## World of Work

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We are currently living and working in times of unprecedented change (Hall & Moss, 1998; Metcalf & Briody, 1995; Watts, 1996). Traditional theories of career development focus on matching people to occupations. Yet, in contemporary times, “[t]rying to place an evolving person into the changing work environment is like trying to hit a butterfly with a boomerang” (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996, p. 263).

Career development has been recently defined as “the process of managing learning, training, and work throughout the life span” (ATEC, 1999, p. 124). Traditional career development, however, has resembled riding a raft down a river—with very little control over where the currents take you, but always heading in the same general direction. Career “management,” on the other hand, would be more like paddling a canoe—choosing the best course, pausing at times, and changing speed and direction when desired—a more planful and purposive approach. Although the terms career development and career management are used somewhat interchangeably in career-related literature, in the present study the term “career management” is preferred as it tends to emphasize an active, purposeful approach.

A Rationale for Career Management

In today’s busy world why would individuals and their employers commit time and resources to career management activities? According to Barbara Moses (1995), a Canadian career management specialist:

In today’s fast-changing workplace, people need the skills and competencies to ensure future employability, and to manage new work and life realities. Organizations need flexible people, who can effectively manage change and adapt to new organizational directions. The key to achieving these goals, for both the individual and the organization, is career self-management. (p. 3)

Clearly, for career management to work within an organization, there is a need for “buy-in” from both sides (Orpen, 1994; Simonsen, 1997).

David Baxter (2000), executive director of the Urban Futures Institute, warned that “[a]s we enter an era of critical labour shortages in many sectors, the challenges of retaining and recruiting human resources will become paramount in the operations of many organizations” (p. 1). One compelling reason, then, for organizations to offer career management support is that it may help them to recruit and retain the talent that they need to sustain a competitive edge. Another area of concern to organizations is productivity. There are two aspects to this quality—the productivity that comes from a keen and highly motivated workforce (Orpen, 1994) and the productivity that comes from that workforce being prepared with the right skill mix or “hot skills” to do the work that is required (Cole-Gomoloski, 1998; Griffith, 1998; Hayes, 1999; Young, 1999). Therefore, to benefit an organization, career management should also equip
people to benchmark their skills, anticipate upcoming skill demands, and commit to continuous learning (Kaye, 1997; Moses, 1995; Simonsen, 1997).

How might career management benefit the individual? In times of rapid change, employees need help with identifying the specific skills and competencies that will keep them employable in the months and years ahead. Career management may also help individuals to balance their work and family life, and link their personal career goals to the emerging needs of their employer, industry, or community (Moses, 1995; Simonsen, 1997).

Career Management for Changing Times: Planned Happenstance Theory

Poehnell and Amundson (2000) argued that the term “management”—at least as it has been traditionally used—may be problematic when applied to careers. It may imply a degree of control over career development that is unrealistic in today’s climate of unprecedented organizational change. Good career management theory, therefore, must account for the limited degree to which workers have control over their own career experiences and satisfaction and organizations have control over the work environments that they provide.

Gelatt (1991) spoke of approaching careers with an attitude of “positive uncertainty.” Savickas (1997) suggested that “career adaptability” may be the core construct in Super’s life-span, life-space theory. We know from employer surveys that flexibility, adaptability, and problem-solving skills are held in high regard in the corporate world (Business Council of British Columbia, 1999; Corporate Council on Education, 1992). Many recent articles have recognized the impact of “serendipity” on career management, especially in these times of rapid change (Krumboltz, 1998; Watts, 1996; Williams et al., 1998).

Planned happenstance theory has also been built on this notion of serendipity (Krumboltz, 2000; Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). One of the central tenets in planned happenstance theory, however, is that individuals can, to a certain extent, create their own luck. Authors of the theory have identified a number of individual qualities believed to contribute to such “luck-readiness,” suggesting that employees who are planful and goal-oriented, curious (actively searching while open to new learning opportunities), persistent, flexible, optimistic, and prepared to take risks would be better equipped to seize the opportunities that chance brings their way. Such employees would be able to both create and capitalize on chance events—transforming serendipity or happenstance into career opportunities.

Effective Career Management

Planned happenstance theory offers a foundation from which to research career management. In it, several personal attributes and attitudes are identified as potentially helpful in managing careers in the often chaotic world of work. Implicit in the notions of curiosity and openness from planned happenstance theory (and central to most literature on career management) is a commitment to continuous learning and skill development—which involves ongoing self-assessment and realistic feedback from others, as well as “benchmarking” skills and keeping them current (Bridges, 1997; Hill, 1998; Kaye, 1997; Kidd, 1998; Moses, 1995, 1999; Porter, Porter, & Bennett, 1998; Shahnasarian, 1994).
Persistence, another personal quality highlighted in planned happenstance theory, has also been valued by the business community (Champy & Nohria, 2000; Posen, 1998). Highly valued in the business community, as well, has been optimism—an attribute often thought to contribute to individual career success (Champy & Nohria, 2000; Posen, 1998). Champy, Nohria, and Posen, like Seligman (1990), believe that optimism can be learned.

Risk-taking is another valued attribute (Hakim, 1994; Posen, 1998). Hakim provided numerous examples of employees who limited their career potential by refusing to take risks. Planfulness (another attribute critical to planned happenstance theory) appears to be foundational to effective career management (Blustein, 1997; DeVoe, 1998; Kaye, 1997; Moses, 1995; Orpen, 1994; Shahnasarian, 1994). Corporate managers have long recognized the importance of planning to the long-term success of their organizations (Wack, 1985). Perhaps career management, then, might draw from such time-tested management strategies as “scenario planning” to help individuals and organizations better cope with tumultuous change.

There are other recurring themes in the career literature, as well, that are worth considering in research on effective career management. Many of these entail behavioural strategies rather than the personal attributes or characteristics identified as important by planned happenstance theory. For example, the ability to network effectively has been presented as integral to career management (Kaye, 1997; Kidd, 1998; Moses, 1999; Porter, Porter, & Bennett, 1998; Shahnasarian, 1994). Financial planning and money management have also taken on new importance as career management skills. Some authors have stressed the importance of being financially prepared for periods of unemployment between jobs and having the financial flexibility to pursue opportunities as they arise (Moses, 1995, 1999; Shahnasarian, 1994). Other literature has identified links between personal financial problems and employee productivity (Joo & Grable, 2000).

The importance of achieving balance between work and other life roles has also become an emerging topic in the career management literature (DeVoe, 1998; Moses 1995, 1999; Shahnasarian, 1994). Moses (1999), in describing the intermittent nature of work in the future, warned:

We will need to be able to manage these periods of downtime not only financially but psychologically. We will need to know not only how to be busy but how to stop our busyness, how to use these breaks as times to nourish ourselves, reconnect with people, explore new avenues of work and play. We will need to find something other than our own busyness to validate our self-worth. (p. 7)

To summarize, then, effective career management for individuals appears to entail a combination of specific personal attributes, attitudes and strategies. A commitment to lifelong learning (based on ongoing, realistic self-assessment), alertness to opportunities and the ability to keep diverse options open (adaptability and flexibility), persistence, optimism, the willingness to take risks, and planfulness are all personal attributes theorized to foster career management success. In addition, networking and self-marketing, financial management, and balancing work with other significant life roles are seen as important components of a planful approach to career management. The outcome of effective career management is expected to be successful careers that meet the needs of both individuals and their employers.
Career Success and Job Satisfaction

Career success has been variously defined and measured in the literature as salary growth and promotions (Orpen, 1994, 1996a, 1996b; Turban & Dougherty, 1994), the accumulation of rewards such as salary, status, and prestige (Bahniuk, Hill & Darus, 1996), career progression (Kirchmeyer, 1998), and relative salary and managerial level (Melamed, 1995). Some authors have attempted to move beyond such traditional, objective descriptions by defining career success more subjectively—with measures of perceived career success and satisfaction (Burke, 1999; Kirchmeyer, 1998; Parasuraman et al., 1996; Van Eck Peluchette, 1993). Gottfredson (1996) suggested that satisfied workers would be more highly valued by employers as such workers would likely be more committed to the organization and have longer tenure.

Rationale for the Present Study

As career counsellors find more demand for their services in the corporate world, as employees recognize the need to self-manage their careers, and as employers recognize the benefits of offering career management support to their employees, all three groups need a clear understanding of what effective career management is and how best to pursue it. To this point in time, there has been limited interface between theories in the fields of career counselling and corporate management. As such, there has been little research testing the effectiveness of career management in achieving its stated goals. The present study took preliminary steps toward evaluating the outcomes (career success and job satisfaction) of several of the attitudes and strategies that practitioners and theorists suggest form the basis of good career management.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were recruited from among the management employees of one of Canada’s largest corporations—a telecommunications company that was in the midst of transformational change. The organization faced the same recruitment and retention issues as other major employers. In addition, the organization was anticipating major business changes as the global economy continued to expand, mergers and acquisitions abounded, and emerging technology impacted both internal business strategies and customer needs and expectations. The current managers in the organization were all survivors of major downsizing and restructuring over the past several years and all had successfully competed for their existing jobs after the merger.

Participation was voluntary and efforts were made to ensure that confidentiality was preserved. Of the 404 survey packages that were distributed, 181 (44%) were completed and returned. Descriptive statistics for the participants are reported in Table 1.
Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

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<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
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<td>Tenure in Organization (months)</td>
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<td>Salary (thousands of Canadian dollars)</td>
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<td>Bonus (thousands of Canadian dollars)</td>
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<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
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<td>Graduate Level Studies (Masters or PhD)</td>
<td>19</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Measures

career attitudes and strategies inventory (CASI, holland & gottfredson, 1992). The CASI is an assessment tool developed to measure various aspects of individuals’ work situations including job satisfaction and specific attitudes and strategies hypothesized to impact their careers (Gottfredson, 1996). Alpha reliabilities in previous research ranged from .76 to .92. Of particular interest in the present study were the subscales on the CASI measuring job satisfaction, risk-taking style, skill development, and work involvement. The subscale measuring career worries, while not a pure measure of optimism as defined by Seligman (1990) or in more recent assessments of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 1997), nonetheless captured the essence of an optimistic approach to career management (i.e., optimism could be operationalized as low career worries). For further analyses, therefore, this subscale was reverse-scored and renamed as Optimism.

career beliefs inventory (CBI, Krumboltz, 1991). The CBI was developed to identify specific beliefs that may result in attitudes and behaviours hypothesized to
block career success. The CBI consists of 25 subscales—Table 2 displays the internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) for scores on the specific subscales of interest, based on the participants in this study.

Table 2

*Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Coefficients for CBI Scales in Present Sample*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Career Plans</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Control</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Career Path Flexibility</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
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<td>16 Post-Training Transition</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
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<td>17 Job Experimentation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Relocation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Improving Self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Persisting While Uncertain</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Taking Risks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Learning Job Skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Negotiating/Searching</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Overcoming Obstacles</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Working Hard</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.72</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

career management survey (CMS). The CMS was designed for this study to collect demographic data and to ensure that the factors hypothesized to comprise effective career management and career success were measured in ways consistent with previous theory-driven research. Neither the CBI nor CASI scales, for example, seemed to measure networking very well. Therefore, questions measuring networking beliefs and attitudes were added to the CMS, including “I believe that it is important to have a large, diverse network of professional acquaintances.” Work-life balance, though addressed in the Work Involvement subscale on the CASI, also seemed to be inadequately measured. Two questions directly measuring attitudes toward such balance were added to the CMS: “I am happy with the present balance between my work role and my other life roles” and “In my opinion, work is taking too large a piece of my life right now.” (The latter question was reverse scored.)

Following Orpen (1994), statements were included to collect objective data about career success including information about salary, promotions, and performance ratings. However, two issues may have confounded the career success measure for this sample: (a) not all managers in this company had received annual performance ratings within the past year, and (b) all had recently competed successfully for their present positions. Therefore, as several researchers have also advocated a subjective measure of career success (Burke, 1999; Kirchmeyer, 1998; Parasuraman et al., 1996; Van Eck Peluchette, 1993), two statements were added to the survey to gather subjective data: “I believe that my career to this point has been a success” and “Compared to my peers, my career progress has been good.”
career management behaviours checklist (CMBC). The CMBC was designed for this study to gather data on the specific career management behaviours in which the participants had engaged over the past year. Questions on the selected subscales of both standardized measures used in this study tended to elicit attitudes and beliefs rather than the actual career management strategies or behaviours that an individual might exhibit. It seemed important, therefore, to also ask participants what career management strategies they had actually employed within the past year.

Results

Career Management, Career Success, and Job Satisfaction Scale Development

**alpha reliabilities.** Initial reliability tests were conducted for comprehensive scales. By systematically deleting items from those comprehensive scales, scales with good internal consistency were developed for each of the variables under consideration: Job Satisfaction (.88), Career Success (.72), Continuous Learning (.83), Flexibility (.71), Networking (.65), Financial Management (.76), Work-Life Balance (.81), Planfulness (.76), Optimism (.87), Persistence (.72), and Risk-Taking (.78).

**correlations.** After the specific measures were selected, correlations between each pair of predictor variables was examined to determine whether or not there was sufficient multicollinearity to warrant combining any of the variables. Almost all of the significant correlations (p < .05) between pairs of variables were very low; only four (listed here) were > .35, p = .00. The largest correlations were between Flexibility and Risk-Taking (.50), Persistence and Optimism (.44), Persistence and Risk-Taking (.38), and Job Satisfaction and Career Success (.37). To ensure that demographic variables were not potential confounds in this study, they were also checked for collinearity with the dependent variables–job satisfaction and career success–but nothing significant was found. Because it also seemed likely that the two dependent variables might overlap significantly with each other, they, too, were checked for collinearity. However, there was not sufficient collinearity to collapse the dependent variables.

Multiple Regression: Predicting Career Success and Job Satisfaction

Once appropriate and reliable measures were identified for all variables under consideration, two step-wise multiple regression analyses were conducted in order to identify the best career management predictors of career success and job satisfaction (Stevens, 1986).

Descriptive statistics for the variables in the multiple regressions appear in Table 3. The correlations among predictor variables, Career Success, and Job Satisfaction are reported in Table 4. The results of the stepwise regression for career success are reported in Table 5. Optimism and Flexibility were the best predictors of Career Success, accounting together for a total of 12% of the variance. The results of the stepwise regression for job satisfaction are reported in Table 6. Optimism, Continuous Learning, and Planfulness were the best predictors of Job Satisfaction, accounting together for a total of 19% of the variance. Planfulness contributed in a negative direction (i.e., participants who were more planful reported less job satisfaction).
Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Scales used in Multiple Regressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Success</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Learning</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Management</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Life Balance</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>37.0 (37.2)</td>
<td>8.7 (8.8)</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planfulness</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Risk-Taking</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.78</td>
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Note. Numbers in parentheses represent statistics for variables in the regression equation for Job Satisfaction when they vary from those reported for Career Success.

Table 4

Correlations Among Predictor and Criterion Variables for Multiple Regression Analyses (N = 174)

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<td>.22*</td>
<td>.32*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td></td>
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<td>.38*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.20*</td>
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<td>.32*</td>
<td>.38*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.13*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

|                        | .37               | .35               | .30*                | .50*           | -.00       | .15**         | .32*        | .38*           | .13*           |               |

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent statistics for variables in the regression equation for Job Satisfaction when they vary from those reported for Career Success.
Table 5

Summary of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Career Success (N = 174)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.01</td>
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<td>Flexibility</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.59</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

Note. Adjusted $R^2 = .12$, $F(2, 171) = 12.41$, $p = .00$

Table 6

Summary of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Job Satisfaction (N = 175)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>4.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cont. Learning</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>4.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planfulness</td>
<td>-1.79</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-2.38</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>54.41</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.98</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adjusted $R^2 = .19$, $F(3, 171) = 15.01$, $p = .00$

Discussion

Predicting Job Satisfaction and Career Success

**a portrait of a satisfied worker.** A satisfied worker was one with an optimistic attitude, involved in continuous learning activities, and with somewhat less of a planful approach to career management. A review of the zero-order correlations enriched this portrait, adding that a satisfied worker was also more persistent and willing to take risks, and had achieved a measure of work-life balance.

**a portrait of career success.** Similar to the portrait of job satisfaction, a successful worker had an optimistic attitude. In addition (and different from the portrait of satisfaction), a successful worker was flexible. This fits with the literature on employability skills (e.g., Business Council of British Columbia, 1999)–employers are looking for flexible people with good attitudes. What was somewhat surprising, however, was that none of the demographic variables correlated positively with responses to the subjective statements, “I believe that my career to this point has been a
success” and “Compared to my peers, my career progress has been good” although previous literature suggested that career success could be measured by such objective measures as salary, bonus, performance ratings, and promotions.

A review of the zero-order correlations enriched the portrait of career success, adding that successful workers were persistent, continuous learners, planful, and willing to take risks. They had also achieved a measure of work-life balance and networked more than their peers who reported less career success. In essence, all of the career management variables extrapolated from the literature (except for financial management), contributed to the portrait of a successful worker in the present study.

**Career Management Attitudes and Strategies**

**continuous learning.** In the multiple regressions, continuous learning was a significant predictor of job satisfaction but not career success. It seems likely, from the results in the present study, that individuals may be engaging in continuous learning that is keeping their work interesting and satisfying for today, and has allowed them to achieve success to this point in their careers, but which may not be preparing them for upcoming changes in their occupations or organization.

