Educational Administration: Theses, Dissertations, and Student Research

Educational Administration, Department of

8-2-2013

EXPLORING HOW CHINESE STUDENTS WITH MASTER DEGREE LOCATE A CAREER PLACEMENT

Xiaoqian Ma
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, tongtong880706@gmail.com

EXPLORING HOW CHINESE STUDENTS WITH MASTER DEGREE LOCATE A

CAREER PLACEMENT

by

Xiaoqian Ma

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Major: Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Professor Miles T. Bryant

Lincoln, Nebraska

August, 2013

EXPLORING HOW CHINESE STUDENTS WITH MASTER DEGREE LOCATE A

CAREER PLACEMENT

Xiaoqian Ma, M.A.

University of Nebraska, 2013

Advisor: Miles T. Bryant

This qualitative research study recruited ten subjects and explored how these ten Chinese students with master degree located their positions of employment successfully in the United States after they graduated. The research stated different perspectives of job searching methods, difficulties in the application process, preparation before graduation, visa limitations, and suggestions for the upcoming future graduates. The researcher conducted and scheduled ten interviews individually and all research subjects were asked the same questions in the interviews.

Chapter One

Problem Statement

In recent years, there are more and more international students coming to the United States to receive a higher education. The Institute of International Education (2009) reported that the number of international students that during the 2008-2009 academic year increased from 623,805 to 671,616 enrolled during the 2008-2009 academic year. Many of those international students would encounter considerable challenges if they sought to enter the employment market in the U.S. "After graduation from an academic program, these individuals are often required to negotiate numerous challenges when seeking employment" (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz, & Cavazos, 2011, p. 17). In one early study, Leong and Sedlacek (1989) stated that international students were likely to meet numerous difficulties and would experience much more challenges than their domestic peers.

Chinese students form one of the largest groups of international students studying in the US. Many of these Chinese students hope to work for a few years in the US after they graduate in order to increase their international experience, gain working experience, and improve language skills. This research project explored how Chinese students with master degrees successfully located employment.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to discover how the limited number of Chinese graduate students is able to locate jobs in the United States after they graduate from American

master degree program. This study will describe what difficulties Chinese master degree students met while they were applying for positions, how they handled these issues, and what recommendation they have willing to share with upcoming Chinese graduates.

Research Questions

1) Why do Chinese graduate students who received a master degree in the United States choose to work in the United States?

2) What do Chinese graduate students who received a master degree in the United States report that they needed to know and be able to do in order to improve their chances of gaining employment?

3) What do these Chinese graduate who received a master degree in the United States students report was that university in college they did that helpful to them that gaining an employment?

4) What suggestions do Chinese graduate students who received a master degree in the United States have that will help locate employment after they graduated?

5) Do these Chinese graduate feel difficulty to change their visa status from F-1 to H1-B

Research Design and Method

Ten Chinese employed graduates were identified for interviews (11Q 30-40mins the rest goes to significance.)

The purpose of this study is to serve Chinese graduate students who received a master degree from an American university. So the researcher selected ten Chinese interviewees who earned a master degree in the United States and currently located a position in American after they graduated as the study subjects. The researcher knew six

of the interviewees through daily social activities. The rest of the interviewees were explored by networking and they were introduced by the researcher's friends.

First, the researched contacted potential subjects who she knew by email to ask whether they were willing to participate in her study. After she received positive responses, she sent them the research approved document, informed consent form, and research protocol. And then, she started sending emails to negotiate interview location and schedule. In the meantime, the researcher asked her current subjects that whether they knew other potential interviewees who could be introduced to the researcher. Unfortunately, it did not work. However, the researcher recruited four more interviewees who were introduced by the researcher's friend who also studied in the United States. After she had the contact information, she sent recruiting email to them. After they agreed to participate in the research, they also were sent the research approved document, informed consent form, and research protocol. One day before each interview, the researcher sent interviewees a follow up email to remind the upcoming interview.

The research reached at the interviewees, interviews started. All interviews lasted around thirty to forty minutes and all interviewees were asked the same 11 questions which are related the research questions. The researcher took notes when she conducted the interviews in Chinese one question by one question. After each of the interviews, the researcher translated her Chinese notes into English within twenty four hours.

Member Checking

After translation, the researcher sent back her Chinese notes and English translation to interviewees separately to check what the researcher knew was the interviewees'

thoughts. All interviewees were told they were welcomed to mark where they wanted to revised before a specific date. The specific date was ten days after the interview. The researcher told all interviewees if they did not reply before the specific date which is ten days after interview, the interview date would be used in the study anyway. The researcher received four replies from interviewees. Three of them marked something, and the researcher followed their ideas to revise her notes before transcription. Ten days after the last interview, the researcher started transcribing and categorized the data by interview questions.

Potential flaws in the method including assumptions and limitations

The research subjects in the study are selected by networking and did not cover all majors in the colleges. Different academic background implies different employment markets. The number of research subjects limits the data I collected. The reputations of the colleges they enrolled also influence their future career.

Definition of Special terms

F-1 students—An F-1 student is a nonimmigrant who is pursuing a "full course of study" to achieve a specific educational or professional objective, at an academic institution in the United States that has been designated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to offer courses of study to such students, and has been enrolled in SEVIS (the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System). Once the educational or professional objectives have been attained, the F-1 student is expected by the U.S. government to return to his or her residence abroad.

OPT—Optional practical training (OPT) is defined in the regulations as "temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study."

CPT—Curricular practical training (CPT) is defined as "alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school."

H1-B—H1-B holders are individuals who will perform services in a "specialty occupation". A "specialty occupation" for H-1B purposes is an occupation that requires "(A) theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge, and (B) attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in the specific specialty (or its equivalent) as a minimum for entry into the occupation in the United States.

