

# School-to-Work Linkages in Texas

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School-to-work linkages among bachelor's degree holders in the state of Texas were examined. Linkage positively predicted earnings. Moreover, the earnings benefits from linkage were concentrated among individuals in matched occupations, or individuals employed in jobs common among people with their college major. Linkage also negatively predicted unemployment.

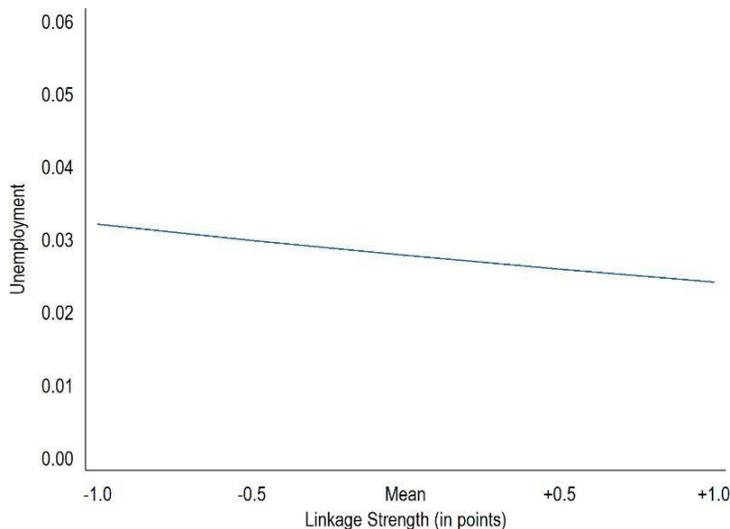
## Definitions

- **Linkage:** This term describes the connection between a college major and specific occupations in the labor market. If individuals with the same college major tend to work in a small set of occupations, then the college major shows strong linkage.
- **Match:** Individuals are considered matched if they are employed in occupations common among people who hold their college major.

The full report is available at [kinder.rice.edu/houston-education-research-consortium](http://kinder.rice.edu/houston-education-research-consortium).

## Key Findings

**Figure 1. Unemployment by Linkage Strength**



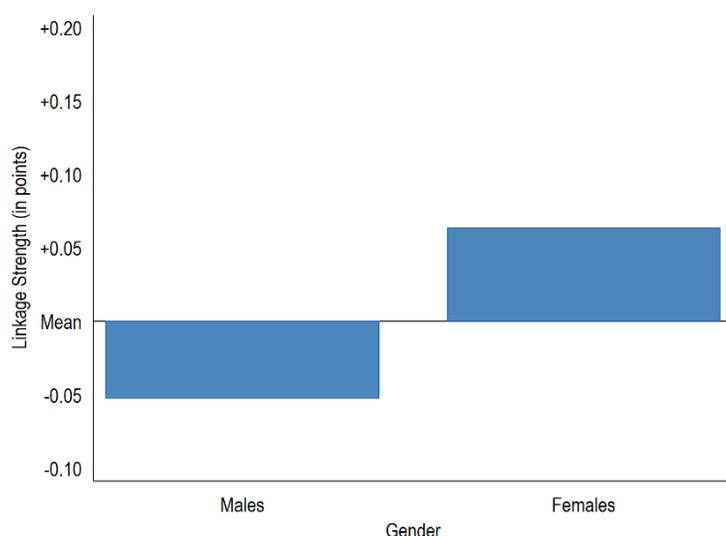
Source: Figure 4.1 in full report.

Note: The y-axis shows the proportion of individual who were unemployed. The x-axis shows linkage strength; higher values mean the individual majored in a field with stronger ties to specific occupations in the labor market.

- Strong linkage increased the wages of workers in matched occupations. On average, workers in matched occupations earned \$56,519 dollars per year, while workers not in matched occupations earned \$51,980.
- Individuals who chose college majors with strong linkage were less likely to be unemployed. Individuals who had college majors with weak linkage scores had a 3.2% likelihood of unemployment, compared to 2.4% for individuals who had college majors with strong linkage scores.

**Individuals who chose college majors closely connected to specific occupations in the labor market earned higher wages and were more likely to be employed.**

**Figure 1. Major-Occupation Linkage Strength by Gender**



Source: Figure 1.2 in full report.

Note: The y-axis shows linkage strength; higher values mean the individual majored in a field with stronger ties to specific occupations in the labor market.

- Older, female, Asian, foreign-born, and non-native English-speakers were more likely to complete a college major with higher linkage compared to workers who were younger, male, white, Black, Hispanic, native-born, and native English-speakers.

- Workers who were older, female, Asian, and native-born were more likely to be employed in a matched occupation compared to workers who were younger, male, white, Black, Hispanic, and foreign-born.

## Recommendations

For education policymakers and researchers:

- Education policymakers and researchers should explore why students choose college majors tightly or loosely connected to the job market and why some students find employment in a matched occupation, while others do not.

For colleges and universities in collaboration with employers:

- Higher education practitioners can use the information from this report and other research to develop new strategies to help students understand the career pathways of their college majors and their connections to the labor market.
- College career placement and academic department staff can collaborate with employers to help students, particularly those from underserved backgrounds, obtain jobs in occupations related to their college majors.



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