

Grit in the rural economy: Unlocking the relationship between employee selection and success

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Abstract

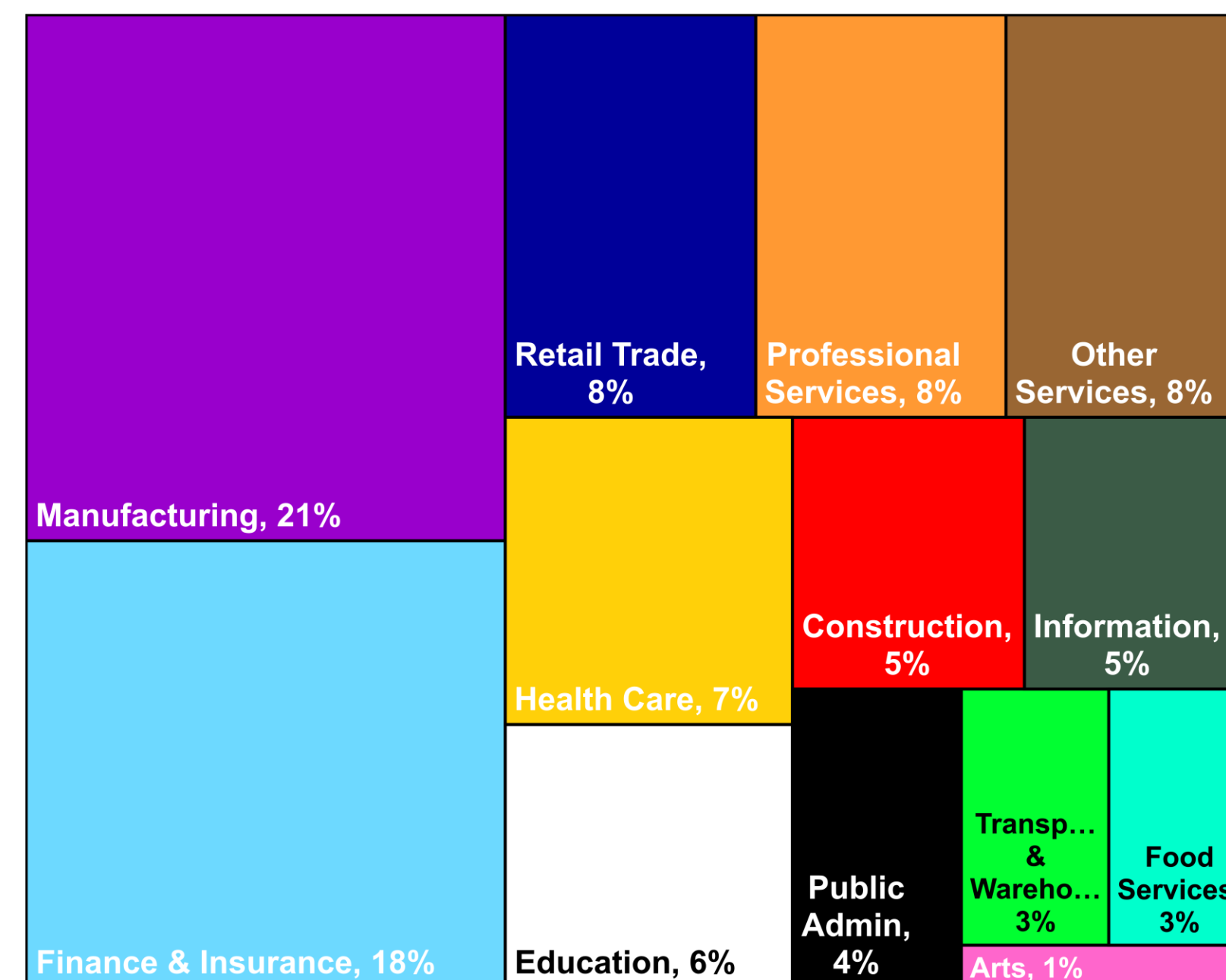
Employee turnover is costly, time consuming, and unpredictable, especially in rural economies. Experts estimate that it can cost as much as twice an employee's salary to recruit, hire, and train a new worker. Furthermore, low unemployment and the draw of urban living continues to erode the labor pool that rural economies need to operate. The best criterion for hiring long-term employees is not competency or experience, but rather the less-observable traits of passion and perseverance. To this end, the Grit Scale—a combination of passion and perseverance—provides a widely underutilized mechanism for predicting long-term employee success. The purpose of this study was to explore the value of grit as a hiring criterion in rural economies. Participants were 100 employers from a three-county area in the Midwest United States. The results indicated that an organization's size, location, and industry influenced its hiring process. Furthermore, the findings suggested that hiring for grit minimizes employee turnover along with the burdensome costs associated with it. Overall, this study offers insights for developing rural economies at the source of their strength: the labor pool.