Significance

Many international students seek a job and gained work experience after graduation, rather than directly return to their original country, these sojourners believed that the combination of overseas working experience and study experience will better prepare them better for future careers and employment. "The worth associated with an international study experience, professional workplace experience with an international organization adds value to a student portfolio" (Gamble, Patrick, & Peach, 2010, p. 536). Archer and Davison (2008) demonstrated that 65% of international employers agree that overseas work experience makes graduates more attractive. Four participants in Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos research declared that "they brought cultural diversity to their potential U.S. employers by offering unique perspectives and approaches from a cross-cultural point of view and possessing the ability to better

comprehend global trends and international issues" (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz, &

Cavazos, 2011, p. 20).

A significant number of international students choose to work in the U.S. are from

China. Samantha Gordon (2013) addressed that

> Connecting with peers from other countries will likely only become easier and more accessible, as the number of foreign students coming to the U.S. to pursue bachelor's degrees and master's degrees has been increasing in recent years. The most recent data from the Institute for International Education shows that the number of foreign enrollees in domestic colleges and universities jumped 5% from the 2009-2010 school year to the 2010-2011 academic period. The majority of international students are coming from China, as the 23% growth of Chinese students seeking degrees in this time frame outpaced that of any other nation, and most of these students (45%) were enrolling in undergraduate programs. This detail may be especially beneficial to those hoping to enter international affairs careers, as China is one of the major economic players in the world, giving students a leg up on relations between these countries. (para. 4)

Chapter Two

Literature Review

According to career construction theory, everyone needs to adapt themselves to the social and various cultural environments through self-regulation, play an active role and build their career (Savickas, 2005). Self-regulation means "Self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals" (Zimmerman, 2000, p.14). We are the persons who know what we want to do and our desire will direct and regulate our behaviors to accomplish it. "A self-regulated learner is one who displays personal initiative, perseverance, and adaptive skills in pursuing his or her self-set goals" (Wang et al., 2007, p. 576). International Careers Consortium (2004) stated that the career and job search process is basically made up of three steps. First, identify personal interest; then research career fields; finally, participate in job hunting by using search strategies. "The literature also noted international students' need for U.S. focused career planning. Specifically, the literature suggested that international students may require information regarding the general career planning process (i.e., self-assessment, gathering information, decision making, and goal setting)" (Crockett & Hays, 2011, p. 67). Job seekers should know who they are and what they have first, then locate themselves in the employment market. Self-assessment or self-evaluation refers to "the evaluation of one's qualifications after reading job descriptions, the preparation for interviews, and the performance of campus visit/on-site interviews" (Wang et al., 2007 p. 581). Wang said gathering information includes positions description, application material and tips for interview. "Goal setting is the most

important first step guiding all of us through the job search process because it reflects how we identify ourselves and how we view ourselves in our future career" (p. 579).

Gaining working experience is important when international students study in the university. The more active the involvement, the larger will be the personal network, the more persons will be met, and the more employment opportunities and information will be amassed.

"For many working-class students (first-generation students in Canada), the financial struggle to gain access to career-related experience is exacerbated by their lack of networks into their respective career areas" ((Lehmann, 2012, p. 210). "Findings further show that strong social networks and relevant work experience significantly improve an individual's chances of gaining entry into professional careers" (Lehmann, 2012, p. 205). Besides, volunteering experience that is related to your career aspirations is also critical for applying a position in the future. "Increasingly, employers and admission committees for professional schools require that applicants bring with them an abundance of related work or volunteer experience" (Lehmann, 2012, p. 209).

Nowadays, in many universities, Career Services serve students about in making a career plan or offer considerable employment information to these students. Counselors in the Career Services would also help students draft and revise their resumes and cover letters. In addition to the resume and cover letter, the counselors in Career Services would help students identify their personal interests, set career goals and seek information. In order to help an international student seek work experience, "the career counselor must know about the laws regulating the length of employment, type of work, and wage or

salary arrangements that are allowable for the particular type of visa issued to that student" (Bikos & Furry, 1999, p. 32).

But international students appear reluctant to seek help from Career Services. "Our review suggested that international students tend to be even more hesitant than their U.S. peers about seeking counseling assistance" (Crockett & Hays, 2011, p. 70). This finding was in accord with other numerous researchers who also found that international students' hesitate to go to Career Service and ask for professional assistance (Byon, Chan, & Thomas, 1999; Mori, 2000; Nilsson, Berkel, Flores, & Lucas, 2004; Singaravelu et al., 2005). This may be because international students experience a language barrier and may have little experience in counseling. "These obstacles include language barriers, differences in cultural norms and values, and little to no previous counseling experience" (Crockett & Hays, 2011, p. 71). Many other researchers have documented that international students were reluctant to seek assistance with intra and interpersonal struggles (Brinson & Kottler, 1995; Hammer, 1992; Sandhu, 1994). Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos (2011) stated that career counselors were neither empathic with international students' situation nor knowledgeable about resources for international job seekers. As a result, seeing a career counselor would not be the first choice when international students needed career and employment resources.

There may be several solutions to improve the international students' job searching, including gathering data from international students together who have been successful in finding employment. (Yang, Wong, Hwang, & Heppner, 2002). Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos (2011) mentioned that international education officers at the

university, foreign students organizations on campus, academic advisers and professors, and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services also could offer assistance to international students. "Specifically, peer mentors can provide a source of support while helping international students navigate commonly faced career barriers (e.g., acculturation issues, American job search, visa status)" (Crockett & Hays, 2011, p. 75). Crockett and Hays (2011) suggested that future research could focus on exploring "international students' vocational goals as well as related career needs and barriers may afford a better understanding how to effectively serve this population".