**optimism.** In the present study, optimism was a significant predictor of both career success and job satisfaction and correlated with all but two variables—networking and financial management.

**flexibility.** In the present study, flexibility was correlated with career success but not job satisfaction. One may wonder, are the workers of today being stretched beyond their comfort zones—to the point where job satisfaction may be sacrificed at the expense of career success? In the present study, flexibility did not correlate significantly with financial management, balance, or planfulness. It is possible that a more flexible worker might be more inclined to overwork, jeopardizing work-life balance in exchange for career success. The lack of a correlation with planfulness begs the question, “Is it contradictory to expect people to be both planful and flexible?” Although, theoretically, Gelatt’s (1991) construct of positive uncertainty and Krumboltz’s (2000) planned happenstance theory link planfulness and flexibility together as desirable qualities for career management, those variables did not cluster together in the present study.

**planfulness.** It was interesting, in the present study, that planfulness predicted job satisfaction in a negative direction. Perhaps those who are dissatisfied become more planful as they begin to consider alternative career paths—this would fit with Gottfredson’s (1996) findings that dissatisfied employees were more likely to be engaged in an active career search.

**persistence.** In this study, persistence correlated with career success but not job satisfaction. Perhaps some workers who were satisfied stopped working so hard, while others continued to persist for the intrinsic value derived from their hard work.

**risk-taking.** It was interesting, in this study, that risk-taking correlated with both career success and job satisfaction—a finding that supports planned happenstance theory and the characteristics apparently valued by business leaders (Hakim, 1994).
work-life balance. In this study, work-life balance exhibited the least overlap with other predictor variables (the only significant correlation was with optimism), yet it was correlated with both career success and job satisfaction. Perhaps, then, balance is not so much a career management variable as it is a life management variable that permits one to achieve career success while remaining satisfied. This explanation would support Moses’ (1999) call for workers of the future to take time to recharge.

networking. It was interesting that, in the present study, networking did not correlate with job satisfaction, balance, optimism, or persistence. It could be that networking is an effective strategy used more consistently by individuals actively engaged in either job search (as promoted in such programs as job clubs) or in building their careers. Reviewing the responses to individual items on the CMBC offers further insight into this variable. Although over 65% of participants acknowledged networking with others by attending meetings and conferences, only 31% indicated that they had informed colleagues and professional acquaintances of their career accomplishments. Therefore, it seems quite possible that more passive networking (i.e., attending meetings and speaking with direct supervisors) is the kind of networking in which most individuals engage—particularly when their careers are successful. More focussed networking, on the other hand—networking which entails informing others of one’s career accomplishments—does not seem to be an activity in which many of the participants in the present study chose to engage.

financial management. In the present study, financial management was not correlated with either job satisfaction or career success. Perhaps these results were confounded by the relatively high income and long tenure of the participants. Salary, on the other hand, did correlate with job satisfaction (.22, p < .01)—a finding which makes intuitive sense. It was interesting, however, that neither salary nor bonus correlated with the subjective measure used in this study for career success. These findings suggest that, although individuals may find their jobs more satisfying if they are paid well, they are not inclined to measure their career success by either the salary or bonuses that they receive.

Redefining Effective Career Management

planned happenstance. Although each variable under consideration in this study, except for financial management, had a small significant correlation with at least one of the outcome variables—career success and job satisfaction— multicollinearity resulted in only limited variance (12% - 19%) being explained when variables were combined. Planned happenstance theory (Krumboltz, 2000; Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz, 1999) seems to be supported by these results in that unexpected, chance occurrences might impact careers—possibly even to a greater extent than individual attitudes, beliefs, career management strategies, or organizational variables.

flow. According to flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990,1997), setting challenging but achievable goals can make work more enjoyable. A potential problem with this theory, however, is that it seems to place too much of the responsibility for achieving and sustaining flow in the hands of individuals. For example, organizational restructuring could result in one person doing the work of two or more people, or
budget cuts could result in individuals struggling to cope with insufficient resources or obsolete equipment. Extending flow theory to include the notion of sufficient resources as well as skill development might help to make the theory fit the reality of a changing workplace.

**Career responsiveness: career management in changing times.** Although the present study focussed on individuals—their career management efforts and their experiences of career success and job satisfaction—it is important to acknowledge that organizations, too, have an important role to play in providing environments that support the careers of their employees and accommodate the individual challenges that they face. To revisit the canoeing metaphor introduced earlier in this paper, even a skilful canoeist could not navigate effectively if a floodgate were unexpectedly opened—depending on which side of the gate the canoe is, there would either be no water (i.e., job loss) or a tumultuous torrent (i.e., chaotic organizational or personal change). Clear communication, therefore, and strategic partnerships between the organization and its employees are crucial for successfully navigating the changing world of work.

However, the impact of serendipity or chance occurrences also needs to be taken into account—some events are beyond the control of either individuals or their organizations (e.g., in the canoeing metaphor, floods or droughts caused by weather extremes would be beyond anyone’s control). Effective career management, however, may equip individuals to recognize and maximize the benefits of such chance events or, at the very least, minimize the negative impact of those events by planning for their possibility, thus avoiding being caught off guard.

Perhaps a new term, “career responsiveness,” could integrate some of the ideas from flow and planned happenstance theory with Super’s notion of “adaptability” and Gelatt’s “positive uncertainty.” Responsiveness implies an organic and mutual adaptation or accommodation to change—sometimes the environment might respond to the changing needs of individuals (e.g., when an organization provides on-site daycare facilities for its employees with young families) and sometimes individuals respond to changing organizational demands (e.g., when they agree to work extended hours to better serve their customers).

**Implications**

Individual career management: Enhancing career success and job satisfaction. One interesting finding in this study was the relatively small overlap between measures of career success and job satisfaction. Therefore, when counselling or coaching individuals, it might be appropriate to first clarify whether career goals involve achieving career success, job satisfaction, or both. Optimism was the only consistent significant predictor in the two regressions in the present study. Although, without further research, it is impossible to assign any particular direction of causality to this association, perhaps interventions that could instill or reinforce hope might be useful in enhancing both career success and job satisfaction. Such interventions could include seminars and workshops, inspirational reading, positive communication from leaders in the company and even rising stock prices or a positive economic forecast for the organization. There seems to be a renewed interest among career practitioners in incorporating spiritual and cultural beliefs in career discussions. Perhaps, because
optimism was found to be a significant predictor of both career success and job satisfaction, this study can offer some empirical support for the contribution of hope and spirituality to effective career management.

Continuous learning, interestingly, was a significant predictor of job satisfaction but not career success. Much of the recent literature has promoted “learning organizations” as the key to success. The present results, however, suggest that there is something intrinsically satisfying about learning; learning is not just about skill development to prepare for future organizational demands. These findings fit with Csikszentmihalyi’s (1997) flow theory—continuous learning helps to keep people “in flow” by matching their skills to new challenges.

**enhancing career management programs and services.** It might be particularly helpful to introduce programs and services that would encourage employees to participate in activities deemed useful to effective career management, but in which the rate of participation is currently low. In the present study, for example, less than 40% of the participants reported that they had actively benchmarked their skills to those skills currently in demand in their fields. Also, although networking is touted by many as the foundation of career management, the present study shed some light on with whom people are networking—few participants (31%) reported engaging in potentially productive networking techniques such as informing others of their accomplishments. And, although almost 50% indicated that they had set some specific career goals, only 35% had implemented an action plan to achieve those goals.

In an era of continuous learning, it is essential that individuals keep up their skills. Although 68% of the participants in the present study had completed courses or seminars within the past year, only 47% had deliberately diversified their work experience to keep their career options open. One might also question how courses and seminars were selected, given that so few participants were benchmarking their skills.

In addition, although in the present study financial management was not correlated with career success or job satisfaction, it is somewhat alarming that only 25% of the participants indicated that they had made financial plans flexible enough to allow them to pursue interesting career opportunities as they arise, and less than 40% indicated that they had managed their money so that they could handle a period of unemployment between jobs. Given the uncertain labour market and Joo and Grable’s (2000) findings linking financial problems to decreased productivity at work, it seems that financial management programs and resources might be an important intervention.

**Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

There were several research challenges encountered in the present study. To begin with, there were no standardized measures available to reliably measure many of the specific variables under consideration. In addition, due to the exploratory nature of this study, no attempt was made to ensure that participation was either random or representative.

It is important to remember that, in the case of career success, much of the variance (88%) was not explained by the variables under consideration in this study; the unexplained variance is almost as high (81%) for job satisfaction. What other variables might contribute to career success and job satisfaction? It is possible that differences among individual work teams might account for some variation—often conflicts with
team members and immediate supervisors are the most distressing. There are many interpersonal characteristics that could be measured. Future research might incorporate interpersonal variables such as management styles and contextual variables such as personal crises (e.g., illness or death in the family) in an attempt to explain more of the variance in career success or job satisfaction. A qualitative design would facilitate individuals telling their own career management stories and perhaps offer insights into the happenstance or chance occurrences that have already impacted their careers.

Another useful focus for future research would be to develop better measures for career management variables and also for career success and job satisfaction. It would be helpful for career practitioners and coaches to have an easily available, concise assessment tool (with good reliability and validity) to screen for effective career management attitudes and behaviours. Such a tool could be useful in directing individuals to the career management interventions or resources that would be of the most immediate benefit in enhancing their job satisfaction or career success. The present study, exploratory in nature, offers a beginning to our understanding of effective career management in the changing world of work. It is encouraging that all of the variables drawn from theory and the growing body of career management literature now have empirical support for their inclusion in career management programs and services. It is also somewhat daunting to acknowledge how little we know about the subject—more than 80% of the variance in job satisfaction and career success is still unexplained. Perhaps the notion of career responsiveness can enhance our understanding by illuminating the complex interaction between individuals and their employers as both attempt to manage careers more effectively in this changing world of work. There is much work to be done if we hope to better help our clients and employees thrive in the new millennium.

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Employees’ Perceptions of Repatriation
Susan MacDonald & Nancy Arthur
University of Calgary

There is an abundance of literature surrounding the dynamics of adjustment to foreign cultures, however, there is little recognition of reentry difficulties faced by employees returning home (Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992b). Repatriation is the least carefully considered phase of global assignments, both in research and in organizational practices. Findings indicate that repatriation adjustment is often more difficult than the stage of cross-cultural transition; and a majority of repatriated employees are dissatisfied with the repatriation process (Adler, 1981, 1991; Black & Gregersen, 1998, 1999b; Black et al., 1992b). Investigations of cross-cultural transition and the process of repatriation must keep pace with growing demands for an international workforce (Arthur, 2001).

This article summarizes a study that explored the repatriation experience and adjustment strategies of employees returning to Canada. The study posed two research questions: 1) What has been your experience with repatriation? and, 2) What strategies have you used to cope with repatriation issues? The article begins with a review of the literature, including the importance of effective repatriation practice and previous studies of repatriation. Second, methods are examined, including rationale for a qualitative approach, a description of the participants, and how the data was analyzed. Third, results are discussed, including the thematic descriptions, and exemplars are provided from participants. The discussion then turns to conclusions drawn from this research, recommendations of strategies for repatriates, strengths and limitations of the study, and ideas for future research.

The Importance of Effective Repatriation

Inadequate repatriation practice represents a significant human resource management problem and a potentially large obstacle to successful globalization. Poor repatriation practice is costly (Black et al., 1992b), restricts the effective utilization of employees (Adler, 1991), often leads to the loss of valued personnel (Black & Gregersen, 1991), and is likely the main reason for employee reluctance to work abroad (Harvey, 1982, 1989, Spring). Repatriation problems often send the message to employees that global assignments negatively affect one's career (Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992a). A poor repatriation reputation makes it difficult to recruit high caliber employees for foreign postings, which in turn increases the likelihood of problems throughout the expatriation-repatriation cycle.

The lack of repatriation programs and the insufficient value placed on international assignments (Black, 1991) leads to poor repatriation adjustment, dissatisfaction, and turnover (Black et al., 1992b). An average of one quarter of repatriates leave their company and join a competitor within one year of returning home, which is double that of managers who do not go abroad (Black & Gregersen, 1999a, 1999b). These turnover rates signify lost investment for corporations. Foreign assignments last an average of two to five years, and expatriate packages including
benefits amount to expenditures ranging from $300,000 to one million dollars U.S. annually (Black & Gregersen, 1999a). Firms with hundreds of international employees and without repatriation programs may be losing hundreds of millions of dollars each year (Black & Mendenhall, 1989). Repatriation failure means that companies lose a large development investment, a high potential employee (Allen, 1998), and considerable knowledge leaves with an individual who understands both corporate headquarters and the overseas subsidiaries (Stroh, Gregersen, & Black, 1998).

Multinational corporations are far more effective at preparing expatriates for entry into another country than they are at providing reentry assistance for repatriates coming home (Harvey, 1982, 1989, Spring). Windham International (1998) found that 70% of firms provide some form of cross-cultural preparation. Unfortunately little attention is given to the repatriation process, as less than 15% of North American repatriates receive any sort of repatriation training (Black & Gregersen, 1999b). Engen (1995) estimates 90% of corporations offer less than three hours of training for the return home, suggesting corporations have yet to understand the importance of effective repatriation practice. A meta-analysis of cross-cultural training for expatriates found programs to be effective in helping expatriates adapt to their foreign postings (Deshpande, 1992), yet there appears to be little perceived need for repatriation programs. Human resource personnel often find it inconceivable that returning expatriates need to readjust to anything when coming home. In reality, the majority of expatriates find repatriation to be tumultuous, both personally and professionally (Black & Gregersen, 1999b).

Models That Guided This Research

Most empirical research on the subject of repatriation adjustment has lacked theoretical grounding (Black & Mendenhall, 1990, 1991). Researchers believe the key theoretical mechanism related to repatriation adjustment is uncertainty reduction: Factors that reduce uncertainty will assist adjustment, while factors creating uncertainty will impede adjustment (Black, 1994). In conducting this study the following four models of reentry and adjustment were considered.

First, Berry's (1997) model of acculturation highlights factors affecting repatriation adjustment and possible outcomes of returning home. This model suggests that reentry affects many life roles and that repatriates have tremendous control over their adjustment process. Second, Adler's (1981; 1991) model of coping with reentry focuses on adjustment to work and highlights the impact corporations have on repatriation adjustment. This model acknowledges the influence of both individual and corporate attitudes. Third, Black's (1988) model of work role adjustment illuminates repatriation as affecting all life roles. The degree of adjustment will depend on the amount of change involved when repatriating, and this transition can be highly individual. This model proposes adjustment and knowledge are interrelated, whereby the greater the knowledge of each area of the repatriation process, the greater the degree of adjustment. Fourth, Black, Gregersen and Mendenhall's theory of repatriation adjustment (1992b) emphasizes the need to treat repatriation as a complex process, involving distinct but interrelated variables. This model highlights communication, information and expectations as playing important roles in repatriation adjustment.

Although space is prohibitive for a comprehensive review of these models, four overriding principles become apparent: 1) Repatriation is a multifaceted phenomenon,
affecting all life roles; 2) there are a multitude of variables that affect repatriation adjustment; 3) individuals and corporations have a synergistic effect on repatriation outcome; and, 4) communication, knowledge, expectations, and adjustment are interrelated during the process and outcomes of repatriation. These principles must be taken into consideration to direct the nature of inquiry into repatriation.

Empirical investigations of repatriation have predominantly sampled American executives and managers (Black, 1991, 1992; Hammer, Hart, & Rogan, 1998; Harvey, 1989), there have been a small number of studies of Finnish (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997) and Japanese repatriates (Black, 1994; Gregersen & Black, 1996), and one study sampling repatriates from 26 different countries (Feldman, Tompson, & Holly, 1993). This research has primarily highlighted repatriation problems, rather than repatriation solutions. Data has been gathered through the use of questionnaires, with the exception of two studies utilizing semistructured interviews (e.g. Adler, 1981; Briody & Baba, 1991). Questionnaires have generally been analyzed through regression and factor analyses to discover relationships between repatriation variables and adjustment, while interview methods have generally been supported by phenomenological approaches and searching for common patterns. Most research to-date has elaborated upon the demands encountered during repatriation but stops short of elaborating upon the strategies used by repatriates during the process of returning to their home environment.

Methodology

Although eclecticism has been criticized as being ad hoc, this ideology allows for choosing the most appropriate aspects of compatible methodology and analysis that fit our beliefs, the purpose of the study, and the phenomenon of repatriation. This study was guided by methodology that would uncover critical processes as participants experienced repatriation demands and developed strategies for coping with the re-entry transition. Ideas from hermeneutics and phenomenology informed the methodology. Hermeneutics has been referred to as the "art of understanding" (Gadamer, 1985, p.146). This study adopts the Heideggerian assumption that all knowledge is based on preunderstanding and interpretation. Rather than viewing prior knowledge about repatriation as a barrier, it is viewed as an integral part of gaining new understanding. When a researcher's assumptions about a topic are brought into the research, they are “at risk” (Gadamer, 1985) to be confirmed or disconfirmed. This research also utilizes a number of concepts from phenomenological psychology. Phenomenological studies examine detailed accounts of people’s “lived experiences” (Klein & Westcott, 1994) and examine patterns and relationships of meaning.

An open-ended questionnaire was used to collect demographic information and to prompt participants to begin thinking about their repatriation experience. Semi-structured interviews were utilized to gather information, and interview data was analyzed through the use of qualitative interpretation.

