my board, my team, our tenants, the local community, and the traveling public.” Participant 13 responded, “Ultimately, the CEO is held accountable for the success of an airport. Success may be defined in different ways based on priorities. But, when faced with multiple business options and strategies, the CEO selects the best recommendation for the airport presented to governing bodies. CEO is ultimately responsible for leading and steering the airport team in ensuring the airport maintains safe and secure operations, complies with federal, state, and local regulations, and maintains a strong business.” Participant 14 stated, “Leadership – someone needs to be the one to ultimately be responsible for all activities that occur at the airport. A good leader will always take responsibility when things go wrong and will always give credit to the staff when things go right.”

Participant 15 replied, “Being able to come up with the most comprehensive macro aspects to decision. Navigating the political aspects of the airport.”

Participant 16 answered, “The CEO is ultimately responsible for the overall operation of the airport. The essential function of the CEO is to understand the region’s goals for the airport and develop the strategy and advocacy to meet these goals while ensuring the safe and efficient operation of the airport. The CEO position is the ultimate decision-maker when it comes to allocating the human and fiscal resources of the airport to meet these goals.” Participant 17 responded, “It is different at each airport, I’d say, but one of the more typical requirements placed on the CEO is that of signatory authority. For legal documents, in most cases, it must be the CEO or someone additionally delegated to sign in their absence. As a practical matter, the job of speaking on behalf of the airport, “selling” or marketing the airport, and interacting directly with key officials often falls on the shoulders of the CEO. Setting the vision and overseeing the senior staff or leadership team is also usually the responsibility of the CEO. Lastly, but most importantly, the CEO must take a role in the selection of senior staff and toward developing a culture in the organization of high standards of care, conduct, and performance.” Participant 18 stated, “Working with the airport board to develop the policies and planning of the airport.” Participant 19 replied, “Know a little bit about each department, ability to interact with far different personalities and somehow make the team out of a puzzle, be visionary and resolute, be understanding but strong, allow differences of opinion and promote and encourage people to challenge my decision.”

Interview Question 6 asked: “What background and proficiencies affect an applicant being selected for an airport CEO’s position at a major commercial airport (in your professional

opinion)?” Participant 1 replied, “Depends on the airport and what challenges the airport is facing. This director had construction and financial background; it depends on where the weaknesses of the current airport are. The process is very political. The relationship with the airlines is political, and the relationship with the surrounding communities is very political, so they need someone who will communicate effectively with the community. Someone who recognizes that the highest priority is safety as well as security. Chief operating officer, a development manager by trade such as an engineer, someone who is credible with high integrity.” Participant 2 answered “Someone with a solid foundation who has a graduate degree (masters), higher academics, someone with industry accreditation, who has on the job training and knows finance, budget, HR, how to manage people and knows about IT, air service development, police, fire, and someone who knows about economic development and has experience across the board. Someone who continues their education and will participate in trade groups and participates in various subcommittees. Broad skill set based on what the board needs at the time of hiring.”

Participant 3 responded, “Similar airport size and complexities, stability, good communication skills, good with a budget, have knowledge of aviation, someone who will brand the airport as a good neighbor with the surrounding communities. Someone who is a team builder and will make the airport staff establish policies and procedures for the safety and security of the traveling public.” Participant 4 stated, “He or she knows what they are doing since the pool of candidates is very little and incorporates major and minor league players. Most places hire and look for a certain level of expertise. Leadership within the concept of the aviation industry, and assign extra points for ex-military candidates. This does not work well in civilian

airports since civilian airports are business assets with different political challenges.” Participant 5 replied, “Business major for business development, engineering degree for infrastructure development, or an aviation degree.” Participant 6 answered, 20-25 years of experience as a CEO, 20 years were managing big airports. Most start in operation and age 55 they are ready. Experience is essential; most start at a small airport and move up to larger airports, they manage stress, and the decision being made on a competing basis by each department. Must have good judgment and be diplomatic and an excellent decision-maker by being in the trenches.”

Survey Question 10 asked: “What background and proficiencies affect an applicant being selected for an airport CEO’s position at a major commercial airport (in your professional opinion)?” Participant 7 replied, “Years of experience, leadership abilities, ability to develop and maintain relationships in the aviation ecosystem and local communities.” Participant 9 responded, “Aviation background and detailed knowledge of the industry. Ability to lead and vision setting.” Participant 10 stated, “It is essential to have a well-rounded background in more than two areas of airport management.” Participant 11 replied, “Airport boards or Mayors often want industry expertise, political and diplomatic acumen, financial literacy, good judgment, and decision-making abilities.” Participant 12 answered, “I believe that strong business acumen is critical in today’s world. Not that a strong knowledge of airport operations and regulatory requirements isn’t important, but airports today are big businesses that generate big economic impacts for their communities and regions.” Participant 13 responded, “Successful airport CEOs have had backgrounds in finance, operations, properties management, developer, engineers, planners, administration, etc. or a combination of the skills can make an applicant attractive. The

soft skills/characteristics are also important, are they a consensus builder, negotiator, approachable, have credibility?”

Participant 14 stated, “Experience at a commercial airport as well as being well-rounded in all aspects of airport operations.” Participant 15 replied, “Unfortunately, we see that there is no consistent list of baseline credentials. But the most common factor includes at least a Bachelor’s degree in business, pilot’s license, and accreditation from ACI or AAAE preferred and at least five years as a CEO.” Participant 16 opined, “An airport CEO must have a background that includes proven organizational leadership, prior airport experience, and a track record of prior growth and success in achieving goals.” Participant 17 replied, “Broad experience in a wide variety of issues, the ability to problem-solve and communicate effectively and persuasively. With some irony, the boards that are often in the position of selecting a CEO of a major airport may have little personal experience in aviation and can often be dazzled by “star power” or the past experiences a candidate brings. Even at the largest airports, sometimes a selected candidate may not be the one who might be the most capable or the best fit.” Participant 18 answered, “Leadership, industry experience, airport experience, I believe, are mandatory. Then a combination of various additional focus areas such as finance, engineering, personnel, operations management, planning, public relations, etc. should be considered.” Participant 19 responded, “Good communication and public speaking abilities, experience, and success in being a leader, professional industry accreditations are often preferred.”

Interview Question 7 asked: “What is the most difficult challenge of an airport CEO’s position?” Participant 1 replied, “Being responsible for safety and security but not having total control since there are other agencies involved such as FAA, customs, and immigration.

Partnership building is key. Must be political and help be part of the solution. Must have broad knowledge and be able to balance the pull/push of the community, concessions, and of course, politics.” Participant 2 answered, “To keep up with the speed of changes occurring within the industry. An example would be expanding security checkpoints, which takes two years to plan and implement, so demands from customers change regularly- changes of conflicting rulings, change in priority system, there are various disrupters as the business environment keeps changing.” Participant 3 responded, “Politics.” Participant 4 stated, “Combination of several factors, understanding politics, is key and must be politically astute. The CEO has to know how to deal with Politics. Must cultivate the politics, which is the most difficult part of the job. The challenges are adaptive, knowing politics, and having political acumen is key, being a strategic manager.” Participant 5 replied, “Managing the stakeholders and their expectations, such as airlines, fixed base operators, state and local government, as well as political bodies, cargo. Communicate effectively with stakeholders is key to being successful.” Participant 6 answered, “Politics. It is challenging to stay independent of political motivation. The CEO controls a large staff, and the politicians try to control the airport. FAA guidance is that airports are to be independent of the government, i.e., FAA policy on revenue diversions; however, it is challenging to stay independent of political influences.”

Survey Question 5 asked: “What is the most difficult challenge of an airport CEO’s position?” Participant 7 replied, “Personnel management, building an effective team.” Participant 8 answered, “Airport CEOs face many challenges from ensuring safety, a positive passenger experience, managing organizational staff, setting the business strategy/direction, meeting local/regional community expectations and goals, managing airport growth, infrastructure planning,

and maintaining/developing/steering business partner engagement.” Participant 10 responded, “Getting great staff and ensuring a collaborative culture.” Participant 11 stated, “It is difficult to advance change as quickly as necessary in highly regulated, highly visible organizations that may be encumbered by political systems.” Participant 12 opined, “Dealing with a diverse set of problems, including people ranging from high-ranking government officials all the way down to cleaning personnel. Every role is essential, and all must be treated as such.” Participant 13 replied, “Balancing and properly prioritizing multiple stakeholder interests that may be aligned or not with airport needs.” Participant 14 answered, “There are various challenges: 1) unfunded mandates from the federal government; 2) aging infrastructure, and not enough funding to pay for much-needed improvements; 3) air service development.” Participant 15 stated, “Keeping the staff focused on the job at hand. The iPhones and work ethic of the generations coming up the ranks are more challenged when it comes to the level of commitment, time, and focus it takes to address the demands of this rigorous position.” Participant 17 replied, “An airport is a bustling place, a small city in being an apt comparison. Problems appear at a rapid cadence in a wide variety of areas, and the skillset that is required to be successful is broad.” Participant 18 answered, “Managing resources both in the short term and long term.” Participant 19 responded, “Personnel, passengers, pilots, public and politics.”