Cultural differences may increase the difficulties in locating the positions. Some articles stated (Spencer-Rogers, 2000; Spencer Rogers & Cortijo, 1998; Tidwell & Hanassab, 2007) that cultural barriers may result in international students' lacking knowledge of American employment opportunities. "Specific cultural issues cited in these studies were appropriate dress, assertiveness and self-promotion, language barriers, punctuality, and maintaining direct eye contact" (Crockett & Hays, 2011, p. 69). "All of the participants suggested that lack of familiarity with the U.S. culture impeded their ability to compete with their domestic counterparts" (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz, & Cavazos, 2011, p.21). However, Wang et al. (2007) stated that the participants in the research felt that their international background and non-native speaker identity were not their disadvantages, but the culture conflicts existed. In Wang et al. (2007) research, a Chinese participant stated that as young children in China, they were taught to put others' interests above their own and this viewpoint clashed with American cultural values. "Many international graduate students are initially reluctant to pitch or 'sell' their

qualifications because some academic cultures, as well as many cultures throughout the

world, consider self-promotion to be in poor taste" (Behrens, 2009, p. 182).

Chapter 3 Methodology

This research design is qualitative. McMillan (2012) stated that:

> Unlike quantitative research, different types of qualitative research are not clearly distinguished by design characteristics. However, different purposes are identified with specific questions, data collection procedures, and analyses. The goal in a phenomenological study is to fully understand the essence of some phenomenon. This is usually accomplished with long, intensive individual interviews. (p.14)

Participants' Background

The researcher recruited ten subjects, six males and four females, to participate in the study. All of them were Chinese and have spent two years on average in the United States. Six participants graduated from University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), two of them graduated from University of Florida (UF), one came from Brandeis University (BU), and the last one came from Northern Illinois University (NIU). They come from various majors, including Master Business Administration, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science, Hydrologic Science, Foreign Language, Marketing, advertising & Communication, and Accounting. Six of them graduated in 2012, the rest of them graduated in 2013, 2011, 2009, and 2008 separately.

Visa status is important to these students. Seven of the study subjects transfer their visa status from F1 to H1-B, two of them still work in the period of OPT. One subject was sent to China who is in charge of exploring Chinese market, so this subject does not need working permit from the United States government, but this subject still work for an American corporation.

Subjects Recruitment

The researcher knew five interviewees before conducting this study and mentioned this research study to them, so she sent them an email to ask whether they would

participate in the study. The researcher attached Informed Consent Form. This email is

called "To Friend Email" is as follows:

> Hello,
>
> How are doing in these days? I think I mentioned before I want to do a study about Exploring How Chinese Students with Master Degree Locate A Career Placement and you are my potential interviewee. However, I need you (sic) final decision whether you want to be my interviewee and assist my research or not. I attach the consent form with this e-mail. Please read it before officially agreeing to participate. I will appreciate your help and look forward to your reply.
>
> Best wishes,
> Xiaoqian
> Graduate Student

Fortunately, the research got positive responses from all of them. Next, she sent them

emails to negotiate interview location and schedule and attached my research approved

notice from Institutional Review Board (IRB) at University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL),

Informed Consent Form, and research protocol with the email. This email is called

"Negotiating Interview Location and Schedule Email" is as follows:

> Nihao (Hello),
>
> Thank you for accepting my interview and your response will assist my study absolutely. I am wondering do you live in Lincoln? If you do, could I interview you face to face? You can select a location with your convenience. If you do not live in Lincoln, could I interview you by Skype? Then, we will figure out our specific interview schedule together. Please tell me when you are available. Let me know if you have any other questions. Thank you very much! Looking forward to your reply.
>
> Sincerely,
> Xiaoqian Ma
>
> Graduate Student

While the researcher was negotiating interview location and schedule with the five

subjects, she started seeking for help from her friends who also studied in the United

States to introduce her more qualified subjects. A few days later, she received three more

potential subjects' email addresses from one of her friends and she sent them recruiting

email immediately and attached the research approved notice from Institutional Review

Board (IRB) at University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), Informed Consent Form, and

research protocol with the email which is called "Recruitment Email" is as follows:

> Nihao (Hello),
>
> I am a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. For my masters
> degree I am doing a research study entitled How Chinese Students With Masters
> Degrees Find Jobs After Graduation. I wish to collect data from Chinese students
> who have jobs in the US. I got your contact information from your friend Mr./Ms.
> Xxxx. Because you successfully found a position, I am wanting to know whether
> you would be willing to be one of my interviewees? I will ask eleven questions
> related to my topic in an interview that should last approximately 60 minutes. If you
> no longer live in Lincoln, I would like to conduct the interview via the telephone or
> with SKYPE. I will really appreciate your participation. Thank you for considering
> my request and if you have any question, please let me know. I am looking forward
> to your reply. Thank you very much.
>
> Sincerely,
> Xiaoqian Ma
>
> Graduate Student

After the researcher received replies which indicated they were willing to participate in

the study from the three subjects, she sent them the same " "Negotiating Interview

Location and Schedule Email" to negotiate interview location and schedule. The

researcher reserved her calendar when she received her subjects' replies and she sent the

"Follow Up Email" one day before the interview to remind them. The following is the follow up email.

Nihao (Hello),

This e-mail is to remind you our upcoming interview for the Exploring How Chinese Students with Master Degree Locate A Career Placement research which will be conducted on XX (date) at XX (time). Let me know if you are not available. Thank you! Looking forward to talking with you.