Participants

Selection criteria for participants were employees who had worked overseas for a minimum of one year and who had repatriated to Canada for one year or less. This population was targeted because a minimum one year allows for a sufficient degree of immersion into the host culture, and the first year after repatriation appears to be the
time frame when most readjustment occurs (Adler, 1981; Black & Gregersen, 1991, 1999b).

All participants in this study are White Caucasians including seven men and one woman ranging in age from 35 to 48 years. The length of their foreign postings extended from 3 to 23 years, and six participants had completed multiple international assignments. The mean length of time working as expatriates is 8.9 years. The participants had been repatriated between 4 months and 1 year, averaging 8 months back in Canada. The positions held by these individuals while working internationally include occupations in the areas of finance, management, oil and gas exploration, drafting, and education development. The participants lived and worked in many countries including Algeria, Australia, Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, England, France, Indonesia, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Peru, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Venezuela, and the United States.

Data Analysis

The goal of data analysis was to obtain a valid and common understanding of the transcriptions (Kvale, 1996), and to find the invariant structures of the experience of repatriation (Dukes, 1984; van Manen, 1990). This may also be referred to as the "essence" of the experience, which is the nature of the phenomenon of repatriation. Data analysis proceeded through the use of thematic procedures to identify meaning structures. After the first interview, transcripts were reviewed for themes and meanings and were clustered and recorded. Each participant was given a copy of his/her transcript and a summary for verification and clarification during the second interview. Any new information resulting from the second interview was synthesized with the original data, and the meaning structures and themes were further refined. Each participant reviewed a final draft of themes and meanings to ensure the accuracy of interpretations.

The process of identification and interpretation of themes included two types of analyses. The first was a "within" person analysis which considered the themes and meaning clusters for each person, and this was followed by an "across" persons analysis, which looked for shared themes among the participants. The phenomena were intuitively grouped according to similarities for each person and for the group as a whole (Giorgi, 1985; Kvale, 1996). A respiralling technique was used to identify patterns of meaning to allow for both contrasting and comparison of these themes (Klein & Westcott, 1994). Two types of experiences are also identified. The first are those that appear close to the surface, are consciously acknowledged by the repatriate, and easily identifiable. The second type is the prereflective experience, which is not readily noticeable, and is that which is experienced but not articulated (Osbourne, 1994). Reaching the prereflective experience involved a great deal of introspection, internal observation, and going beyond the surface characteristics of the text. The researchers’ previous knowledge of repatriation and their psychological training supported this process of analysis. Simultaneously, bracketing (Dukes, 1984) was practiced in order to acknowledge and set aside personal assumptions and to focus on the experience of repatriation offered by participants.
Results

Three metathemes emerged from this analysis including work adjustment, lifestyle adjustment, and psychological adjustment. Table One provides a summary listing of the three major themes and related subthemes acquired from the data.

Table 1

Summary of Repatriation Adjustment Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme One: Work Adjustment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Responsibilities: Career Development - Professional Status Loss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme Two: Lifestyle Adjustment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A New Lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Adjustment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjustment to Canadian Society and Culture</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Theme Three: Psychological Adjustment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perception of Loss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Experiences, Learning Outcomes and Opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work Adjustment

Work adjustment was one of the salient metathemes, as six participants were embarking on a new job within their home country organizations and two were beginning new jobs with different companies. Work adjustment can be illustrated by the three themes: 1) job responsibilities, 2) colleagues, and, 3) the organization.

job responsibilities. Repatriates who were most satisfied with their current job had returned to responsibilities similar to the job held internationally. Unfortunately, for most employees, this was not the case, as there was a tendency to return from a managerial position to be placed in a nonmanagerial job. The sense of dissatisfaction for most employees returning to Canada is described in the following exemplars.

“I had a staff of 15 over in Algiers. I have a staff of zero here....Right now where my career is, I couldn't sabotage it much more.”

“I'm probably not going to stay here very long....if I can find something else tomorrow, I'd go.”
“It was frustrating dealing with people making decisions about overseas operations when they had no such experience and were not willing to listen to those who did.”

**work and colleagues.** The main theme regarding colleagues was described as "my network has been completely destroyed" due to turnover rates, organizational changes, and losing contact with people. This left people feeling out of touch upon their return home.

“There was a fair amount of attrition at work, there was the takeover at work. I've been overseas twice, both people I reported to when I left were gone by the time I returned....This resulted in a lot of new individuals I did not know and an organization structure I was not familiar with.”

**work and the organization.** None of the companies associated with the repatriates in this study had a formal repatriation plan. Employees who were most satisfied with their jobs upon returning to Canada were also more satisfied with how the organization handled their repatriation.

“The company didn't do anything with repatriation to help us adjust back.”

“If I had been given some sort of debriefing counseling, it would have been easier to adjust.”

These examples suggest that the process of repatriation brings forward the relationship between employees and the organization. Most participants felt that their international experience was not beneficial to their career development. However, they rationalized that any disadvantages imposed upon their careers were offset by the personal gains of living and working internationally. The personal aspect of reentry adjustment was also addressed in this study and also appears to be a major component in the experience of repatriation. This next section reviews findings regarding lifestyle and related subthemes.

**Lifestyle Adjustment**

Each participant found that repatriation includes adjusting to a different lifestyle compared to the one they had become accustomed to during their international assignment. Although the foreign country lifestyle and the Canadian lifestyle varied for each participant, the common theme was that lifestyle had been altered. One repatriate described this as “my lifestyle changed dramatically, like night and day”. Lifestyle revolved around five common subthemes: 1) Activities, 2) relationships, 3) finances, 4) freedom, and 5) Canadian culture and society.

**activities.** Many repatriates defined their lifestyle through activities, and almost all repatriates found many activities changed due to repatriation. Those who were involved in enjoyable activities during their international assignment experienced a sense of lifestyle loss, while for the people who have returned to activities they longed for while overseas, there was a perception of gain. Examples of changes in activities include the following:
“We missed our (Canadian) lifestyle, and for us it's the mountains and skiing.”
“We always did something that was oriented toward Russian society or culture everyday,…So (repatriation) was giving up a really rich culture we were immersed in.”

relationships. Activities also revolve around relationships. Returning to Canada meant the reestablishment of relationships with friends and family, starting new relationships, and the maintenance or relinquishing of relationships that were established during the international assignments.

“We were breaking longterm ties. We had tears at our going away party at work. There were friends that thought they’d never see us again.”
“Reestablishing relationships has not been easy. Social groups that had been in place had changed or ended. Some of our friends had changed, situations changed, hence it is not the same.”

finances. Financial changes are part of the repatriation experience that affects lifestyle, as domestic pay is usually lower than international compensation packages, and is compounded by increased taxes. There are also many extraordinary costs incurred when returning to Canada, which often include the purchase of a home, vehicles, and clothing to better suit the environment.

“The financial adjustment has been difficult. You have to change your spending habits...It's like taking a big cut in pay….it is hard to get used to paying the high taxes.”
“I guess the house was probably the largest outlay, and clothing for all the family members…we didn’t own ski jackets.”

freedom. The term freedom surfaced in many interviews, as participants found they had greater freedom of choice regarding cultural, religious, and political affiliations, more occupational choice, greater diversity in activities, and more freedom with respect to health and safety.

“Freedom of choice. No one says I can't wear shorts in public….I can feel safe with my wife on the streets….When our son goes to school, the freedom of being able to learn what he wants to learn and what the schools can teach.”
“There are no more language barriers, no more feeling somewhat uncomfortable in a strange society…here the sky’s the limit.”

canadian culture and society. As with freedom, adjustment to Canadian society and culture were often related to comparisons made to the countries of expatriation. There was a tendency to comment on the differences in technology and consumer lifestyle.

“The (staff) at the counter hands me this (banking) machine to punch in my number and I said, “What’s this for?” and she looked at me like I was from Mars. I didn’t have a clue.”
“...going into stores and being so overwhelmed by the colours and choices that walking out felt like the only option.”
“I am not as materialistic as I used to be.”

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The consequence of losing enjoyable activities, especially an active social life and financial decreases seemed to create a sense of personal status loss for most repatriates. Losses relating to both work and lifestyle were the focal point of repatriation for these individuals. The next theme, psychological adjustment, is the area given the least amount of consideration by both repatriates and their corporations.

**Psychological Adjustment**

The interviews conducted with these participants presented repatriation as a process whereby aspects of psychological adjustment occur over time. This adjustment was influenced by the following themes: 1) Choice, 2) expectations, 3) perception of loss, 4) opportunities, and, 5) strategies. The following quotes describe these factors.

**choice and repatriation.** Choice refers to the option of returning to Canada and the timing of that decision. Those participants who were in control of returning to Canada and the timing of their return seemed to adapt much easier, used more strategies, identified more opportunities, and were more flexible and positive in attitude.

“We actually arranged our return….there was not pressure, no plans on the company’s part to return us, but there was an opportunity in Canada….”

“We weren't ready to come back, so coming back has been a significant adjustment…I probably carry a bit of resentment because of that, and that probably might come out through the course of the interview.”

**expectations and adjustment.** Expectations had an enormous impact on repatriation satisfaction. When expectations were met or exceeded, adjustment was a smooth transition. Expectations that were not met or were undermet (especially in the area of work) caused repatriation difficulty.

“We didn't expect a tough adjustment….And we knew there would be a lot of changes in everything here when we came back….We talked to people who had come back, so we sort of knew what to expect.”

“I guess from a job point of view I came back here hoping I’d be comfortable with the way things were. But that hasn’t turned out. I didn’t expect that. I didn’t think I’d come back here and want to quit. I expected to come back and be comfortable.”

**Perception about loss.** Losses mentioned by the participants included less travel opportunities, loss of cultural experiences, loss of relationships, decreased personal and professional prestige, reduction in finances, and lifestyle loss. It became evident the greater the perception of loss, the more difficult repatriation issues became.

“(Repatriating) is a loss or sorrow that you get over in time.”

“I can't come up with anything positive….I would say zero positive aspects from repatriating. Professionally….no, absolutely zero positives professionally. Zero.”

**strategies and adjustment.** This study demonstrated an association between strategies and adjustment, as it seemed that the more strategies used, the greater the
adjustment. One of the most effective strategies seemed to be goal setting, accompanied by a plan of action, as goals allowed the process of repatriation to be a more purposeful endeavor.

“Planning minimizes the surprises when you come back, so there aren't the shocks. As long as you have a plan, you’re maximizing the aspects you have control over.”

A useful strategy for some was to regard the move back to Canada as another foreign assignment. This is sound advice, as all repatriates have experience adapting to another country, and adjustment strategies used as expatriates could also be useful for their repatriation adaptation. Flexibility, a positive attitude, and patience were also frequently noted as important for adjustment.

“I think you have to treat (repatriation) as a foreign assignment. After being away 23 years and moving as much as I’ve moved, I consider my move back to Canada no different than any other foreign move.”

“I think the key is to always have realistic expectations and to be able to roll with the punches.”

“Patience….it’s going to take some time to accomplish it all.”

While journaling can be an effective of dealing with change, only one repatriate talked about taking the time to reflect through writing. This individual was also the only person who had the opportunity to attend a one-day repatriation seminar at the time of our interview.

“It makes a big difference being able to put it on paper or on a computer. It’s like talking to somebody….It’s helped me to go back and read it. Maybe because it helps you see how much you’ve changed and how much you’ve been through, and how that makes you a different person today.”

“It made a big difference, it really did. It brought a lot of things together….It gives you that perspective so you can see how you’ve changed, what areas you’ve changed a lot in, what difference that will make in your life. I found it quite beneficial.”

Some repatriates believed that finding a job with a new corporation would be beneficial upon returning to Canada. Others believed repatriation was only a temporary or part-time solution.

“I’d say this is only ever going to be a part-time solution unless in the next two to three years we get further settled in….we can chuck everything and go elsewhere….there’s nothing holding us back.”

opportunities and repatriation. The ability to identify opportunities, positive experiences and learning outcomes is also noted to be a helpful strategy for repatriation adjustment. When opportunities could be associated with repatriation, there seemed to be more positive repatriation adjustment.

“Repatriation allowed us to come back to the outdoor lifestyle we really enjoy. It has allowed us to appreciate driving our own vehicle, a restricted privilege overseas. Repatriation, because we each needed support, brought my wife and I closer together.
My wife finds that it is the repatriation itself which makes us appreciate the experiences of having worked and lived overseas.”
“Things are a lot more organized here. And things happen more easily, it’s more efficient (here), and things are in the stores.”
“This is a very child friendly society.”

Inquiries aimed at the experience of psychological adjustment were more difficult for these repatriates to answer directly, compared to questions regarding work and lifestyle. However, adjustment is not simply determined by the work and lifestyle repatriates return to in Canada. Woven into the discussion were clear examples that repatriation adjustment is also dependent upon choice, expectations, perception, strategies, and identified opportunities. This suggests that the meaning of repatriation involves understanding the factors related to psychological adjustment. The conclusions drawn from this study, involving work, lifestyle, and psychological adjustment are discussed next.

Discussion

One of the main predictors of repatriation success for the employee is job placement upon reentry (Black & Gregersen, 1998; Black, Gregersen, Mendenhall, & Stroh, 1999), as overall satisfaction is strongly related to the impact of the foreign assignment on career goals. The influence of job placement on repatriation satisfaction was evident in this study. Employees who returned to positions that were similar to foreign postings, and those who could use their internationally acquired knowledge and skills, were more satisfied with the repatriation process. Other work issues identified in the literature which were echoed by participants include loss of autonomy and authority, loss of career direction, and loss of recognition domestically (Adler, 1981). What came across strongly in this study were the feelings of frustration with the job, the organization, and the handling/mishandling of the repatriation process.

This research underscores a number of lifestyle adjustments when returning from abroad. Various losses cited by participants include loss of cultural and travel opportunities, loss of friendships, and financial losses. Due to Canada's high levels of taxation, it appears that financial losses are greater for Canadians than repatriates from other developed countries, e.g., United States. There are many similarities found in both the literature and the current study regarding lifestyle: Challenges adjusting to the general living environment including food, climate, transportation, and schools (Black et al., 1992a), a feeling of being left out and left behind (Piet-Pelon & Hornby, 1992), a feeling of alienation upon returning (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1987), and forgetting how to deal with the country's pace (Thompson, 1992). As well, difficulties reestablishing relationships with friends and family were noted, as the bonds of common experience that once existed often have disintegrated (Engen, 1995). Although the focus of repatriation is often on the negative aspects of returning home, participants emphasized many lifestyle gains. These include greater freedoms, educational, and extracurricular opportunities for children, a return to activities not possible in foreign countries, and living in closer proximity to family members.

Adjustment includes psychological adaptation, which is the internal outcomes of personal achievement and satisfaction (Berry, 1997) of returning to life in Canada. The experience of participants in this study illustrates that psychological adjustment is
at the core of repatriation. Psychological adjustment is affected by choice, expectations, perception of loss, strategies employed, and opportunities identified.

Choice and Repatriation

Berry (1997) refers to choice as the degree of voluntariness, or whether the individual chooses to move as compared to the move being compulsory. Individuals with the ability to choose the timing of repatriation clearly expressed greater adjustment. This study adds to our understanding of voluntariness by demonstrating that those people who freely chose to repatriate and the timing of their return adapted much easier, used more strategies, identified more opportunities, and were more flexible and positive in attitude.

Expectations and Adjustment

Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall's (1992b) work found expectations play an important role in effective repatriation adjustment, and this was certainly confirmed by all participants in the current study. Repatriates who experienced disconfirmed expectations, or negative differences between expectations and realities (Arthur, 2000), acknowledged adjustment difficulties. Studies recommend that reducing uncertainty will help develop accurate expectations, which leads to better repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992a; Black, Gregersen, & Oddou, 1991). This appears as an important direction for repatriation, as the repatriates with more accurate expectations had a more effortless adjustment experience.

Strategies and Adjustment

Literature on transitions has determined that effective coping means being flexible and utilizing a number of different coping strategies (Schlossberg, 1984). This finding was reflected in the findings of this study, as participants who reported they were adjusting positively were those who also reported using the most diverse strategies. There were also two strategies that emerged from the interviews that have not been previously cited in the literature. The first is goal setting and establishing a plan of action upon return. The second is finding a new job in another organization that corresponds with career aspirations. Participants’ reports about the effectiveness of these strategies suggest the importance of career planning as part of the repatriation process. Planning and decision-making prior to re-entry and during the first year of repatriation appear as key directions to support international workers.

Perceptions About Loss

The results of this study also emphasize the impact of perceived loss. As a general rule, it appeared that the greater the perception of loss, the greater the repatriation difficulties. It is interesting to note too, that those who seemed to have gained so much during their expatriation experience had the greatest perception of loss. While existing research addresses loss, it does not directly address the issue of perception of loss, which varied greatly for participants. The key to comprehending issues of loss is directly related to understanding the personal meaning associated with
the perceived losses. This was accomplished in the interviews through listening to the repatriates' changes in worldview and expanded cultural awareness (Arthur, 1998), which may lead to difficulties when reintegrating back into Canadian culture.

Opportunities and Repatriation

Adler's (1991) study determined repatriates who adjust well are those who recognize positive and negative changes in themselves, their organization, and their community. Participants in this study often found it difficult to identify positive aspects of repatriation, and tended to focus on losses. While all participants welcomed the chance to look for repatriation opportunities, the literature does not refer to opportunities or positive experiences of repatriating. This research identified opportunities of returning to life in Canada, which for some includes returning to a less polluted and less crowded environment, lower cost-of-living, better health care and education, a more efficient society, and better systems of transportation, to name a few examples.

