Adult’s Perception of Homeostasis in Career Chaos

Hsiu-Lan Shelley Tien
National Taiwan Normal University
Taipei, Taiwan

Taiwan
~The Island Formosa in South East Asia
- Limited nature resources
- Wisdom based on Chinese history
- Strength in its human resource development
- Economic development is emphasized
- Global competition ability and attitude

A brief history of career development

- The start of career counseling-
  - Nine-year compulsory education started in 1968 and it becomes Twelve-year in 2014
  - Vocational/technological educational for middle school students (7-9) was parallel to comprehensive high school
- Significant change in the structure of work world
  - Agriculture, industrial, commercial, political, educational, and economic
  - International, global, and cross Taiwan Strait (China)
- The meaning of work

Purpose of the Study

- The purposes of the study was to analyze adult’s perception of homeostasis and order in career chaos.
- We expected that people will understand more about how to get homeostasis in the uncertainty or uncontrollable situations.

Theoretical Approach

Chaos Theory
Can you find any rule in the two pictures?

Yes. Sure you can.

- In the interview, we tried to facilitate the individuals to think about/find out rules in similar events in their development.
Can you find any small pieces in those pictures?

Yes, you can.
- The idea of fractals/important life events.
- Small pieces in the past life events could cause changes in the current situation.
- Together with the clients, we review important life events in the grow up process and find similar pattern. In this way, they get insight about self. For example, personality traits.

The Butterfly Effect
- the propensity of a system to be sensitive to initial conditions. Such systems over time become unpredictable, this idea gave rise to the notion of a butterfly flapping its wings in one area of the world, causing a tornado or some such weather event to occur in another remote area of the world.

Butterfly Effect

The Order in the Chaos
- We still have four seasons.
Both figures are combined with circles.

Method – Participants and Interviewers

- We interviewed 30 adults age ranged between 20 and 41. (M=26; SD=4.7)
- Five interviewers: PhD and Med graduated from Counseling Program. They have been trained 6 hours for this research.

Interview Protocol

- Warm up
- Questions about the following categories:
  - Attitude toward life confusion/disturb/uncertainty
  - Any coping strategies
  - Any career themes for the narrative story
  - Questions about calling and empowerment
- Closing Questions

Procedure

- Participants recruiting
- Interviewers training
- Tape recorded Interview
- Transcription
- Data analysis

Data Analysis

- The transcription of the interview data about counseling skills were analyzed with grounded analysis method.
- The transcription of the interviewed data about interviewees stories were analyzed with narrative analysis (life theme) method

Grounded Theory

- Meaningful units in the transcripts.
- Open coding
- Axial coding
- Core category
- Process Analysis
Life Theme Construction

- The specific steps: (Savickas, 1995)
  - The client tells the story s/he brought;
  - The counselor listens carefully and reflects the life themes to the client;
  - The client thinks about the career problems encountered and examines the relationship between the life-themes and the career problems;
  - Extent the life-themes to the future and examine the important tasks the client wants/likes to finish
  - Try to make an action plan.

Results -

- Awareness of uncertainty
- Insight the chaos status
- Looking at strength and think about the inner calling
- Being clear and get homeostasis in career development

Awareness of uncertainty:
- Unsatisfied needs
- Self-doubt
- Anxiety about current situation
- Lack of resources/support

Insight about the chaos status through the counseling process
- Complexity
- Constant
- Chances/Opportunities/Happenstance

Looking at strength/positive thinking
- Positive personality traits
- Positive beliefs / Rational beliefs
- Be assertive to ask for support
- Emotional adjustment

Being clear and get homeostasis/calling/peace in career development – Action Stage
- Be aware of the chance and control it
- Let it go if it’s impossible to grab it
- Value the uniqueness of self
- Be myself
- Life meaning
Case example

- Personal information:
  - Ma-lin, Male, 24 years old.
  - He is currently a graduate student majoring in Public Policy.
  - Unsatisfied with college major but continued to study in graduate program. (Public Policy)
  - In college, he learned a lot but only a little bit in everything. (music instrument, foreign languages, student clubs...)

- Since college, spend much more time in student club and busy in extra-class activities.
- Time flies soon and he feels kind of regret that he did not learn enough.
- It’s hard to find a job, so apply for graduate program.
- Still feel confused about career future.
- Live at home in college but rent an apartment near the campus. 🔄Want to be uncontrolled by family.

- Family background:
  - Mother works for the government. Her life style is quite stable and she is quite satisfied with her work. ➔She expects the client can find a government job.
  - Mother is close to him. To some degree, he needs to listen to mother’s opinions. For example, PhD degree is not important to find a job.
  - He has a brother. Now work as an elementary school teacher. Not bad! 🔄Chinese face (面子) issue

- The Main Issue-
  - Career Problem
  - Career Identity
  - Decision-making
  - Life Style in the Future
  - Meaning of Life
  - Purpose of Life

The Counseling Process

1. Awareness of uncertainty
   - Too many choices, so it is hard to make decision. Uncertainty
   - Life space (Super’s idea) is so huge in college. It makes my life pattern Complicated.
   - Some unexpected events happened and interfere with my plan. Nonlinear
   - Even I follow mother’s direction, she might not be satisfied. Uniqueness
2. Insight for the chaos status
- Lost in the chaos and follow other people’s direction. Now, he needs to be alone/isolated and think about self. Who I am? What do I really want to do?
- Life is not only for the job. However, job is important for basic life needs. Be realistic and take responsibility for self.
- I should know what’s meaningful for me.

The similarity in life events
- Always have to take into account others’ opinions.
  - At home, listen to the parents.
  - At university, listen and depend on friends.
  - In graduate program, listen to advisor’s order/not only in thesis writing.

3. Looking at strengths
- I always listen to others. It makes me flexible and easier to cope with others.
- Resilience mechanism is OK.
- Family could be a good resource for social support, what I need is communication.
- Feel more confident after the interview.

4. Looking for inner calling
- Title for the Story after the interview-
  - Be Myself and it is Simple

Conclusion
- Life no longer follows a linear path as the new work/home/family/leisure fusion career style emerges rapidly
- Personal needs satisfaction vs. national competition competencies is another controversial issue.

Cultural Adjustment/adaptability in Career Chaos?
- Tradition versus Post-Modern
- Eastern versus Western
- External focus versus Internal focus
- Male versus Female roles
  - Both. People need to be self-controlled

2014/05/19
- Achievement oriented versus family-oriented
  - Work-family conflict

- Leader versus follower
  - People need to confident

- Risk-taking versus risk-averse
  - Curious and concern

---

**Welcome to Visit Taiwan!**

---

**International Conference in November**

The Effectiveness of College Career Services - A systemic approach