



Career development for international students studying at a two-year community college in the Midwest, US

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction:

U.S. higher education has been tremendously successful in attracting international students from developing countries in recent decades (Institute of International Education, 2018).

In the 2017-2018 academic year, 1.1 million international students studied at a U.S. postsecondary and higher education institution (Institute of International Education, 2018). It should be noted that in addition to the increased number of international students at four-year institutions, two-year community colleges have also been accepting an increased number of international students (Zhang, 2016).

Upon completing their studies at two-year colleges, international students who choose to stay in the U.S. face many challenges, one of which is getting employed within three months in accordance with US immigration policy. This paper seeks to understand the challenges that international students face, career services that community colleges provide, and the initiatives that students take for their career preparation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS

Research Questions:

How do international students studying at the two-year community college prepare for their careers during their studies in the US?

Research Method:

In this study, we collected data through semi-structured interviews. Unlike quantitative studies focusing on statistical interpretation and scientific paradigms, qualitative studies focus on subjective human experiences (Leung, 2015).

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

1. Individual system:

- a. Language Proficiency
- b. Career Planning
- c. Time Constraint
- d. Career Decisions of International Students

2. Social system:

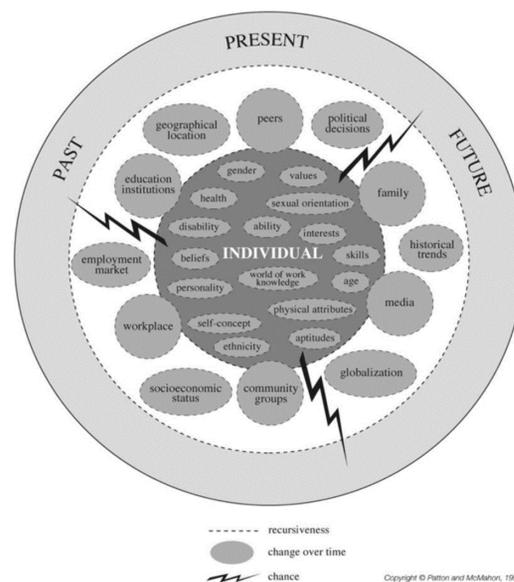
- a. On-Campus Student Employment

3. Environmental-societal system:

- a. Understanding of Immigration Regulations
- b. Internship
- c. Utilization of Career Services
- d. Career Counseling

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (STFCD) is frequently used in career counseling. We use this theory as our conceptual framework in this study. STFCD was initially developed to explore the adolescent career decision-making process. It has been gradually modified and extended to a range of student groups (Patton & McMahon, 1997).



CONCLUSION

In the context of an increasing number of international college students migrating to the US to pursue higher education and subsequent employment opportunities, this study explored the students' career development process by employing systems theory framework of career development (STFCD) as the theoretical framework. It contributes to the research field of international education, both theoretically and practically. This study helps community colleges better understand international students' career choices and thus provide appropriate support to get students well prepared for the competitive job market.