Recommendations For Repatriates

The following recommendations are based upon the insights of participants shared during this study. Participants found these ideas to be useful from their personal experiences of repatriation and focuses on what helped them in their adjustment process.

**work adjustment.** Existing literature recommends repatriates make active attempts to change the work environment and to seek out information (Adler, 1981, 1991). The advice repeated by participants in this study echo the need for workers to be self-directed and take charge of their career development (Bridges, 1994). Participants offered the following suggestions:

1. Take the initiative regarding job placement and begin this process well in advance of returning. Update resumes prior to returning so managers understand the experience gained internationally.
2. Become informed by asking questions to develop an accurate understanding of what to expect professionally upon return. This includes becoming apprised of the firm's repatriation policies.
3. Recognize that returning may mean temporarily taking a step backward in one's career. To help alleviate this issue, keep current with technical skills, as managerial positions or jobs at a similar level or higher may not be available upon return.
4. While on assignment, maintain contact with colleagues or managers to remain familiar with organizational changes.

**lifestyle adjustment.** Prepare for the return by gathering as much information as possible in the same way one would when going overseas. This concept was elaborated upon by participants with the following suggestions:

1. Develop goals and a plan of action.
2. Ask questions, and prepare for the return in advance of repatriating.
3. Formulate a financial plan to ease the fiscal shock and to prepare for the many extraordinary expenses of returning. Decisions such as retaining real estate in your home country during expatriation should be discussed with professional advisors such as lawyers, financial advisors, or accountants.
4. Become involved in the community and partake in pleasurable activities.
5. Socialize with other repatriates.

**psychological adjustment.** The predominant theme in the literature regarding psychological adjustment is developing accurate expectations (Black & Gregersen, 1998; Black et al., 1992b), while psychological reappraisal or viewing the more positive side of a situation is also indicated. Participants gave the following recommendations:

1. View repatriation as a process that takes time to adjust.
2. Develop realistic expectations. Expectations can be modified through talking to other repatriates, reading, and gathering information about work and lifestyle issues.
3. Recognize you are a changed individual due to your expatriation experience.
4. Develop the attitudes of patience and flexibility.

One recommendation that covers all facets of adjustment is to supplement the strategies with a clear commitment to take charge of the repatriation process. The common thread that runs through these recommendations involves taking the initiative to determine the course of repatriation. It is empowering for individuals to make the transition of reentry a purposeful and meaningful endeavor by creating the future and determining one's destiny.

**Conclusion**

Repatriation is a profound cross-cultural transition that affects people across their life roles. This discussion has elaborated upon three core areas of repatriation adjustment, including work, lifestyle and psychological adjustment. While this research has helped clarify employees' perceptions of repatriation, there are several limitations that require acknowledgement. First, all participants except one worked for corporations that were related to the natural resources sector of our economy. One cannot help but wonder if a greater diversity of industries would have demonstrated any substantial differences in findings. Second, much of the data presented by the participants represents a retrospective account of the experience of repatriation. As well, all participants had been repatriated for varying amounts of time, ranging from four months to just over one year. This raises speculation that differing conclusions may have resulted if interviews of each participant had occurred throughout the process of repatriation. Third, due to the limited space of this article, the recommendations and implications for repatriation programming within organizations have not been discussed. Although the focus of this article has been on the experience of individual employees, the roles and responsibilities of organizations to support their employees must also be examined.

Future research is needed that considers repatriation as an evolving process that deserves longitudinal investigations. Qualitative studies utilizing semi-structured interviews over the span of repatriation adjustment may provide an even greater perspective of the personal meaning of repatriation. Research is also lacking on the
repatriation experience of family members. Results of this type of study may also add to the knowledge of repatriation and the repatriated employee, as the reciprocal effects of adjustment between family members may contribute to our understanding of this complex process. It appears the number of employees working internationally will continue to grow, and so must our understanding of the repatriation experience, and ways to support employees during their transition home.

References


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Mentoring, a Practice Becoming Organized

“To do mentoring” has become fashionable again. Mentors and Telemacus are repeating history; we observe in the early years of the 21st Century that the same basic characteristics of mentoring remain, a senior supporting and educating a protégé. Generally speaking, mentoring finds its roots in the life stages of learning protégés and experienced mentors. For protégés, mentoring is a time of new experiences or transitions with all the challenges they imply. For mentors, it is the time of mid-life and, in many cases, the career stage when they feel a need to bring to fruition their skills, expertise and worldviews for the benefit of the younger generation (Houde, 1995, p. 29).

We can therefore foster the meeting of these two complementary needs by structuring an activity that will bring together and facilitate the development of a relationship between an experienced person and a learning individual, most often with the purpose of professional development. This structure is called a mentoring program in the United States, Quebec, and the rest of Canada. Thus we can see that Mentors are back in service, and no longer working alone.

Mentoring can be defined as a means of structured learning, according to Galbraith and Cohen (1995): Mentoring is an interactive person-to-person process that guides learning development, assuming the participants have qualitatively and quantitatively adequate contacts to allow for this development.2

Mentoring in Quebec and Elsewhere

For nearly twenty years, mentoring has had a high profile in the United States, where writers have described the existence of many mentoring programs. These programs support disadvantaged young persons get into or stay in school,3 integrate young professionals in various fields, support young entrepreneurs as does the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and human resources management programs in business settings. Listing the articles on these programs would be a research project in itself.

Canada's 1992 “Stay-in-School” initiative is one program that has highlighted mentoring as a significant volunteer activity in helping young persons at risk of

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2 Paraphrase.

dropping out of school. As well, Peer Resources\textsuperscript{4} reports on mentoring in Canadian businesses as well as in school and community settings. Mentoring practice in Canada has developed over the past fifteen years, closely following that in the United States in focusing on professional development, psychological, and social objectives. In 1996, the federal government Treasury Board produced "Guidelines for Developing a Mentoring Program", a reference paper that has certainly inspired numerous mentoring programs in Canada and Quebec. More recently (January 2002), a group of persons involved in the development of mentoring across Canada organized the first national conference of Canada Mentoring, which brought together more than three hundred (300) persons from all parts of the country; which implies that mentoring has become more attractive and important in recent years.

In Quebec, most mentoring experiences on record are barely ten years old. Here again, formal programs are developing in various educational, community, corporate and organizational settings, with professional development, psychological, and social objectives. Articles on mentoring programs have been published since 1990, many by research professors interested in organizational development (Lépine, Benabou, Guay), adult psychological and social development (Houde), and intergenerational relationships (Lefebvre).\textsuperscript{5} For example, the Réseau des Femmes d’affaires du Québec, UQAM, and the Chambre de commerce de Montréal have pioneered the organization of formal mentoring programs in the labour market, in the areas of entrepreneurship support and career development. Since 1995, several other groups have joined in, as they consider mentoring an effective way of developing and transmitting knowledge and experience while validating participants. Even cybermentoring, distinctively original, is finding its niche (Academos, Psybermentor, uq@mentor).

In November 2001, a group of people in mentoring practice in Quebec organized a first conference that brought together practitioners in professional mentoring, with the purpose of exchanging ideas on the practices and to identifying needs. One of the recommendations that emerged from this event was an emphasis on the lack of proper tools and references for what should represent a quality mentoring activity. From that, stem the research mandate that we will now describe.

**Our Research Project on Mentoring and the World of Work**

The main objective of this research project is: To create a promising model for developing mentoring in Quebec.

For this purpose, we selected eighteen mentoring programs focused on career development and the labour market to constitute a sample that would be most representative of the Quebec situation. Community groups, educational groups, entrepreneurship support organizations, private sector businesses, and professional orders and associations operated these programs. We contacted the co-ordinators\textsuperscript{6} of


\textsuperscript{5} This list is not exhaustive and is provided only as an example.

\textsuperscript{6} The English version of this paper uses non-sexist language.
these mentoring programs and, using a questionnaire and interviews, asked them about their mentoring practices. We paid special attention to their assessment of the strengths, limitations, and effective mechanisms of their programs, and their perception of the effects of mentoring on their clients. This analysis highlighted the importance of set-up, operation, follow-up and evaluation in these mentoring programs and from these findings we developed a structural model that may be used as a framework for analysing existing programs or as a reference for introducing new ones. In light of our conclusions, we discuss issues in developing mentoring in Quebec, especially of a professional nature.

**Our Basic Model**

A number of researchers, particularly in the United States, have developed structured mentoring models, each one focusing on different aspects of the mentoring concept. For example, Murray (1991) has developed a generic model for introducing mentoring programs, describing their components and putting them in sequence over time. Elsewhere, in a managerial approach, Johnson (1997) has developed a strategic mentoring model in which the individual, the group, and the organization benefit in turn from strategies to facilitate learning, leading and relating.

We opted to base our research on the model suggested by Hunt and Michael (1983) of the University of Miami. These researchers present their model as a basis for research on the mentoring relationship that includes all aspects of context, characteristics of participating mentors and protégés, stages of development of the mentoring relationship, and impacts on mentors, protégés and the organization. In our view, this model comes closest to the aspects of program evaluation proposed by Carter McNamara and described below. We have therefore adapted this initial model, by adding variables on program operation and co-ordination in addition to the variables affecting the development of the mentoring relationship. As a result, we have therefore opted for an evaluation mode for the process which answers the following questions: how does the program function? What is its structure, its unfolding, its strengths and limits? How does our program operate? It is this type of evaluation that will allow us to draw a model to analyze actual practices.

**Suggested Framework For Research Project on Mentoring**

**Context**

- Characteristics of parent organization
- Mission
- Corporate culture, particularly regarding mentoring
- Reasons for starting a mentoring program
- Program objectives and design
- Partners

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Human and material resources

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MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ RELATIONSHIP

Duration, Frequency, Process, Commitment, Meeting content, Learning, Mandates, Activities, Code of ethics, other factors

OUTCOMES OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Quantitative, Qualitative, Positive and Negative
- On organization
- On program operation
- On participants

Measurements and Evaluation (of objectives, support structure, benefits)

DIAGNOSTIC*
- Success factors…
- Lessons learned…
- Avenues for development*

In this connection, we needed to ask program co-ordinators:

- the reasons mentoring programs were introduced;
- program inputs, that is, the resources required to operate the programs;
- participants' characteristics;
- co-ordinators' role;
- the process to which participants make a commitment, for example, roles, requirements and duration;
- evaluation methods used;
- program strengths, evaluated from various standpoints;
- main program limitations, complaints or difficulties;

* Our additions to initial model.
• main development objectives; and
• recommendations.

Briefly, for each mentoring program described, the purpose of our research project was to identify inputs (required resources), processes (services provided, operations, clients), outputs (quantitative and qualitative information on performance) and effects (repercussions, strengths, limitations). Then, in analyzing all this information, we tried to highlight emerging common factors and to organize them into a model.

For this analysis, we chose three information-gathering methods: the questionnaire, interviews and the focus group. Firstly, the questionnaire had the advantages of quickly producing a body of information about the programs, and facilitating compilation and analysis. Our questionnaire was developed using the selected basic model described above, and included the same major divisions: context; operations; the mentoring relationship; and evaluation of outcomes.

Secondly, interviews provided us with greater depth about the data gathered, particularly qualitative information that is hard to obtain using questionnaires. Lastly, once an initial analysis had been carried out and some hypotheses developed, we considered it appropriate to bring together a focus group of well-informed observers and to obtain their impressions and reactions in order to validate our initial findings.

Briefly, here are certain results which have been subsequently criticized by the focus group; the first results of this consultation have allowed us to identify certain paradoxes describing the mentoring situation in Quebec. Finally, recommendations presented in the form of premises, introduce the presentation of our model.

A Few Results

Based on the analysis of the questionnaires, enriched by the comments collected from the interviews, we identified five major observations, which we have submitted to our experts on the focus group. The results are as follows:

• In 78% of the mentoring programs we studied, recruiting is taking place with mentors who were men; slightly less than 40% of mentors were women; because of their mandates, the three programs that worked with women mentors, were excluded.
• Of Cohen's six recognized mentoring functions, the ones most often exercised by mentors were: establishing an atmosphere of trust; offering advice (information and coaching); and providing support to facilitate choices; that is, functions I, II and III. Few mentors stated that they emphasized the other functions of confronting protégés, acting as role models, or helping them make their visions a reality.
• Of the programs, 41% offered training for mentors and protégés; 41% organized informal meetings (particularly for mentors) to promote exchanges; and 30% organized neither training nor informal meetings.
• In 78% of the mentoring programs studied, the program co-ordinators spent less than two days per week operating these programs. They spent most of that time on recruitment, file maintenance, distribution of information, and establishing mentor-protégé matches. A number of them said they would like to spend more
time on leadership including training, follow-up, and providing support for matches.

- Mentoring programs are unlikely to carry out evaluations; the evaluations that have been done have focused on participant satisfaction, most often using questionnaires (58%), or compilation of feedback expressed at informal meetings, impromptu conversations, and team meetings (29%).

These five findings lead us to the following questions: Why do we have difficulty recruiting women mentors? Why is it that the majority of mentors do not practice the functions related to confrontation, acting as role models, and helping make protégés’ visions a reality? Why do the majority of programs not organize training sessions for their participants? Why do the co-ordinators confine themselves to management tasks? And, finally, why is evaluation the *poor relative* in managing mentoring programs?

The results presented have therefore brought about questions that the members of the *focus* group have examined and put in the form of paradoxes, in order to give our basic model practices and solutions for by-passing these hurdles. Here then are the four paradoxes stemming from the results.

**A few paradoxes**

1. Mentoring requires of mentors the so-called feminine traits of listening, trust, and caring; this relational characteristic is recognized as vital both to women's career paths and to mentoring relationships. However, mentoring programs find it more difficult to recruit women mentors, and are not managing to recruit an equitable representation of male and female mentors that reflect a mixed professional representativity. We should question ourselves on what influences this matter: is it the double chore which women are still hit with which make them refuse a volunteer involvement outside work and family? Is the recruitment of mentors being done at paraprofessional meeting places where women are less present…?

2. Focus group members unanimously felt that the mentoring relationship is a special one that develops over the long-term and focuses on developing the person as a whole. In reality, mentoring programs are set on specific, often time-limited goals and focus more on the short-term project (job justification, success of business, employment maintenance) than on the development of the individual and his projects over the long-term. In so doing, they may encourage mentors to concentrate on functions I, II and III, at the expense of the functions of confrontation, acting as role models, and helping make protégés’ life project a reality.

3. Lack of resources and time meant that program co-ordinators spent more time on management than on activities related to the essence of mentoring, including the relational aspect and follow-up on mentor-protégé pairs, training and support.

4. Program co-ordinators felt torn between their desire to emphasize quality and provide an effective support structure for the mentoring relationship, and the need to report on performance in order to obtain adequate funding. They are using the evaluation for only that purpose, and are not much preoccupied with it in the continuous improvement of their services.
Our Quebec Model

Starting with these results and these paradoxes, we arrive at a point of being able to design a model that is sufficiently simple and sufficiently complete to supply a realistic framework to people wanting to develop formal mentoring activities. We have started our modelling by putting the emphasis on five premises, thus illustrating five basic practices, which should facilitate the implementation of mentoring programs.

**first premise:** We have noticed that many mentoring program co-ordinators devoted their available time to the mentor, more than to the protégé. We suggest rather that the mentoring programs should be centred equally on the mentor and the protégé, as much on training as follow-up, given the fact that the ultimate goal of the mentoring activity concerns the protégé’s fulfilment and development.

**second premise:** A mentoring program should make a pre-selection of participants, by providing them with information on program aspects that will allow them to assess the requirements of possible involvement. If recruitment includes right from the start orientation activities to situate potential participants, supply them with basic information, and instruct them on program requirements… the recruiting operation increases its efficiency.

**third premise:** A mentoring program should use volunteering to support day-to-day management. Volunteers are first of all mentors, but could become on occasion trainers, communicators and others, all this under the governance of the program co-ordinator.

**fourth premise:** A mentoring program should provide training activities, to at least clarify the roles and distinguish mentoring from other forms of support, to present at least minimal communication skills and to make sure that the basic concepts related to mentoring practice (relationship development, mentoring functions, ethical considerations, etc.) are known.

**fifth premise:** As objectively as possible, and for the purpose of continuous improvement, a mentoring program should evaluate whether it has achieved its objectives, participant satisfaction, and the quality of involvement with the protégés.

These five premises ensure that:

1. what are called mentoring programs actually provide mentoring;
2. program participants receive a minimum of training; and
3. activities are followed up on and evaluated.

**Prerequisites**

To be achievable, these premises should be used in conjunction with prerequisites which facilitate the day-to-day management of the programs:

- a clear mandate supported by the organization;
resources (financial, human and material resources) appropriate to the roles and responsibilities inherent in operating a mentoring program; and

- conditions that ensure that programs are not isolated and offer opportunities to exchange expertise and tools.

These premises and prerequisites therefore accompany our model and attribute to it important intrinsic qualities to guide and structure the development of mentoring activities.

Illustration of Model

Conclusion: Issues in Developing Mentoring in Quebec

The stakes represent the markers which guide the development of high-quality mentoring; they point to financial and other resources, accompaniment in the mentoring relationship, and evaluation.

