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College Senior's Utilization of Career Center Services and Career Readiness

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Carrie Ann Klaphake

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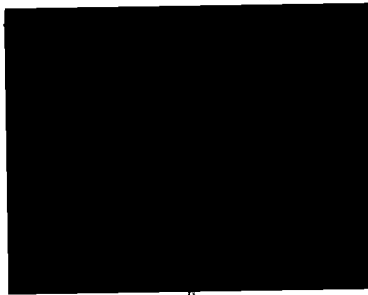
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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
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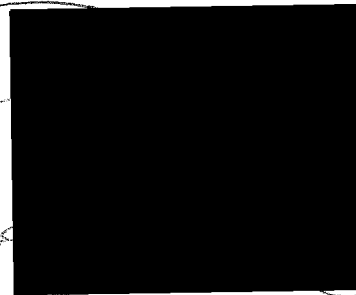


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Abstract

This quantitative study focused on the utilization of Career Center services and the correlation between utilization and three career decision-making difficulties, *lack of readiness, lack of information, and intra and inter career conflict*, and differences of utilization between academic colleges. The 50-item survey was administered to seniors graduating that academic year. The results indicated that seniors under-utilized Career Center services, and there was no significance found between their utilization and their career decision-making difficulties. Significance was found between academic colleges in their utilization of the Career Center. The findings suggest that seniors do not experience difficulties deciding on a career, do not utilize all the services available through the Career Center, and that utilization of the Career Center by colleges vary.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my biggest support and number one fan, Mama K. I know mothers are expected to support you in all your life endeavors and caution you when you are about to do something that could potentially regret but you are more than that to me. Throughout my entire life you have been there to shine a bright light on me when I reach my goals. You are also the person I could count on to listen when I am struggling to overcome the speed bumps that slow me down from reaching my goals. I am truly the luckiest daughter in the world to have you as my mom. The cards of encouragement, the messages of inspiration, and the chocolate incentive when I was home over break as I attempted to move forward with my thesis all helped me make this journey much more enjoyable! I know wherever my life may take me you will continue to be a role model for me and support me through my life endeavors.

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To my Career Services Family at St. Cloud State University, working with all of you was one of the best experiences I could have asked for. Your mentorship and wise wisdom was the strength I needed to accomplish my thesis. You all are role models to me as I aspire to continue my passion working with students within their career development journey.

To my cohort, these past two years have been a journey we will never forget. I have learned so much from all of you and will cherish it forever. I will forever be thankful for all the memories we have made!

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Graduation rates from colleges and universities have risen 31.6% since 1997 (The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2014). The number of seniors graduating with a bachelor's degree in the year 2014 was projected to be 1,582,000 students (Hussar, 2005). After graduation students begin working, continue their education, or become one of the unemployed. Depending on college major, unemployment rates for recent graduates have ranged from 4.8% to 14.7% (Carnevale, Cheah, & Strohl, 2013). These statistics suggest colleges could do a better job helping students secure jobs post-graduation.

Employers believe applicants are not prepared for the duties of an entry level position requires. Students are entering the labor market with a sense of insecurity about how they have prepared to join the workforce (Stone, Van Horn, & Zukin, 2012). Being under-prepared may be a reason recent graduates are struggling to locate and secure a job.

Student affairs professionals are charged with the responsibility of understanding students' needs and helping them achieve holistic learning experiences. One way to help students is to aid in career decision-making. The office specifically set up to assist students with their post-graduation plans is Career Center. Career Center is a division of student affairs within higher education to assist students in their development as they work towards obtaining a degree. Career Center sponsored employer panels have discussed common problems they encounter when interviewing recent graduates. These problems include: 1) lack of professionalism in applicant materials, such as resume and

cover letters that are not tailored to the specific job; 2) lack of participation in on-campus or off-campus activities; 3) lack of transparency during interviews when asked questions about relocating or traveling; and 4) lack of factual resume content. Identifying how students utilize the resources of Career Centers could provide insight as to why today's graduates struggle to become prepared to enter the work force.

One of the primary reasons students attend college is to prepare for a career (Engelland, Workman, & Singh, 2000). Job placement, career networking, and career planning are three foundational components of Career Centers (Dey & Real, 2010). Their services can be accessed through Career Centers both online and in the office where centers are located. However, some researchers are interested in whether students utilize Career Center. Fouad, Guillen, Harris-Hodge, Henry, Novakovic, Terry, Kantamneni (2006) found that half of the students surveyed were aware of services but far fewer used the services. Likewise, Schaub (2012) found students were not proactive when it comes to post-graduation employment. Researching how graduating seniors utilize career service resources therefore could provide additional insight into addressing this issue.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to assess how graduating seniors utilize Career Center Services in guiding them to transition into a career or further education. Identifying the services that students are using to assist them in their job search helps determine what programs students are utilizing. A survey was distributed to gauge awareness and use of services, lack of readiness in deciding a career, lack of information

to decide on a career, and inconsistent information of careers. The findings will provide insight as to how students are preparing for post-graduation life.

Research Questions

The following research question was developed by the researcher and was used to provide guidance for the proposed study:

RQ1: What is graduating seniors' utility of Career Center programs to assist in post-graduation plans?

RQ2: Is there a correlation between senior's lack of information and their total utilization of Career Center programs?

RQ3: Is there a correlation between students who lack readiness and their usage of Career Center programs?

RQ4: Is there a correlation between seniors' intra and inter career conflict and their utilization of Career Center programs?

RQ5: Is there a difference in current seniors' Career Center services utilization by academic colleges?

Hypotheses

With regard to the main research question, 'What is graduating seniors' utility of Career Center services to assist in post-graduation plans?' graduating seniors were surveyed to measure the relationship between graduating status and their use of Career Center programs. Due to lack of research and the diversity of the population, the researcher hypothesized:

H₀: Graduating seniors do not take advantage of Career Center's services.

H_a: Graduating seniors take advantage of Career Center's services.

With regard to the second research question, ‘Is there a correlation between senior’s lack of information and their total utilization of Career Center programs?’ data was collected to compare amount of information on careers and program use. The more psychosocial development seniors undergo the more likely they are to use career service programs to gain information about careers (Bowers, Dickman, & Fuqua, 2001). The hypotheses for this question are as follows:

H₀: There is no correlation between senior students’ who use Career Center’s services and the amount of information they know about careers.

H_a: The higher the career program use by seniors, the less likely they lack information about possible careers.

With regard to the third research question, ‘Is there a correlation between students who lack readiness and their usage of career service programs?’ data was collected to compare lack of career readiness and program use. Based upon Bowers’ (2001) research, the hypothesis is:

H₀: There is no correlation between students who utilize services and their level of readiness to enter a career.

H_a: Students who use a higher amount of services hold a higher level of readiness in deciding a career.

With regard to the fourth research question, ‘Is there a correlation between seniors’ intra and inter career conflict and their utilization of career service programs?’ data was collected to compare intra and inter career conflict and program usage. The high level of diversity poses an interesting component to this research question. King and Kitchner developed a reflective judgment model which outlines six stages an

individual could be experiencing (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, and Renn, 2010).

