

# Predicting Success of Interior Design Alumni as an Assessment of the Curriculum: Post Graduation Years 1-10

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## ABSTRACT

The main question being explored in this research study is “does what we teach in the Interior Design Department make students successful in industry.” The measure of success in this study used two different variables, which include annual salary and job satisfaction.

The study is broken down into four sub research questions.

1. What aspects of what we teach and offer students help them in making them successful in industry? Here the independent variables include categories of classes such as studios, history courses, technical courses (AutoCAD, building systems, lighting, materials), individual classes, outside classroom experiences (field trips and student organizations), and skills such as manual drawing and rendering, computer drafting and visualization, teamwork, research, design thinking, and interpersonal skills.
2. What is the relationship between how satisfied students were with their interior design education and their success and satisfaction in the industry?
3. What is the relationship between the student’s cumulative university grade point average and job satisfaction? More specifically, does their university GPA predict job satisfaction and does their GPA predict their annual salary.
4. What is the relationship between a student’s high school GPA and their success in the industry? Here we ask, does a person’s high school achievement predict future job satisfaction, and does a person’s high school achievement predict future job salary?

### Framework for exploration

There is increased pressure on educational institutions to assess their program effectiveness (Richter & Ruebling, 2003). The impact of higher education on our society includes many stakeholders such as policy makers, parents, faculty, employers, industry representatives, accrediting bodies, and the general public (Borden, 2005). These stakeholders have an important interest in the outcomes produced by higher education and the success of graduates, and they are demanding a greater degree of accountability. One group of stakeholders, the alumni, are able to provide feedback on their perceptions and satisfaction with a department's activities, which can be used to gauge the effectiveness of the department (Twum-Ampomah & Danso, 2012).

### Conclusions / Results

An online survey was sent to alumni of an Interior Design Department within a large Midwestern University, where 95 respondents completed the survey. The first phase of the research study, and the focus of this presentation, targeted alumni who had graduated between 1-10 years ago or from graduation years of 2001 to 2012.

Results indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between the satisfaction of the student's studio courses and their current job satisfaction. In addition, the satisfaction of skills learned in school (design process) and the alumni's current annual salary was also shown to have a significant relationship. The results did not show any significant relationship between a student's high school GPA or university GPA and their future job satisfaction or annual salary. Data was collected on whether the respondent was NCIDQ certified and the results showed a positive significant relationship between NCIDQ and annual salary. Not surprisingly, age and annual salary was also a significant relationship.

### REFERENCES (APA)

- Borden, V.M.H. (2005). Using alumni research to align program improvement with institutional accountability. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 126: 61-72.
- Richter, R., Ruebling, I. (2003). Model for development of outcome assessment surveys for allied health educational programs. *Journal of Allied Health*, 32(3): 179-184.

Twum-Ampomah, M.K., Danso, H. (2012). Alumni perceptions of their alma mater of a public university in Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4(6).