Firstly, to facilitate this development, we consider it important to invest in a more formal network where individuals directly or indirectly involved in mentoring
practice can find resources, tools and references. A more formal network would help distribute information on the mentoring culture described above and help eliminate existing confusion about the concept of mentoring. Although mentoring is becoming fashionable again, there is a danger of applying the related practice indiscriminately. Thus, it is important to channel this development, without limiting the originality of mentoring initiatives, or, at the very least, to make information available on the theoretical and practical framework that situates the concept and its application. In Quebec, an organization called “Mentorat Quebec”, formed at the second conference on “Mentoring and the World of Work”, held in May 2002, will play that role of gathering and diffusion.

Mandates, as well as financial and other resources available to program co-ordinators in operating mentoring programs, need to be addressed. If we develop only high-quality programs, parent and funding organizations should assess the need for the financial, human and other resources required to introduce, operate, and evaluate mentoring programs and to help ensure that the human relationships initiated through these programs are of high quality and without risk to the protégé’s integral development.

If program co-ordinators have adequate resources and appropriate tools, then they can focus on the essence of mentoring practice, by following up on developing mentor-protégé relationships and making this accompaniment central to training and evaluation.

Mentoring programs cannot focus on quality without more formal evaluation of their operations and impacts of their actions. In parallel with local program evaluations, it is important to carry out stricter and more comprehensive evaluations of overall mentoring practice, for example, the impacts of this activity on personal development. Often, more scientific study supports and enhances good ideas and practices by ensuring that they are developed efficiently.

Finally, mentoring is not a declining activity; on the contrary, our research proves unequivocally that current mentoring practice is of high quality, considering the fact that mentoring programs are new and lack resources and references. These programs therefore need the resources to continue their work: we know that this method of support is effective, focuses on personal development through a special human relationship, and illustrates the highest social values in a community that cares about using full human potential.

**Further Research**

This research was distributed in 2001 under the title *Mentoring and the World Of Work: A reference model* and was published in French and English at the Éditions de la Fondation de l’entrepreneurs. This first project has become the instigator of other initiatives. Indeed, the same analysis is being done in five other Canadian provinces during 2002-2003 and other tools are in a development stage to accompany pan-Canadian models of winning practices. The work is being pursued in order to supply practitioners in mentoring with the indispensable tools to develop and make their programs work in an efficient way - by referring them to the Quebec model. With regard to this model, here are the themes that we are elaborating on so that all the monographs, making up the reference kit (six monographs) on mentoring related to the world of work in Canada, are completed:
The Winning Practices

The analysis of the winning practices in other provinces, including Ontario, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Alberta and British Columbia plus a pan-Canadian summary document.

The Basic Kit and the Lexicon

The definitions and the distinctions in concepts, the basic vocabulary with regard to the mentoring relationship, its characteristics, to the functions and implied roles, and to mentoring support in relation to career development and the world of work.

Program Elaboration and Set-up

Definition of program context and functioning, including the mandate, the objectives, the target clientele, the design, the processes of recruitment, selection and pairing, the set-up of a pilot project.

The Role of the Co-ordinator

The role of the Co-ordinator with regard to program management, training, follow-up, support, and respect for standards of professional conduct.

Training for the Dyads

Tools that deal with themes related to the mentoring relationship, with the goal of supporting the participants, assuring their efficiency and stimulating their motivation.

The Evaluation

Basic tools allowing the measurement of efficiency and impact as defined at the start: efficient functioning, effects, benefits, satisfaction, etc., and supplying sufficient data to allow programs continuous improvement.
Le mentorat : une pratique qui reprend du service

« Faire du mentorat » est redevenu à la mode. Des Mentor et des Télémaque répètent l’histoire; on observe dans les années 2000 les mêmes caractéristiques fondamentales, un senior soutenant et éduquant un protégé. De façon générale, le mentorat se greffe sur les stades de vie du protégé en apprentissage et du mentor expérimenté : pour le premier, c’est le vécu de nouvelles expériences ou de transitions, où abondent les défis, et pour le second, c’est l’étape du mitan de la vie, où mettre au profit de la génération suivante ses compétences, ses expertises et sa vision du monde devient un besoin (Houde 1995, p. 29).

Le mentorat veut favoriser la rencontre de ces deux besoins en structurant une activité qui a pour objectif d’initier un rapprochement et de faciliter le développement d’une relation entre une personne d’expérience et un apprenant, le plus souvent dans une finalité de développement professionnel : c’est ce que nous appelons un programme de mentorat, aux États-Unis, au Québec et dans le reste du Canada. De cette façon, Mentor reprend du service et n’est plus seul. On peut définir le mentorat comme un mode d’apprentissage structuré, à la façon de Galbraight et Cohen (1995):

Le mentorat est un processus interactif de personne à personne qui guide le développement d’apprentissages, basé sur la prémisse que les participants ont des contacts qualitativement et quantitativement suffisants pour permettre ce développement.8

Le mentorat au Québec et ailleurs

Depuis près de vingt ans, les Américains ont remis à l’honneur la pratique mentorale. Leurs écrits à ce sujet décrivent l’existence de nombreux programmes de mentorat qui ont pour objectif le soutien aux jeunes défavorisés pour l’accession ou le maintien aux études,9 l’intégration de jeunes professionnels dans divers secteurs d’activités, autant que le soutien aux jeunes entrepreneurs (SCORE : Service Corps of Retired Executives) et la gestion des ressources humaines en entreprise. Faire une recension de ces écrits représenterait une recherche en soi.

Au Canada, le programme L’École avant tout en 1992 est une des initiatives qui a repositionné le mentorat comme activité bénévole importante pour aider les jeunes en danger de décrochage scolaire. Par ailleurs, le rapport de Peer Resources10 fait état

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8 Traduction libre

d’expériences de mentorat dans les entreprises canadiennes, autant que dans les écoles et les organismes communautaires. La pratique canadienne suit de près celle de son voisin du sud et se développe depuis une quinzaine d’années; de la même façon, elle concerne des objectifs de développement professionnel et des objectifs d’ordre psychosocial. Le Conseil du Trésor (Ottawa) a même cru bon, en 1996, de produire un document intitulé Lignes directrices pour le développement d’un programme de mentorat; c’est un document de référence qui a dû inspirer plusieurs maîtres d’œuvre de programmes de mentorat au Canada et au Québec. Plus récemment (janvier 2002), un groupe de personnes impliquées dans le développement du mentorat à travers le Canada a organisé la première conférence nationale Mentorat Canada, qui a regroupé plus de trois cents (300) personnes en provenance de tous les coins du pays; c’est dire que l’engouement pour le mentorat est important ces derniers temps.

Au Québec, les expériences de mentorat recensées ont à peine dix ans. Là encore, les programmes formels se développent dans divers milieux éducatifs, communautaires, corporatifs et organisationnels et ont des finalités reliées au développement professionnel ou psychosocial. Depuis 1990, des écrits sont publiés sur la question; ils sont produits pour plusieurs par des professeurs chercheurs intéressés au développement organisationnel (Lépine, Benabou, Guay), au développement psychosocial de l’adulte (Houde) et aux liens intergénérationnels (Lefebvre)\(^\text{11}\). Le réseau des Femmes d’affaires du Québec, l’UQAM et la Chambre de commerce de Montréal, entre autres, ont été parmi les pionniers à organiser des programmes formels de mentorat reliés au monde du travail : soutien à l’entrepreneuriat ou développement de carrière. Depuis 1995, plusieurs autres groupes ont emboîté le pas, trouvant que la pratique mentorale pouvait être un moyen efficace de développement et de transmission des savoirs et une expérience valorisante pour les personnes impliquées. Même le cybermentorat prend sa place et se distingue par son originalité (Academos, Psybermentor, uq@mentor).

En novembre 2001, un groupe intéressé par la pratique mentora\(l\) au Québec organise un premier colloque qui regroupe les intervenants en mentorat professionnel, dans le but d’échanger sur les pratiques et de cibler les besoins en la matière. Une des recommandations qui émerge de cette réunion met en évidence le manque d’outils et le manque de référence sur ce que représente une activité mentora\(l\) de qualité. De là le mandat de la recherche que nous allons maintenant décrire.

**Notre recherche : Le mentorat et le monde du travail**

Cette recherche vise l’objectif général suivant : Dégager un modèle québécois porteur d’avenir pour le développement du mentorat au Québec.

Pour ce faire, nous avons sollicité dix-huit programmes de mentorat dont la finalité concerne le développement de carrière et le monde du travail, issus de milieux aussi divers que possible pour constituer un échantillon le plus représentatif de la réalité québécoise : organismes communautaires, milieux de l’éducation, organismes de soutien à l’entrepreneuriat, entreprises privées, associations et ordres professionnels.

\(^{10}\) Carr, R.A. (1999) Bilan des activités de mentorat de 2000 Sociétés canadiennes et Le point sur le mentorat au Canada. Peer Resources Victoria, C.B.

\(^{11}\) Cette énumération n’est pas exhaustive et n’est donnée qu’à titre d’exemples.
etc. À l’aide d’un questionnaire et d’une entrevue, nous avons rejoint les coordonnateurs de ces programmes et les avons questionnés sur leurs pratiques. Nous portons une attention particulière à leur évaluation des forces, des limites et des mécanismes qu’ils jugent efficaces dans le fonctionnement de leur programme et de l’impact du mentorat sur leurs clients. Nous retiendrons de cette analyse le niveau d’importance accordé aux ingrédients ayant servi à la mise en place, au processus et au fonctionnement, au suivi et à l’évaluation et nous dégageons de ces observations un modèle structural pour le développement du mentorat. Enfin, à la lumière des constatations auxquelles nous arrivons, nous discutons des enjeux qui accompagnent le développement du mentorat à dominante professionnelle, au Québec.

Notre modèle de base

Plusieurs auteurs, surtout américains, ont structuré des modèles pour l’étude du mentorat, chacun d’eux s’attardant à différentes dimensions du concept. À titre d’exemples, Murray (1991) a façonné un modèle générique pour faciliter la mise en place d’un programme; elle en décrit les composantes et les inscrits en séquence dans le temps. Ailleurs, dans une approche managériale, Johnson (1997) trace plutôt un modèle stratégique de mentorat, dans lequel, tour à tour, l’individu, le groupe et l’organisation profitent de stratégies visant à faciliter le développement de compétences (learning), le sens du leadership (leading) et les habiletés interpersonnelles (relating).

Nous avons plutôt choisi de nous inspirer du cadre suggéré par Hunt et Michael (1983) de l’Université de Miami. Ils présentent leur structure comme une base pour la recherche sur la relation mentorale, leur modèle incluant toutes les dimensions qui agissent sur cette relation, i.e. le contexte dans lequel elle s’insère, les caractéristiques des participants mentors et protégés, les étapes de développement de la relation et les impacts dont bénéficient les mentors, leurs protégés et l’organisation. Leur modèle nous semble celui qui se rapproche le plus des éléments d’évaluation de programmes proposés par McNamara. Nous avons adapté leur schéma initial, en y ajoutant une variable sur le fonctionnement et la coordination d’un programme, variables parallèles à celles qui influent sur le développement de la relation mentorale.

Nous avons donc opté pour un mode d’évaluation du processus qui répond aux questions suivantes : comment notre programme fonctionne-t-il? Quelle est sa structure, son déroulement, ses forces, ses limites? Comment notre programme opère-t-il?

Suggéré Pour L’Étude Du Mentorat

Le Contexte
Caractéristique de l’organisation qui offre le programme
Sa mission
Sa culture / au mentorat
L’origine du programme : pourquoi ce programme?

12 Ce texte est rédigé au masculin uniquement dans le but d’en faciliter la lecture.

Les mentors  
Caractéristiques idem professionnelles et personnelles, provenance, etc.

Les protégés  
La sélection*  
le recrutement  
le jumelage  
le ratio, etc.

Coordination*  
Encadrement  
la formation et les outils

**RELATION MENTORALE**

Durée, fréquence, processus, engagement, contenu des rencontres, apprentissages, mandats, actions, code de déontologie etc.

**LES IMPACTS :**

quantitatif, qualitatif, + et –  
Dans l’organisation  
Dans le déroulement du programme  
Pour les participants  
Les mesures et l’évaluation (objectif, structure, bénéfices)

**Le diagnostic**

Les facteurs gagnants…  
Si c’était à refaire…  
Les pistes de développement *

C’est ce genre d’évaluation, à notre avis, qui nous permettra de dégager un modèle de l’analyse des pratiques actuelles.

- Pour ce faire, nous avons questionné les coordonnateurs de programmes sur :  
- Les motifs de mise en place des programmes  
- Les intrants : les ressources requises pour rendre le service  
- Les caractéristiques des participants  
- Le rôle du coordinateur  
- Le processus dans lequel les participants s’engagent : rôle, exigences, durée, etc.  
- Les méthodes d’évaluation utilisées  
- Les forces du programme, évaluées sous diverses facettes  
- Les principales faiblesses, plaintes, difficultés, etc.  
- Les principaux objectifs de développement et les recommandations

* Nos ajouts au modèle initial
En résumé, notre enquête fait ressortir pour chacun des programmes décrits les intrants (les ressources requises), le processus (le service offert, le fonctionnement, la clientèle, etc.), le rendement (données quantitatives et qualitatives) et les impacts (les forces, les limites). Pour analyser l’ensemble des données, nous avons ensuite fait ressortir les facteurs communs émergents que nous avons schématisés, modélisés.

Pour réaliser cette analyse, nous avons choisi trois méthodes de collecte de données : le questionnaire, l’entrevue et le groupe focus. Dans un premier temps, le questionnaire a l’avantage d’aller chercher rapidement un ensemble d’informations sur les programmes, tout en facilitant la compilation et l’analyse. Notre questionnaire a été bâti selon le modèle de base choisi et décrit précédemment et se compose des mêmes grandes divisions, soit le contexte, le fonctionnement, la relation mentorale et, enfin, l’évaluation. Ensuite, l’entrevue nous permet d’approfondir l’information colligée et d’aller chercher des aspects plus qualitatifs, difficilement descriptibles par la voie d’un questionnaire. Finalement, une fois un premier travail d’analyse effectué, au moment où certaines hypothèses se dessinent, il est pertinent de réunir un groupe d’observateurs avertis (groupe focus) et d’obtenir leurs impressions, leurs réactions afin de valider nos premières conclusions.

Voici brièvement certains résultats obtenus qui ont été subséquemment critiqués par le groupe focus ; cette confrontation devant les premiers résultats a permis de mettre en évidence certains paradoxes décrivant la situation du mentorat au Québec. Enfin, pour finir, certaines recommandations présentées sous forme de prémisses introduisent la présentation de notre modèle propre modèle québécois.

Quelques résultats

À partir de l’analyse des questionnaires, bonifiée par les propos recueillis lors des entrevues, nous mettons en évidence cinq grandes observations, que nous avons soumis à nos experts du groupe focus ; ces résultats sont les suivants :

- Pour 78% des programmes de notre recherche, le recrutement se fait en majorité chez les mentors de sexe masculin ; l’ensemble des programmes, à l’exception de ceux dont la mission est précisément de s’adresser aux femmes (3), fonctionne avec une représentation de moins de 40 % de mentors féminins.
- Des six fonctions mentorales reconnues (Cohen), celles qui sont le plus fréquemment assumées par les mentors se centrent sur l’établissement du climat de confiance, le rôle conseil (information, coaching) et le soutien face aux choix, soit les fonctions I, II et III. Peu de mentors insistent sur les trois autres fonctions : confrontation, rôle modèle et le projet de vie à plus long terme.
- 41% des programmes offrent de la formation pour les mentors et pour les protégés ; 41% organisent des rencontres informelles (surtout pour les mentors) qui favorisent les échanges. 30% n’organisent ni formation, ni rencontre informelle.
- Pour 78% des programmes, les coordonnateurs s’occupent du dossier « mentorat » à moins de 2 jours/semaine. Les coordonnateurs de programme passent la majorité de ce temps au recrutement, à la tenue des dossiers, à la diffusion, et au jumelage. Ils souhaiteraient pour plusieurs passer plus de temps à l’animation (formation), au suivi et à l’encadrement des dyades.
Les programmes de mentorat sont peu enclins à évaluer leurs interventions; s’ils ont effectué une évaluation, ils l’ont surtout fait porter sur la satisfaction de leurs participants et ce, surtout à l’aide d’un questionnaire (58%), sinon à partir de feedback colligés lors des rencontres informelles ou de conversations ponctuelles ou de réunions d’équipe (29%).

Ces cinq observations mènent aux questions suivantes : Pourquoi avons-nous de la difficulté à recruter des mentors féminins? Pour quelles raisons la majorité des mentors pratiquent peu les fonctions reliées à la confrontation, au modelage et à la vision du rêve de vie? Pourquoi la majorité des programmes n’organisent pas de formation pour leurs participants? Pourquoi les coordonnateurs se confinent-ils dans des tâches de gestion? Et, enfin, pourquoi l’évaluation devient-il le parent pauvre dans la gestion des programmes de mentorat? Les résultats présentés ont donc suscité des questionnements que les membres du groupe focus ont interrogés et mis sous forme de paradoxes, tous plus intéressants les uns que les autres, afin de donner à notre modèle de référence des formes de pratiques et des pistes de solution pour éviter ces écueils. Voici donc les quatre paradoxes qui ressortent des résultats.