Assuming that seniors are at the later stage of reflective judgment, an alternative hypothesis is stated. Intra and inter career conflict refers to individuals having contradictory information about considered occupants, struggling to overcome internal confusion, or a difference in what the individual prefers and what others are informing him/her.

H₀: There is no correlation between program usage and their level of intra and inter career conflicts.

H_a: The higher the use of career service programs, the lower intra and inter career conflicts the graduate would have.

With regard to the fifth and final research question, 'Is there a difference in current seniors' Career Center utilization by academic colleges?' data was collected to compare academic college and program usage. Measuring graduating seniors' perceptions on programs hosted by career service centers would provide insightful information as to program differences among majors and program use. The hypotheses for this question are as follows:

H₀: There is no correlation between academic college and program use.

H_a: There is a correlation between academic college and program use.

Significance of the Study

The proposed study will provide insight into students' utilization of Career Center Services, as well as understanding if lack of information, lack of readiness, or inconsistent information is the cause of students struggling to make career decisions. There is limited research on how students overcome personal obstacles when identifying

their career choice (Schaub, 2012). Employers are questioning how institutions are preparing students to enter the job market (Fischer, 2013). Collecting information from graduating seniors on how they have prepared themselves for post-graduation life will provide insight on the struggles students face when deciding on a career and what services they utilize to prepare to enter a specific occupation.

Limitations of the Study

This study has various limitations. First, participants were selected using a convenience sample. The number of students who decide to partake in the study was determined by who reads their emails and decides to complete the survey. Handing out surveys face to face could also impact students' comfort filling out the survey.

This study utilized a convenience sample because it is only sampling graduates from one university. Having a smaller sampling population impacted generalizability.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms and concepts are defined to ensure the understanding of their meaning in context to this proposed study.

Career development. An ongoing process that occurs over the life span and including home, school, and community experiences related to an individual's self concept and its implementation in life style as one lives life and makes a living (Leonard & Splete, 1978).

Career ready. Individuals who are active and involved in shaping and directing their lives now and in the future (Gysbers, 2013).

Intra and inter career conflict. Specific difficulty with contradictory information about themselves or possible occupations, internal confusion, or external confusion (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996).

Lack of information. Specific difficulty with lacking information about the decision making process, lack of information about the self, lack of information about occupations, and lack of information about ways of obtaining information (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996).

Lack of readiness. Specific difficulty related to lack of motivation, indecisiveness, and dysfunctional beliefs (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996).

Utilization. Graduating seniors' total usage of Career Center's services throughout their time at the institution.

Summary

Chapter I encompasses an introduction of career service centers, purpose of investigating, significance of the study, limitations that may occur, and poses research questions to guide the proposed study. Chapter II includes literature in relation to what resources Career Centers provide, what employers needs are, and theories that relate to student development.

Chapter II

Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the literature and examines the history of Career Center, Career Center programs, technology's impact, and theoretical framework of college students.

History of Career Centers

The foundation of Career Center is to provide students resources to help them identify their career goals, based on their skills, interests, and values, and teach them how to apply for a job (McGrath, 2002). Over the last thirty years Career Centers have emerged as a critical part of student affairs at higher education institutions (2002).

Career Centers started in the early 1900s through community centers offering social service to immigrants and others including guidance to a profession (Garis, Reardon, & Lenz, 2012). A guidance movement began in the 1920s correlating characteristics of students to occupations that compliment their skills (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010; Zunker, 2011). Frank Parsons was an early leader of this movement, which established the first Career Center (Evans, et. al., 2010; Garis, Reardon, & Lenz, 2012). Parson's relationship with a financial benefactor provided a grant for the funding of the Career Center located in the Civic Service House of Boston (2012). The guidance movement was community-based organizations, whose purpose transitioned into educational institutions across the United States (2012).

With a growth of GI bill recipients in the 1940s and 1950s, more people were enrolling in school and felt the pressure to figure out a career in a short amount of time (Schaub, 2012). The economic instability had raised complex issues and technological

advances over the past few decades and created uncertainty in young adults deciding on a career (Bishop, 1990). Career Centers focus in the early 1970s was to aid in student maturity (Oetting, Ivey & Weigel, 1970). In the 1990s, the need to further investigate the resources that Career Centers provide was examined to assist in the progress of students (Bishop, 1990); technology became a large emphasis (Pope, 2000). Career programs and services remain an organizational element in Career Centers (Garis, Reardon, & Lenz, 2012). “A distinguishing feature was and remains the provision of resources and information related to occupations, jobs, training, financial aid, career planning, and employment skills” (Garis, Reardon, & Lenz, 2012 p. 6).

Career Center Programs

Career Centers have goals and services based upon the needs of the students. Programs can be categorized into networking sessions, career counseling/advising, job and internship opportunities, and instructional sessions and workshops (Schaub, 2012). These programs stem from students’ needs as they decide on a career. “The senior year transition embodies both opportunities and challenges for students and institutions” (Henscheid, 2008, p. 79). Resources provided by Career Centers aid in this transition as seniors job search or move on to graduate study.

One of the components of Career Center services is career exploration or counseling. The number of students entering college unprepared is increasing (Hughes, Gibbons, & Mynatt, 2013). McGrath (2002) found that career counseling was the top resource offered and utilized by students. Career counseling provides students with resources on majors and careers utilizing assessments to help them discover what their career goals could be.

Some students struggle deciding on a career because they aren't confident that they will succeed or adequately prepared to work for a particular industry or environment (Creed & Hughes). Other students have difficulty making a decision, knowing their options, or having an understanding of self due to knowledge of available resources and maturity level (Sampson, McClain, Musch, & Reardon, 2013). Identifying the difficulties that the student may be struggling with is the first step career counselors take to assist the student (Gati, 2010).

Online assessments are also an option to assist students in finding their career path (Lent, 2013). After taking an online assessment career counselors discuss the results with each student. Meeting with career counselors not only provides students options for career pursuit but also generates ideas on what options they have within their chosen major (Litoiu, & Oproiu, 2012).

Another component of Career Center is job search resources such as resume critique, mock interviews, online job portals and cover letter guidebooks. This component helps students write a resume, cover letters, improve interviewing skills, and develop internship searches; skills vital to securing a job. These resources are also available for alumni (Nadya, 2006).

Career Center offices' third component is planning workshops and other events like career fairs. The workshops teach how to give someone a handshake and develop effective communication techniques (verbal and non-verbal) (de Janasz & Forret, 2008; Friar & Eddleston, 2007). Career fairs also help students learn more about a company, explore job opportunities and occupations (Schaub, 2012). One university held a one-day

conference for students to learn and practice professionalism as well as gain job search techniques (Diepenbrock & Gibson, 2012).

Some methods for seeking employment are termed as formal while other ways are informal. Informal techniques range from family and friends to social networking, while websites, career fairs, and campus databases are formal search options for students (Scallop & Kirby, 2007). Career fairs and workshop events are one way for students to prepare for post-college life.

