Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:SP 2015

Department:Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Degree:EdD

Title:PERCEPTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION: PRIVATE GOOD OR PUBLIC GOOD?

This study examined the perceptions representatives of southeast Missouri have towards higher education; specifically whether or not participants view higher education attainment as a private good or a public good. The researcher employed a quantitative research approach and collected data, via survey, from 400 participants currently residing in the target region. From these surveys a series of conclusions were drawn based upon demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the sample population and data examined through descriptive analyses, correlational analyses, and analysis of variance testing.

The research showed that representatives of southeast Missouri perceive attainment of a Bachelor's degree or higher as more of a public good than a private good. Correlational analysis indicated that the more participants perceived higher education as public good, the more value they placed on higher education attainment. Significant differences among individual perceptions were identified based on gender, income bracket, perceived socioeconomic status when an adolescent, and education level. From these relationships a series of conclusions are drawn concerning the perceptions representatives of southeast Missouri have towards higher education.