Quelques paradoxes

1. Le mentorat est une activité qui sollicite chez le mentor des qualités dites féminines d’écoute, de confiance et de soin; la qualité relationnelle du cheminement de carrière des femmes est reconnue comme centrale, comme elle l’est dans l’activité mentorale. Pourtant, les programmes de mentorat ont plus de difficultés à recruter des femmes mentors et ne réussissent pas à obtenir une participation proportionnelle d’hommes et de femmes afin de favoriser une représentativité professionnelle mixte. Il faudrait se questionner sur ce qui influence cet état de fait : est-ce la double tâche dont les femmes écopent encore qui les fait refuser une implication bénévole extérieure au travail et à la famille? Le recrutement des mentors s’effectuent-il à des endroits de retrouvailles para-professionnelle où les femmes sont moins présentes….?

2. Tous s’entendent pour dire que la relation que le mentorat propose est une relation privilégiée qui se développe à long terme et qui se centre sur la personne dans la globalité de son devenir; par ailleurs, les programmes déterminent des objectifs spécifiques, souvent encadrés par une durée prédéterminée, et se centrent ainsi plus sur le projet à court terme (l’obtention d’un poste, le succès de l’entreprise, le maintien en emploi, etc.) que sur le développement de la personne et de ses projets, à long terme. Ce faisant, par leur gestion quotidienne, ils peuvent favoriser la concentration des tâches des mentors aux fonctions I, II et III, au détriment des fonctions de modelage, de confrontation et de révélation du projet de vie.

3. À cause du manque de ressources et de mandat partiel et du manque de soutien de leur organisation, les coordonnateurs consacrent plus de temps aux activités de gestion qu’à celles qui concernent l’essence même de l’activité mentorale, soit l’aspect relationnel et le suivi des dyades, la formation, l’animation.

4. Les coordonnateurs de programmes se sentent coincés entre le désir de miser sur la qualité, en se centrant sur un encadrement efficient de la relation
mentorale, et le besoin de rendre des comptes sur le rendement pour pouvoir obtenir un soutien financier adéquat. Ils ne se servent de l’évaluation qu’à cette fin, et s’en préoccupent peu pour l’amélioration continue de leurs services.

**Notre modèle québécois**

Partant de ces résultats et de ces paradoxes, nous en arrivons à tracer un modèle suffisamment simple et suffisamment complet pour fournir un encadrement réaliste aux personnes désireuses de développer des activités mentorales formelles. Nous avons démarré notre modélisation, en mettant en exergue cinq prémisses, illustrant cinq pratiques de base qui doivent faciliter l’implantation des programmes de mentorat :

**première prémisse** : Nous avons remarqué que plusieurs coordonnateurs de programmes de mentorat consacraient leur temps disponible au mentor, davantage qu’aux protégés. Nous suggérons plutôt que les programmes de mentorat doivent se centrer également sur le mentor et sur le protégé, autant dans la formation que dans le suivi, étant donné que l’objectif ultime de l’activité mentorale concerne la réalisation et le développement du protégé.

**deuxième prémisse** : Un programme de mentorat doit faire de la tâche du recrutement une opération qui déclenche déjà par elle-même une présélection des participants, en leur donnant les éléments nécessaires pour évaluer les exigences de leur implication éventuelle. Si le recrutement inclue dès le départ des activités d’orientation, qui situent les participants potentiels, leur fournit l’information de base, et les instruit sur les exigences du programme, etc. l’opération recrutement accroît son efficacité.

**troisième prémisse** : Un programme de mentorat aurait avantage à utiliser le bénévolat pour soutenir la gestion au quotidien. Les bénévoles sont de prime abord des mentors, mais peuvent aussi devenir à l’occasion des animateurs, des relationnistes, etc., tout ceci sous la gouverne du coordonnateur de programme.

**quatrième prémisse** : Un programme de mentorat doit prévoir un volet *Formation* qui assure minimalement que les rôles sont clairs pour les participants et distincts de d’autres formes de soutien, que les habiletés minimales de communication sont présentes et que les concepts de base rattachés à la pratique du mentorat (développement de la relation, fonctions, etc.) soient connus.

**cinquième prémisse** : Un programme de mentorat doit s’assurer d’évaluer le plus objectivement possible l’atteinte de ses objectifs, de mesurer la satisfaction des participants et la qualité de l’intervention sur le protégé; en ce sens, il devient intéressant de concevoir l’évaluation dans une optique d’amélioration continue.

Ces cinq prémisses nous assurent :

1. Que ce qui s’appelle « mentorat » l’est réellement;
2. Que les gens qui y participent ont une formation minimale;
3. Que les activités sont suivies et évaluées.
Les conditions préalables

Ces prémisses, pour être réalisables, s’accompagnent aussi de conditions préalables, qui facilitent la gestion au quotidien des programmes :

- Un mandat clair, supporté par l’organisation;
- Des moyens (financiers, ressources humaines et matérielles) appropriés aux rôles et responsabilités inhérentes à toutes les facettes de la gestion d’un programme;
- Des modalités qui assurent que les programmes ne restent pas isolés et ont des occasions d’échanger leur expertise et leurs outils entre eux.

Ces prémisses et ces conditions préalables accompagnent donc notre modèle et lui attribuent des qualités intrinsèques importantes pour guider et encadrer le développement des activités de mentorat.

**LE SCHÉMA DU MODÈLE**

**Conclusion : Les Enjeux Du Développement Du Mentorat Au Québec**

Les enjeux représentent les balises qui doivent guider le développement d’un mentorat de qualité ; ils se situent aux niveaux des moyens et des ressources, de l’accompagnement de la relation mentorale et de l’évaluation.
Dans un premier temps, nous trouvons important pour faciliter ce développement d’investir dans la constitution d’un réseau plus formel, où les personnes impliquées de près ou de loin dans la pratique mentorale trouveront des ressources, des outils et des références ; cela concourt à la diffusion de la culture mentorale, tout en contribuant à réduire la confusion qui existe sur le concept du mentorat. En effet, le mentorat redevient à la mode mais on voit poindre le danger qu’il soit servi à toutes les sauces. Il est donc nécessaire d’endiguer ce développement, sans brimer l’originalité des initiatives, et, à tout le moins, de diffuser et de rendre disponible l’encadrement théorique et pratique qui situe le concept et son application. Au Québec, l’organisme « Mentorat Québec », constitué lors du deuxième colloque sur le Mentorat et le Monde du travail, tenu en mai 2002, jouera ce rôle de rassembleur et de diffuseur.

Comme autres moyens et ressources, abordons la question des mandats et des argent qui les responsables disposent pour mener leur programme. Si nous tenons à un développement de qualité, les organismes pourvoyeurs doivent bien évaluer les besoins en terme de ressources humaines et matérielles requises pour la mise en place, le fonctionnement et l’évaluation d’un programme de mentorat et qui concourent à assurer que les relations humaines qui germent à l’intérieur du programme représentent des interventions de qualité, sans danger pour le développement intégral du protégé.

Si les responsables de programmes ont les ressources adéquates et les outils appropriés, ils peuvent alors se centrer sur la raison d’être de l’activité mentorale, soit assurer le suivi de la relation qui se développe entre les mentors et les protégés engagés dans leur programme et ainsi, faire de cet accompagnement la pierre angulaire de la formation et de l’évaluation.

Enfin, les programmes ne peuvent se soucier de la qualité de leurs interventions, sans procéder à certaines évaluations plus formelles de leur fonctionnement et de l’impact de leurs actions. Parallèlement à ces évaluations locales, il devient aussi important d’évaluer la pratique du mentorat de façon plus globale et plus rigoureuse et de vérifier, entre autre, l’impact de cette activité sur le développement de la personne. La recherche plus scientifique soutient et alimente souvent les bonnes idées et les bonnes pratiques pour leur assurer un développement efficace.

Enfin, le mentorat n’est pas une activité en perdition, loin de là ; cette recherche prouve hors de tout doute que la pratique mentorale qui se fait actuellement au Québec est de grande qualité, si on prend en compte la jeunesse des programmes et le manque de ressources et de références. Il s’agit donc ici de lui donner les moyens de poursuivre son œuvre, parce que nous savons que ce mode d’apprentissage est efficace, qu’il place au centre de son activité le développement de la personne par le développement d’une relation humaine privilégiée et qu’il correspond à des valeurs sociales de premier ordre dans une communauté qui a à cœur l’utilisation de tout son potentiel.

**Les Projets En Cours**

Cette recherche a été diffusée en 2001 sous le titre *Le mentorat et le monde du travail : un modèle de référence* et publiée en français et en anglais aux Éditions de la Fondation de l’entrepreneurship. Ce premier travail est devenu l’instigateur d’autres initiatives. En effet, la même analyse s’effectue dans cinq autres provinces canadiennes au cours de l’année 2002-2003 et d’autres outils sont en développement pour accompagner les modèles pan canadiens des pratiques gagnantes. Les travaux se
poursuivent donc afin de fournir aux intervenants en mentorat les outils indispensables pour développer et faire fonctionner leurs programmes de façon efficace, en se référant au modèle québécois. Voici donc, en référence à ce modèle, les thèmes que nous élaborons afin que l’ensemble des monographies composant la trousse de référence (six monographies) en mentorat relié au monde du travail au Canada soit complétée :

**Les pratiques gagnantes :**


**La trousse de base et le lexique :**

Les définitions et les distinctions de concepts, le vocabulaire de base relié à la relation mentorale, à ses caractéristiques, aux fonctions et aux rôles impliqués, et à l’encadrement du mentorat relié au développement de carrière et au monde du travail.

**L’élaboration et la mise en place d’un programme :**

Définition du contexte et du fonctionnement d’un programme, soit le mandat, les objectifs et la clientèle visée, le design, les processus de recrutement, de sélection, de jumelage, la mise en place d’un projet pilote.

**Le rôle du coordonnateur :**

Son rôle quant à la gestion du programme, à l’animation, au suivi, à l’encadrement, au respect des normes d’éthique et de déontologie.

**La formation pour les dyades :**

Des outils qui abordent les thèmes reliés à la relation mentorale, dans le but de soutenir les participants, assurer leur efficacité et stimuler leur motivation.

**L’évaluation :**

Des outils de base permettant la mesure des paramètres de rendement et d’impact définis au départ : fonctionnement efficace, effets, bénéfices, satisfaction, etc. et fournissant des données suffisantes pour permettre l’amélioration continue des programmes.

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In a recent book about the future of career, Collin and Young (2000) pointed to the need for workers to collectively consider both their needs and those of their employer if they are to achieve meaningful careers. In the same publication, Doyle (2000) highlighted the debate around the idea of career being managed on behalf of the individual and the organization. Part of this debate entails the idea of a “common, shared interest” (p. 229) between the employee and the employer. In a different but related strain of thought, Law (2000) suggested that due to changes in the world of work, i.e., globalization, technology, economic trading communities that serial or portfolio careers will become more common with workers experiencing more discontinuities in their work experience. The idea of career as embodying the components of both the needs of the employee and employer, the idea of commonality that the employee and employer have in contributing to economic production, and the need for skilled workers to keep current in a labour market characterized by frequent movement between workplaces can be brought together by focusing on the work-site.

One aspect of the work-site which deserves more attention is workplace learning. Workplace learning for employees means taking an active part in managing and documenting their job-related learning. For employers, it means seriously considering the benefits of prior job experience as evidence of learning work knowledge and skills. The purpose of this article is to discuss the use of portfolios to guide current and future learning and to highlight the learning which has taken place on the work-site. Often portfolios are viewed as a document which attests to past learning with the view to gaining recognition within an educational institution.

In this article, the writer focuses on three topics: workplace learning and how employees and employers must work together to facilitate this learning; portfolio development as an employee’s responsibility, its features, functions and the difficulties in developing one; and, prior learning recognition assessment as an employer’s responsibility and the issues surrounding this assessment. Overall, despite the complexity of employee-employer relationships, this article suggests that both parties can work together on the work-site to maximize the possibility of learning and hence contribute to the on-going skill development of the labour force, and to recognize such learning.

Workplace Learning

There are at least two reasons why North Americans should focus on workplace learning (Inman & Vernon, 1997). Workplace learning can be a response to the concern about the loss of competitiveness in world trading markets. If North American workers were more engaged and reflective in their work-sites, such as Japanese workers are reported to be, their productivity and work satisfaction would help to build a competitive edge in world markets. Secondly, due to the increasing rate of technological advances in the work-site, North American workers need to be encouraged to adopt a philosophy of life-long learning, and to engage in learning which
reflects the needs of the work-site. These two developments stress the necessity of the employee and the employer working together to enhance workplace learning.

There are three approaches to workplace learning (Inman & Vernon, 1997). The first approach concerns the mastery of skills and their application, an approach termed the technical paradigm. The focus of this paradigm is primarily the domain of workers because it concerns the issue of getting and/or maintaining a job. The criteria used to assess worker competencies within this paradigm are typically pre-established by the employer. Workers must determine their level of competence relative to the demands of the work-site and make decisions based on their self-assessment. Further, workers need to understand the ways that workplace learning can take on new meaning in their lives, an approach known as the interpretive paradigm. Within this paradigm, learning is viewed as a process of interaction between the employee and his or her work-site. This interaction process highlights the need for workers to see learning as a continuous activity with direct benefits. Far too often workers view learning as that which takes place within the traditional classroom, and often they do not recognize non-traditional ways by which learning can take place. Workers should adopt a life-long learning perspective with the view to developing a set of skills which will directly benefit their quality of life. A third paradigm, termed strategic, suggests that workers view their learning and the needs of the corporation from a broader and comprehensive perspective. Within this approach, employees understand the ways social and economic forces influence them and their work-site. When employees embrace this broad perspective, they readily see the need for life-long learning as necessary to remain competitive in the labour market. They see the need to work with employers to understand the technological and professional changes which are taking place, and how together they can best master the competence to meet these changes. One way to accomplish the tasks inherent in these paradigms is for workers to develop portfolios and for employers to embrace prior learning assessment of employee workplace learning and to provide appropriate recognition of this learning.

Portfolios

In the past, portfolios have been used primarily by artists, designers, and architects. More recently, portfolios are being used by individuals both as they prepare for work and progress in their career. For example, career portfolios are used in the public education system as well in post-secondary institutions (Danielson, 1996). These portfolios are composed of a collection of artifacts which attest to the competencies and academic achievements of the individuals constructing them. Traditionally, the portfolio was an edited and carefully constructed collection of documents which accounted for a person’s learning over time (MacIsaac & Jackson, 1994). From a present and future perspective, the portfolio can be conceived as an on-going plan in which the individual establishes goals, shows evidence of reaching the goals, reflects on and analyzes changing skills and knowledge, and sets out areas for further workplace learning. From this perspective, the use of a portfolio can guide life-long learning (Conference Board of Canada, 1993); as well as, prepare workers for meaningful involvement in the development of their skills and knowledge to keep themselves and their employers competitive in the larger economic community. Workers must take an active part and be responsible for workplace learning if they are to remain viable in this age of global interdependence and technological revolution (Rifkin, 1995).
**portfolio distinctives.** Constructing portfolios is a challenging task due to a lack of standardization in terms of what they should look like and contain. Portfolios are somewhat like resumes in that they may vary in their composition and appearance. However, portfolios may differ in a variety of ways including what is placed in them, how they are developed, their format, their purpose and validation (Canlearn Interactive, 2001).

In spite of the amount of latitude, portfolios have several distinctive features (MacIsaac & Jackson, 1994). They serve as a record of accomplishment and attest to the aspect of workplace learning within both the technical and interpretive paradigms. This record of learning should contain specific documents which are credible indicators to support the learning to which the portfolio is attesting. For example, from the technical and interpretative paradigms, some indicators can include letters from employers, transcripts of workshops and/or courses completed, videotapes, reports of credits earned from formal and informal courses, and descriptions of work completed in different work-sites.

Portfolio construction should be a collaborative process. The portfolio should be done in association with colleagues and employers, and consequently reflects aspects of the interpretive and strategic paradigms of workplace learning. Such collaboration fosters reflection and discussion about the content of what was learned, and to some degree, the economic realities faced by the business where the individual is employed. Such reflections should centre around questions like “what did I do?”, “what does this mean?”, “what have I learned?”, “how might I do things differently?”, “what are the future realities facing this industry/business?”.

**functions of a portfolio.** In addition to having a number of distinctives, constructing a portfolio can serve three functions which ultimately help workers develop their workplace competencies as well as demonstrate their involvement in life-long learning (MacIsaac & Jackson, 1994). The first function of assembling a portfolio helps the employee engage in self-assessment. To accomplish this, individuals take responsibility for assessing their professional development. They determine their levels of employability strengths and weaknesses, and as a consequence set goals as a means to improve their employability potential. This function of a portfolio is reflected when employees attend to the technical and interpretive paradigms of workplace learning. Consequently, the portfolio should contain artifacts which support the results of this introspective self-analysis, as well as an outline of the strategies planned to achieve the learning goals.

Additionally, a second function of portfolio construction is the requirement that employees assess their progress within the workplace. As indicators of monitoring and improving their competencies in the work-site, individuals assemble samples which indicate mastery of their learning goals. This function of portfolio construction necessitates employees to engage in the issues of the technical workplace learning paradigm and to demonstrate evidence of their commitment to a life-long learning philosophy to work-site competency development. Some indicators of these accomplishments include a written paper containing information about the following: an introduction outlining why the artifacts have been included, the work assigned by the work supervisor and his or her evaluation of the work outputs, a description of different samples of work which embody the competencies learned during the performance of the
work, a statement indicating what was learned, the process used to accomplish the learning, a statement of the employee’s self-perceived strengths and future learning directions.