A fourth component is preparation for graduate school. If students are interested in continuing their education past a bachelor's degree, Career Centers can also help in preparation of application materials for graduate school. One university hosts a graduate school awareness week where they host an informational fair for their students to learn about programs all over the United States (Diepenbrock & Gibson, 2012). Events such as these open doors for students to gain an idea of what is expected of them, learn how to pay for further education, and also fuel their confidence to earn another degree.

Lastly, internship preparation and search can also be found at a Career Center. Companies are utilizing Career Center databases to begin their search for interns (Curry, 2004). Another factor of internships is working with academic departments so students can receive credit for their experience (Schaub, 2012). This shows the need for students to integrate formal job strategy techniques to engage in internships.

All programs are instrumental in providing a career development path for the students' it serves. Fong stated, "... people should do something they have a passion for because things and aspirations change" (2011, p.2). Career counselors have the opportunity to assist in studies to do just that- find a career that fits them. "Students go to

college to be better prepared for the next stage of their lives” (Diepenbrock & Gibson, 2012 p. 56).

Technology’s Impact

As technology becomes integrated into everyday activity, Career Centers have adopted it to advance their services to students. Career Centers have created LinkedIn groups, Twitter accounts, and Facebook pages to promote their services and events (Osborn, 2012). These sites are free and commonly used as marketing techniques for Career Centers (Greenwood, 2012). Before social media became a popular trend, other forms of technology were used to deliver career development services (Venable, 2010). Forms of technology to support today’s students include: e-mail, discussion boards, videos, podcasts, websites, and Internet delivered career guidance and information systems (Venable, 2010).

LinkedIn is a professional networking website where individuals are able to make a profile to highlight their accomplishments and connect with other professionals (<http://www.linkedin.com>). Some less common resources are endorsements, recommendations, and the alumni function. A profile is formatted similar to a resume. LinkedIn is essential for all upcoming graduates (A. Ditlevson, personal communication, November 5, 2013). Developing connections by networking contributes to a 70%-80% success rate for students to secure jobs (Whiting & de Jaanasz, 2004). Networking provides opportunities for students to build relationships with people in their field, which aids in organizational success (de Janasz & Forret, 2008). Professional organizations also utilize LinkedIn to provide support to various people in their industry.

Career building activities, job search features, and student engagement are a few of the top reasons graduating seniors should form a detailed profile (Gerard, 2012). Profiles are also used on Career Center job portals like experience.com (Moneta, 2005). With a wide variety of uses for the Internet, Career Centers are now identifying what resources should be available online for mass usage by those who visit their webpage and what resources or programs should be strictly assessable in face-to-face meetings (Davidson, 2001).

Professionals in Career Centers utilize various components of the Internet to assist students in their needs. Job searching is among the top uses of the Internet (Reile & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2000). Social networking sites are also among the top global phenomena that are affecting students and organizations (Ellison, 2008). Exploration tools such as Focus and Discover are also tools used by Career Centers via the Internet (Schaub, 2012). Career Centers recognize this trend, hence adapting their programs and services to support students at colleges and universities (Garis, Rearson, Lenz, 2012).

Students assume a prominent role in use of social media outlets. It begins as they come in as freshman and continues until they graduate. Student's use of sites like Facebook is used as a way to assist when overcoming any type of transition (DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield, & Fiore, 2012). Social media outlets serve as a technology based form to cope with transitions.

High use of social media sites suggests that students are posting appropriate content on these sites. Miller, Parsons, and Lifer's (2010) study implied "seniors are the least likely group in the sample to post content which they consider inappropriate" (p. 380). Developmentally, when students first are adjusting to a new environment they tend

to follow what the cultural norm is (Evans, et al. 2010). As they undergo positive personal identity development their image on social media adjusts to reflect their maturity, personal goals, and beliefs. Students are beginning to learn that employers are using technology via social media sites to eliminate candidates for positions if they post inappropriate images or words on their profiles (Miller, Parsons, and Lifer, 2010).

The driven outreach programs and services are on a new level compared to a couple decades ago (Dey & Real, 2010). Technology is constantly being revolutionized. Career Centers are using enhanced technology to provide programs, such as webinars, and resources (examples of resumes and cover letters).

Theoretical Framework

Students going to college experience changes as they develop and grow into young professionals. According to Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, and Renn (2010), student populations are changing, therefore, continuing research and identifying theories already established is a key component for student affairs professionals to facilitate students growth. Two well known theorists, who have developed philosophies as a way to describe challenges today's college students face, was described as it relates to graduating seniors.

Schlossberg's transition theory.

The first theory is Schlossberg's Transition Theory. This psychosocial theory proposes four parts of coping during any type of transition: situation, self, support, and strategies (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). A psychosocial theory examines the content of development, the important issues people face as their lives progress, such as how to define themselves, their relationships with others and what to do

with their lives (Evans et al., 2010). In the following paragraphs each part of Schlossberg's theory was described.

Situation is one of the four components of Schlossberg's theory. It refers to a multitude of components for a graduating senior. These components include the transition severity, timing, control, and how permanent the transition is. Seniors graduating could face multiple situations at once, hence impacting their career development. Situation is one factor to consider during a transition.

Self is another component of Schlossberg's theory. It refers to the strength each individual person gains from experiences he/she has gone through. Potential components include and are not limited to: outlook on life, control on outcomes, stress management techniques, and experiences preciously related to transition. The intensity of these factors inhibits the transition for an individual.

Support is the third component of Schlossberg's theory. It can be a strength or weakness to a senior undergoing a transition. Services, resources, and people are all supportive outlets available to students undergoing a transition. Finances, friends and family are all components defining how a student handles a transition. The amount of support individuals receive will contribute to the transition, positively or negatively.

Finally, strategy is the last factor tied to coping to transition. Components range from inner resources, seeking support, and factoring time frame. Each portion of coping can be personalized in benefiting the student undergoing a major transition. As seniors are preparing for a transition, into a workplace or further education, it is beneficial for student affairs professionals to recognize where each student is on an individual basis and

provide assistance where needed. The strategy individuals use when in transition aid in how they cope.

Chickering and reisser's theory of identity development.

Chickering and Reisser created a theory to describe psychosocial behaviors of students' as they develop their identity (Evans et al., 2010). The term they use to distinguish the various stages is vector. There are seven vectors total. The sixth and seventh vector was described as it relates to career decision-making because junior and seniors are target groups in these vectors (Taub, Servaty-Seib, & Cousins, 2006).

Developing purpose is the sixth vector in Chickering and Reisser's theory. Career planning is one element defined for this vector. Distinguishing a specific purpose in life assists in the guidance for an individual to decide on a career. Once the decision is made individuals begin to plan accordingly to obtain a job in their decided occupation.

Developing integrity is the seventh vector in Chickering and Reisser's theory. Clarifying personal values is one of the ways individuals develop integrity. During the job search process establishing a sense of integrity is important for job satisfaction. When individuals know what they want in a job, because of their integrity and values, the organizations they are applying with will have the same characteristics. Developing integrity is a beneficial way to define where individuals are finding jobs.

