



Name: Arthur, Nancy

Designation: Professor

Organization: University of Calgary, Canada.

Contact Information: Division of Applied Psychology, Faculty of Education, 2500 University Dr. NW Calgary AB Canada T2N1N4.

email: narthur@ucalgary.ca

Language: English

Type of Presentation: Scientific Paper

About the Presenter:

Title of Paper: **International Students' Career Development: Should I Stay or Should I Go Home?**

Abstract:

There is limited literature on the career development of international students. International students have traditionally been viewed as temporary sojourners who live and learn in another country and then return home. Changing immigration policy in Canada and in several other countries recasts the view of international students as highly desirable human capital and a source of skilled labour. This study sought to include the perspectives of international students who are completing their studies as temporary immigrants and who are embarking on the career journey of employment and permanent immigration. The intent of the research is to determine key influences on their career decisions, and the types of formal and informal support systems that enhance their success in securing employment and implementing plans for permanent immigration.

This research examined the career planning experiences of international students at one university in Western Canada who are making the transition from school to full-time employment in Canada. The main question that was explored through this research follows: What are the key influences that international students perceive to be facilitators or barriers to pursuing employment and permanent immigration to Canada? To pilot this research, in-depth interviews were also conducted with individual international students from a variety of host countries.

Results suggest that the decision to pursue permanent immigration is strongly linked to international students' career goals. Influences on their career decision-making are connected to experiences and relationships in both the home and host countries. Although many international students wish to remain in the host country, their decisions are confounded by cultural influences that often lead to a complex and difficult process for students. This includes lack of knowledge about local job search and labour markets and how to successfully transition from school to employment.



Changing immigration policy requires a corresponding shift in policies pertaining to institutional programs and services in higher education, and in institutional linkages with employers. Comprehensive career counselling approaches are required to addressing the career development needs of international students, including the option to work and live in the host country following graduation.