Lastly, when individuals put together a portfolio in a careful and thoughtful manner, they are challenged to consider how they present themselves and their accomplishments, and demonstrate what they have learned within the technical, interpretative and strategic paradigms of workplace learning. A portfolio which includes evidence of the individual’s competencies and his or her on-going learning helps to present that person in a positive perspective and represents one credible component to offer in the employment seeking and maintaining process. Reflective practice in portfolio development enhances the possibility of an individual getting employment while attesting to his or her engagement in aspects of all three workplace learning paradigms.

Non-traditional Learning Methods

When employees engage in self-assessment, they should consider a variety of non-traditional methods (Henry, 1989) by which they have learned new skills or may learn a number of new work-site skills inherent within the three workplace learning paradigms. Employees need to consider non-traditional learning methods because often they tend to minimize or disregard the learning gained by these methods or they fail to realize that they can use these methods to develop new work-site competencies.

**experiential learning.** Prior to constructing the portfolio, workers need to engage in self-reflection and self-assessment. They need to consider the non-traditional ways in which their work experience has helped them to learn work skills and knowledge. One method used to learn or enhance new skills is “learning by doing.” This category accents the technical paradigm of workplace learning (Inman & Vernon, 1997). Workers can reflect on the competencies they have learned by focussing on what they have been or are doing. For example, it is possible that workers such as carpenters or electricians may have been exposed to new ideas and techniques in their work-sites where, through team participation and observation, they have learned the skill of being able to perform routine maintenance tests and checks on new equipment.

Another type of experiential learning is problem-solving. Workers in the building trades may have learned new skills when responding to structural damages in buildings due to excessive weather conditions. In addition to learning the skills involved in assessing the extent of such damages, they may learn ways to repair such damages without rebuilding the entire structure.

A third method of experiential learning involves the use of media. Distance learning enables an employee to keep abreast of new developments within their work domain. Workers in the building trades can take distance education courses related to new innovations in the workplace. For example, recently lasers have been used to help carpenters install suspended ceilings. Also, computers are now used to custom design furniture, which when used in conjunction with wood-making equipment enable a cabinet maker to achieve a detailed custom product.

Another type of experiential learning focuses on work and community placement. It is possible by working with a mentor or an individual skilled in the use of a piece of equipment to learn new skills. For example, a carpenter who wants to learn
the skill of cabinet making and the use of the equipment to accomplish this task, could work with an individual after regular work hours to learn the competencies inherent in this type of work.

**self-reflection and analysis.** Another broad category of non-traditional learning methods involves workers engaging in self-reflection and analysis both individually and in groups. The methods used in this category help to operationalize the interpretative paradigm in workplace learning (Inman & Vernon, 1997). The use of self-reflection helps employees to consider their past and present learning and to relate this learning to future directions in the work-site.

One way to use self-analysis is to consider prior learning. Workers could review lists of skills and knowledge to determine their competencies and/or deficits. These lists can be obtained from educational institutions or from government officials responsible for labour certification.

Another way to use self-analysis is through the use of narratives. Narratives, which arise from discussion, serve as both process and product in that workers develop a scenario for themselves and the company which helps to guide their future workplace learning. Narratives help workers discover common ground within the organization. This approach permits workers to see connections between their personal goals and that of the corporation by reflecting on such topics as the knowledge and skill they bring to the workplace, and how this knowledge fits with the strategic plan of the corporation. This process puts the responsibility on both employees and employers to decide what training is needed to meet the demands of the work-site.

**group discussion.** An extension of the use of narratives involves the use of discussion groups to determine where workers need further skill development. Through discussion, particularly between teams, workers can give feedback to one another on their perceived level of competence. Ideally this team approach works best where workers have varying years of work experience and skill development. Workers with more experience could provide feedback to those with less experience, and those with more recent educational experiences could update those who have been out of educational institutions for some time. These activities would help to accomplish the technical aspects of workplace learning. In addition, workers can improve their communication skills by having a colleague observe them and provide feedback based on selected areas of observation. Or, if they decide that communication lines between the office and field workers need improvement, a facilitator could be engaged and the issues discussed and resolved at a meeting between the employer and employees.

The insight arrived at through discussion focussed on social change and how social change influences the demands on the work-site addresses the learning raised in the strategic paradigm (Inman & Vernon, 1997). This type of learning may take place within a staff meeting where employers share the issues facing the industry. For example, the construction trades often work with insurance bureaus when repairing buildings covered by insurance. Insurance bureaus may change the level of competency expected from employees of these firms to guarantee quality in such repairs. It may be necessary for construction firms doing repairs covered by insurance bureaus to have a certain number of apprentice carpenters and licenced carpenters doing the work. Employers can communicate these changes to their employees. Knowledge of these changes helps employees know and prepare for these future expectations. In this way,
the company and its employees engage in process mapping to develop a plan for on-going change.

**Elements of a Portfolio**

Portfolio preparation is an exercise requiring self-assessment, analysis, synthesis and prioritizing of learning goals arising from reflection on the ways learning has taken place or may take place on the work-site (Mann, 1997). While there may be common features, the purpose of the portfolio is very important in order to guide its structure and the artifacts which are placed in the portfolio (Danielson, 1996). There are a number of common elements to include in a portfolio.

**Life history which indicates the most salient events in a person’s life**
This component involves a short (one to two pages) narrative outlining the significant events in the worker’s life and how these relate to the individual’s personal attributes and values. This life history should indicate the origins of work goals for the employee and how the person views his or her work personality and the skills and competencies presently possessed.

**A chronological record which details a list of work experiences since school graduation.** This aspect contains a list, in outline form, of the work performed by the person including both paid and unpaid experiences. The record should contain the following: when the work experiences were accomplished, the duration and responsibilities of the work experiences, and the location and the name of the immediate supervisor in each work location.

**A paper citing life experiences and the learning gained from them**
This paper should proceed from the first one in which the worker outlines what and where workplace learning has taken place. The paper should be short and worded in a concise and clear fashion. This information helps the employer to assess the quality of the learning.

**Evidence which Supports the Learning**

This evidence includes a number of artifacts attesting to workplace learning. Ideally before this component is completed, the worker should use a list of competencies which outlines the pre-requisite skills and knowledge for the worker in his or her selected area of work. For example, apprenticeship and occupational certification branches of provincial governments publish the competencies needed for workers in a number of trades. Workers should carefully analyze these lists and present artifacts which attest to competencies in these areas. Such artifacts include certificates and diplomas from educational institutions as well as a list of the competencies mastered in the institution, testimonials from peers and supervisors verifying the learning, photos of products demonstrating the competencies being attested to, sample drawing of projects which were undertaken, and/or videos illustrating the person performing the competencies. In addition, it could include outlines of workshops attended.

**A paper outlining the person’s personal, career and educational goals**
This paper should be short, about one page, in which the person reviews these goals as arising out of salient work experiences. This report could be presented in outline form
so that the employer is able to gain quick knowledge of what the person wants to accomplish.

Portfolio development should not be done in isolation but should directly relate the learning to a goal, i.e., meeting technical competence in the workplace. It should be done in consultation with employers or government personnel responsible for labour standards who are knowledgeable about the needs of the labour market, and who are able to assess the types of learning experiences which demonstrate competence to meet these needs.

**Issues in Portfolio Development**

Employees may experience some difficulties as they engage in assembling a portfolio (Boud & Walker, 1993). The reflective process requires employees to focus on themselves, their context, and the use of a number of skills and strategies with which to engage in self-assessment. Additionally, the process requires employees to attend to the learning components of their work experience and evaluate the results of their learning. The difficulties which prevent an employee from engaging in this process may come from a variety of sources and can be considered as arising either externally or internally to the person.

One internal source of difficulty centres on the employees’ perception of their past work experiences. Three such difficulties include the following: having had negative experiences in their past work histories which do not leave them objective about workplace learning, doing workplace duties without adequate preparation which result in feeling a lack of competence, and working in workplaces which are characterized as stressful.

Further, employees may not be very introspective and may lack self-awareness. They may view learning as only taking place in traditional classroom settings and may find it difficult to see their workplace experiences as learning experiences. They may experience low levels of self-efficacy and/or self-esteem and may feel uncertain and unsure about accepting the responsibility for self-assessment. They may view the expectations from others as being too high and unattainable. Additionally, employees may lack the skills necessary to engage in self-assessment.

Further, external difficulties to portfolio development involve the lack of time required for self-assessment and scenario building, particularly if an employer does not see the benefits of such activity. Also, when all employees do not see the benefits, there may be a lack of support and interest in the discussion required to accomplish the work which is pre-requisite to portfolio development.

Baud and Walker (1993) offer some suggestions for working with these difficulties. They suggest that if the difficulties have strong emotions attached to them, the employee may want to receive counselling. They outline a four phase process which begins by acknowledging that a difficulty exists, and continues on to clarifying and specifying the difficulty, understanding and explaining the origins of the difficulty and working with the difficulty to desensitize and re-conceptualize it. The use of this process enables employees to have a balanced outlook in their present work location and should enable them to be more objective about their present and past work experiences.

In summary, workplace learning involves two groups of people. Employees, one group, have to take responsibility for their past and future learning and document it
in a manner which indicates their competencies to perform a definite skill set or to learn new skills sets in a particular work environment. When employees engage in constructing and maintaining a portfolio, they are able to provide the documentation to support their past and future workplace learning. Employers, the other group, have to be ready to accept evidence of this learning, i.e., the contents of the portfolio, and engage in a process known as prior learning assessment recognition (PLAR). When employers trust and recognize the evidence in portfolios, they enhance the possibility of furthering the learning which has or can take place in the work-site, as well as help to lessen the difficulties in transitions for employees moving between work locations.

Prior Learning Assessment Recognition

Portfolios are documents which attest to workplace learning. The knowledge and skills learned in the workplace are typically learned in a non-traditional context and using non-traditional methods. A growing movement which seeks to gain recognition for these non-traditional learning experiences is known as prior learning assessment recognition. This term is used to represent a process which assesses the efficacy of the artifacts in a portfolio as indicators of significant learning and to award recognition by a credible person, institution or professional body.

Employers need to support and engage in PLAR when they assess workers for the work-site. Employers are appropriate individuals to assess and provide recognition for the contents of portfolios. They are knowledgeable about the skills and processes inherent in the technical, interpretative and strategic paradigms of workplace learning. Further, their work experiences enable them to assess the skills and knowledge needed to make their work-site productive and competitive. When employers provide PLAR, they contribute to the on-going development needed to keep employees abreast of technological and global demands placed on today’s work-site.

what is PLAR? Proponents of PLAR argue that what one knows is more important than where one learned it. PLAR takes a broad view of learning which encompasses the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects of an individual (Michelson, 1997). PLAR is a means to avoid unnecessary duplication of training and education efforts and is an appropriate way for adults to have their learning assessed, to identify their goals and commitment to life-long learning, and to have these goals and learning accomplishments recognized (Mann, 1997). PLAR documents evidence of both traditionally acquired learning as well as learning gained in non-traditional ways (Barkatoolah, 1989). This movement addresses the question of how life experiences in the area of work, leisure and education can be structured to provide for ease of assessment and accreditation (Barkatoolah, 1989).

A big part of the motivation for PLAR is premised on the reality that economic competition in world markets requires a work-force who can respond to the needs of business but do not have the time to do the lock-step method of demonstrating evidence of their competence (Mann, 1997). In addition, when workers change employment locations due to changes in the work-site, proponents of PLAR argue that the learning which took place in the previous employment sites should be recognized in any future employment site.

Presently PLAR is primarily used to demonstrate academic competence, but there are indications that it is being used to show evidence of professional competence
as well (Michelson, 1997; Fostering a Profession, 1999). Currently, the Standards and Guidelines Initiative has developed standards for the practice of career development in Canada. While further refinement is necessary, the work of the Standards and Guidelines Initiative is based on the assumption that traditional learning venues are not the only ones which can be used by individuals to demonstrate mastery and competence in a work domain. More specifically, individuals will be able to document prior learning experiences gained in non-traditional ways to demonstrate their competence within the broad domain of career development. This recognition provides a sense of social justice for individuals who have gained, in non-traditional ways, the same competences as those who have learned them in the traditional manner (Barkatoolah, 1989). When this recognition gains a broader acceptance, it will permit learners entry into professional associations as well as programs of higher learning (Mann, 1997).

**issues in PLAR.** There are a number of issues which must be addressed prior to assessing a portfolio (Barkatoolah, 1989). Both employees and employers involved in this task should be aware of these issues and clarify them so that everyone feels that fair play has taken place. One issue is the criteria used for assessing the artifacts in the portfolio and whether these artifacts are suitable indicators to reflect the standards on the work-site. There are two components to this issue. One component involves measuring the indicators and the other involves predicting the fitness of the worker to perform adequately in the workplace. For example, a worker may have all the skills needed to perform the work required but may not be able to do the job with sufficient speed to ensure accuracy. Speed and accuracy are important factors in productivity but it may be difficult to infer them from learning artifacts. Also, a person may have worked up to expectations in one setting but not be able to meet the expectations of another due to differences between employers. Further, sometimes it is difficult to separate what is being assessed in the portfolio – the person or the artifacts. Often people may feel that their self-worth is being assessed and not the artifacts. This issue raises the importance of employees giving careful thought to including artifacts which accurately indicate their competencies.

Another issue in portfolio assessment involves the background of the worker and the assessor. Each of these individuals has a socialization history with different experiences and expectations. Assessors may have had challenging demands placed upon them to perform tasks at a high level of competency while workers may not have had such expectations. A minimum level of competency is sometimes difficult to determine. For example, it would be difficult to determine the minimum level of competency acceptable in cabinet making due to the many styles and intended purposes of the cabinet being constructed. Ideally the portfolio developer and the assessor should have similar experiences, however, each should be aware of their background to ensure more objectivity and to be aware of the limitations of the assessment process.

In addition, there is the issue of a power imbalance between the assessor and the employee. Employees have a right to a fair reading of the indicators of their competencies, however the assessment process is the responsibility of the assessor. Assessors need to be knowledgeable about how to give feedback to employees. Employees need to have the skills to receive this feedback and to ask questions about the assessment process. Further, there are issues of confidentiality which can influence an employee’s self-efficacy and motivation in future such endeavours.
Conclusions

Workplace learning has implications beyond performing the duties required with an occupational position. Such learning requires employees to go beyond mastery of level entry skills and knowledge and to acquire the future skill needs of their occupation to remain competitive in today’s markets. Portfolios represent a multi-textured view of the employee and can be used to demonstrate the products and processes of life-long workplace learning. Constructing a portfolio requires employees to take responsibility for their skill development and to actively seek ways and means to develop new work-site skills. Many of these ways exist on the work-site, and if used, enable employees to continue their life-long learning without resorting to traditional means to develop their competencies. When portfolios are constructed in a thoughtful and reflective manner, employees are able to document their work-site competencies and also present a credible picture of themselves.

Prior learning recognition assessment is individualistic and provides for recognition of the learning acquired on the work-site. Appropriate use of PLAR provides the needed recognition of workplace learning gained over an employee’s life-span. Together, portfolios and PLAR provide a direct link between life experiences and workplace learning. The skills of self-assessment and portfolio construction must be learned while workers are in their initial stages of skill and knowledge development, if these skills are to be used to guide their life-long learning. Additionally, employers must be given the opportunity for training in portfolio assessment to ensure an open and fair process, and to provide and encourage the needed recognition of employees who have learned work-site skills and knowledge in non-traditional ways.

In spite of the difficulties inherent in the development and assessment of portfolios, employees and employers must recognize the work-site as a viable place within which to learn competencies for successful deployment on the work-site. When employees and employers work together in an open and fair manner, they ensure a workforce which is skilled to meet the competitive demands of business markets. Together they are able to work in a complementary manner to develop a vision which helps to revitalize an organization and produce a work environment which provides for human resource development to take place.

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Various phenomena over the past century, including the escalation of technological change, normalization of retirement, emergence of the baby boom cohort, and population aging have contributed to a labour force that is unique in the history of this country, posing challenges never before faced in Canada. One such challenge witnessed across the country is a rising incidence of job loss within the older worker population, a group that will continue to comprise an increasingly larger proportion of the workforce in the future (Human Resources Development Canada; HRDC, 1999). Within the multidisciplinary field of gerontology, research questions regarding older adults in relation to the work force have most often focused on the issue of retirement. However, job loss experienced in late career is in many ways different from that experienced by younger persons, involving decisions such as whether to take early retirement and, for those who pursue other employment, a typically longer and more difficult job search process (Couch, 1998; LeBlanc & McMullin, 1997). As research points to an association between unemployment and negative health implications (Warr, 1987), this trend of increased older worker job displacement should also be of concern to proponents of health promotion. Unfortunately, programs for older workers have proliferated over the past decade with little attention or input from the discipline of gerontology or the health promotion perspective.

This paper will address the impact of unemployment on older adults’ health and critically review the nature of the programs targeting this group. Informed by the principles of health education as well as the experience of other countries, several issues and suggestions for improvement of older worker programs in Canada are presented.