Students struggle to commit to a career (Harris & Gafoor, 1999; Young, 2000), which places stress on students as they prepare to graduate from college. Chickering and Reisser categorize this phenomenon as struggling to develop purpose (Evans, et al., 2010). Making commitments within personal benefits and cultivating career goals are examples of scenarios juniors and seniors could be going through during this vector.

Clarifying values is a component of the seventh vector, developing integrity (Taub, Servaty-Seib, & Cousins, 2006). Identifying values in relation to psychosocial development plays a factor in a person's maturity. Bowers, Dickman, and Fuqua (2001) found correlation between psychosocial development and career development. These findings support the theory of seniors making decisions and plan for their future career(s).

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology of the study to explore how students are preparing to reach their career goals post-graduation from a four-year public institution. A quantitative research method was used to collect data as it applies to use of Career Center services and difficulties in the career decision-making process.

Research Questions

To further understand students' career decision-making difficulties and their utilization of Career Center services, this study sought to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What is graduating seniors' utility of Career Center programs to assist in post-graduation plans?

RQ2: Is there a correlation between senior's lack of information and their total utilization of Career Center programs?

RQ3: Is there a correlation between seniors' lack of readiness and their usage of Career Center programs?

RQ4: Is there a correlation between seniors' intra and inter career conflict and their utilization of Career Center programs?

RQ5: Is there a difference in current seniors' Career Center programs utilization by academic colleges?

Design of the Study

The study was conducted utilizing a survey sent via email. All students in senior status, or above 90 credits, enrolled at a Midwestern four-year state university at the time of data collection were contacted to complete the survey in Qualtrics. The cross-section

survey consisted of demographic questions as well as questions to assess the services students use from the Career Center and statements to gauge difficulties deciding on a career.

Participants

Participants were identified as undergraduate seniors in their fourth year of school or those who have completed more than 90 credit hours. They were informed that participation is entirely voluntary and could revoke their participation at any time. The number of total participants consisted of 95 students. Of those, 66 students completed the survey. The mean age of the participants was 26.61 ($SD = 2.3$). The self-reported ethnic breakdown of participants was: 45 (68.2%) Caucasian/Non-Hispanic, 5 (7.6%) Hispanic/Latino, 7 (10.6%) African-American, 1 (1.5%) Native American, 4 (6.1%) Asian/Pacific Islander, 2 (3.0%) Other and 2 participants did not disclose their ethnicity. Gender participants consisted of 53 females (80.3%) and 11 males (16.6%) and 2 participants did not indicate their gender. Colleges/Schools represented in this study included: 9 from the College of Arts and Humanities (13.6%), 22 from the College of Education and Professional Studies (33.3%), 12 from the College of Sciences (18.1%), 13 from the College of Business and Applied Sciences (19.7%), and 9 from the School of Continuing Education (13.6%) and 1 participant did not indicate their major.

Site

Data collection took place at a rural, mid-sized, public institution with approximately 9,000 enrolled students located in the Midwest region of the United States. The institution consists of 97% in-state students and 3% out-of-state students. Approximately 59% of the student population is female, and 41% is male. White

students are the majority of the population (73%). Currently, there are 47 undergraduate programs and 29 graduate programs.

Table 3.1

Demographics of Participants

Demographic	<i>n</i>	%
Ethnicity		
White	45	68.2
Hispanic/Latino	5	7.6
Black/African American	7	10.6
Native American or American Indian	1	1.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	6.1
Other	2	3.0
Gender		
Male	11	16.7
Female	53	80.3
College		
College of Arts & Humanities	9	13.6
College of Education and Professional Studies	22	33.3
College of Sciences	12	18.2
College of Business & Applied Sciences	13	19.7
School of Continuing Education	9	13.6

Instruments

This study utilized three instruments. The first instrument was a demographic questionnaire covering gender, age, race, and academic major (double majors chose one they most identify with).

Career decision-making difficulties questionnaire.

The second instrument utilized an established quantitative instrument; Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ) defines any difficulties students may have when it comes to decision-making (Gati, Krausz, & Opiow, 1996). The purpose of the CDDQ is to locate and identify the specific areas students find difficult in their career decision-making process. The 35-item measurement has three subscales: lack of readiness, lack of information, and difficulties related to inconsistent information. Sample statements include, “I find it difficult to make a career decision because I don’t know what careers will look like in the future”, “I believe that a career choice is a one-time choice and a life-long commitment”, and “I like to do things my own way”. The final statement is, “Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision?” Students respond to each item by ranking statements on a 9-point Likert scale, with one not describing me and nine describes me well. The Cronbach alpha for the CDDQ was .925, which indicated high reliability. In a previous study, reliability was reported at the .96 level (Fouad, Cotter, Kantamneni, 2009).

Scoring the CDDQ is categorized into three subscales: lack of readiness, lack of information about careers, and difficulties related to inconsistent information. A nine-point Likert type scale ranging from 1, “does not describe me” to 9, “describes me well”. This recording allows the minimum score on the Career Decision Making Difficulties

Questionnaire to be 35 and the maximum score to be 315. A high score represents favorable results, while a low score represents unfavorable results. These procedures are the original procedures used during the development of the questionnaire (Osipow & Gati, 1998).

Career services utility.

The third survey instrument was developed by the principal investigator (PI) for the present study in the form of binary options. The Career Services Utility is purported to measure students' utilization of services provided by the Career Center Office. The services are broken into three categories: job search activities, career planning activities, and development activities. Participants indicated if they have ("yes") or have not used ("no") the service. The final measure was a summation of participants' responses on all items to create a total Career Services Utility score.

An expert panel was comprised of four professionals. The panel was asked to provide feedback about the appropriateness, ambiguity, and complexity of the statements assessing Career Services Utility. The PI tailored the statements per the expert panel's advice. After all expert opinions were gathered a pilot study was conducted.

The pilot study was emailed to twelve seniors planning on graduating within the next month. Within a week eight students took the sixteen-question survey. Results were collected and evaluated to identify trends or weaknesses with the instrument. Question fifteen in this survey, "I have attended a job fair coordinated by Career Center off campus" was changed to "I have attended a job fair promoted by Career Center off campus" to correctly indicate the service available for students. No other changes were

made to the survey. The Cronbach alpha for Career Center Utility was .88, which indicated high reliability.

Data Collection

Participants were administered the survey via e-mail from the Informational Technology Services Office utilizing three instruments: a demographic questionnaire, CDDQ, and Career Services Utility. Three reminder emails were sent out a week after the initial email, two weeks after the initial email, and four weeks after the initial email. The Student Life Office emailed all registered student organization the survey as well. Each email contained a letter discussing the purpose of the study, as well as the estimated length of time it would take to complete the survey (See Appendix II). Senior Seminar professors were also contacted to promote participation in the survey. Out of twenty-seven professors four responded stating they would promote the survey to their student in their senior seminar course. After the online survey was administered through Qualtrics, data was collected within a four week period and coded for analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 (2012). Participants took, on average, six minutes to complete the survey. Upon completion of the survey students were offered the opportunity to provide their email to win a \$30 VISA gift card. One number was drawn randomly and the participant was then notified via email to pick up their gift card.