Interview Question 8 asked: “What qualities do you believe are necessary to achieve success as a major commercial airport CEO?” Participant 1 replied, “Strength of building relations, strong communication, strong organizational skills, and building a strong vision.” Participant 2 answered, “National politics- we are divided and need to make conflict resolution, the CEO needs to bring people together.” Participant 3 responded, “Someone who can read the

board and understands what the board is looking for and is flexible, someone who will do things technically correct and deliver to the commissioners politically.” Participant 4 stated, ”Political astuteness, strategic thinker, someone with leadership ability who also possesses technical expertise.” Participant 5 opined, “Communication skills, effective communication, having a vision, and having a strategic plan and vision of where you want to take the airport.” Participant 6 replied, “High ethical standards lead, a large group of people, balance of various influences, ability to promote the airport to the airlines, negotiate with the airlines, and airport concessionaires. Know when and how to respond to the leadership- vast knowledge of aviation and how to maintain the facility.”

Survey Question 6 asked: “What qualities do you believe are necessary to achieve success as a major commercial airport CEO? Participant 7 replied, “Leadership is most important, also needs to be an effective communicator and relationship manager.” Participant 9 responded, “Honesty, community engagement, and understanding competition.” Participant 10 stated, “Setting the vision, creating strong working relationships, and giving staff what they need to succeed.” Participant 11 opined, ”Airport CEOs must be analytical, risk-tolerant, possess a high level of emotional intelligence, and be willing to operate in a fishbowl environment.” Participant 12 replied, “Flexibility and a calm, confident leadership persona. Airports are dynamic, never static with challenges galore. Employee teams and local community leaders want to know that “we got this” regardless of the challenge. I bring that focused calm to an issue.” Participant 13 answered, “Leadership qualities that include strong communication skills, a team builder, innovative, approachable and flexible, someone who provides vision and strategy, and possess courage, discernment, integrity and be willing to provide and receive constructive

feedback.” Participant 14 responded, “ I believe that leadership skills are a must as well as an understanding of the various areas of an airport: budget, finance, operations, planning & development.” Participant 15 stated, “Thorough knowledge of all aspects of an airport’s function, ability to multi-task in a fast-paced environment, ability to assess risk exposure from the micro and macro perspective.” Participant 16 opined, “Strong leader, clear vision, supportive, problem solver, a trustworthy, listener.” Participant 17 replied, “Flexibility, patience, and the ability to problem-solve are at the top. The ability to communicate effectively and to personally market the airport persuasively to a wide array of individuals and groups is equally critical.” Participant 18 answered, “Adaptability, ingenuity, experience, support of employees, experience.” Participant 19 responded, “The ability to hire good people for the inner circle, the ability to stay calm under stress, seeks solutions to problems, the ability to navigate politics.”

Interview Question 9 asked: “What are the essential functions of an airport CEO’s position that can only be performed by the CEO?” Participant 1 replied, “Accountability to the public, the authority to make difficult decisions, the credibility of the organization depends on the credibility of the director. Lots of politics can be circumvented if the CEO is politically savvy. Having a strong set of values- the CEO has to be a strong representation of the values and have to be a strategic manager and must be visionary.” Participant 2 answered, “Interaction between the institution and the governing board, policy decisions, positive and strategic priority.” Participant 3 responded, “Ultimate decision-making, care, and communicating to the board of commissioners.” Participant 4 stated, “CEO is the face of the airport and cannot delegate that leadership cannot be delegated.” Participant 5 opined, “Cannot delegate vision- the leader has to come up with the plan, set the process, have good facilities, staff, and put a team together.”

Participant 6 replied, “CEO must have impeccable decision-making abilities, uses his experience in airports and aviation to synthesize to get the correct results. Decisions that would impact current standing with a major airline. Decisions with the airline use agreement, terms, and conditions should come from the director to finalize the negotiation.”

Survey Question 11 asked: “What is the main focus of an airport CEO’s job?” Participant 7 replied, “Leadership and stakeholder development, economic growth, and passenger satisfaction.” Participant 9 responded, “Safety is always #1, but next would be economic development that compliments your region.” Participant 10 stated, “Making sure the airport serves the people and business of the region.” Participant 11 opined, “Setting the direction for the staff and allowing them to do their jobs.” Participant 12 replied, “Every day is different. Whether it’s holding a press conference, negotiating an important lease, navigating a complicated personnel matter, addressing the concerns of an unhappy passenger, and handling some political type request, every day flows at its own pace and presents a new mix of opportunities for success (otherwise named challenges). Being flexible and being able to adapt is important” Participant 13 answered, “Operating a safe and secure airport for its passengers, tenants, and employees.” Participant 14 responded, “Leading the staff and providing them with the resources they need to do their job and to set the long-term vision/goals for the airport.” Participant 15 stated, “Largest hub airports tend to hire unqualified people and make decisions because of politics or inclusion goals, not hiring the best-qualified candidates.” Participant 16 opined, “Leading and supporting the overall direction and culture for the complete airport team to deliver safety, customer satisfaction, fiscal sustainability, and meet community goals for the airport.” Participant 17 replied, “Vision, culture, managing key relationships, and communicating the key message of the

airport.” Participant 18 answered, “The safe, efficient, and fiscally sound management of the facility, planning for the future, participation in the community, and management of resources.” Participant 19 responded, “Keeping the ball moving, don’t become stagnant, motivate the team, and stay positive.”

Research Question 2. What essential function should the federal government specify for airport CEOs? The interview questions that correspond to the first research questions are questions 2, 3, 4, and 5. The survey questions that correspond to the first research questions are 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 13, 14, and 15.

Survey Question 9 asked: “In your professional opinion should the federal government set basic criteria for airport CEOs of major commercial airports for uniformity in hiring (similar to those criteria as established for airport consultants, airline pilots, air traffic controllers, airline mechanics)?” All participants except participant 15 did not feel that the government should set basic criteria for airport CEOs at major commercial airports. Participant eight went on to say that the role of the CEO varies by region and “airport CEOs are not a position that directly touches an immediate life safety risk like a doctor, pilot, air traffic controller, engineer, airframe mechanics, etc. who require specific licensure.” Participant 17 stated that “industry certifications and qualification programs can broaden an individual’s skill set, and the accreditation process mentioned by these agencies is sufficient.” Participant 15 stated that the government should set basic criteria for airport CEOs at a major commercial airport, “because too many people are being hired into the CEO positions that are not qualified or capable of doing the job to the level it must be to achieve the safest and most efficient airport system.”

Interview Question 2 asked: “What do you believe are the characters of the CEO nominee that influence utmost to their selection as the CEO?” Participant 1 replied, “I believe the characteristics of the CEO nominee that influence their selection as the CEO are reputation, credibility, and integrity. A team builder with experience in operation of the airport and airport development. Someone who operates transparently. Someone with a strong sense of values, which can articulate the values and ensure that it aligns with the organization’s values. Participant 2 answered, “Leaders that will lead the hot topics, if the hot topic happens to be the capital infrastructure, then they will hire an engineer.” Participant 3 responded, “Charismatic, visionary, responsible for being captain of the ship.” Participant 4 stated, “Understanding how to run the operation of the airport, someone who is strategic, forward-looking.” Participant 5 opined, “Someone with the knowledge of the aviation industry, decisive but thoughtful, good with the public, a team builder.” Participant 6 replied, “Demonstrable ability, which can be quantified through data that successfully led the airport to great success, the industry benchmark, sees to it that the goals of the board of commissioners are achieved. Articulate verbally and report writing. To react well under pressure and can conduct themselves and think on their feet. Expressed knowledge of airports and aviation and has a good relationship with the airlines.”

Interview Question 3 asked: “What do municipalities say is imperative to them in designating the CEO they wish to hire?” Participant 1 replied, “In designating the CEO, Municipalities say that it is imperative to hire someone with proven success, whether it is infrastructure development or airport operation. Someone with the knowledge of the aviation industry, decisive but thoughtful, good with the public, a team builder. Visionary, and knows where the airport should go, the values should resonate at all levels of the organization.

Participant 2 answered, “City-run system, someone who is politically in alignment with the mayor and the mayor’s vision for the airport. The county-run county manager and the commissioners will have input on how the airport is run. Someone who is political and has some knowledge of air service or engineering background with leadership abilities.” Participant 3 responded, “Someone with integrity who manages a lot of money displays integrity and is a good steward of those funds.” Participant 4 stated, “Airports are economic engines, so it is important to have someone understand the economic value and strategic management.” Participant 5 opined, “It varies; if the airport has financial issues, then they look for someone with financial background. Someone who is a good communicator with surrounding communities, federal, and state governments and can make the airport the best gateway.” Participant 6 replied, “Ambition, high level of drive, determination to achieve and work independently, to manage a large staff, must have high ethical values and good judgment. Know all facets of airport operation and leading a large group of people.”

