The Influence of Change: An Investigation of Major Changers at the University of Northern Iowa

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Your Presenters

Introducing...

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Introduction to the Study

• Background Information
  • Definition of a Major-changer (operational definition)
• Statement of the problem
• Significance of the study
• Implications
Literature Review

• To date, very little research has been conducted on this population of students.
• Chickering’s Psychosocial Theory of Student Development (1969)
• Gordon et. al. (1985)
• Theophilides et. al. (1984)
  • Classified Major-changers into three categories:
    • Early Changers
    • Late Changers
    • Constant Changers
Major-changers Spectrum

- Totally Undecided
- Freshman Year
  - Constant Changer
  - Early Changer
- Sophomore Year
  - Late Changer
  - Constant Changer
Method

- Electronic survey
- 1,409 students selected for participation
- 242 respondents
Results

• Demographics
  • Predominately white (95.8%); female (66.8%); and seniors (77.4%)

• Key findings
  • Most changed major only one time
  • Most only visited advisor during registration
  • Important factors in choosing major
  • Reasons for changing major
How many times have you changed your major?
What are the most important factors in choosing a major?

- Interest in subject
- Future career
- Earning potential
- Reputation
- Future plans
- Personal values
- Marketability
- Gut feeling
What influenced you to change your major the first time?
Limitations

• Quantitative research may be more prone to biases and limitations in the knowledge base of the researchers.

• The researchers may already have ideas about the Major-changer population; therefore, disregarding any information to the contrary.

• This research is restricted to full-time (12 or more hours) undergraduate students.
Discussions, Conclusions, Recommendations

• Because very little research on Major-changers has been conducted in the past, it is expected that the outcome will present the advising community with a new perspective on Major-changer behavior.

• A follow-up study will be conducted that will include a larger sample as well as incorporate other institutions.
Questions