Best wishes,
Xiaoqian Ma

Graduate Student

The researcher recruited a subject when she traveled in Chicago and met this subject in a Chinese restaurant. She happened to know the subject who meets her research study's requirements. She gave the potential subjects a short statement of her research study and received positive response from the potential subject and be left contact information. After the researcher came back to Lincoln, she started sending the subject she met in Chicago "Recruitment Email", "Negotiating Interview Location and Schedule Email", the research approved notice from Institutional Review Board (IRB) at University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), Informed Consent Form, and research protocol. The last subject was recruited through Linked-in which is a social network soft. The researcher happened to access to the subject's profile which showed this is a qualified subject. So the research called the subject following her contact information. After a short while, the researcher recruited her last subject. As she did before, the researcher sent "Recruitment Email", "Negotiating Interview Location and Schedule Email", the research approved

notice from Institutional Review Board (IRB) at University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL),

Informed Consent Form, and research protocol to the last subject.

Interviews

The researcher interviewed two interviewees face to face because they still live in

Lincoln after graduated where the researcher lives, interviewed four interviewees through

Skype, and conducted four phone interviews. Every interview lasted around 30-40

minutes. The questions I asked my interviews are as follows:

1. Could you tell me something about your master degree? What's your major and how long did you spend earning your master degree?

2. Could you tell me something about your current job and how did you get it?

3. What factors influenced you to make a decision to work in the United States, rather than return to China?

4. Did you have some working or volunteering experience in the college? If you did, what were the experiences and were they related to your master's degree?

5. Did you think the visa is a problem for international students? If yes, what kind of questions do you have? How did you solve these problems?

6. What kinds of resources did you use to search for employment information? For example, websites, books, people? How helpful were these resources?

7. Did you utilize Career Services? If yes, how did the service help you with your career?

8. Did you interview for the job you had? If so, please describe the details to me.

9. Did the interview questions make you nervous if you could not understand them?

How did you handle it and what career services tell you what to do?

10. Did you apply for a number of positions before you get this one? If yes, could you tell me how you handle the rejections?

11. If an international student who is going to graduate next year and were to ask you how to locate a job, what you will tell him or her?

All conversations were heard in Chinese and the researcher took notes both in Chinese and English while the interviewees were talking. After the interviews, the researcher transcribed the interview within twenty four hours and translated her Chinese notes into English. After the researcher finished each of the transcriptions, she sent an email called "Transcription Email" to subjects attached of English transcription with Chinese notes. The reason is that the researcher wanted to make sure she received correct information from the subjects and avoid translation errors. All interviewees were told they were welcome to make changes if they thought the researcher did not receive their points. In the meantime, they also could add or delete any information they provided in the conversation. However, because of the limited of time, their data would be used after ten days they received the "Transcription Email" anyway if they did not response and they were not allowed to edit any more. The "Transcription Email" is as follows:

Nihao (Hello),

Thank you for letting me interview you. The following section is the transcription from our conversation. Could you double check what I record is that you want to tell me? If I misunderstand you, I will apologize and correct it right way after I receive your feedback. If you want to make some modification, please let me know.

I really need your feedback to make sure whether you are agreed with my transcription or not. I will appreciate if you could reply this e-mail as soon as you could. Looking forward to your reply.

Sincerely,
Xiaoqian Ma

Graduate Student

Ten days later after I sent the last "Transcription Email", the research edited transcription because she received four replies and three of them made some changes. After editing the transcriptions, the researcher began to code the information she transcribed.

Data Collection

First the researcher categorized the messages by different questions, and then compared and analyzed different responses to the same question. At last, concluded the same opinions and the different points. In the process of coding, she used English.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation and Analysis

The purpose of the study is to discover how the limited number of Chinese graduate students is able to locate jobs in the United States after they graduate from American master degree program.

Interview Question 1:

Could you tell me something about your master degree? What's your major and how long did you spend earning your master degree?

These data are reported in the first paragraph of the Chapter 3.

Interview Question 2:

Could you tell me something about your current job and how did you get it?

Participant 1 serves as the director of China Business Development and work for a company called Solaria Corp which is located in Silicon Valley. Besides, he told the researcher he located his current job through networking because he was recommended by a Chinese friend.

To the researcher's surprise, Participant 2, Participant 3, and Participant 10 all explored their current positions through networking. They mention more than one time that networking is critical in their job searching in the interviews. Participant 2 and Participant 3 addressed he knew the important person who recommended him to his current company through serving Chinese Student and Scholar Association (CSSA) at UNL. Participant 2 is a Mechanical Designer and Participant 3's title is Sourcing and

Mechanical Engineer. Both of them were president of CSSA at UNL and they developed a good relationship with Mr. Chen who used to be the president of Lincoln Chinese Culture Association (LCCA) through cooperation of social activities between CSSA and LCCA. Participant 10 explored her current position in an accounting firm and works as an audit associate. She said that she met an American who offered her an opportunity to work in her current company in a professional associating meeting. They chatted in the meeting and exchanged business card for future contact. Participant 10 addressed she made her own business card while she was starting job searching.

Participant 4 and Participant 9 located their career through University job fairs which were held by the Career Service at their universities. Both of them were interviewed on campus. Currently, Participant 4 worked for Amazon Company which is located in Seattle as a computer engineer. Participant 9 is working in an accounting firm which is the third largest international accounting firm.

Participant 6 and Participant 7 used websites to search job for openings. Participant 6 works at Ausenco which is a nation-wide company and Participant 7 is a Chinese teacher in a middle school in Minnesota. Both of them located their jobs through on-line searches.

Participant 5 and Participant 8 worked as interns in the current company for a few months before they transferred to full-time employee. Participant 5 explored her internship through Google website and then she moved to a full-time employee as a software engineer. Participant 8's title is Database Marketing and Business Intelligence Analyst in an Oriental Trading Company which is located in Omaha. Participant 8

worked as a full-time intern in this company for three months before she became a full-time employee.

Interview Question 3:

What factors influenced you to make a decision to work in the United States, rather than return to China?

Factor one is accumulating working experience in the United States.