Methods

PARTICIPANTS

- $N = 100$ managers in charge of making hiring decisions for companies in Central Wisconsin
- Median No. of employees 150



PROCEDURES

- Employers were sent an email containing a hyperlink to an online survey.

MEASURES

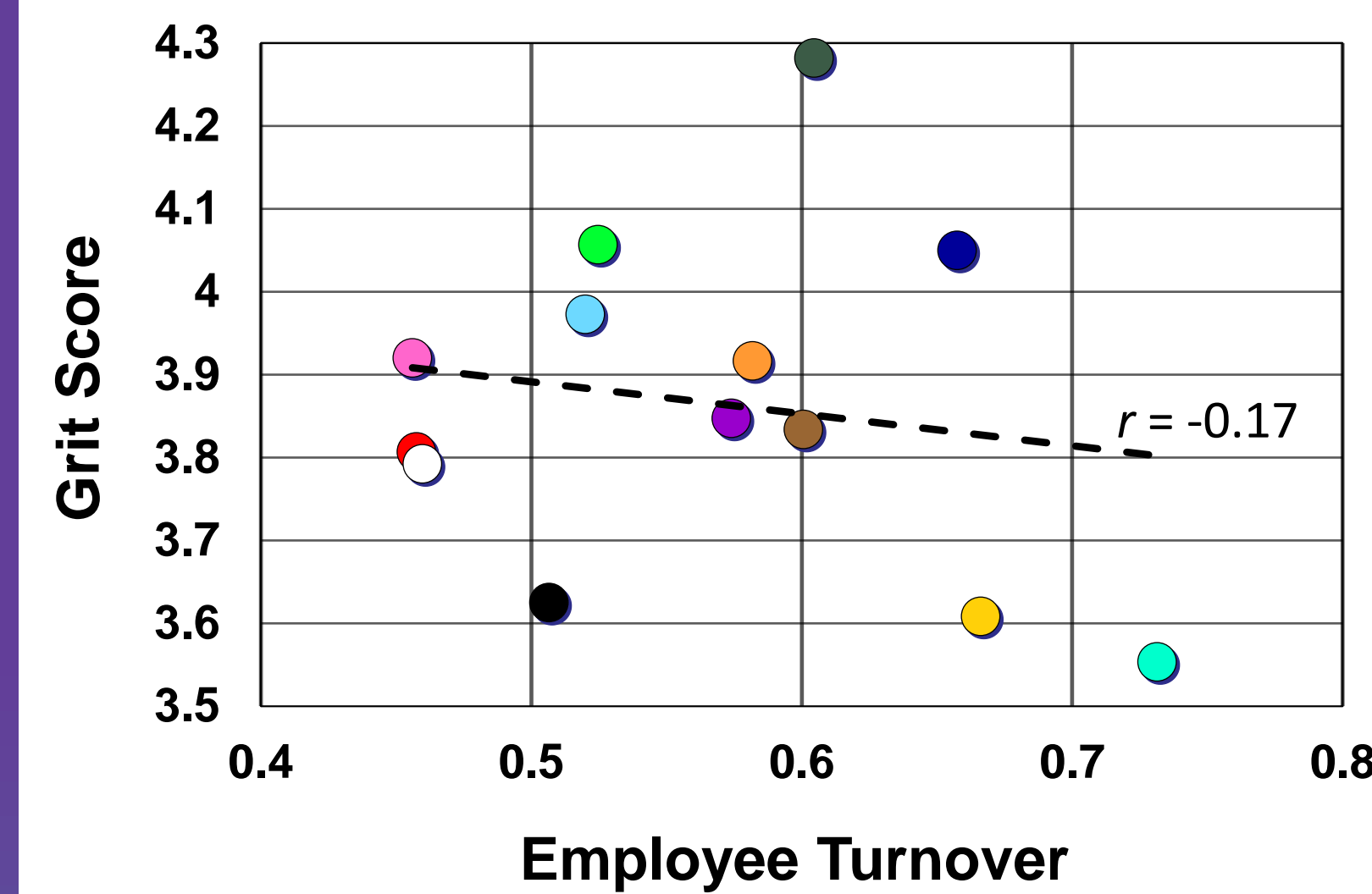
- **Grit** (Duckworth et al., 2007)
 - » 12 items, $\alpha = .82$
 - » Sample Item: "A well-qualified candidate would be someone who has overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge." (1 = Disagree strongly, 5 = Agree strongly)
- **University Provided Skills and Experiences**
 - » GPA
 - » Written Communication
 - » Oral communication
 - » Problem Solving
 - » Leadership Skills
 - » Volunteer Experience
 - » Internship
- **Turnover** (WI Dept. of Workforce Development)

$$\text{Turnover Rate} = \frac{\text{Quits}}{\text{Hires}} \times 100$$

Note. Quits = Separations excluding temporary employees, layoffs due to downswing, firings, and non-performance-related separations such as retirement or injury

