

Assignment 4:

Research Proposal Brief

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Part 1: Study Rationale Overview

Problem Statement

The problem that should be addressed in this study is the number of undecided college students there are in institutions that ends up having career anxiety, and what the best professional practices can help these undecided college students to find the best career path for them. The context of the study is for institutions to take caution on the professionals that are advising college students, especially the ones that have change majors' multiple times and the undecided college students that might end up picking a major they are not happy with. There seems to be a lot of research when it comes to undecided college students that are first-year college students and/or first-generation college students, but the gap of the knowledge base seen from other researchers are the lack of the knowledge for undecided college students that are also transfer college students. Most college students comes to college to find a career, and institutions need to focus on the undecided college students that still could not find the perfect career path for them.

Study Purpose / Research Questions/Hypotheses

The purpose of my study is to answer what causes career anxiety amongst first-year, first-generation, and transfer undecided college students, and what psychological needs can help these students cope with career anxiety. The research questions guiding this study are: What are the experiences first-year, first-generation, and transfer undecided college students face with career anxiety? What are the best methods that professionals help advise and guide first-year, first-generation, and transfer undecided college students to cope with career anxiety?

Significance of the Study

Investigating in this topic is important because most college students goes to college to build a career, and if some college students does not have the knowledge on what type of career that they want to pursue in can be very overwhelming for them. Professionals should also understand what causes these career anxieties to happen, and what they can do to try and help their students in finding the best career path for them and to overcome their career anxiety. The study adds to the scholarly research because it can bring knowledge for professionals in institutions to be more cautious about college students that comes their way that can seem to not be remotely happy about their chosen major or career. The study should help improve professional practice by having these professionals understand more on the different kinds of aspects college students can face when it comes to career anxiety as well as how these professionals can help guide them through it.

Part 2: Literature Review Overview

The literature review provided multiple information about the best approach should be taken about this study. The literature found for this study emphasizes more for first-year and first-generation undecided college students with their struggles from career anxiety. Parents could play a huge role for these students to suffer career anxiety as well as lack of self-confidence can prompt career decision-making incapacitation and a further bringing down of confidence, therefore, psychological needs is one of the main things to keep in mind when professionals are guiding college students in career distress (Bullock-Yowell, McConnell, & Schedin, 2014). Professional practice is also a huge part of helping these undecided college students from overcoming their career anxiety, which leads to these professionals to understand how to better help their students that are in this situation. The main overview of this literature review gave us

information on what causes career anxiety for these undecided college students as well as giving us ways that professional practice can help solve this issue.

The two different types of undecided students, first-year and first-generation college students, can have parents that have a strong impact on these students in choosing a career that they are not passionate about, especially when those students are first-generation college students with parents that does not know much about going to college (Montag, Campo, Weissman, Walmsley, & Snell, 2012). First-generation undecided college students can struggle more so than the first-year students who have at least one parent that went to college because first-generation students' rate of attrition exceeds that of continuing-generation students (Glaessgen, MacGregor, Cornelius-White, Hornberger, & Baumann, 2018). First-year undecided college students could be undecided because of lack of knowledge about majors or careers, or they have so many possibilities that a decision has become impossible (Ellis, 2014). Therefore, parents could be one of the reasons why these undecided college students can suffer from anxiety and being stuck in between of what they want to do in life versus what their parents wants them to do in life.

Anxiety is a characteristic reaction to upsetting life occasions, for example, prospective employee interviews, conceivable occupation misfortune, employment evaluations, and choosing a major (Pisarik, Rowell, & Thompson, 2017). Many college students struggle to stay centered in their academic undertakings and depend of guidance of their academic advisors and university counselors (Kreitler, Dansereau, Barth, Repasky, & Miller, 2012). People experience internalized motivation toward activities with regards to the support just as improved prosperity if these main self-determination and psychological needs are contributed (Leach & Patall, 2016). Anxiety was reported to have the biggest diminishing in levels contrasted with the other three factors: depression, stress, and homesickness (Huenergarde, 2018). Without a decrease in anxiety, it is

impossible that an individual will most likely connect adequately in the cognitive demands to adapt new position aptitudes and increment their career self-efficacy, as anxiety can keep a person from engaging in the behaviors that would relieve their career uncertainty, in this manner, drawing out or expanding their anxiety further (Deer, Kelsey Gohn, & Tomoe Kanaya, 2018).