Participant 2 said that one of the reasons he studied in the United States was to have some competitive advantages compared to his domestic peers. He believed if he came to China after graduation immediately without working experience, he will lose the advantages. So he wanted to work in the United States, rather than return to China.

Participant 4, Participant 8, and Participant 10 also expressed that they wanted the working experience in America.

Factor two is enjoying the professional working environment in the United States and experience in the most advanced practices in their respective fields.

Participant 1 told the researcher it does not matter to him whether he works in America or China. The main reason he decided to work for an American corporation was his current position matched his academic background and technology develops and he also valued where his company located. Participant 1 believed working in Silicon Valley could allow him to access to the nearest information.

Participant 6 also thought he could get more opportunities to learn advanced technologies in his field. Participant 7 is a Chinese teacher in a middle school and she believed America possesses a more advanced educational system than China.

When Participant 9 was asked this question, he said: "American possesses the most advanced accounting system. The professional environment was the main reason attracted him to work in the U.S."

Above all, American professional working environment is one of the factors that let Chinese graduates consider working in the U.S.

Factor three is the higher salary, less working stress and better natural environment.

Participant 3 said: "I wanted to work in the United States because of the higher salary and the no stressful life. I cannot afford a house if I come back to China. Besides, I enjoy American life quality, including natural environment."

The same finding was found in the interview with Participant 4, Participant5, Participant 6, Participant7, Participant 8, Participant 9 and Participant 10. They shared the similar point that they could earn much more money compared working in China, feel less stressful working in the United States, and more enjoy the American natural environment.

Factor four is the kids.

Participant 3 introduced another reason that is he hopes his kids could be born in the United States.

Factor five is the Family.

Participant 4 and Participant 10 both expressed that they just wanted to work in the United States for a few years, not for whole life because their families and friends are all in China. The rest of participants did not talk their future working plans. However, all of the research participants told the researcher that their parents support and wanted them to gain some working experience in the United States even though they missed their kids.

Interview Question 4:

Did you have some working or volunteering experience in the college? If you did, what were the experiences and were they related to your master's degree?

From the data the researcher collected in the interviews, nine participants possessed working experience before they were hired by American companies except Participant 4, including part-time and full-time positions. Participants 1, Participant 3, Participant 6 and Participant 7 had assistantships that mean they worked almost 20 hours a week when they pursued their master degrees. The assistantships are teaching assistant and research assistant.

Assistantships

Participant 1 was a graduate assistant with the Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs at UNL. He assisted university's partnership degree program for two years. This part-time position helps him build a general concept how to communicate with Americans and how to fix the misunderstanding between Chinese and American. His assistantship allowed him to be an ideal candidate to his current position which

required him to explore Chinese market and developed communication between American and Chinese after he was sent back to China.

Participant 3, Participant 6 and Participant 7 were research assistants when they studied in graduate college. Moreover, Participant 3 published several theses in journals in the period of time of his studying.

Paid internship in the current company

Participant 5 and Participant 8 were both interns in their current company. Participant 5 moved to the full-time position after she graduated. Participant 8 worked for several months before she worked as a full time employee.

Summer internship

Participant 1 received another internship for two months in summer in Great Eastern Assurance which is a famous company in Singapore. Participant 1 said: "I got valuable working experience and considerable knowledge of management when I worked there and the working experience assisted my MBA degree." Participant 8 received a full-time paid internship in Los Angeles in summer before she graduated.

Unpaid working experience

Participant 2 and Participant 3 both were presidents of CSSA at UNL. This is a volunteer job, but they met Mr. Chen who played a significant role in their job searching.

Participant 2 and Participant 7 also had some internship experiences which were required by their degrees. Participant 2 was a lab Teaching Assistant who needed to do a lot of presentations in classes. He told the researcher that was a hard time for him. However, the researcher could feel that Participant 2 benefited from this experience

which let him develop presentation skills and practice spoken English. Participant 7 was required to observe a Chinese teacher in a Lincoln public school to teach and then practice teaching by herself to get her teaching license. Furthermore, she mentioned that she was a mentor for highly gifted students in Lincoln public school, a Chinese teacher in Lincoln Chinese School, and an office assistant in Confucius Institute at UNL. She told the researcher all these experiences were related to her major and she looked for these opportunities hardly. Participant 7 believed these experiences would strengthen her resume and prepare her for future job searching.

Working experience in China

Participant 6 worked in China for six months as a full-time employee before he came to the U.S. Participant 8 worked as an assistant appraiser in a foreign-fund company for almost one year before she came to the United States. Participant 9 received two internships directly related to his major when he was an undergraduate in China. One is the corporate finance company, and the other one is in the tax consulting company. Both companies are multinational corporations, so they are well-known by American employers. Participant 9 told the researcher that his internships in China do him a big favor of locating a job in the U.S. successfully.

Interview Question 5:

Did you think the visa is a problem for international students? If yes, what kind of questions do you have? How did you solve these problems?

Yes, it is a problem

Participant 2 told the researcher that he thought the process was easy, but some companies have the policy that will not offer H1-B sponsorship to international employees. Visa problem leads Participant 2 losing some good working opportunities. He also mentioned that if students were Computer Science, they would get H1-B visa easily, because that field needs more employees.

Participant 3 also believed H1-B sponsorship is a problem to international students. He told the researcher if there were a large number of applicants, lottery would be used to decide who can receive H1-B visa. Besides, Participant 3 said that if international students want to work in some security company, they probably would be refused. Moreover, he addressed sponsorship has been influenced by the size of the company more or less. The small size companies would not prefer international employees because of the cost and complicated process.

Participant 4 also told the researcher the visa status would be a problem in a small company, but not in a large corporation. He said his major is Computer Science, so he did not worry his visa status which was agree with Participant 2. Participant 2 also pointed out that visa status would let him lose the opportunities to work for some security companies. This point was shared with Participant 3.