Data Analysis

After collection, data was organized and prepared using Microsoft Excel. Data was prepared by removing identifying information such as IP addresses for where the survey was accessed and the survey start and end times.

In order to maintain confidentiality of data gathered from participants, a number of steps were taken. To begin, all data was kept in a secure location in a file cabinet located in the primary investigators office to which only the primary researcher has access. Survey data only contained demographic information about the participants and no identifiers for the identities of each individual and therefore, minimal risk of breaching confidentiality. Data was analyzed to assess the correlation between use of services and difficulties in career decision-making. To measure service usage, each item on the Career Services Utility was coded. Responses marked no was coded “0” and responses marked yes was coded “1”. This recording allows the minimum score on the Career Services Utility to be 0 and the maximum score to be 12.

To answer the first research question descriptive statistics were run on usage of Career Center’s services. To answer the second, third, and fourth research questions the primary investigator conducted a Univariate Analysis of Variance of each of the categories: lack of readiness, lack of information, and intra and inter career conflict. To answer the fifth research question, majors were categorized by college/school and then an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was conducted to compare differences between multiple means between the 4 colleges/schools and the average use of Career Center’s services. For significant ANOVAs, the Tukey Post-Hoc analysis was then performed to determine which sets of paired means were statistically different from each other. In addition, a One-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) test was run to determine what resources show significance when comparing the five colleges. The final test run was a Multiple Linear Regression looking at each individual and if their career decision-making difficulties predicted their use of Career Center’s services.

Summary

This study utilized a quantitative approach with an online questionnaire. The researcher used a questionnaire developed specifically for this study, Career Services Utility, and the CDDQ. The survey was emailed to seniors attending the host institution via students' university issued e-mail accounts. Demographics of participants were identified, incentive was described, and the process of data collection and analysis was mentioned. Statistics and results from the surveys are presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

Results

This study was conducted to answer the research questions: What is the utility of graduating seniors using Career Center programs to assist in post-graduation plans? Is there a correlation between students with less information and their utilization of Career Center programs? Is there a correlation between students who lack readiness and their usage of Career Center programs? Is there a correlation between students who received intra and inter career conflict and their utilization of Career Center programs? Is there a relationship between service usage and academic majors? This chapter presents the results from the statistical analyses conducted.

Career decision-making difficulties were measured using the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire on a scale of 1 (*this does not describe me*) to 9 (*this does describe me*) (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996). Lower scores are more favorable. Descriptive statistics from the three subscales, *lack of information*, *career conflict*, and *lack of readiness* were obtained and are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.

Means and Standard Deviations for Senior's Career Decision-Making Difficulties (N = 66)

Difficulties	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Lack of Information	2.4	1.6
Career Conflict	2.1	1.4
Lack of Readiness	3.3	1.1

Research Question 1: What is graduating seniors' utility of Career Center programs to assist in post-graduation plans?

The first research question focused on how many seniors used the resources offered by the Career Center. Career Center programs were measured using the Career Services Utility instrument. The researcher developed this instrument based on the resources the office offers to students. Participants indicated with a “yes” or “no” whether or not they had utilized each resource, and a total score was created. The mean for total usage was 2.76 ($SD = 3.47$), meaning that of the 15 different services, individuals utilized less than 3 of them, on average. Table 4.2 shows the number of participants who indicated that they had used the services available through the Career Center. The top three services used by seniors were resume review (43.9%), job fair on campus (36%), workshop coordinated by Career Center (31%). Conversely, the three least used services by seniors were: on-campus interviews and off-campus job fairs (6% each), and receiving assistance with the application process for graduate school (3%).

Research Question 2: Is there a correlation between senior's lack of information and their total utilization of Career Center programs?

A bivariate correlation analysis was run to determine if there is a relationship between *lack of information* ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.57$) and usage of career service programs ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 3.47$) as measured by Career Services Utility instrument. It was hypothesized that there is a correlation. Result suggested there was no correlation between the amount of information seniors had and their usage of Career Center programs; $r(66) = .04$, $p = .75$. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no correlation was not rejected.

Table 4.2

Frequency of Seniors Utilization of Career Center's Services (N=66)

Service	<i>n</i> (%)	
	No	Yes
Resume review	37 (56.1)	29 (43.9)
Job fair on-campus	42 (63.6)	24 (36.4)
Workshop	45 (68.2)	21 (31.8)
Employers	47 (71.2)	19 (28.8)
Interviewing tips	48 (72.7)	18 (27.3)
Educational session	55 (83.3)	11 (16.7)
Career/major decision	55 (83.3)	11 (16.7)
Online recruiting system	56 (84.8)	10 (15.2)
Mock interview	57 (86.4)	9 (13.6)
Cover letter	59 (89.4)	7 (10.6)
4-year Plan	59 (89.4)	7 (10.6)
Internship	60 (90.9)	6 (9.1)
Interview	62 (93.9)	4 (6.1)
Job fair off-campus	62 (93.9)	4 (6.1)
Graduate school	64 (97.0)	2 (3.0)

Note: See Appendix III for explanation of services

Research Question 3: Is there a correlation between senior's lack of readiness and their total utilization of Career Center programs?

A bivariate correlation analysis was run to determine if there is a relationship between students' readiness and their usage of career service programs. The mean for readiness was 3.31 ($SD = 1.14$). Result of Pearson's correlation was not significant, suggesting that there was no correlation between the students' level of readiness and their usage of Career Center programs; $r(66) = -.01, p = .95$. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no correlation was not rejected.

Research Question 4: Is there a correlation between seniors' intra and inter career conflict and their utilization of Career Center programs?

A bivariate correlation analysis was run to determine if there is a relationship between students' experiences of career conflict and their usage of Career Center programs. Result indicated there was no correlation between intra and inter career conflict ($M = 2.08, SD = 1.38$) and students' usage of Career Center programs; $r(66) = .13, p = .3$.

A multiple regression was run to develop a model for predicting the utilization of Career Center programs from students' *lack of information, lack of readiness, and intra and inter conflicts*. Table 4.3 summarizes the descriptive statistics and analysis results. As can be seen, the independent variables (*lack of information, lack of readiness, and intra and inter conflicts*) were not significantly correlated with utilization, indicating these variables are not a predictor of seniors' utilization of Career Center's services. The multiple regression model with all three predictors produced, $R^2 = .024, F(3,62) = .509, p$

= .677. Lack of information, lack of readiness, and intra and inter conflicts did not contribute to the multiple regression model.

Table 4.3

Summary Statistics, Correlations and Results from the Regression Analysis

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>SD</i>	correlation	multiple regression weights	
				<i>b</i>	β
Conflict	20.77	13.77	.12	.05	.21
Readiness	33.12	11.43	-.01	-.02	-.06
Lack of information	28.21	18.86	.04	-.01	-.08

Research Question 5: Is there a difference in current seniors' Career Center utilization by academic colleges?

