Career development of Italian youth and the roles of social network

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This doctoral dissertation examines the connection between college students' social relationships and their job exploration activities in the society where the college life and occupational life are totally separated. First, the paper reviews (1) the roles of "others" in the process of youth career development, (2) the recent research of youth transition from school-to-work, and (3) the preceding study of social network approach, which is utilized as a theoretical support for this paper. Then, the social background of Italian youth is overviewed in terms of the Italian education, employment, and family systems. The paper reviews that Italian college students have received insufficient social support in the initial career exploration period, mainly under influence of the Italian familistic values. The major hypothesis of this paper is that "The closed nature of social network might be the leading factor to hinder future career perspectives of Italian college students." The author investigates this hypothesis based on the interviews with Italian female college students (N=25) and found that the parent-child relationships and the homogeneous local friendships inhibit their development of social networks. These closed and tight relationships bring various disadvantages for the youth career exploration. For example, Italian college students tend to have less opportunity to encounter their potential role models or mentors who could provide appropriate advice and useful information in their career exploration period. The paper also exemplifies the tendencies of Italian youth who unable to set the mid-and-long term life goals, postpone career exploration, and feel uncomfortable with actual job hunting. Through the analysis, the hypothesis has been partially proved. Finally, as the implication derived from the study, the paper proposes the introduction of "mentor system" by universities. Through this system, universities can take an initiative to promote the supports for students' career path.
-293 words-