Survey Question 2 asked: “What is your work background and experience?” Participant 8 answered, “I have worked in airports since 1992. I started my career at airports in engineering and facilities management. My work in engineering and facilities gave me a thorough grounding in airport infrastructure, operations, concessions, and later finance.” Participant 9 responded, 27 years in the airline business, with 15 at the executive level.” Participant 10 stated, “Consulting, Airports.” Participant 11 replied, “15 years as a lawyer working at various departments within the local government, which led to Aviation post.” Participant 12 answered, “After graduation (1983), I spent two years working with a CPA firm performing audits, personal and corporate taxes, and other accounting and client-related services. I then moved into my career in airport

management. I caught the jet fuel flu and fell in love. Participant 13 responded, “25 years of professional experience, the majority of the time in aviation.” Participant 14 stated, “25 ½ years in municipal government and 17 years of aviation experience.” Participant 15 replied, “Over 30 years of employment at seven different airports. Twenty-two years in the top executive position and eight years in the assistant director position.” Participant 16 answered, “I started my career at airports in engineering and facilities management.” Participant 17 responded, “15 years of airport management, eight years with DOT, seven years of consultancy, eight years of military.” Participant 18 stated, “Owner of aircraft cleaning business for two years worked for an airline for 14 years, and three years of that was in management, ten years as assistant airport director, and ten years as airport director.” Participant 19 replied, “26 years in airport operations and airport administration.”

Survey Question 3 asked:” How many years of experience did you possess working at an airport (if any) at the time of hire for the position of a major commercial airport CEO?”

Participant 7 replied, “Seven years in the military and 18 years at Civilian airports.” Participant 8 answered, “I had 16 years of airport experience at the time I was appointed Director (CEO).”

Participant 9 answered,” Zero, but came from the aviation industry with airport operations background.” Participant 10 responded, “33 years at airports.” Participant 11 stated, “I have been in or around aviation business since 1988; with a break from 2007 to 2009 hired as the CEO in 2011.” Participant 12 replied, “29 years.” Participant 13 answered, “15+ years working at an airport.” Participant 14 responded, “Seven years.” Participant 15 stated, “Twelve.” Participant 16 stated, “16 years of the airport experience.” Participant 18 replied, “26 years of the airport experience.” Participant 19 answered, ”Ten years @ three airports before I became a CEO.”

Survey Question 4 asked: “What is the reason that you decided to work in public service?” Participant 7 replied, “To make a difference for people and businesses.” Participant 8 answered, “At the start of my career, as a young engineer, I was looking to the challenge/opportunity to design, build, and maintain significant infrastructure. The public sector was a natural fit for me since it is the custodian of the vast majority of our transportation infrastructure.” Participant 9 responded, “I think a region’s airport is critical to overall regional success, and I wanted to be apart.” Participant 10 stated, “It matches what I care about...serving people.” Participant 11 replied, “I believe public service is an admirable field; it requires dedicated, smart people to help lead and manage important organizations for our communities. Airport management is the perfect blend of public service for your community and business discipline it takes to run a global, multi-million dollar business.” Participant 12 answered, “I did not like CPA work very much and applied at an airport due to recent Bond Issue and planned new terminal project.” Participant 13 responded, “Working in public service allows employees to develop and influence municipal infrastructure plans that improve overall mobility throughout the nation. Public service careers is an individual choice, and I’ve found great personal value knowing I was entrusted to provide a tangible benefit to society, especially in aviation, which annually touches millions.” Participant 14 stated, “I like working for the good of the community.” Participant 15 replied, “Wanted to work at the airport, and governments are the only ones that own and operate airports to offer these types of positions.” Participant 16 answered, “As an engineer, the public sector was a natural fit for me.” Participant 17 responded, “I have always believed in public service as the highest calling an individual can provide. From my years of service in the military to federal service in the FAA and now at five different

airports, I have enjoyed the work under the premise of making things better for our country and the people in it. Regardless of the bluster, those in the private sector may say, the big things in this country still happen through government and public service. I'm proud to be a part of that." Participant 18 stated, "While technically public service, this is a career much like my time with the airlines, I enjoyed the industry. Public service was never part of the equation." Participant 19 replied, "Public service was not a consideration, only an aspect of the field I wanted to be in."

Survey Question 8 asked: "What federal licensure (if any) is required of an airport CEO? Specify type, rating, and the number of flight hours." Participant 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19 stated "None." Participants 11 & 12 replied, "There are no licensure requirements. There are several industry certifications that some CEOs possess, which are often listed as desirable on job postings, but there are no federal requirements." Participant 17 answered, "None, although, it's helpful to have a background in aviation and to pursue industry accreditation. At many large airports, the CEO may not even have a pilot's license or specific technical airport skills. While those skills and experience may be helpful, CEOs at large hub airports all have large staffs of highly and especially skilled team members that can handle any technical issue that arise. With that said, it certainly doesn't hurt and can add to a CEO's credibility if they have some experience in the field and a pilot's license. It's different at small airports, in my opinion. For airport managers at general aviation airports, technical skills and real aviation experience is often much more important and more highly valued."

Survey Question 13 asked: "How do you evaluate the airport's mission against the demand of the public hiring agency, airport staff, the airlines, the FAA, the airport travelers, and other federal agencies? Please explain." Participant 8 replied, "Surprisingly, all these entities

often share a set of common basic goals that can and should be incorporated in the airport's mission statement. All these entities want a safe, customer-focused, fiscally sustainable, economic generating airport that is efficiently run, and a good steward of the environment. There can certainly be disagreements over issues like airport noise, but generally, if the airport has embraced the community's goals and values, even issues such as noise are balanced by the other benefits the airport provides." Participant 11 answered, "The ultimate mission of an airport is to connect people and goods to the community. By doing this effectively and efficiently, an airport plays an important role as an economic engine for a community." Participant 12 responded, "As part of the diverse set of challenges, an airport CEO has, listening and understanding people must be at the core. Sometimes the demands of the federal government are opposite of what the traveling public or an important tenant want. Being able to bridge that gap to create win-win-wins is important to longevity." Participant 13 stated, "Today, we are fortunate to see continued investment and demand in the travel industry, yet it's more and more difficult for airports to meet that demand. We see multiple constrained resources, financial, talent pools (and hiring of airport staff, FAA staff, etc.) and time. However, this demand has challenged airports to be more innovative, embrace more technological solutions, and facilitated a greater partnership and collaborative effort between other agencies, airports, private entities to help complete its mission." Participant 14 replied, "The airport is a department of the city, and we align our department's strategic plan with that of the city's. Within our strategic plan, we establish goals and objectives, which cover all the areas that you mentioned in your question. As an example, the airlines and the airport travelers are both our customers, and we set high standards in meeting

their needs. We also benchmark against other airports. Regarding the FAA and TSA, we utilize compliance as a measurement.”

Participant 15 answered, “You know you are successful when all of the stakeholders are successful in carrying out their mission.” Participant 17 replied, “Airports use an often-dizzying array of metrics, from passenger loads, cost per enplanement, budget and accounting measures, etc. to determine the current state of the airport and measure improvement. Benchmarking with other airports of similar size and type is also pretty typical. Having strategic goals, a strategic plan, or a business plan also provides guidance that allows measurement of success or failure.” Participant 18 answered, “Management of resources to best serves the competing needs of various constituents. We cannot provide everything to everyone; therefore, we have to prioritize what we can provide and how best to do it that serves the interest of the airport.” Participant 19 responded, “The airports' mission is defined by those variables; hence, the evaluation is organic and living daily in our responsibilities to all airport users.”

Interview Question 4 asked: “What is your comprehension of the assessment methods boards go through in choosing the successful applicant?” Participant 1 replied, “The assessment method boards go through in choosing the successful applicant varies; some hire recruitment firms, and some hire industry experts or a combination of the two.” Participant 2 answered, “Hire an outside consultant – the consultant does the screening, then a shortlist of candidates that best fit the culture of the region is presented to the board.” Participant 3 responded, “Varies widely some perform an IQ TEST, while others look at psychological profiles, background check, and personality evaluation.” Participant 4 stated, “Varies, since recruiters go through the selection process, they look to find a good fit for a director with certain acumen, for example, a director

who can work with the airlines and grow airport traffic.” Participant 5 replied, “Recruiters who specialize in aviation- executive search committee, then the board of commissioners makes the selection.” Participant 6 answered, “Commissioners should agree on a proper job description, function, and future goals for the airport. Advertise nationally to get a large pool of candidates. They should try to avoid politics in hiring and not allow outside influences so the airport will remain independent. Then it should be shortlisted to 2-3 candidates, background check done, then panel interview, which is not influenced by one person. A secret ballot is the best.”