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was run to determine if there was difference in student usage of Career Center services among academic colleges. The factor was academic college and the dependent variable was total utilization. Results of descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.4. Result of ANOVA returned an overall significant test, $F(4,60) = 3.87, p = .01$, as seen in table 4.5. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in Career Center utilization was rejected. Post hoc tests Tukey HSD were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means, that is, to determine where the differences were located. There was a significant difference in the means of utilization between the School of Continuing Education and College of Business and Applied Sciences with the latter reporting higher usage.

Table 4.4

Seniors Utilization of Career Center's Services by Academic College

Self-Identified College	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Arts and Humanities	9	3.33	3.91
College of Sciences	12	2.67	3.06
College of Education and Professional Studies	22	2.09	3.31
School of Continuing Education	9	.11	0.33
College of Business and Applied Sciences	13	5.31	3.73

Note: *N* = 66

Table 4.5

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Academic Colleges and Total Utilization (N = 66)

Source	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between Groups	160.41	4	40.10	3.87	*.01
Within Groups	622.14	60	10.37		
Total	782.55	64			

Note: *significant at = .05.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) test was conducted to determine the utilization of Career Center's services by the five factors: College of Arts and Humanities, College of Education and Professional Studies, College of Sciences, College of Business and Applied Science, and School of Continuing Education.

Significant difference were found among the five colleges on the dependent measures, Wilks's $\Lambda = .19$, $F(4,60) = 1.62$, $p = .01$. The multivariate η^2 based on Wilk's Λ was quite

strong, .34. Table 4.6 contains the means and the standard deviations on the dependent variables for the 15 resources.

Table 4.6

Seniors Mean (SD) Utilization of Services by Academic College N=66

Services	College of Arts and Humanities <i>n</i> =9	College of Education and Professional Studies <i>n</i> =22	College of Sciences <i>n</i> =12	College of Business and Applied Sciences <i>n</i> =13	School of Continuing Education <i>n</i> =9
Resume	0.33 (.50)	0.36 (.49)	0.42 (.52)	0.85 (.38)	0.11 (.33)
Job Fair On- Campus	0.22 (.44)	0.27 (.46)	0.33 (.49)	0.92 (.28)	-
Workshop	0.44 (.53)	0.32 (.48)	0.33 (.49)	0.38 (.51)	-
Employers Interviewing Tips	0.44 (.53)	0.27 (.46)	0.17 (.39)	0.54 (.52)	-
Educational Sessions	0.44 (.53)	0.18 (.40)	0.25 (.45)	0.46 (.52)	-
Career/Major Decision	0.22 (.44)	0.14 (.35)	0.17 (.39)	0.31 (.48)	-
Online Recruiting System	0.22 (.44)	0.09 (.29)	0.25 (.45)	0.23 (.44)	-
Mock Interview	0.22 (.44)	0.05 (.21)	0.17 (.39)	0.38 (.51)	-
Cover Letter	0.33 (.50)	0.05 (.21)	0.17 (.39)	0.23 (.44)	-
4-year Plan	0.11 (.33)	0.14 (.35)	0.08 (.29)	0.15 (.38)	-
Internship	0.11 (.33)	0.05 (.21)	0.08 (.29)	0.31 (.48)	-
Campus Interviews	0.00 (.00)	0.05 (.21)	0.17 (.39)	0.23 (.44)	-
Job Fair Off- Campus	0.11 (.33)	0.05 (.21)	0.00 (.00)	0.15 (.38)	-
Graduate School	0.00 (.00)	0.05 (.21)	0.08 (.29)	0.15 (.38)	-
	0.11 (.33)	0.05 (.21)	-	-	-

Note: See Appendix III for explanation of services. “-” represents no usage.

Summary

Students at a midsize Midwestern institution participated in an online survey during the fall 2014 semester to gather information on their career decision making difficulties and their usage of Career Center's resources. For the first research question, resume review was the highest used resource at the Career Center. For the second, third, and fourth research question, participants indicated they did not feel difficulty in terms of readiness, lack of information, or intra and inter career conflict. For the last research question, the College of Business and Applied Sciences uses the most resources, specially resume reviews and on campus job fairs. Chapter V contains more information regarding the results of the study, including conclusions, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter V

Conclusion

This chapter presents the results of a study conducted to assess utilization of Career Centers services and the difficulties graduating seniors have when deciding on a career. This chapter will compare results to relevant literature, highlight limitations to the study and give recommendations for future research.

Discussion

Career service usage.

Previous research found that although students may know about Career Center few have used them (Fouad, et. al., 2006). Data from the survey indicated graduating students use at least one among multiple services offered during their enrollment at the institution. The most commonly utilized services are resume reviews, attending a job fair on campus, and participating in job preparation workshops. It's possible that graduating students may not know of the other services available to them, or they do not see reason to use other services.

Services such as graduate school preparation, off-campus job fairs, and campus interviews had the lowest number of utilization in this study. This outcome may have resulted because graduating seniors are not preparing to go to graduate school; instead they are preparing to join the workforce. Additionally, during all years the student attended school at the research site, seniors did not attend off-campus events. This may be caused because of lack of transportation available for them to attend or they do not feel the need to go. Participating in on-campus interviews is also a resource that is not

utilized often. Further investigation is needed to address why this service is not being used by graduating seniors.

According to this study, between nine and thirty percent of graduating seniors utilized over half of the services evaluated in the present study. Chickering's Theory of Identity Development supports this finding because students are developing career goals and defining what their purpose is (Evans, et al., 2010). The top services include: how to research employers, gaining interviewing techniques, attending educational sessions about interviewing, deciding on a major and/or career, use of online recruiting system, participating in a mock interview, writing a cover letter, the four-year career plan, and located an internship with assistance from Career Center. From these results we can assume graduating seniors are aware of services provided but are utilizing them based on personal preference.

Lack of information

One major category in Gati's instrument, Career Decision-Making Difficulties, is lack of information (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996). Subcategories include: lack of information about the decision making process, lack of information about the self, lack of information about occupations, and lack of information about ways of obtaining information (1996). In the present study, the correlation between seniors who lack information and their usage of Career Center was weak ($r = .04$). Graduating seniors appear to have enough information about deciding on a career. Hence, they do not go to the Career Center to investigate career or major options.

One possible reason graduating seniors are not going to the Career Center for information is they are learning about it in their courses from faculty members on campus

(Downing, 2011) or this process took place before arriving to college. Faculty members are the number one influence on students' careers (Hutchinson, Hopkins and Kyriakides, 2015). Another way seniors could be gaining information about careers is through the Internet. Easy accessibility to the Internet allows students to do independent research about careers gaining knowledge about salary, job outlook, and skills desired.

Lack of readiness.

Another major category in Gati's instrument, Career Decision-Making Difficulties, is lack of readiness (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996). Subcategories include: lack of motivation, indecisiveness, and dysfunctional beliefs (1996). In the present study, graduating seniors indicated high levels of readiness when deciding on a career. They feel motivated and decisive on their chosen career. Based on research, students are ready to make a decision on a career as they approach graduation (Bullock-Yowell, McConnell, & Schedin, 2014). This study also discovered the same results ($M = 3.31$).