Participant 7 told the researcher that she was refused by two schools because of her visa status. One of them wanted to observe her for one year which she could work through OPT and then decide whether offer her a sponsorship. The other school told her they don't want an international teacher. However, her current school promised her to

transfer her F-1 visa status to H1-B when they decided to hire her because her current school possessed an experience immigration lawyer.

Participant 8 believed that visa is a big problem for international students. H1-B visa occupants in one year are limited, and a large number of them were offered to Indians offshore consulting company. So she thought it is very hard to apply for H1-B visa.

Participant 9 thought it depends. He identified into two groups. One does not hire any international students at all, and the other does not care you are international student or not. Besides, Participant 9 also believed that small companies much more care visa status, because switch from F-1 visa status to H1-B is a complicated process and they need to pay for the immigration lawyer fee. His point of the complicated process was different with the Participant 2. Participant 9 also complained the limited number of H-1B visa occupants that would be offered to international students. Moreover, Participant 9 told the researcher he could not do any internship off-campus in his first academic year in the United States because of his visa status. Curriculum Practical Training (CPT) which allows international students to do an internship off-campus. However, international students cannot apply for CPT before they complete at least one academic year in the U.S. After Participant 9 finished his first academic year study, it was the time that he needed to apply for graduation and for a full-time position. He was upset that he did not have an opportunity to look for an internship before he graduated.

Participant 10 told the researcher that some companies considered the cost of providing H-1B visa. Besides, she said she was admitted by a chemical industry, but she

would work for the financial office which is an auxiliary office in the company. In that case, she was refused to be offered an H-1B visa sponsorship.

No, it is not a problem

Participant 2 was sent back to work in China which is his original country. So there is no problem with his visa status in the United States. Participant 5 and Participant 6 also believed visa status was not problem to them. They told the researcher that their employers did not hesitate to offer her H1-B sponsorship.

How to solve the problem

Participant 3 said: "I had no choice but to follow the immigration rules."

Participant 8 suggested H-1B applicants preparing for their application package before the end of March and sending to the immigration office at the first day of April. It was wise to let employers know what would happen if they delay to send the application package. Participant 8 also recommended consulting a professional immigration lawyer to apply for H1-B visa.

Interview Question 6:

What kinds of resources did you use to search for employment information? For example, websites, books, people? How helpful were these resources?

Networking

Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 6, Participant 7, Participant 8, and Participant 10 all told the researcher that networking plays a significant role in the job searching. Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, and Participant 10 explored their

positions through networking. Participant 3 said: "I tried many ways to located positions, but networking is much more effective to me." Participant 6 did not use the method of networking, however, he told the researcher in the interview that he realized networking is critical to his future career.

On-line Application

Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 7, Participant 8, and Participant 10 tried to search jobs through the websites, such as, Google, Indeed, Monster, and Craigslist. However, only Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 7, and Participant 8 successfully received job offers. Participant 6 and Participant 7 both believed websites were useful to them.

Participant 1, Participant 4, and Participant 8 tried to locate positions by visiting the companies' website through sending resume and cover letter. However, there was no result.

Career Services On-campus

Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 9, and Participant 10 used Career Services at their universities to search jobs. Participant 2 said: "Husker Hire Link provided UNL Career Services is a good website for graduates, because a few of my friends got jobs from this link and employers know most of applicants are graduates at UNL." Participant 4 and Participant 9 addressed the career services at their university is really useful and they located their jobs successfully through attending job fairs which were held by Career Resource Center. Participant 4 pointed out there are much more interview opportunities if he applied for jobs through Career Resource Center at his university.

Social Media

Participant 7 used Linked-in to help her explore career in the U.S. She told the researcher that Linked-in is useful because she is able to see if she has any connection with the company that she wants to apply. Participant 7 received a few recommendations from her former employer on her Linked-in account and located some openings from visiting companies' job posting pages, as well as company's Linked-in page.

Interview Question 7:

Did you utilize Career Services? If yes, how did the service help you with your career?

All participants utilized Career services on campus. Participant 9 said: "Princeton reported Career Resource Center at UF ranks No. 1 in the United States and their job posting are changed quickly." The researcher could feel the proud from the Participant 9 while he was talking about the Career Resource Center at UF. Participant 4 and Participant 9 both located their careers through the services provided by Career Services.

Revising Resume and Cover Letter

Participant 1 said in the interview that the companies that Career Services at UNL can reach at are different from where he wants to work, so he did not utilize Career Services at UNL a lot, just for revising resume and cover letter. From the data that researcher collected, except Participant 7, the rest of participants had asked career services specialist to revise their resumes and cover letters. Participant 8 told the

researcher that she did not learn a lot from the revised resume and cover letter, and Participant 10 only visit there once and asked some format questions.

Mock Interview

The researcher was told in the interviews that Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 6, and Participant 9 did the mock interview organized by Career Services Office on campus. Participant 3 said: "I attended a mock interview which offered me practices opportunities and let me know the environment of the interview. I learned some interview skills through the mock interviews." Participant 6 told the researcher that he was encouraged by career services specialist after the mock interview to follow up after he applied for a position which was useful to him.

Participant 1, Participant 5, and Participant 10 told the researcher that they did not have any mock interview and did not ask any questions related to interview.

Attend Information Session

Participant 7 told the researcher that she attended information session which taught her how to wear for the interview and helped her a lot in her formal interviews.

Interview Question 8:

Did you interview for the job you had? If so, please describe the details to me.

All participants in this research study were interviewed before they received their current job offers. Participant 1 was interviewed at lunch time which was an informal interview. The rest of participants were interviewed formally.

Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 7, and Participant 10 all had phone interviews which last around 30 minutes. Participant 6 had a Skype interview for his current job. Participant 7 was supposed to have a Skype interview, but her employer cancelled it because she performed very well in the previous phone interview.