Interview Question 5 asked: “Would you explain the standard airport CEO selection process beginning from the board of commissioner’s approach that led to your selection as a successful contender?” Participant 1 replied, “They look at internal candidates, has the previous CEO prepared the organization for succession and who they, are and do they have the right characteristics. Internal review of candidates then who are the other candidates outside and how to lure the successful directors away from other airports. Start with 60 candidates and shorten the list to 2-3. Review the current plan by industry experts such as consultants and how many should get interviewed, only two recommendations from the commission to the mayor who will hire the director. Look for the strength of building relations, strong communicator, strong organization builder, and a visionary.” Participant 2 answered, “Hired an outside consultant, which provided a list of 10-15 questions screening process, then a phone interview which will shortlist the candidate list. Then a long interview process consisting of 1 ½ hour of corrective action exercise for a nonperforming employee. Followed by observed by a panel of 7 staff with different interests and personalities and to come up with a plan of action, so they disagreed with whatever the candidate proposed, and a panel of 4 members observed the response. Then back to making a

budget presentation to board members who were asking contradictory questions on how to get through all the complex issues. Followed by an interview with the entire board of commissioners consisting of 20 questions, which was very intensive.” Participant 3 responded, “A recruiting firm- a description of the job which will be provided to the recruitment firm which puts a package together, advertise, gather information on who is interested in the job, application process, video interview with technical questions, followed by shortlisting of the candidate pool to 2-5 candidates then interview by the board of commissioners.” Participant 4 stated, “Outreach with a recruiting firm. The shortlist was initially developed, then a Skype interview; then, senior staff interviewed the candidate, followed by an interview with the commissioners. The process was directed more about the right fit and leadership. The recruiters should guard the selection process by not making it public.” Participant 5 replied, “The board decides which direction the airport needs to go through and identifies the priority for municipalities. The mayor or the advisory board identify what community relation or business relationship they need. Whether the need is air service development or fiscal, they develop a job description, come up with the skill set they are looking for, then they will do a national search either by hiring a recruiter or through the Human Resources. The next phase is to decide how to go about shortlisting and how much public involvement do they want to incorporate as part of the selection process.” Participant 6 answered, “Prepare a job description, review the description, advertise, gather resume, shortlist to 5 candidates for the board to interview. Many boards have 1 or 2 board members who can influence the entire selection process for personal interest.”

Survey Question 14 asked: “What steps are necessary for the hiring of an airport CEO at your respective airport?” Participant 7 replied, “Appointment by the mayor of the city.”

Participant 8 answered, “The Airport Director is appointed by the City Manager and approved by the City Council. Generally, the process would start with the review and update of hiring selection criteria by the City Manager, Director of HR, and internal and external stakeholder panels. After this is complete, the position would be publicly posted. As needed, an outside private HR firm may be used to assist in finding candidates with sufficient experience, education, and a successful record of leadership. Ultimately the pool of applicants would be reviewed based on the selection criteria. The employees and public panels and the City Manager would interview the finalists. The City Manager would then make a final selection for the position, which, as noted previously, must be approved by the City Council.” Participant 9 responded, “Mayoral appointment.” Participant 10 stated, “Competitive Selection process and appointment by county structure.” Participant 11 replied, “The airport authority board is charged with the hiring and firing of the CEO. Both actions take the vote of the majority of members of the board. I am the only direct hire of the board; it is my responsibility to hire and oversee other members of the staff.”

Participant 12 answered, “In our case is a pre-planned succession plan. Many airports hire a headhunter and do national recruitment. I’ve only been hired once as a CEO, but I’ve not been selected many times. It is a very competitive field, and many of the people I have competed with have been friends.” Participant 13 responded, “Identifying the ideal characteristics and skills needed at the time of recruitment. It may depend on the stage of airport development, perceived identity within the community, stakeholder relationships, and financial strengths. All of them are important, but where we are the time defines weighted emphasis during the selection process. Extensive candidate background search is also important, typically with the help of an

executive recruiting firm, followed by several rounds of technical, business, personality, and leadership experience questions.” Participant 14 stated, “The Human Resources department will handle the recruitment process, sometimes hiring an outside agency to handle the process. Once the list has been reduced to candidates who will be interviewed, the deputy city manager, as well as other panelists he chooses, will handle the interview. The final selection is then interviewed and approved by the city manager.” Participant 15 replied, “Meet the stated criteria and have the right demeanor and prove your knowledge and motivation in the interview process.” Participant 17 answered, “It is a small field of serious applicants. Typically a national search, which may be conducted internally (often not successful) or led by a recruiting firm (usually successful). Most organizations start with the board or selection committee clarifying the job description, advertising for up to 30 days (or an open advertisement until filled), and an initial review and winnowing of candidates. After this, there is often a phone screen, perhaps a taped video interview that is reviewed by the recruiting firm or the board, leading to final interviews for a group of 3-5 candidates. With the guidance and input of the recruiting firm, a final selection would be made, and a job offer tendered.” Participant 18 responded, “Publish, search, evaluate and select.” Participant 19 stated, “Advertising – application review by HR for responsiveness- app review by a search team, interview, offer letter, negotiations.”

Survey Question 15 asked: “Please add any additional information about your position as the CEO and the essential functions of the job as well as any additional information about the hiring process.” Participant 9 replied, “I am an appointee of the mayor, but in that process, there were several meetings and or interviews with key leaders in the region. Additionally, meetings with key business organizations that operate at the airport to ensure there would be a good working

relationship.” Participant 13 answered, “I believe CEOs, in general, understand that although they are some decisions only they can make, there is support across the industry. There are days we mentor others or become the mentee, but it’s another significant part of our role that makes us successful. Building and sharing decades of experience amongst peers is a valuable resource. Candidates that show well-established connections across the industry are usually positive.” Participant 14 responded, “Job specifications are available on the city’s website.” Participant 18 stated, “Education and experience come in a variety of ways. There is no single way to become a CEO, to start with, a passion for the industry, along with appropriate education and experience, provides at least a background. Also, it is essential for everyone considering this type of position to find whether it genuinely fits his or her interest, passion, personality, and desire. There are many vital functions within the industry that all have significant value. Much like trying on shoes, not every shoe fits.” Participant 19 replied, “A good CEO must also be humble and admit errors, must be willing to take risks and know when to reduce efforts or terminate an idea, must be willing to delegate and hold themselves and others accountable, must have a thirst for knowledge and accept guidance when applicable.”

Themes

Three themes emerged from the data. The themes that transpired from the data were the experiences of the 19 participants who represented the leading airports in the nation. These are Effective communication, Industry knowledge, and political astuteness. Appendix J lists the research questions by participants’ responses, which correlate to themes described.

Theme 1: The ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing. All participants explained their experiences as airport CEOs and emphasized the ability to

communicate effectively both verbally and in writing. Participant 1 stated that the relationship with the airlines is political, and the relationship with the surrounding communities is very political, so they need someone who will communicate effectively with the community.

Participant 5 stated that to communicate effectively with stakeholders is key to being successful.

Participant 6 specified that his employer was looking for someone who could express himself well verbally, make a presentation, write reports, and speak to the media, and the public with confidence. Participant 17 stipulated the importance of the ability to communicate effectively and persuasively both verbally and in writing. The ability to speak effectively and persuasively to groups is important, in my opinion, though I've seen CEOs who were still effective and didn't have that particular skill. They usually have others who are good at it by their side.

Theme 2: Knowledge of the field of aviation. All participants explained their experiences as airport CEOs and emphasized the importance of having solid knowledge and foundation in aviation. Participant 1 stated that he believed the characteristics of the CEO nominee that influenced utmost to their selection, as the CEO was “a team builder with experience in operation of the airport and airport development.” he went on to say that in designating the CEO, Municipalities say that it is imperative that it is someone with proven success, whether it is infrastructure development or airport operation, a CEO should be visionary.

Participant 6 stated that his employer was looking for someone with knowledge of aviation and is familiar with major construction projects at airports. Participant 7 stated that years of experience, leadership abilities, and ability to develop and maintain relationships in the aviation ecosystem and local communities deem to be a candidate's most significant capability to qualify for as an airport CEO. Participant 8 opined that an airport CEO must have a background

that includes proven organizational leadership, prior airport experience, and a track record of prior growth and success in achieving goals. Participant 9 identified having an aviation background and detailed knowledge of the industry to be an important proficiency for a CEO applicant.

Participant 11 stated, industry knowledge is essential, and the ability to analyze a situation and make decisions quickly and confidently is also essential. Participant 12 stated that after working as a CPA he caught the “jet fuel flu” and fell in love with the field of aviation.” and it is essential to have “Strong knowledge of government relations, airport operations, business, personal management, and people skills, honesty, integrity, work ethic, leadership qualities, and the ability to juggle many balls under pressure.” Participant 13 opined, what is desirable is a demonstrated experience in developing and leading an airport team through complex and challenging airport issues, requiring strategic vision, buy-in from various entities, and working within a limited set of time and resources. Participant 14 opined, experience at a commercial airport, as well as being well rounded in all aspects of airport operations to be the necessary proficiency for a CEO applicant. Participant 15 classified “love managing airports” as a CEO candidate’s most significant capability to qualify for the job, and the participant went on to say, “If you do it just because it is a job, that lack of passion for airports will be detrimental.” I just wanted to work at the airport. The participant went on to say to identify thorough knowledge of all aspects of an airport’s function as the necessary quality to achieve success as a major commercial airport CEO. Participant 18 identified the passion for aviation as being the most significant capability to qualify for as an airport CEO. “Leadership, industry experience, airport experience I believe is mandatory.”

Theme 3: Political astuteness. All participants explained their experiences as airport CEOs and emphasized the importance of politics in their posts. Participant 1 said, “the process is very political, the relationship with the airlines is political, and the relationship with the surrounding communities is very political so they need someone who will communicate effectively with the community,” he went on to say that the CEO must be political and help be part of the solution. Must have broad knowledge and be able to balance the pull/push of the community, concessions, and obviously, politics.” In response to the question of what are the essential functions of an airport CEO’s position, the participant responded, “lots of politics can be circumvented if the CEO is politically savvy.”

