

Effective Practice Management Techniques: Preparing for Private Practice

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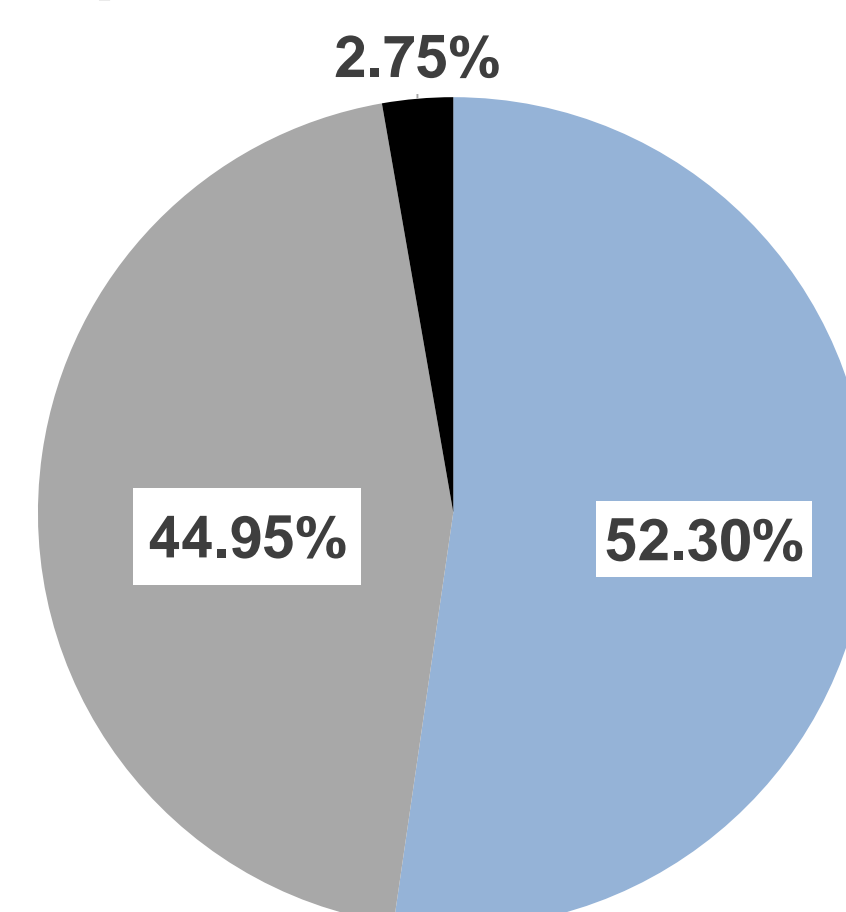
Abstract

Practice management course topics were studied and a survey was conducted among 14 United States schools of optometry. Data was analyzed to determine how varying methods prepared students for practice management in a private practice setting. Results of the study are anticipated to assist practice management educators in preparing optometric students for a future in private practice.

Introduction

The private practice sector is declining and this trend could be attributed to poor preparation for operating an optometric business. Multiple business textbooks, magazines, simulators, and personal resources are available to function as guides to basic foundations in business knowledge. Optometric physicians typically have limited training in the business realm, which may determine whether a graduate chooses to pursue private practice.

Perceived Preparedness at Time of Graduation



■ Adequately Prepared ■ Unprepared ■ Very Prepared

Perceived level of preparedness at the time of graduation.

Methods

A survey was conducted among optometrists who graduated within the last ten years. The survey was sent to all American Optometric State Associations and U.S. Colleges of Optometry. Optometrist ranked perceived effectiveness of common practice management techniques. Results were collected through the survey engine Checkbox.

School	Number of Participants
Illinois College of Optometry	5
Indiana University College of Optometry	2
Michigan College of Optometry	2
Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry	7
Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry	34
Ohio State University College of Optometry	4
Pacific University College of Optometry	12
Southern College of Optometry	7
Southern California College of Optometry	9
State University of New York College of Optometry	4
University of Alabama at Birmingham College of Optometry	4
University of California-Berkeley College of Optometry	1
University of Houston College of Optometry	5
University of Missouri at St. Louis College of Optometry	13