Except Participant 1 and Participant 2, the rest of the participants in the research study were interviewed more than twice. All participants were asked professional questions related to their majors in their interviews. Participants with Engineering and Computer Science majors were asked technological questions in the interviews and were required to present what projects they did.

Participant 7 told the researcher that while she was waiting for the interview, she tried to chat with other staff and remember their names. She wanted to show her social ability which was satisfied by the Principal.

Interview Question 9:

Did the interview questions make you nervous if you could not understand them? How did you handle it and what career services tell you what to do?

Not Nervous

All participants told the researcher it happened in their interview that they could not understand interview questions. Participant 1, Participant 1 was interviewed during the lunch, so he was not nervous in such a causal environment. Participant 7 said she did a full preparation before the interview, so she could answer interview questions smoothly.

Because of her preparation, Participant 7 felt relax in the interview. Participant 5 and

Participant 8 were both not nervous in the interviews.

Nervous

Participant 2 said he was nervous at the beginning of interview and felt much better

later. Participant 3 said he was very nervous when he was asked behavior questions for an

hour. He was afraid that he could not express himself very well in English, his second

language. Besides, these questions were related to cultural background which was

unfamiliar to him who came from China. Participant 4 nervous when being interviewed

in the job fair in the last semester, but not this semester after he gained considerable

experience. Participant 6 and Participant 9 also felt nervous. Participant 10 thought she

did not prepare well in the first a few interviews, so she felt nervous.

How to handle nervous

All the participants in this research study did not hide their confusions about the

interview questions and they asked to repeat or paraphrase the question or asked to give

more explanation for the question immediately. Participant 3 said: "If I could not

understand the question, I would ask to repeat the question. If I could not understand for

the second time, I would ask to explain the specific word which impeded me understand

the question." Participant 4 said: "I believed interview officers wanted to know ability of

candidates in solving problem, rather than language skills, so interviewers hope every

candidate could understand their questions."

No one in this research study had consulted career services specialists to handle the language problem. Participant 4 addressed that he developed the interview skills by himself through many interview practices and experiences.

Interview Question 10:

Did you apply for a number of positions before you get this one? If yes, could you tell me how you handle the rejections?

Except Participant 6, the rest of the participants had been rejected before they received their current job offer. Participant 6 only applied for his current position and he was hired smoothly.

If participants were rejected, they would move on as soon as possible. Participant 2 and Participant 9 felt very upset when they were rejected. Participant 2 said he had no idea why he failed and Participant 8 said he would never regret because he tried his best to apply for jobs. Participant 8 addressed that he is good at summarizing from these rejections and thinking what he needed to prepared better next time. What he summarized from his rejections assist him to succeed at last. Participant 10 said she would keep applying for new positions if she got rejections. In the meantime, she would chat with her friends who also were applying for jobs and successfully located career. Participant 10 discuss interview questions she met with them and asked them for interview skills. Moreover, Participant 10 also searched interview questions from the website: glassdoor.com. She wanted to know more interview questions before she was interviewed.

Interview Question 11:

If an international student who is going to graduate next year and were to ask you how to locate a job, what you will tell him or her?

Revising Resume and Cover Letter

Participant 1 and Participant 8 suggested upcoming graduates need to draft and revise their resume and cover letter carefully. Participant 8 said that resume and cover letter should looks professionally. It would not be as long as possible, but should show and focus your characteristics and qualities. Besides, resume and cover letter should be made a few changes for different positions.

Develop Network

Participant 3 suggested developing networking and getting known more people who may recommend for any position in the future. The same suggestion offered by the Participant 6 who said: "Social network is also significant to job searching."

Participant 9 also suggested involving around campus and he believed international students could not be separated from their classmates who could provide valuable experience and interview skills. Participant 10 also recommended international students developing good relationship with Americans. She said: "Building networking is really significant to job searching in the United States. Develop relationship with more Americans, and do not limit within Chinese people."

Looking For Internship

Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 6, Participant 7, Participant 8, Participant 9, and Participant 10 all told the researcher in their interviews that pursuing some internship opportunities to gain working experience would be helpful to future career.

Participant 4 and Participant 8 suggested starting looking for internships as early as possible. Participant 4 said: "I suggested applying for internships as more as possible and started immediately after arriving in the U.S." Besides, he mentioned that internship is important to future career, and if you did not possess any working experience you probably would not get any interview from the companies with good reputations.

However, Participant 1 addressed short-term internship is not an essential factor to future career and he believed the first full-time position is the first time that allows us to calculate working experience.

Starting Job Searching early

Participant 4 said: "Most of companies in his field finished hiring before summer and began another session of hiring after summer." In that case, Participant 4 advised to start job searching at the beginning of the last academic year and some famous IT companies, such as, Microsoft, Apple, Intel, Google, and Facebook prefer to hire new employees in fall.

Participant 7 started job searching at her second last semester and she also strong recommended upcoming graduates start searching jobs as early as possible.

Strengthen Academic Background

Participant 1 suggested career preparation should be depended on the majors and programs. He believed strengthen academic abilities is really critical to job searching. The same point the researcher received from the Participant 2 and Participant 4 who recommended doing more projects related to the major and wrote some reports. Participant 5 also said: "Academic class and ability are essential factors which probably influence your application."

Others

Participant 7 told the researcher that if graduates were refused to some positions, it might not be a bad thing. Probably we may get a better position later, who knows.

Participant 9 suggested that international students should not rush to graduate. Because they need to be involved around the campus, especially communicate with both American and Chinese People who get jobs successfully. In that way, students could possess different viewpoints. Participant 9 thought different requirements for different industries, but he was benefit and learned from the experience.