Given that graduating seniors' in this study show a readiness to decide on a career, their utilization of Career Center services is low. One reason may be that graduating seniors have previously chosen a major during their years as an underclassman. Another form of readiness may be parental influence. Throughout high school many seniors consult their parents or mentors for guidance on what careers might be a good fit. Once in college students continue to rely on those individuals to assist them in job preparation reducing their need to utilize the on-campus Career Center.

Intra and inter career conflict.

The third and final major category in Gati's instrument, Career Decision-Making Difficulties, is inconsistent information (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996). Subcategories

include: unreliable information, internal conflicts, and external conflicts (1996). In the present study, graduating seniors did not report experiencing intra or inter career conflict ($M = 2.08$). Unreliable information can be defined as individuals feeling that they have contradictory information about themselves or possible careers (1996). Internal conflicts refer to confusion about what they view as important and connecting those values to a career. External conflicts stem from an individual's preferred career choice is different than what other's express to him/her or multiple people who are significant to the individual are giving contradicting messages. Data from this study show just over fifteen percent of graduating seniors received counseling on deciding on a career or major. Graduating seniors in this study are not experiencing conflicting career information; therefore, they are not utilizing Career Center services.

Academic colleges.

A common myth at universities is Career Centers are only for business majors. In this study, students who identified themselves as business majors had the highest mean of usage, ($M = 5.31$). One reason this college has the highest mean, compared to the other academic colleges, may be because of a strong relationship between faculty members in those majors and the Career Center. Strong relationships can assist in building rapport and awareness of various types of services an office provides. Another reason why these majors may have the highest mean is because of the strong relationship the Career Center has with regional employers. The college with the lowest usage was School of Continuing Education. As stated, there is a significant relationship between students' service usage and their academic college based upon the information gathered in this study.

Looking further into the participants' demographic information, the School of Continuing Education yielded a large amount of non-traditional students. Courses taught through this college are also not located on campus. Non-traditional students are categorized in this study as being over the age of 25. This group of graduating seniors may have grounded knowledge on job search preparation and what they plan to do with their degree because they are already employed full-time. One reason behind the low usage of Career Center Services from students in the School of Continuing Education may be because these students are not on campus to receive them. School of Continuing Education students have the lowest usage of Career Center services.

Finally, the researcher examined what services are being utilized by students within each academic college. Resume review and attending job fairs on-campus are the top two services used by all seniors. In the job application process, employers always asked for the candidates' resume. The least utilized service is graduate school information. Only students in the Arts and Humanities and the College of Education and Professional Studies reported using that service. This may be due to a lack of strong need for a graduate degree to begin a career.

Recommendations for College Student Affairs Professionals

Based on the present study, the following recommendations have been made for professionals. First, professionals should begin to educate, connect, and partner with faculty on campus. Some education techniques include: hosting events for experts in various industries to provide a panel for faculty members in that area of study, present at new faculty orientation and other faculty events, create luncheons for faculty members to network with employers, highlight faculty's participation in industry sponsored events

and conferences through newsletters, and provide feedback on students' post-graduation outcomes. To build connections Career Centers can utilize faculty to be moderators or participate in career-related panel events for students to attend, invite faculty to career fairs, create partnerships for classroom engagement, and share data and research about current trends in employment. To partner with faculty Career Centers can reward, recognize, and appreciate what faculty members are doing within research or in the classroom, build trust and develop relationships with faculty members, respect their class time, provide access and service instead of only asking them to promote opportunities and events to their students, and finally applaud them for their expertise in their field and how they know who their students are.

Second, incorporating social media to advertise what Career Center services provides would be a way to extend outreach for students and alumni. Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest are all platforms to showcase career fairs, services, office promotions, job and internship opportunities, how to dress professionally, interview tips, and other information to benefit students as they are preparing for life after graduation. Creating and maintaining these platforms are a cost-effective way to promote services provided by the Career Center.

Third, hiring undergraduate interns to assist with office outreach efforts, communication plans, and general job search advising would create more availability for students and alumni to visit the Career Center. Creating these positions will create opportunities for students to have conversations with their counterparts about available resources and upcoming events the office provides. It also gives opportunities for the

professional staff to delegate tasks for a student to take ownership of and give feedback to how various services are delivered to students on campus.

Recommendations for Future Research

During the present study, quantitative data were collected. The data provided information that students' use of the Career Center services is low. For future research, it would be recommended that the research look at qualitative data. For those who indicated utilizing services, qualitative information would allow for a deeper understanding of how they learned of the service and how helpful the service was to them. This would allow the researcher to gain knowledge of marketing strategies that are reaching its students and their satisfaction with the services they received.

Other recommendations for future research would be to give recent alumni a survey similar to the one used for this study. This would demonstrate how much of a priority those graduates made to utilize Career Center services and if it had a role in them being offered a job within a few months of graduation. This would be helpful in identifying what services to continue providing, scale down, or more heavily market to students and the campus community.

Finally, future research could include gaining an employer's perspective about how professional the students' job application materials are. This would give insight as to what services are fulfilling its purpose or if professionals in that office should allocate and promote professional development for its employees. With the economy constantly changing and employers raising their expectations for college graduates conducting more research, networking with employers and fellow colleagues, and attending conferences could heighten the level of knowledge by those employed in the Career Center.

Limitations

The study had several limitations. First, the sample size was low. Just over two thousand, five hundred students were emailed the survey with a return rate of 3%. If more students had participated in the study the sample would have represented the population more adequately. Utilizing a different approach than depending on online participation could have yielded a higher sample size.

Another limitation of this research was the sample was not representative of the population. Participation of females to males was significantly different. Females had a larger response than males in this study.

Finally, participants from the academic colleges varied greatly. If the number of students from each college were proportionate it would further strengthen the findings. Some students might have been discouraged to participate in this study because they are ill informed about the services available to them.

Summary

This chapter presented the discussion of the quantitative results on research at a mid-size Midwestern University focusing on students' usage of Career Center services and their career decision-making difficulties. Relevant literature showcased the evolution of Career Centers, technology's impact, and student development theories related to graduating seniors. A survey was administered to students graduating in the upcoming academic year. After analysis of the data, the results indicated a low level of usage of services provided by the Career Center, minimal levels of difficulty proving students aren't lacking information, lacking readiness, or receiving intra and inter career conflict, and students in College of Business and Applied Sciences use the most services but

students in the School of Continuing Education use the least amount of services. Based on the results, recommendations were made for researchers to further investigate students' usage of Career Centers to better meet the needs of current students and employers.

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Appendix I
Survey Instrument

Demographic Questions.

- 1) What is your age?
- 2) What is your sex? Male, female, prefer not to disclose
- 3) Please specify your ethnicity. Caucasian (White), Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Native American or American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Other
- 4) What is your major? (please write out full name) *If more than one major identify the one you most commonly identify with
- 5) What is your year in school? Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate Student

Career Center Utility. This construct is purported to measure students' utilization of services provided by the Career Center Office. The services are broken into three categories: job search activities, career planning activities, and development activities. Participants will indicate if they have (yes) or have not (no) used the service. The final measure was a summation of participants' responses on all items to create a total Career Center utility score.