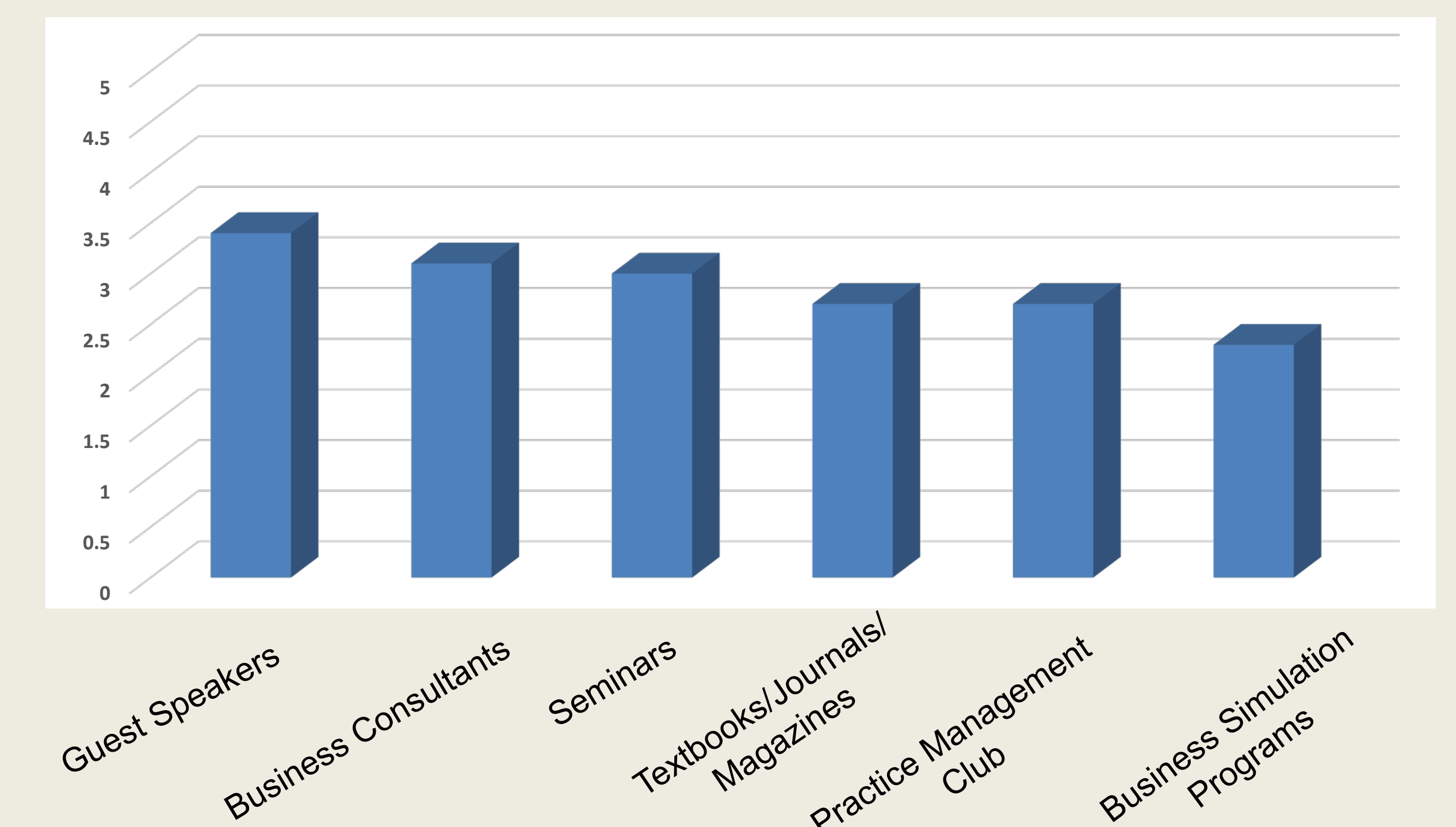
Number of survey participants from each school.

Results

Data obtained through the survey concluded that many different resources must be utilized to effectively prepare optometry students for private practice. Analysis of alumni responses from each individual school revealed similar results for 85% of schools represented. Survey participants ranked optometric guest speakers as the most effective, followed closely by business consultants. Business simulators were least beneficial. The majority of participants were working in a private practice at the time of the survey.

Discussion

Gathering a significant number of responses from each school was not achieved due to the survey parameters. No teaching guideline exists to ensure all pertinent practice management education is communicated in a practice management course. Each course is taught slightly different; some focus more on textbook data while others emphasize experiences from guest speakers. Evaluating the level of preparedness of participants was advantageous, as it enabled comparison of which variables corresponded to higher levels of perceived preparation.



Perceived effectiveness of common teaching techniques.

References

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