



Internships or Study Abroad: Influences of Career Decision Making

Delanie Crist, Troy G. Tarpley, Cindy Akers, Scott Burris,
CassiDe Street and David Doerfert



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources

Dr. Bill Bennett Student Success Center

Introduction



High Impact Practices

- High Impact Practices incorporate several distinctive qualities including:
 - Significant application and time
 - Enable learning away from a classroom
 - Faculty and student collaborations
 - Incorporate interactions with various individuals
 - Provide fundamental feedback

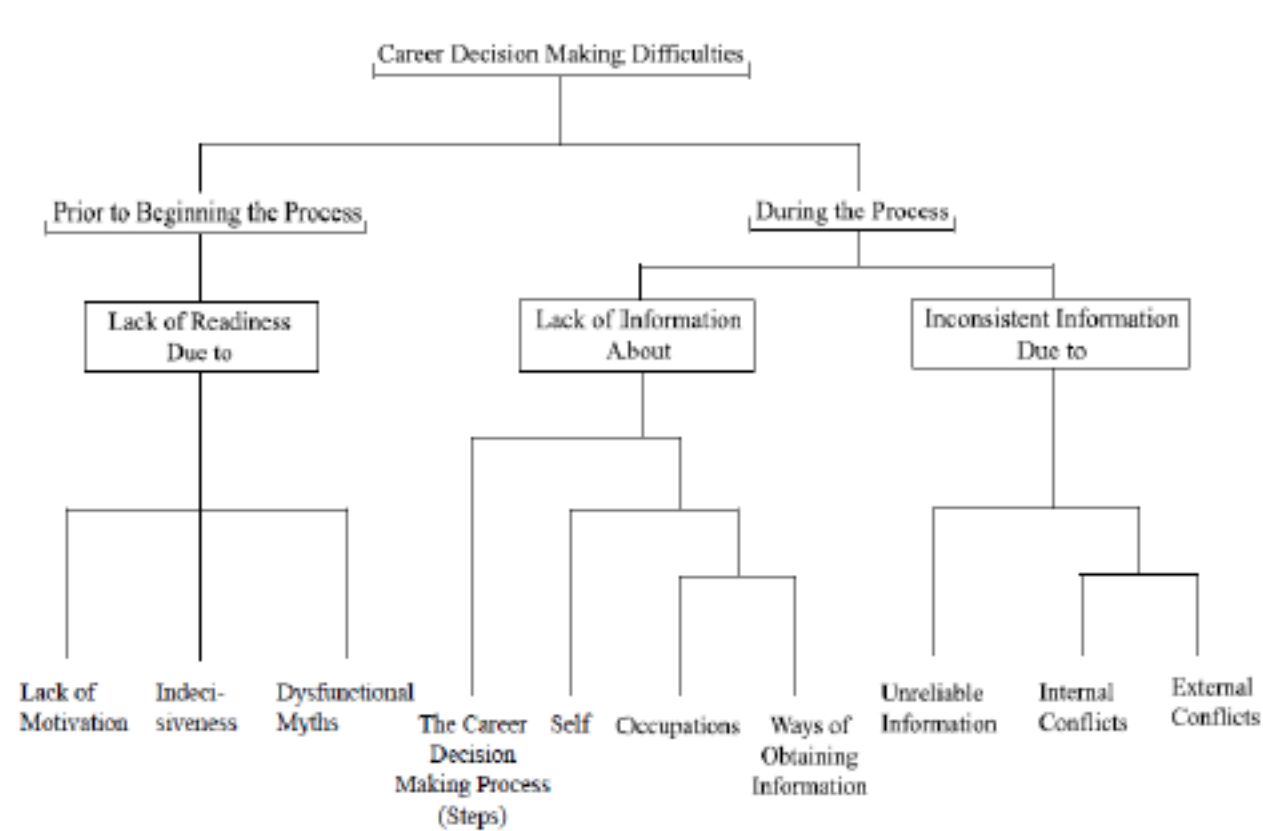
High Impact Activates

- NSSE founding director categorized 10 activates that include:
 - First year seminars and experiences
 - Common intellectual courses
 - Learning communities
 - Writing-intensive courses
 - Collaborative assignments and projects
 - Undergraduate research
 - Diversity/global learning
 - Service learning
 - Internships
 - Capstone courses and projects.
- Suggested that undergraduate students should have the opportunity to participate in at least two different high-impact activities while in college (Kuh 2008).

Purpose of the Study

- The purpose of this study was to examine the differences in students' career decision-making abilities based on their completion of an internship and study abroad experiences.
- Sought to determine if incorporating internships and study abroad can impact students' career decision-making abilities.
- Assessing the students' perspectives can help administration create a more unified approach in promoting high impact learning in undergraduate studies.

Taxonomy of Career Decision-making Abilities



Methodology



Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire

- The 34 questions within the CDDQ are designed to measure the various constructs students may face when making a career decision.
- The questions are distinguished between three major categories of difficulties which are further separated into 10 specific difficulty categories.
- The items are rated on a 9-point scale of the degree to which the difficulty represented by each item describes the respondent (1 = “does not describe me” and 9 = “describes me well”).

Participants

- Participants consisted of students at a Texas Tech University's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.
- 55 participants completed a duplication of the Career Decision Making Difficulties Questionnaire (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996).
- Participants were placed into discrete groups by their involvement, or lack of involvement, in study abroad and internships.

Data Collection & Analysis

- Online questionnaire using Qualtrics were distributed to students in a core course for CASNR students.
- A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized for this study.

Results



Results

- Students who participated in study abroad ($p = 0.03$) and those students who participated in study abroad and an internship ($p = 0.03$) reported experiencing a significantly less “lack of information” than those students who did neither an internship or study abroad.
- Students who have participated in an internship experienced less “lack of readiness” than those students who did not participate in an internship or study abroad ($p = 0.01$).

Conclusions & Recommendations



Conclusions & Recommendations

- Students who have completed an internship had a significant difference between those who participated in neither an internship nor study abroad program in the lack of readiness category.
 - *Students who did not participate in neither an internship nor study abroad program consistently had higher career-decision-making difficulty scores.*
- Academic advisors and faculty should continue to promote study abroad and internship programs to undergraduate student.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- Individuals who studied abroad were less likely to have difficulties within the lack of information major category.
 - *Study abroad contributes to the growth and development in the following areas amongst students: growth in maturity and individuality, better self-awareness, increased tolerance for differences in people and ideas and growth in interpersonal skills (Cash, 1993).*
- Academic advisors should promote students to participate in study abroad experiences.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- Those who completed an internship had a lower indecision score than those who did not participate in a study abroad or internship.
 - The largest difference within lack of readiness is general indecision.
- Promoting internships to students who score highly within the lack of readiness category could help alleviate some of difficulties that obstruct the ability to make a career decision.