Participant 2 stated that in city-run systems, the airport CEO must be someone who is politically aligned with the mayor and the mayor’s vision for the airport. Participant 3 identified politics as the most difficult challenge the airport CEOs face. The CEO stated the necessary quality to achieve success as a commercial airport CEO is to “read the board and understand what the board is looking for and have flexibility, someone who will do things technically correct and deliver to the commissioners politically.”

Participant 4 asserted that most places hire and look for a certain level of expertise, extra points for ex-military candidates, which does not work well in civilian airports since civilian airports are business have different political challenges”, “understanding politics is key and must be politically astute. They have to know how to deal with Politics. Must cultivate the politics, which is the most difficult part of the job. The challenges are adaptive, knowing politics, and having political acumen is key, being a strategic manager.” The CEO stated the necessary quality to

achieve success is political astuteness, strategic thinker, someone with leadership ability who also possesses technical expertise.

Participant 5 identified politics as one of the most difficult challenges the airport CEOs face. Participant 6 identified politics as the most difficult challenge the airport CEOs face. It is very difficult to stay independent of political motivation. The CEO controls a large number of staves, and the politicians try to control the airport. FAA guidance is that airports are to be independent of the government, i.e., FAA policy on revenue diversions; however, it is very difficult to stay independent of political influences. Participant 7 identified politics as the most difficult challenge the airport CEOs face. Participant 9 identified “managing political expectations” as the most difficult challenge the airport CEOs face. Participant 11 stated, “It is difficult to advance change as quickly as necessary in highly regulated, highly visible organizations that may be encumbered by political systems.” and stated that the boards look for someone who is “political and has diplomatic acumen.” Participant 12 identified politics as one of the main focus of an airport CEO’s job, “handling some political type request, every day flows at its own pace, and presents a new mix of opportunities for success (otherwise named challenges).” Participant 15 identified politics as the most difficult challenge the airport CEOs face, “navigating the political aspects of the airport.” and as one of the main focus of an airport CEO’s job, “Largest hub airports tend to hire unqualified people and make decisions because of politics or inclusion goals, not hiring the best-qualified candidates.” Participant 19 identified politics as one of the most difficult challenges the airport CEOs face, “Personnel, passengers, pilots, public and politics.” and “the ability to navigate politics” as a necessary quality to achieve success as a major commercial airport CEO.

In numerous instances, throughout the data, the same words occurred, and it is highlighted to be linked with more than one code. The NVivo12 output included a word query that identifies the word representation based on the frequency during interviewee responses. Appendix K depicts a word query as generated by NVivo 12. In numerous instances during the data gathering, certain matching words or portions emphasized or categorized to be related to more than one code. The word politics and political occurred most frequently in the data. As part of the responses provided by the participants, the NVivo12 generated a word tree (Appendix L). The word politics and political amplifies the code symbol established on the sum of times the excerpt is coded, which the airport CEOs employed through interviews and surveys, which was analyzed.

Evaluation of findings

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. The study concentrated on major commercial airports that accounted for 0.05 of a percent and greater of all U.S. passenger traffic embarking on a flight in the United States. As reported by FAA's NPIAS (2017), there were 133 major commercial airports in the U.S. that handled more than 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarking on a flight. The participants for the study were from 19 different airports of various sizes and geographic locations. As identified in Table 2, the study participants from each airport hub system are representative of 14% of the nation's major commercial airports. The results obtained pointed to the importance of public service motivation and leadership, politics, and aviation. The results of the study also stressed that communication skills, whether written or oral, political

acumen, and industry knowledge are central qualities of an airport CEO. According to Babatunde (2015), leadership encompasses numerous critical abilities, such as having the creativity and being a visionary, someone who plans and engineer's success. These qualities were reflected in the 19 study participants. Public service incentives of public employees can be multifaceted and established on many influences (Ballart & Riba, 2016).

The two research questions revealed three themes throughout the progression of the multi-case study research: effective communication, industry knowledge, and political astuteness. Understanding the background of each CEO and their combined perception in identifying the essential functions of airport CEOs position at a major commercial airport was a necessary measure. The airport CEOs echoed that the aviation industry knowledge is essential to analyze a situation and make decisions quickly, and confidently. In hiring the CEOs, the local government entity is putting their trust in the abilities of that CEO. According to Egan (2011), when an entity put their confidence in another party, they trusted that person would take their wellbeing into account, and they had assurance in that character they thought the individual was proficient in their performances. CEO's function not only based on their knowledge and abilities but also their particular opinions and beliefs. The person's particular opinions and beliefs are motivating properties to their decision-making (Kroll & Vogel, 2014). There is no one definition of leadership (Gini & Green, 2014). The attained results indicated the significance that politics plays in the airport systems. Playing politics can interfere with the leader mentality. Warren Bennis, a pioneer of the contemporary field of leadership studies, suggested that leadership is an issue of the individual's traits (Gini & Green, 2014).

The CEOs identified the process of hiring airport executives, the relationship with the airlines, and the relationship with the surrounding communities to be very political, and politics led to needing someone who will communicate effectively with the community. According to Young and Wels (2019), airport CEOs must undertake the responsibility for leading the airport and having a positive impact to the local economy, providing good relations with the airport's users such as the airlines and the passengers they serve and the surrounding community as well as keeping up the operations of the airport itself. The airports were identified as a department of the city, or county and the airport CEOs had the challenge of aligning the airport's strategic plan with that of the cities or counties. Within the airport's strategic plan, the CEOs established goals and objectives, which cover all the areas. The airlines and the airport travelers were both looked at as customers. It was interesting to note that airports benchmark against other airports as a form of competition, and the second noteworthy point was that compliance with FAA and TSA was also utilized as a measurement. Several CEOs identified that at times, the demands of the federal government are opposite of what the traveling public or an important tenant want. According to Wai and Rindermann (2015), the route to turning into a CEO can be regarded as a hard mental task. The airport CEOs are the bridge that fills the gap to create a system of airports. Multiple constrained were identified, such as resources, financial, talent pools (and hiring of airport staff, FAA staff, etc.) and time. Industry knowledge of airports and the passion for aviation was a common theme throughout. Kenville and Smith (2014) posited that airport CEOs face extraordinary political, environmental, and economic burdens such as erratic operations, greater than before due to competition, changing governing concerns, and economic demands.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. In doing so, the researcher interviewed six and surveyed 13 airport CEOs from 19 different airports reporting to 19 separate local government entities. The yardsticks for participation were to be an airport CEO between the age of 18 to 65, at a major commercial airport and for the airport to account for at least 0.05 percent of all passengers in the U.S. Each interview participant was asked nine interview questions and each survey participant was asked 15 questions. The questions varied from identifying what characteristics they considered to be most prominent which led to their selection as the CEO, the most difficult challenges of an airport CEOs position, the necessary qualities to achieve success as a major commercial airport CEO, the main focus of an airport CEOs job, the reason they decided to work in public service, background and proficiencies that affect an applicant being selected for an airport CEOs position at a major commercial airport and the essential functions of the job.

The two research questions uncovered three themes from the data, effective communication, industry knowledge, and political astuteness. Understanding the visions of the leadership in the replies was valuable in comprehending their drives and how politics, aviation knowledge, and communication skills are beneficial to the development of the variables. This study focused on the need for national standards for the recruitment of CEOs at major commercial airports. Currently, the city and county airport boards hire private consultants to help with the hiring of the CEOs. The industry certification and training for the CEOs are currently optional and are handled by several private organizations, and these industry certifications are

meant to test the CEO's proficiency. While the FAA provides training for specific positions at the airport, including airport firefighting, ATC, pilot and certifies the airport infrastructure, the FAA currently is not involved in the training and certification of airport CEOs.

Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

The problem addressed in this study was the decentralized system of airports in the U.S., and the lack of national standards for the hiring of CEOs at major commercial airports. The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. As reported by Jimenez, Claro, and Sousa (2014), airports have typically been considered as public service suppliers. According to Kutlu and McCarthy (2016), local governments manage commercial service airports in the U.S., but, each airport has a distinctive administrative classification.

According to Özdemir, Çetek, and Usanmaz (2018), airports are the most vital feature of the air transport organization since they are the beginning and end of air travel. This qualitative multi-case research included interviews with six airport CEOs and surveyed 13 airport CEOs. The total number of participants was from 19 different airports across the nation. The researcher envisioned exploring and understanding the perception of the airport CEOs in their hiring process. The first limitation of this qualitative multi-case study was that the data from the inquiry was contingent on the participant's trustworthiness and motivation to share their experience and knowledge. The participants could have personal biases in responding honestly to the questions. This limitation was addressed using open-ended surveys via phone interviews and mail, which helped the researcher understand the perception and experiences of a large number of airport CEOs from various geographic areas, managing different size commercial airports. The researcher conformed to the guiding principle as delineated by Northcentral University and the

Institutional Review Board (IRB). To safeguard integrity, credibility, and confidentiality, the researcher kept close communication with the dissertation chair.