Job Search Activities

- 1) I had my resume reviewed by a staff member in Career Center.
- 2) Career Center staff helped me write a cover letter.
- 3) Career Center staff provided me with information about how to research employers.
- 4) Career Center online recruiting system assisted in my job search.
- 5) Career Center staff taught me interviewing techniques.

- 6) Did you attend an educational session on interviewing techniques offered by Career Center?
- 7) Did you participate in a mock interview with a member of the Career Center staff or during a program offered by the Career Center office?

Career Planning Activities

- 8) I used Career Service sponsored the four-year career plan during my college experience.
- 9) I located an internship with the assistance of Career Center.
- 10) I participated in Career Center sponsored campus interviews.
- 11) Career Center helped me decide on a major and/or career.
- 12) Career Center assisted me with the graduate school application process.

Development Activities

- 13) I have attended a job fair coordinated by Career Center on campus.
- 14) I have attended a job fair promoted by Career Center off campus.
- 15) I have attended a workshop coordinated by Career Center.

Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire

This questionnaire's aim is to locate possible difficulties and problems related to making career decisions.

Please begin by filling in the following information:

Age: _____

Number of years of education: _____

Sex: Female / Male

Have you considered what field you would like to major in or what occupation you would like to choose?

Yes / No

If so, to what extent are you confident of your choice?

Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Very confident

Next, you was presented with a list of statements concerning the career decision-making process. Please rate the degree to which each statement applies to you on the following scale:

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

Circle 1 if the statement does not describe you and 9 if it describes you well. Of course, you may also circle any of the intermediate levels.

Please do not skip any question.

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For each statement, please circle the number which best describes you.

1. I know that I have to choose a career, but I don't have the motivation to make the decision now ("I don't feel like it").

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

2. Work is not the most important thing in one's life and therefore the issue of choosing a career doesn't worry me much.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

3. I believe that I do not have to choose a career now because time will lead me to the "right" career choice.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

4. It is usually difficult for me to make decisions.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

5. I usually feel that I need confirmation and support for my decisions from a professional person or somebody else I trust.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

6. I am usually afraid of failure.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

7. I like to do things my own way.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

8. I expect that entering the career I choose will also solve my personal problems.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

9. I believe there is only one career that suits me.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

10. I expect that through the career I choose I will fulfill all my aspirations.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

11. I believe that a career choice is a one-time choice and a life-long commitment.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

12. I **always** do what I am told to do, even if it goes against my own will.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

13. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what steps I have to take.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

14. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what factors to take into consideration.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

15. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I don't know how to combine the information I have about myself with the information I have about the different careers.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

16. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I still do not know which occupations interest me.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

17. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I am not sure about my career preferences yet (for example, what kind of a relationship I want with people, which working environment I prefer).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

18. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about my competencies (for example, numerical ability, verbal skills) and/or about my personality traits (for example, persistence, initiative, patience).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

19. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what my abilities and/or personality traits was like in the future.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

20. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about the variety of occupations or training programs that exist.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

21. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about the characteristics of the occupations and/or training programs that interest me (for example, the market demand, typical income, possibilities of advancement, or a training program's prerequisites).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

22. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I don't know what careers will look like in the future.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

23. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know how to obtain additional information about myself (for example, about my abilities or my personality traits).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

24. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know how to obtain accurate and updated information about the existing occupations and training programs, or about their characteristics.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

25. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I constantly change my career preferences (for example, sometimes I want to be self-employed and sometimes I want to be an employee).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

26. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I have contradictory data about my abilities and/or personality traits (for example, I believe I am patient with other people but others say I am impatient).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

27. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I have contradictory data about the existence or the characteristics of a particular occupation or training program.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

28. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I'm equally attracted by a number of careers and it is difficult for me to choose among them.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

29. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not like any of the occupation or training programs to which I can be admitted.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

30. I find it difficult to make a career decision because the occupation I am interested in involves a certain characteristic that bothers me (for example, I am interested in medicine, but I do not want to study for so many years).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

31. I find it difficult to make a career decision because my preferences can not be combined in one career, and I do not want to give any of them up (e.g., I'd like to work as a freelancer, but I also wish to have a steady income).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

32. I find it difficult to make a career decision because my skills and abilities do not match those required by the occupation I am interested in.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

33. I find it difficult to make a career decision because people who are important to me (such as parents or friends) do not agree with the career options I am considering and/or the career characteristics I desire.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

34. I find it difficult to make a career decision because there are contradictions between the recommendations made by different people who are important to me about the career that suits me or about what career characteristics should guide my decisions.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision?

Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 High

Appendix II
Informed Consent

EIU Senior,

You are invited to participate in a research study that focuses on the relationship of Career Center use and Difficulties in career decision-making. The purpose of this study is to see if there is a correlation between students who know what career they want to go in and their use of Career Center' resources. This survey is being conducted as part of an assignment for the course CSD 5950, Thesis and Research, as a requirement for the Master's of Science program in College Student Affairs here at Eastern Illinois University. Dr. Richard Roberts is the course instructor, and I, Carrie Klaphake, as the Principle Investigator on the project.

This survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your decision to participate is completely voluntary. You have the right to terminate your participation at any time without penalty.

Your participation in this research was kept confidential. Information from this research project could be shared with administrators on campus. Because your participation in this study is critical, if you complete the survey you were entered in a drawing to win a \$30 VISA gift card. To enter email: caklaphake@eiu.edu at your convenience with your contact information and a random drawing was conducted at the conclusion of data collection.

Your decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on your current status or future relations with Eastern Illinois University.

By clicking on the link, you agree to participate voluntarily in all aspects of this study, understand that you have the option of removing yourself from the study at any time and give your approval of all findings to be enclosed within the research. Here is the link to the survey:

[Insert link]

If you have any questions for the research, feel free to contact:

Carrie Klaphake
caklaphake@eiu.edu

Dr. Richard Roberts
rroberts@eiu.edu

If you have any questions or concern about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:

Institutional Review Board
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Ave., Charleston, IL 61920
Telephone: (217) 581-8576
E-Mail: eiuirb@eiu.edu

Thank you in advance and have a great day,

Carrie Klaphake

Appendix III
Description of Services

Description of Career Center Services

Resume review: a staff member in Career Center reviewed their resume

Job fair on-campus: Attended a job fair coordinated by Career Center on campus

Workshop: Attended a workshop coordinated by Career Center

Employers: Career Center staff provided information about how to research employers

Interviewing tips: Career Center staff taught them interviewing techniques

Educational session: Attended an educational session on interviewing techniques offered by Career Center

Career/major decision: Career Center helped in deciding on a major and/or career

Online recruiting system: Career Center online recruiting system assisted in their job search

Mock interview: Participated in a mock interview with a member of the Career Center Staff or during a program offered by the Career Service's office

Cover letter: Career Center staff helped them write a cover letter

4-year Plan: Used Career Center sponsored four-year career plan during their college experience

Internship: Located an internship with the assistance of Career Center

Interview: Participated in Career Center sponsored campus interviews

Job fair off-campus: Attended a job fair promoted by Career Center off campus

Graduate school: Career Center assisted with the graduate school application process