Conclusion

The data that the researcher collected related to the methods participants in this research study used to identify jobs, how they prepare for job applications, what difficulties they met in job applications, what factors that influence them to work in the U.S. and what suggestions the participants would provide to upcoming international graduates.

How to identify jobs in the United States

- Developing social network and seek for recommendation.

- Communicating with previous and current classmates who are successfully located jobs in the United States.

- Searching job openings through websites, such as, Google, Indeed, Monster, and Craigslist.

- Consulting specialists from Career Services on campus

How to prepare for job applications

- Being involved around campus while studying to develop social network.

- Editing resume and cover letter.

- Pursuing paid and unpaid internships to gain working experience.

- Consulting Career Services specialists.

- Attending job fairs on campus.

What difficulties they met in job applications

- Language barrier.

- Feeling nervous in the interviews.

- Lacking of preparation for the interview.

- Visa status

What factors that influenced them to work in the U.S.

- Accumulating working experience in the United States.

- Enjoying the professional working environment in the United States and experience in the most advanced practices in their respective fields.

- The higher salary, less working stress and better natural environment.

- Giving birth to kids in the U.S.

- Family support.

What suggestions the participants would provide to upcoming international graduates.

- Revising Resume and Cover Letter.

- Developing Network.

- Looking For Internship.

- Starting Job Searching early.

- Strengthening Academic Background.

References

Archer, W., & Davison, J. (2008). Graduate employability: What do employers think and want? London: Council for Industry and Higher Education.

Behrens, D. (2009). Interview practice U.S. style: a workshop for international students. Journal of Employment Counseling, 46, 182-184.

Bikos, L. H., & Furry, T. S. (1999). The job search club for international students: an evaluation. The Career Development Quarterly, 48, 31-44.

Brinson, J. A. & Kottler, J. (1995). International students in counseling: Some alternative models. Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, 9, 57-70.

Byon, K. H., Chan, F., Thomas, K. R. (1999). Korean international students' expectations about counseling. Journal of College Counseling, 2, 99-109.

Crockett, S. A., & Hays, D. G. (2011). Understanding and responding to the career counseling needs of international college students on U.S. campuses. Journal of College Counseling, 14, 65-79.

Career planning guide for international students. International careers consortium. (2004).

Gamble, N., Patrick, C., & Peach, D. (2010). Internationalising work-integrated learning:

creating global citizens to meet the economic crisis and the skills shortage. Higher

Education Research & Development, 29(5), 535-546. doi:

10.1080/07294360.2010.502287

Hammer, M. R. (1992). Research, mission statements, and international student advising
offices. International Journal of International Relations, 16, 217-236.

Institute of International Edueation. (2009). Open doors: Report on international

educational exchange. New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from

http://www.opendoors.iienetwork.org/

Lehmann, W. (2012). Extra-credential experiences and social closure: working-class

students at university. British Educational Research Journal, 38(2), 203-218. doi:

10.1080/01411926.2010.535894

Leong, F. T., & Sedlacek, W. E. (1989). Academic and career needs of international and

United States college students. Journal of College Student Development, 30, 106-

111.

McMillan, J. H. (2012). Educational research: fundamentals for the consumer. Boston:

Pearson Education.

Mori, S. (2000). Addressing the mental health concerns of international students. Journal of Counseling & Development, 74, 137-144.

Nilsson, J., Berkel, L., Flores, L., & Lucas, M. (2004). Utilization rate and presenting concerns of international students at university counseling center: Implications for outreach programming. Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, 19, 49-59.

Niland, J. R. (1971). A human capital model for brain drain of foreign manpower trained in the U.S. Journal of Economic Issues, 5(3), 60-71.

Samantha, G. (2013, June 23). International collaboration proves beneficial to college students. *University Dictionary.* Retrieved from http://www.usnewsuniversitydirectory.com/articles/international-collaboration-proves-beneficial-to-c_13222.aspx?goback=.gde_71923_member_253598238#.Uc35243KCeD

Savickas, M. L. (2005). The theory and practice of career construction. In R.W. Lent & S. D. Brown (Ed.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 42-70). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Sandhu, D. S. (1994). An examination of the psychological needs of the international

    students: Implications for counseling and psychotherapy. International Journal for

    the Advancement of Counseling, 17, 229-239.

Sangganjanavanich, V.F., Lenz, A.S., & Cavazos, J. (2011). International students'

    employment search in the United States: a phenomenological study. Journal of

    Employment Counseling, 48, 17-26.

Singaravelu, H. D., White, L. J., & Bringaze, T. B. (2005). Factors influencing

    international students' career choice. Journal of Career Development, 32, 46-59.

Spencer Rodger, J. (2000). The vocational situation and country of orientation of

    international students. Journal of Multieultural Counseling and Development, 28,

    32-49.

Spencer Rogers, J., & Cortijo, A. (1998). An assessment of the career development needs

    of international students. Journal of College Student Development, 39, 509-513.

Tidwell, R., & Hanassab, S. (2007). New challenges for professional counsellors: The

    higher education international student population. Counselling Psyeholojjv

    Quarterly, 20, 313-324.

Wang, C., Lo, Y. Y., Xu, Y., Wang Y., & Porfeil, E. (2007). Constructing the search for a

   job in academia from the perspectives of self-regulated learning strategies and social

   cognitive career theory. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 70, 574-589. doi:

   10.1016/jvb.2007.02.002

Yang, E., Wong, S. C, Hwang, M., & Heppner, M. (2002). Widening our global view:

   The

development of career counseling services for international students. Journal of Career

   Development, 28, 203-213.

Zimmerman, B. J. (2000). Attaining self-regulation: a social cognitive perspective. In M.

   Boekaerts, P. R. Pintrich, & M. Zeidner (Eds.), Handbook of self-regulation (pp. 13-

   39). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.