The study participants were sought according to Northcentral University's IRB procedures. The researcher gained IRB approval before the commencement of the open-ended surveys. The participants for this study were recruited by mail. The correspondence encompassed the purpose of the research and benchmarks for participation. Participation in this study was voluntary. CEOs who were interested in contributing to the survey responded by communicating with the researcher through the mail, emails, and phone calls. An informed consent release form was provided to the CEOs preceding to the phone interviews and mail-out surveys for the CEO's acknowledgment (see Appendix D & D-1). The information provided by the participants will be kept confidential to the extent allowable by law. Some steps the researcher took to keep the CEO's identity confidential were to assign a number to identify each CEO, and the CEO's names had not been associated with the data. The people who have access to the information are the researcher. The individual responses have not been connected with any of the CEOs in any of the reports linked to this study; the participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point.

Implications

The answers that the 19 study participants provided tackled the following two research questions: What are the essential functions of airport CEOs? What essential function should the federal government specify for airport CEOs? Each of the 19 CEO participants articulated opinions about their job function, proficiencies in their leadership position, working in aviation, and working for the public sector. Analysis of the participant responses discovered three themes; these are Effective Communication, Industry Knowledge, and Political Astuteness. The general

implications for the study offer an interpretation of the essential functions of airport CEOs in the U.S. The research paper facilitated a greater comprehension of essential job functions of airport CEOs. There are limited inquiries that have been made on the topic of airports and airport CEOs.

Research question 1. What are the essential functions of airport CEOs? The analysis of this research question was determined through the process of coding. The airport CEOs echoed that aviation industry knowledge is essential to analyze a situation and make decisions quickly and confidently. The attained results indicated that operating a safe and secure airport for passengers, tenants, and employees and keeping safety as the number one priority is the vital essential function of all CEOs. The participants also echoed that having strong communication skills to relay the necessary information to passengers, tenants, employees, and the various federal agencies is essential. The airport CEOs reiterated that the significance that politics plays in running the airport makes the job most challenging. According to Gini and Green (2014), leadership is the utmost transcribed theme in political theory, social science, and management analyses.

In numerous instances, throughout the data gathering, the same words occurred, certain matching words or portions emphasized or categorized to be related to more than one code. The NVivo12 output included a word query that identified the word representation based on the frequency during interviewee responses. The word politics and political occurred most frequently in the data. Appendix F depicts a word query as generated by NVivo12. As part of the answers provided by the participants, the NVivo12 produced a word tree (Appendix G). The word politics and political amplifies the code symbol established on the sum of times the excerpt is coded, which the airport CEOs employed through interviews and surveys, which was analyzed. The

overall implications for the study suggest the intricacies of airport CEO's delicate nature of functioning and politics as the predominant impediment to get the job done.

Research question 2. What essential function should the federal government specify for airport CEOs? While the same themes as question 1 were established in this question, most airport CEOs wished for the airport CEO functions to be determined by the local government entity even though the recruitment was done by outside companies. The participants with aviation backgrounds and knowledge felt that industry knowledge was vital. Most CEOs did not want the federal government deciding on the essential function and felt that industry certification by a third party was sufficient. Only a few airport CEOs felt strongly in favor of the federal government establishing essential functions for the commercial service CEOs and stated that too many unqualified people were appointed into the position. Limitations comprised of a lack of assessment of the degree to which CEOs perceived this to be a threat. A different study may have measured the significance of this threat.

The FAA, under the FAR part 139, certifies public-use airports to accommodate scheduled commercial air service for the passengers (FAA Airport Certification, 2018). According to Arblaster and Hooper (2015), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) upholds that, in the end, all national governments are accountable for safeguarding users from the misuse of market control. Therefore they need to create suitable regulatory provisions (Arblaster & Hooper, 2015). The job of the airport CEO is complicated with responsibility for the security and safety as well as efficiency and environmental stewardship of a large and dynamic facility. The qualification and performance standards for the position of airport CEOs are varied from airport to airport. As reported by Kutlu and McCarthy (2016), while all U.S.

commercial airports are in the civil division, not all commercial, civic sector airports are uniformly effective. Jimenez et al. (2014) describe the intricacy of the airport profession, specifically in what distresses the function of the airports as a business that functions in a system of sponsors, to create a prearranged facility bundles directed at numerous kinds of consumers. The system of airports is decentralized since each airport CEO reports to their local governing entity. According to Wiesel and Modell (2014), disparities in the perception of public area consumerism happen to be inserted in dissimilar governance performance. In this research, the outcomes establish the national attributes that would be most significant for airport CEOs at major commercial airports.

Recommendations for Practice

The results of the study stipulate that the development of national standards for the hiring of CEOs at major commercial airports is essential. According to Tomaževic, Tekavcic, and Peljhan (2017), public administration throughout the world face numerous demands to transform and develop proficiency and success, and to decrease their need on taxpayers, while upholding the level and attribute of amenities delivered to the public. The decentralized system of airports falls under such a premise. The result of this study will add to the fundamental facts and scholarly framework associated with the field of airport management. The study is significant to the U.S. travelers, the federal government, and the local governments hiring the airport CEOs. The study will contribute to the literature as it relates to major commercial airports in the United States, which handle the majority of total air passengers. The study has social significance since commercial service airports move passengers and cargo. As reported by Florida, Mellander, and Holgersson (2015), airports influence local growth both by moving people and cargo. Since

airport CEOs are in the leadership position, they are responsible for the safeguarding of local passengers. According to McNeill (2014), neither airports nor their evolving rationalities or metropolitan locales can be cogitated as singular, uniform, or unconcealed units in isolation. Bacot and Christine (2006) posited that airport organizations in the United States are a strange but dynamic element of local governments. According to Enoma, Allen, and Enoma (2009), the airport safety necessitates an organized methodology between the numerous interest constituents and the government as well as the patrons and employees

The system of airports is decentralized since each airport CEO reports to their local entity. There is a lack of continuity at the local level when all other aspects of the operations of an airport are regulated at the federal level. The findings indicate the applicable standards for the hiring of CEOs at major commercial airports once national standards are in place. The academic and scholarly community may find use in this qualitative multi-case study on the decentralized system of U.S. airports. The study will add to the fundamental facts and scholarly framework associated with the field of airport management. Additionally, this multi-case study research provides a basis from which scholars can formulate new research questions in pursuit of further research studies.

Recommendations for Future Research

As reported by Yin (2016), a case study research systematically examines a real-life occurrence inside its environmental setting. According to Cleary, Horsfall, and Hayter (2014), the solid idea of a qualitative study was that it provided the investigator the chance to investigate a subject exhaustively. As reported by Lawrence and Tar (2013), a qualitative study provides an occasion for the assessor to increase understanding and collect conceptions that are possibly

overlooked by conventional data calculation methods. Based on this multi-case research study outcomes, six suggestions for future research have been found. Each suggestion is established on what was revealed in the existing literature and gaps marked in the evaluation of this study.

Recommendation one. Ployhart, Nyberg, Reilly, and Maltarich (2014) discerned knowledge to be amongst the notions of human capital and human capital properties. Research should commence in determining the national policy development to outline a basic set of criteria or KSAs for airport CEO positions at major commercial airports. According to Robinson-Morrall et al. (2018), KSA-task association rankings necessitate raters to specify the level to which each KSA is linked to each position undertaking. The decentralization of airports uncovers a multifaceted geography of constitutional authority comprising of unsettled networks of actors tangled in multi-government administrations; a network of collectively detached; efficient passageways for aircraft movement that are frequently the cause of skirmish amongst opposing technical and societal strains; and observation bays through which personal movement, uniqueness and, concerns are built and disputed (Addie, 2014).

Recommendation two. Future research on the feasibility of the FAA-certified courses in airport management, including airport budget, finance, operation, planning, and development. Strengthening the existing system to incorporate FAA certifications in conjunctions with industry certifications and Collegiate Training with universities specializing in aviation to help train future Airport CEOs. According to Young and Wells (2019), airport CEOs must undertake the responsibility for leading the airport and having a positive impact to the local economy, providing good relations with the airport's users such as the airlines and the passengers they serve and the surrounding community as well as keeping up the operations of the airport itself.

Recommendation three. Conduct a multi-case study to determine how many airport CEOs have to go through a process of internship with small airports to build upon the job knowledge before moving on to larger commercial airports and have gained the necessary knowledge prior to employment at a commercial airport. The purpose is to investigate areas for improvement. The management of an airport is relevant not only for the airport's workers, and landlords, but also for the accompanying terminus (Fong & Law, 2014).

Recommendation Four. Conduct a similar multi-case study with mid-level department managers at major commercial airports. The purpose of running additional analyses is to investigate similarities and areas for improvement. It also will provide a chance to examine if the FAA in those departments is offering training. Yan and Oum (2014) posited that professional concerns encourage the director of an airport authority, a not-for-profit unit; a high functioning in overseeing airport operation promotes the labor market's opinion of his skill and interprets it into potential job prospects.

Recommendation Five. To conduct a similar multi-case study with city/county officials in charge of the airports as participants to find out their perceptions and understanding of the basic set of criteria or KSAs for airport CEO positions by the FAA. Human resource management (HRM) denotes the method of categorizing and defining the responsibilities, tasks, and stipulations of a specific post, level of knowledge, skills and, qualification (Wolfson & Mathieu, 2018). Detjen and Webber (2017) denote knowledge as tangible essentials, comprising of processes, which may be specified in words, methods, simulations, or other symbols that can be gathered. Skill signifies the use of facts and processes that have been acquired through performance and repetition by mastery of the subject.