Therefore, professional practice is the key component when it comes to helping college students with career anxiety because the main people that these college students might go to for guidance are the professionals that work with the students. Some undecided college students recognized that Career Services as well as other profession development and academic courses as assets for achieving choices on a major (Workman, 2015). The main professionals that college students in need of guidance are academic advisors, career counselors, and mental counselors. It is very important that these main professionals helps these struggling college students with career guidance, and to help students understand that anxiety is an awareness of responsibilities, choices, and endeavors related to creating authentic and meaningful lives (Pisarik et al., 2017).

Part 3: Research Design and Methodology

Research Design

The study ideas that I have come to the conclusion with is to focus more on qualitative research base approaches. The research design I would use would be phenomenological research design because this design type focuses on the experiences and/or reactions of participants to a particular perspective (Mertler, 2019, p. 82). It can be difficult to get the participants to accurately relive the experiences they face from career anxiety. However, I like to research this study like a career counselor as well since I would want to put in more student development

theories into my research in order to figure out how to help these struggling college students by thinking like career counselors and use that in my data collection as well.

Data Collection

Phenomenological research design type is perfect for my study because this approach can give me the best data collection that I would need from my participants since the data collection I would like to use is semi-structured interview, and this interview format can be used by using phenomenological research design. In order to also collect data on participants' career anxiety issues, I will also make sure to choose the participants that are developing career anxiety because they still haven't pursued on a set career path. In order to find the participants that also have career anxiety, I will probably do a mini structured interview first in order to make my final decision if these participants matches for being both first-year, first-generation, and transfer undecided college students as well as having career anxiety because they are first-year, first-generation, and transfer undecided college students. Depending on the answers I receive from my participants, and the additional questions I have asked for each, is how I will collect my data.

Selection of Participants/Sampling

In my study, the participants will be first-year, first-generation, and transfer undecided college students and the reasons for them not finding the right career path can be different from each other, and this approach underlines that the experiences from these participants "can, and do, differ from person to person (Mertler, 2019, p. 82). First, I will first send out letter of consent to the selected participants before furthering the research process. The participants will be 15 participants, 5 participants each for the three groups (first-year undecided group, first-generation undecided group, and transfer student undecided group). I would more likely select participants

that are first-year, first-generation, and transfer undecided college students to compare why these three sets of college students are still undecided in their career path; which will mean that I will use the homogenous sampling. This research study should ask the same questions to all three participant groups and compare the different answers that was received from each group since the participants will have similar traits or characteristics (Mertler, 2019, p. 168).

Data Analysis

Along with my data collection method of using semi-structured interview format with my participants, the appropriate analysis I would use would be inductive analysis with a coding scheme approach. Inductive analysis was strongly pointed out as the most common analysis that is used for qualitative data analysis technique, which I think will be a great analysis to use for my study. Inductive analysis will help qualitative researchers to reduce the number of data collection that was made by using the coding scheme approach, “which is used to group data that provide similar types of information” (Mertler, 2019, p. 181). Therefore, the data will be coded by using the coding scheme approach while the software program that will be used is *dedoose*.

In order to proceed in this data analysis, I will start off by reducing the massive amounts of data in the form of interview transcripts I have collected, which will be the coding scheme. Second, I will make notes of each category from my data as it appears and code my data accordingly. Lastly, I will find the appropriate software program that can assist in organizing the various categories in my data analysis with the statistical procedures that will be used to test the hypotheses; which could be the software called *dedoose*. *Dedoose* “allows for a wide variety of types of analysis, including tables and visual depictions” (Mertler, 2019, p. 185), which is appropriate for a qualitative data analysis approach.

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