Results

CORRELATIONS



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. GPA	—								
2. Written Comm	.15	—							
3. Oral Comm	.13	.64**	—						
4. Problem Solve	.19	.53**	.64**	—					
5. Leadership Skill	.43**	.35**	.42**	.35**	—				
6. Volunteer	.31*	.34**	.42**	.39**	.51**	—			
7. Internship	.40**	.38**	.40**	.38**	.54**	.59**	—		
8. Grit	-.06	.18	.10	.11	-.28**	-.35**	-.08	—	
9. Turnover	-.15	.00	.09	.03	-.09	-.03	-.28	-.17	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Turnover calculated by industry

Interpretation

- Grit, Internship, and GPA are negatively correlated with turnover

REGRESSION

Regression between University-provided skills/experiences and Grit

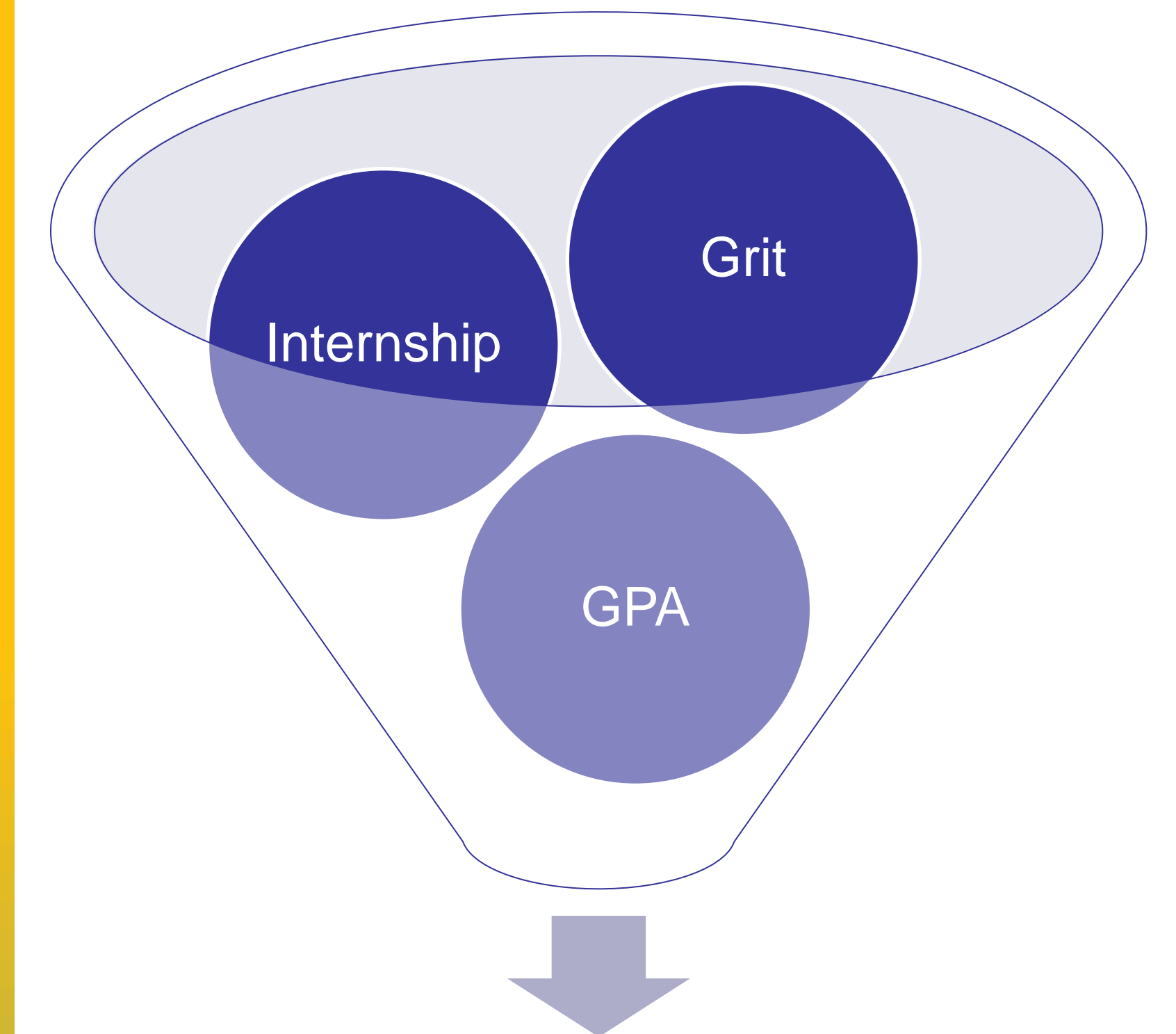
Independent Variables	Dependent Variable
	Grit
Written Comm	0.25
Oral Comm	0.09*
Problem Solving	0.08
Leadership	-0.28*
Volunteer	-0.48
Internship	0.12
R^2	0.27**

Note. $df = 98$

Interpretation

- University-provided skills/experiences explain a notable portions of the variance in Grit

Discussion



Low Employee Turnover

References

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