Recommendation six. To conduct a quantitative study with city/county officials as participants to determine if the characteristics such as political astuteness, industry knowledge, and effective communication were missing in airport CEO candidates would the civic authority still hire the CEO. According to Kenville and Smith (2014), airport executives cope with extraordinary political, environmental, and economic difficulties, which cause modification; shifting an institute's configuration necessitates complete leadership and complex group effort.

Conclusion

According to Yan, and Oum (2014), commercial airports in the United States are controlled by local regimes either unambiguously as government divisions such as the Department of Aviation, or circuitously via airport authorities. The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the primary attributes that could be the leading indicators in the event national standards for the hiring of airport CEOs are pursued at major commercial airports. The results attained indicated the decentralized hiring practices at nations' major commercial airports. Travelers depend on the federal government to provide a safe transportation system. However, the airports, which are points of entry and exit, are not uniformly run and operated. Addie (2014) posited that airports operate as significant interchanges via universal systems that are both profoundly assimilated with, and influenced by, the re-adjusted relationship generated by the aviation industry.

The results of this study also point to politics as the most challenging undertaking of airport CEOs. According to Gini and Green (2014), leadership is the utmost transcribed theme in political theory, social science, and management analyses. The findings realized the significance of industry knowledge, and that the educational training considerably adds to the development of

the leadership skills of the persons in charge. As reported by Florida, Mellander, and Holgersson (2015), airports influence local growth both by moving people and cargo. Since airport CEOs are in the leadership position, they are responsible for the safeguarding of local passengers. The outcomes of the study additionally emphasized that communication skills are vital attributes of a successful CEO. According to Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, and McKee (2014), leadership encompasses numerous essential abilities such as being a coach, visionary, and designer; furthermore, “effective leaders and leadership behavior can positively influence organizations” (p.63-82). In this research, the results demonstrate the national attributes that would be most significant for the hiring of airport CEOs at major commercial airports.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Literature Search Terms

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation

Appendix C: Open-ended survey

Appendix D: Informed Consent Release Form (Survey)

Appendix D1: Informed Consent Release Form (phone interview)

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Appendix F: Key Points

Appendix G: The challenges of airport CEOs

Appendix H: Designating the airport CEO

Appendix I: Essential Functions of the airport CEO

Appendix J: Research questions and participants' responses

Appendix K: Word Query generated by NVivo12 for mac software

Appendix L: Word tree

Appendix A: Literature Search Terms

Search Terms	Peer Reviewed Journals
Public Administration Leadership	288,322
Public Sector Leadership	231,089
Public Sector Theory	492,433
Public Service Leadership	443,320
Leadership Theory	24
U.S. Airports	85,471
U.S. Airport Leadership	14,933
Airport Leadership Theory	11,571
Federal Agency Leadership	105,602
Code of Federal Regulation	245,532
U.S. Department of Transportation	339,093
FAA Leadership of Airports	519
CEO competency theory	25,865
CEO Job Analysis	50,960
Total	2,334,734

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation

Dear Airport CEO,

My name is Marjan Mazza, and I am a student at Northcentral University. I am doing a research study as part of my degree. The purpose of this study is to look at the need for national values for hiring CEOs at major airports in the United States.

The research activities for my paper will be mail survey forms and phone interviews. The yardsticks for participation are to be an airport CEO between the age of 18 to 65, at a major commercial airport and for the airport to account for at least 0.05 percent of all passengers in the U.S.

Please let me know of your approval to join my study by letting me know if you choose to participate in a phone interview or if you prefer to answer a survey and return this letter back to me.

Regards,

Marjan Mazza

Doctoral Candidate, Northcentral University

1739 Brooke Beach Dr.

Navarre, FL 32566

Appendix C: Open-ended survey

Participant Screening Question

Are you the CEO at a major commercial airport or a representative?

_____ Yes _____ No

Does your airport account for at least 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarking on a flight in the U.S?

_____ Yes _____ No

Are you between 18 and 65 years old?

_____ Yes _____ No

Questions

Airport CEO Curriculum & Credentials

1. What is your educational background and qualification? Please specify i.e., Airport management degree, Accounting degree, Engineering degree).
2. What is your work background and experience?
3. How many years of experience did you possess working at an airport (if any) at the time of hire for the position of a major commercial airport CEO?
4. What is the reason that you decided to work in public service?
5. What is the most difficult challenge of an airport CEO's position?
6. What qualities do you believe are necessary to achieve success as a major commercial airport CEO?
7. What are the essential functions of an airport CEO's position that can only be performed by the CEO?

8. What federal licensure (if any) is required of an airport CEO? Specify type, rating, and the number of flight hours.
9. In your professional opinion should the federal government set basic criteria for airport CEOs of major commercial airports for uniformity in hiring (similar to those criteria as established for airport consultants, airline pilots, air traffic controllers, airline mechanics)?
10. What background and proficiencies affect an applicant being selected for an airport CEOs position at a major commercial airport (in your professional opinion)?
11. What is the main focus of an airport CEOs job?
12. What do you deem to be a candidate's most significant capability to qualify for as an airport CEO?
13. How do you evaluate the airport's mission against the demand of the public hiring agency, airport staff, the airlines, the FAA, the airport travelers, and other federal agencies? Please explain
14. What steps are necessary for the hiring of an airport CEO at your respective airport?
15. Please add any additional information about your position as the CEO and the essential functions of the job as well as any additional information about the hiring process.

Appendix D: Informed Consent Release Form (Survey)

Introduction:

My name is Marjan Mazza, and I am a doctoral student at Northcentral University. I am doing a research study as part of my degree. The purpose of this study is to look at the need for national values for hiring CEOs at major airports in the United States. I invite you to participate.

Activities:

I am asking for your participation to respond to fifteen opinion survey-type questions. It should take about 20 minutes.

Eligibility:

You are eligible to join in this research if:

1. You are an airport CEO at a major commercial airport.
2. Does your airport account for at least 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarking on a flight in the U.S?
3. You are between 18 and 65 years old.

You are not eligible to participate in this research if:

1. You are not an airport CEO at a major commercial airport.
2. Your airport does not account for at least 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarking on a flight in the U.S?
3. You are not between 18 and 65 years old.

I hope to include 12 people in this research.

Risks:

There are minimal risks in this study. Some possible risks include discomfort in replying to questions on the subject and talking about yourself.

To reduce the impact of these risks, you can skip and not answer any questions you don't feel comfortable answering or, discontinue involvement at any time.

Benefits:

If you decide to participate, there are no direct benefits to you.

The potential benefits to others are providing research to the body of science in aviation, public administration, and leadership.

Confidentiality:

The information you provide will be kept confidential to the extent allowable by law. Some steps I will take to keep your identity confidential are: I will assign a number to identify you, and your name will not be associated with your data. The people who will have access to your information are the researcher. The Institutional Review Board may also review my research and view your information.

I will secure your information with these steps:

The hard copy data will be kept in a locked cabinet on the researcher's personal property when not in the researcher's presence during the data collection phase. The electronic data will be kept in a file with a password and will only be accessible by me (the researcher). I will ensure I am the only person with computer access and work will only be conducted from a personal, not public computer.

I will keep your data for seven years. Then, I will delete the electronic data and destroy paper data by shredding.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions for me, you can contact me at 1739 Brooke Beach Dr. Navarre, FL 32566 or email me at M.Mazza5875@o365.ncu.edu or via phone at 312-317-9048.

My dissertation chair's name is Dr. Kathy Richie. She works at Northcentral University and is supervising me on the research. You can contact her at KRichie@ncu.edu and 651-301-0446. If you have any questions about your rights in the research, or if a problem has occurred, or if you are injured during your participation, please contact the Institutional Review Board at irb@ncu.edu or 1-888-327-2877 ext. 8014.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, or if you stop participation after you start, there will be no penalty to you. You will not lose any benefit.

Signature:

A signature indicates your understanding of this consent form. You will be given a copy of the form for your information.

Participants Signature

Printed Name

Date

Researcher Signature

Printed Name

Date

Appendix D-1: Informed Consent Release Form (phone interview)

Introduction:

My name is Marjan Mazza, and I am a doctoral student at Northcentral University. I am conducting a research study as part of my degree. The purpose of this study is to look at the need for national values for hiring CEOs at major airports in the United States. I invite you to participate.

Activities:

I am asking for your participation to a phone interview. It should take about 20 minutes.

Eligibility:

You are eligible to join in this research if:

1. You are an airport CEO at a major commercial airport.
2. Does your airport account for at least 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarking on a flight in the U.S?
3. You are between 18 and 65 years old.

You are not eligible to participate in this research if:

1. You are not an airport CEO at a major commercial airport.
2. Your airport does not account for at least 0.05 of a percent of all passengers embarking on a flight in the U.S?
3. You are not between 18 and 65 years old.

I hope to include 12 people in this research.

Risks:

There are minimal risks in this study. Some possible risks include discomfort in replying to questions on the subject and talking about yourself.

