

Are all students the same? Beliefs and attitudes about transfer students

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As college costs rise, transferring from a community college to a four-year university is becoming a more popular option leading to an increase in the number of transfer students at four-year institutions. To date, little research has examined the experiences of transfer students, and the research that exists is almost exclusively from the perspective of the transfer student. Missing is an understanding of how transfer students are perceived at four-year universities and how these perceptions may affect students' experiences. The purpose of this study is to experimentally investigate the beliefs and attitudes held by faculty and students about transfer students. Specifically, participants (200-300 faculty and students) will be randomly assigned to read about a student who is a transfer student or not and will rate the student on a variety of dimensions including perceptions of intelligence, academic ability, and achievement motivation, as well as their desire to interact with the student. In order to disentangle effects caused by transferring from effects caused by differences in status of an institution, two types of transfer students are presented: one from a community college or one from another four-year institution. Data are currently being collected and the results are therefore forthcoming. Given anecdotal evidence suggesting that transfer students are devalued, we expect perceptions of transfer students will be significantly worse than for non-transfer students and that this effect will be driven by particularly poor perceptions of the community college transfer student. This research has implications for how universities integrate transfer students into their campuses.

Chinese Students' Attitudes Towards Counseling and Psychological Services

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The notion of "face" in Chinese culture has a significant influence over various aspects of social and private lives of Chinese people (Hwang, 1987), including their attitudes towards psychological services. While Chinese counseling practices are influenced by Western methods, Western theories and practices are not always culturally appropriate for Chinese individuals in need of psychological help. In a collectivist society where maintaining harmony is imperative, "complaining" about one's hardships to a stranger could result in loss of "face". There is also a social stigma attached to mental health in Chinese society. This qualitative study examined how Chinese students perceive counseling and psychological services. A sample of ten Chinese students completed a bilingual, open-ended, anonymous survey. Furthermore, the study included an interview with a counselor who was experienced with cross-cultural therapy. Participants expressed mixed feelings about confiding in a stranger. Some stated that they would rather talk to family or friends, while others preferred to keep problems to themselves, for fear of appearing "superficial." It was also found that while participants deemed mental health services as necessary, they should only be used as a last resort. The counselor confirmed this view, saying that if Chinese students came earlier, it would be easier to assist them as opposed to later, when the problems were more severe. By understanding the cultural considerations when counseling Chinese students, further research can propose ways to improve the effectiveness of therapy for Chinese students.