To reduce the impact of these risks, you can skip and not answer any questions you don't feel comfortable answering or, discontinue involvement at any time.

Benefits:

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The potential benefits to others are providing research to the body of science in aviation, public administration, and leadership.

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The information you provide will be kept confidential to the extent allowable by law. Some steps I will take to keep your identity confidential are: I will assign a number to identify you, and your name will not be associated with your data. The people who will have access to your information are the researcher. The Institutional Review Board may also review my research and view your information.

I will secure your information with these steps:

The hard copy data will be kept in a locked cabinet on the researcher's personal property when not in the researcher's presence during the data collection phase. The electronic data will be kept in a file with a password and will only be accessible by the researcher. I will ensure I am the only person with computer access and work will only be conducted from a personal, not public computer.

I will keep your data for seven years. Then, I will delete the electronic data and destroy paper data by shredding.

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My dissertation chair's name is Dr. Kathy Richie. She works at Northcentral University and is supervising me on the research. You can contact her at KRichie@ncu.edu and 651-301-0446. If you have any questions about your rights in the research, or if a problem has occurred, or if you are injured during your participation, please contact the Institutional Review Board at irb@ncu.edu or 1-888-327-2877 ext. 8014.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, or if you stop participation after you start, there will be no penalty to you. You will not lose any benefit.

Signature:

A signature indicates your understanding of this consent form. You will be given a copy of the form for your information.

Participants Signature

Printed Name

Date

Researcher Signature

Printed Name

Date

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Interview questions

1. What do you believe your employer was looking for when they hired you?
2. What do you believe are the characters of the CEO nominee that influence utmost to their selection as the CEO?
3. What do municipalities say is imperative to them in designating the CEO they wish to hire?
4. What is your comprehension of the assessment methods boards go through in choosing the successful applicant?
5. Would you explain the standard airport CEO selection process beginning from the board of commissioner's approach that led to your selection as a successful contender?
6. What background and proficiencies affect an applicant being selected for an airport CEOs position at a major commercial airport (in your professional opinion)?
7. What is the most difficult challenge of an airport CEOs position?
8. What qualities do you believe are necessary to achieve success as a major commercial airport CEO?
9. What are the essential functions of an airport CEO's position that can only be performed by the CEO?

Appendix F: Key Points**Key points**

Name	Files	References
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Appendix G: The challenges of airport CEOs

The challenges of airport CEOs

Challenges
Politics and managing political expectations
Being responsible for safety and security but not having total control
Getting great staff and ensuring a collaborative culture
Ability to see what needs to get done, and to develop a plan to get there by input from others
To advance change as quickly as necessary in highly regulated, highly visible organizations that may be encumbered by political systems
Industry knowledge is essential, and the ability to analyze a situation and make decisions quickly, and confidently is also essential.
Dealing with a diverse set of problems, including people ranging from high-ranking government officials to cleaning personnel.
Holding a press conference, negotiating an important lease, navigating a complicated personnel matter, addressing the concerns of an unhappy passenger, and handling some political type request
Strong knowledge of government relations, airport operations, business, personal management
Balancing and properly prioritizing multiple stakeholder interests that may or may not be aligned with airport needs.
A demonstrated experience in developing and leading an airport team through complex and challenging airport issues
Aging infrastructure, and not enough funding to pay for much-needed improvements
Unfunded mandates from the federal government
Air service development.
Leading the staff and providing them with the resources they need to do their job and to set the long-term vision/goals for the airport
Keeping the staff focused on the job at hand
The iPhones and work ethic of the generations coming up the ranks are challenging, low level of commitment, time, and focus

Leading the overall direction and culture for the airport team, which is a disparate group of employees, airlines, contract service providers, concessionaires, federal agencies (TSA, FAA, Customs, FAA ATCT, etc.), fixed base operators, construction contractors, law enforcement, fire Dept.

An airport is a bustling place, a small city.

Challenge at a rapid cadence in a wide variety of areas, and the skillset that is required to be successful is broad.

Appendix H: Designating the airport CEO

Designating the airport CEO

The CEO

Someone with a proven success record

Having strong business acumen is critical in today's world. Not that a strong knowledge of airport operations and regulatory requirements, that isn't important, but airports today are big businesses that generate big economic impacts for their communities and regions.

Airport boards or Mayors often want industry expertise, political and diplomatic acumen, financial literacy, good judgment, and decision-making abilities.

Backgrounds in finance, operations, properties management, developer, engineers, planners, administration, etc. or a combination of the skills can make an applicant attractive. The soft skills/characteristics are also important, are they a consensus builder, negotiator, approachable, have credibility.

Experience at a commercial airport as well as being well rounded in all aspects of airport operations.

An airport CEO must have a background that includes proven organizational leadership, prior airport experience, and a track record of previous growth and success in achieving goals.

Broad experience in a wide variety of issues, the ability to problem-solve and communicate effectively and persuasively. With some irony, the boards that are often in the position of selecting a CEO of a major airport may have little personal experience in aviation and can often be dazzled by "star power" or the past experiences a candidate brings. Even at the largest airports, sometimes a selected candidate may not be the one who might be the most capable or the best fit.

Leadership, industry experience, airport experience are mandatory. Then a combination of various additional focus areas such as finance, engineering, personnel, operations management, planning, public relations, etc. should be considered.

Good communication and public speaking abilities, experience, and success in being a leader, professional industry accreditations are often preferred.

City-run system, someone who is politically in alignment with the mayor

Someone with integrity who manages a lot of money displays integrity and is a good steward of those funds.

Someone who understands the economic value of the airport and understands strategic management.

Aviation background and detailed knowledge of the industry. Ability to lead and vision setting.

Know all facets of airport operation and leading a large group of people.

An airport CEO must have a background that includes proven organizational leadership, prior airport experience, and a track record of previous growth and success in achieving goals.

Appendix I: Essential Functions of the airport CEO

Essential Functions of the airport CEO

Essential Functions
Accountability to the public
Keeping an eye on the big picture
Having a good, competent, and dedicated staff and that the staff is empowered to do their job.
The CEO is the ultimate decision-maker and the one whose head is on the chopping block.
The CEO is the chief strategic officer and the final, authoritative spokesperson and representative for the airport.
Setting the direction for the staff and allowing them to do their jobs.
Vision is critical. I steer the rudder, guide the ship. I get a lot of input, but I am the one who must articulate and sell the vision to my board, my team, our tenants, the local community, and the traveling public.
The CEO is held accountable for the success of an airport. Success may be defined in different ways based on priorities.
Leadership – someone needs to be the one to ultimately be responsible for all activities that occur at the airport.
Leading the staff and providing them with the resources they need to do their job and to set the long-term vision/goals for the airport.
Being able to come up with the most comprehensive macro aspects of a decision. Navigating the political aspects of the airport.
The CEO is ultimately responsible for the overall operation of the airport. The essential function of the CEO is to understand the region’s goals for the airport and develop the strategy and advocacy to meet these goals while ensuring the safe and efficient operation of the airport.
One of the more typical requirements placed on the CEO is that of signatory authority. For legal documents, it must be the CEO to sign.
As a practical matter, the job of speaking on behalf of the airport, “selling” or marketing the airport, and interacting directly with key officials often falls on the shoulders of the CEO.
Setting the vision and overseeing the senior staff or leadership team is also usually the responsibility of the CEO.
Working with the airport board to develop the policies and planning of the airport.

Know a little bit about each department, ability to interact with far different personalities and somehow make the team out of a puzzle, be visionary and resolute, be understanding but strong, allow differences of opinion and promote and encourage people to challenge my decision.

Keeping the ball moving, don't become stagnant, motivate the team, and stay positive.

Interaction between the institution and the governing board

Ultimate decision-making, care, and communicating to the board of commissioners.

Appendix J: Research questions and participants' responses

Research Questions and participants' responses

Research Question	Participants' responses
<p>Q1. What are the essential functions of airport CEOs?</p>	<p>The ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing.</p> <p>Passion for aviation.</p> <p>Leadership qualities and experience at a commercial airport. Industry knowledge is essential, and the ability to analyze a situation and make decisions quickly and confidently is also essential. Someone who understood the industry technically well.</p> <p>Someone who understood the industry technically well.</p> <p>To understand the region's goals for the airport and develop the strategy and advocacy to meet these goals while ensuring the safe and efficient operation of the airport.</p> <p>Someone with a solid foundation who has a graduate degree, higher academics, someone with industry accreditation, who has on the job training and knows finance, budget, HR, how to manage people and knows about IT, air service development, police, fire and someone who knows about economic development and has experience across the board.</p> <p>Understanding politics is key and must be politically astute. The CEO has to know how to deal with Politics. Must cultivate the politics, which is the most difficult part of the job.</p>
<p>Q2. What essential function should the federal government specify for airport CEOs?</p>	<p>Industry knowledge is essential, and the ability to analyze a situation and make decisions quickly and confidently is also essential.</p>

Qualified people, too many people are being hired into the CEO positions that are not qualified or capable of doing the job to the level it must be to achieve the safest and most efficient airport system.

Someone with the knowledge of the aviation industry, decisive but thoughtful, good with the public, a team builder.

Appendix K: Word Query generated by NVivo12 for mac software



Appendix L: Word tree