**Employment, Job Loss and Older Adults in Canada**

The age category used to define ‘older workers’ used within this paper will be 45 years and older, the same utilized by Canadian government agencies such as HRDC (1999) and British Columbia Statistics (BC Stats, 1997). This cohort represents a growing proportion of the labour force in Canada and other industrialized countries due to the phenomenon of population aging. For instance, older workers comprised 28% of the Canadian workforce in 1994 and 31% in 2000. The estimate for 2010 is 40% (HRDC, 1999). This trend has also been examined in terms of the population of prime entrants into the labour force (ages 20 to 24) compared to the prime retirement population (ages 60 to 64). Whereas the entrant cohort in the province of British Columbia in 1976 was more than twice as large as the retiree cohort, the retiree population is expected to be equal in size to the entrant population in 2011, and surpass them thereafter (BC Stats, 2001). Hence, the importance of older workers to the vitality of the Canadian labour force is projected to grow in the near future (Nathanson & O’Rourke, 1994; Wanner, 1994).

The aging of the workforce intersects with another phenomenon, that of widespread early exit of older adults from the workforce. Despite increased life
expectancy and decreased self-reported inability and limitation in ability to work due to health reasons, the trend of early retirement continues in most industrialized countries (Crimmins, Reynolds, & Saito, 1999). This may be largely attributed to private and public policy that has encouraged early retirement over the past several decades to the extent that it is now viewed as normative within Canadian society (LeBlanc & McMullin, 1997; Wanner, 1994). Examples of such policies include the drop in Canada Pension Plan eligibility to age 60 and the increased prevalence of senior employee buy-out packages. The short-term fiscal and political gains include the replacement of expensive older employees with younger persons at lower wages and purportedly, the attenuation of youth unemployment. However, the former is achieved at the expense of decreased workplace experience, and the latter has not been realized as youth unemployment has not decreased with the early exit of older workers (HRDC, 1999; Wanner, 1994; Winn, 1999).

It is important to realize, however, that while there are many who desire early retirement, this decision is not always voluntary and may be preceded by an extended period of unemployment and fruitless job search (LeBlanc & McMullin, 1997; Marshall, Clarke, & Ballantyne, 2001; Wanner, 1994). In fact, the frequency of job loss for older workers has risen disproportionately in recent years (Chan & Stevens, 1999; Couch, 1998; Quinn & Kozy, 1996). Whereas job displacement was more common for younger than older workers in the 1980s, this has been reversed such that displacement rates are now higher for those over 49 years of age (Chan & Stevens, 1999; Couch, 1998). Moreover, rates of job loss within the older worker population are higher for non-white and less educated persons (Couch, 1998). On average, older unemployed workers face a 1-year duration out of work (over twice as long as younger workers) and experience a decline in earnings between 20% and 50% of pre-displacement earnings (BC Stats, 1997; Chan & Stevens, 1999; Couch, 1998).

Several reasons have been given to explain the trend of increased job displacement of persons over 44 years of age. Related to the proliferation of public and private policy that have pushed and pulled older workers into earlier retirement, ageist stereotypes of older workers have emerged, which have led employers to question their ability to function effectively on the job (Kaye & Alexander, 1995; Wolf, London, Casey, & Pufahl, 1995) despite a lack of evidence that work performance declines with age (HRDC, 1999; Schultz, 2000). Discrimination against older workers is apparent in terms of differential hiring, and fewer promotion opportunities and on-the-job training (Kaye & Alexander, 1995). Additionally, Barth (2000) and Schultz (2000) note that older persons may be less likely to possess the skills and training most desired within our increasingly global and technological labour market. While older workers offer benefits to the workplace such as a commitment to quality, extensive experience and low turnover, they are typically limited in certain abilities that are highly valued today (e.g., flexibility, acceptance of new technology, a desire to learn new skills) placing them at a disadvantage in the hiring process (Barth, 2000). Other explanations for increased job displacement among older workers include: economic and labour market changes leading to massive plant closures and company reorganizations; social and political pressure on older workers to make room for the next generation (i.e., stepping aside); and inexperience in how to perform a successful job search (HRDC, 1999; Rife & Belcher, 1994; Wolf et al., 1995).

Of course, these trends do not provide the entire picture. For some older adults, such as those who have held blue collar, seasonal, or semi-skilled jobs, a history of job
loss and periods of extended unemployment are not unique to late career but endemic of their entire working lives (Kaye et al., 1999). Also, many women have work histories characterized by part-time employment and multiple entrances and exits from the workforce due to family obligations (Fast & Da Pont, 1997). Ethnic minorities and immigrants are other sub-groups who experience greater unemployment (Quinn & Kozy, 1996; Thomas & Rappak, 1998). According to Couch (1998), higher rates of job displacement among older minority workers in the United States may be partially explained by lower levels of education and previous job tenure. Recent immigrants to Canada experience higher rates of unemployment relative to non-immigrants until they have lived in this country more than 15 years (Thomas & Rappak, 1998). This difference may be attributed, in part, to characteristics that are more prevalent among the foreign-born population: visible minority status, older age, and human capital disadvantages such as non-English speaking ability and lack of experience in the Canadian labour force.

**Involuntary Job Loss and the Health of Older Workers**

Employment and unemployment are contextual factors within individuals’ lives that influence their overall health and well-being. Researchers have tried to tease apart the causal associations observed in cross-sectional studies indicating a link between unemployment or career instability and poorer mental and physical health (He, Colantonio, & Marshall, 2003; Marshall et al., 2001; Warr, 1987). While persons may lose their jobs because of poor health, recent longitudinal research supports the assertion that job loss leads to declines in mental and physical health (Gallo, Bradley, Siegel, & Kasl, 2000).

Both aggregate and individual data reveal a positive linear association between unemployment and premature mortality where longer periods of unemployment are associated with higher mortality rates (Avison, 2002; Jin, Shah, & Svoboda, 1995). An increased incidence of completed suicide is also correlated with unemployment (Vinokur, van Ryn, Gramlich, & Price, 1991). A recent study by Gallo and colleagues (2000) examining the health effects of involuntary job loss among older workers using longitudinal Health and Retirement Survey data found that the effect of this event on physical functioning remains negative and significant after controlling for baseline health, socio-demographic and economic factors. However, the link between job loss and increased physical morbidity appears somewhat ambiguous (Vinokur et al., 1991). For instance, the correlation between unemployment and greater symptoms of physical illness may only occur during times of economic recession (Avison, 2002). Time-series data collected within communities and nations over a period of years reveal a general pattern where increased unemployment is followed closely by increased rates of illness incidence (Warr, 1987). Furthermore, in countries such as Canada where healthcare is generally accessible, a clear relationship emerges between job loss and increased utilization of the healthcare system (i.e., hospital visits, physician visits, prescription drug use) by both unemployed individuals and their families (Avison, 2002; Warr, 1987).

The mental health implications of unemployment are also considerable. Even after controlling for pre-job loss health status, differences between the mental health of employed and unemployed persons are consistently reported whereby the latter report greater negative affect, anxiety, distress, and more psychosomatic complaints (Canadian
Compared to employed persons, unemployed individuals experience higher levels of psychopathology (e.g., depression, substance abuse, panic disorder; Avison, 2002; Warr, 1987). Longitudinal and cross-sectional research also indicates that involuntary job loss is associated with lower scores on measures of global mental health (Gallo et al., 2000) and self-rated health (He et al., 2003) among older individuals.

Some researchers seeking to understand the association between job loss and health consider the stressful nature of termination (Baum, Fleming & Reddy, 1986; Beland, Birch, & Stoddart, 2001; Ensminger & Celentano, 1988; Marshall et al., 2001). According to the Canadian Mental Health Association (2002), unexpected job loss is a major life crisis, regardless of age, involving a grieving process and the experience of significant stress. Additionally, unemployment often causes greater stress in one’s family and financial situation that may further undermine one’s sense of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and perceived social support. If a person does not have the resources or skills to cope successfully with this stressful event, negative health outcomes may result. Avison (2002) elaborates on the stress process model, indicating that mediating or intervening factors such as positive social relationships can buffer the negative impact of unemployment on health while moderating factors such as reduced self-esteem or increased family conflict may exacerbate the effects of stress on illness.

Other research has looked more specifically at the situation of displaced older workers and how job loss impacts the health of this sub-population. Several studies point to the economic implications of unemployment in later life and describe how this may negatively affect health by compromising short-term and long-term financial security (Chan & Stevens, 1999; Couch, 1998; Gallo et al., 2000). As previously noted, older workers typically face a longer duration of job seeking without salary or benefits. This affects one’s ability to save for retirement and may require the use of savings that had been set aside for future years (Couch, 1998; Gallo et al., 2000). Furthermore, older individuals have less opportunity to compensate for such financial setbacks since they face potentially substantial wage reductions and job insecurity even upon reemployment (Chan & Stevens, 1999).

The unexpected nature of a job loss in later life may also have implications for older workers that extend beyond economics. There is evidence that a majority of people tend to plan toward retirement several years in advance, organizing their lives, and making choices (e.g., saving more or less, ‘sticking it out’ in a bad job with a good pension) based on their expectations of when it will occur (Ekerdt, Kosloski, & DeViney, 2000). Unexpected job loss therefore creates stress by disrupting extensive, careful planning and decision-making. Also related to this is the loss of control that may accompany an involuntary job loss, leaving older workers with a sense that the circumstances affecting their lives are beyond their influence (Baum et al., 1986; Canadian Council on Social Development, 1999; Warr, 1987). Perceived control has been established as an important element of health and well-being in later life through its association with self-efficacy, proactive coping, psychosocial adaptation and good health behaviours (O’Rourke, 2002; Waller & Bates, 1992). Thus, the loss of a job may undermine older workers’ belief that the actions they take positively impact their quality of life.

Furthermore, Pearlin and Yu (2000) contend that the loss of work may be equated with a personal loss. These authors suggest that it is the unscheduled and involuntary nature of loss that causes an individual to redefine a relatively objective
role loss into a devastating personal loss, thereby making the person susceptible to diminished self-worth and self-esteem. Accordingly, an unstable transition from work into retirement after taking a buy-out package, characterized by working when the expectation was to retire early or not working when the expectation was to find new employment, is associated with lower life satisfaction and higher life stress for men (Marshall et al., 2001). This is less true for women perhaps because they are accustomed to discontinuity in their work histories due to familial obligations (Marshall et al., 2001).

Moreover, it appears that the more important the work role is in an older person’s life, the greater the negative affect on self-identity. According to Westerhof and Dittmann-Kohli (2000), society provides a ‘standard biography’ against which people define, evaluate and interpret their lives. The standard biography for the current generation of older adults has entailed a life pattern where people progressed from education to work and then finally to retirement (for women, ‘work’ was typically within the home). Each stage is separate from the others and involves different values, beliefs and self-definitions. Therefore, those who consider themselves in the ‘work’ portion of their lives will rate their job, work role and employment-related abilities as valuable and central to their self-definition (Westerhof & Dittmann-Kohli, 2000).

While today’s society may expect a financially-secure 60-year-old engineer who has just been laid off to move easily into retirement, this lost work role may be devastating if the individual does not yet view him/herself as a retiree. This helps to explain the fact that the well-being of retirees and homemakers is less affected by their non-work status relative to unemployed older adults, even when these groups are of a similar age (Marshall & Clarke, 2002; Westerhof & Dittmann-Kohli, 2000). Accordingly, Bossé, Aldwin, Levenson, and Ekerdt (1987) suggest that their research linking early retirement with symptoms of depression, somatization and anxiety indicates that when retirement is involuntary and out of step with one’s peers (thereby different from the standard biography), poor mental health can result.

Finally, the link between extended job loss and poorer health may be partially explained by the loss of social ties present in the workplace. Social interaction is an important dimension of work for most people (Mor-Barak, 1995). Based on their research, Mor-Barak, Scharlach, Birba, and Sokolov (1992) assert that employment in later life is related to a larger network of friends (not family or confidants) and, through this relationship, to perceived health. While research must further clarify the mechanisms, it is apparent that for older workers who desire employment, the loss of a job has deleterious affects on health; therefore, programs aiming to alleviate involuntary unemployment in this population have important health-related functions.

**Employment Programs for Older Workers in Canada**

Programs specific to older workers did not exist in Canada until recently as older workers have historically been the most advantaged in terms of job stability, security and wages (HRDC, 1999). This relative advantage has disappeared in recent years and various types of programs to aid older displaced workers have since emerged (HRDC, 1999); these include income support, career retraining and job search interventions. Income support programs provide older persons laid off from long-term jobs some financial assistance to bridge the gap until retirement eligibility or new employment. For instance, the Program for Older Worker Adjustment (POWA), jointly
funded by the Federal and British Columbia Governments from 1990 to 1997, provided a safety net of up to $1,000 per month to older workers who had been displaced due to downsizing or plant layoffs and had exhausted Employment Insurance benefits (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, 1997). Income support programs, however, may act as a disincentive to reemployment (HRDC, 1999); for example, a 1996 evaluation revealed that POWA participants were 20% less likely to become reemployed than non-POWA older displaced workers. Such income support programs are termed ‘passive’ and contrast with other programs that require ‘active’ participant involvement (HRDC, 1999).

Retraining programs provide older workers with new or updated skills, such as computer familiarity enabling them to be competitive in today’s changing workplace (Wolf et al., 1995). Research shows that high motivation facilitates success in such programs while extensive experience in a single job throughout one’s life is associated with lower success (Wolf et al., 1995). In general, it is important that these programs be well designed for older workers and include elements such as: allowing ample time; providing support and feedback; ensuring mastery at each stage; building on familiar elements; and limiting memory requirements (Wolf et al., 1995).

Retraining components may also be incorporated into job search programs, currently the most popular type of older worker program in Canada. Of the five existing programs targeting older displaced workers in British Columbia’s lower mainland (i.e., Vancouver and surrounding areas), four have a strong job search focus. These interventions teach older adults the requisite skills for a successful job hunt, such as résumé-writing, networking, and interviewing within a leader-led, group environment where participants are motivated by and benefit from the support and feedback of others (Rife & Belcher, 1994). Within these groups, older workers are able to share their fears and frustrations with peers, many whom have had similar experiences.

According to O’Neill (senior advisor for an older worker pilot project administered by British Columbia’s Ministry of Advanced Education and funded by Human Resources Development Canada), there has been a shift where passive income support programs have fallen out of favour and more active programs are receiving funding (personal communication, March 8, 2002). HRDC (1999) suggests that this shift is positive for the older worker, citing research and the results of focus groups held by the National Advisory Council on Aging (NACA) indicating that most older workers want to work and, “for the majority, only full-time employment would satisfy their economic, social and psychological needs” (p. 13). A valid question arises, however, as to why governments at one time thought it best to provide income assistance to displaced older workers but now believe that income support programs are undesirable. The rationale behind this shift is likely fiscal given the realization that an aging workforce has fostered the current trend of early retirement. This change in emphasis to active programs conveniently comes on the verge of the retirement of the baby-boom generation when an exit of this group en masse from the labour force would have significant economic implications. The motivation behind older worker programs is further illuminated by an examination of how (and how not) they are evaluated.
Evaluation of Programs for Older Workers

In general, evaluation of programs targeting displaced older workers is limited (Olson & Robbins, 1986; Walker & Taylor, 1999). The Evaluation and Data Development Branch of HRDC (1999) produced a report purporting to summarize the lessons learned thus far from experiences with older worker adjustment programs within Canada and selected countries. While programs targeting older workers vary widely in terms of their frequency, duration, methods and structure, this report and other research identify several characteristics that appear to contribute to the efficacy of such initiatives. The literature indicates that successful programs: are community-based; take a client-centred approach in responding to diversity in goals and abilities; actively involve older workers in development and implementation stages; often include peer-counselling and job-placement elements; have clearly defined goals related to this population and; provide an element of social support (HRDC, 1999; Rife, 1994, 1995; Vinokur et al., 1991).

The objectives that serve as the basis for defining the success of older worker programs are less explicitly stated, however. Most studies we reviewed frame their assessments about program effectiveness in terms of how many older workers become reemployed or the intensity of an older adult’s job search (HRDC, 1999; Nathanson & O’Rourke, 1994; Rife, 1995; Rife & Belcher, 1994; Wolf et al., 1995). Within Canada specifically, the evaluation of older worker programs may be examined by looking at the information requested by HRDC from the various programs it funds. This information provides a purely quantitative overview of the extent to which certain quotas were met (e.g., the number of job search groups run per month, the number of people completing these programs, and the proportion of job seekers within a program who become employed within three months; R. James, program manager of Canadian Career Moves, personal communication, March 8, 2002). A HRDC report (1999) states that the definition of “success depends on the economic and political objectives being sought” (p. 27). If meeting of quotas defines the success of these programs, it appears as though their primary objective is narrowly focused on getting older persons back to work quickly. Notably absent from this type of evaluation is consideration of the subjective experience and perceptions of the older workers as they experience unexpected job loss, grapple with decisions such as reemployment or early retirement, face the unfamiliar and sometimes frightening task of looking for a job, and deal with the physical, psychological and social implications to their health. Only one outcome evaluation was identified that considered the reemployed older person’s satisfaction with the new job (Kaye et al., 1999).

On a more positive note, some individual programs themselves attempt to address these issues (e.g., through regular participant evaluations; R. James, personal communication, March 8, 2002). Also, the evaluation criteria for the Older Worker Pilot Project partnered by the Federal and British Columbia Governments shows promise in terms of adding more depth to this process. For instance, assessment of the 15 programs that have been funded across British Columbia under this 1-year project will go beyond quantitative data and consider the extent to which participants’ goals were altered and/or met, their satisfaction with their new job once reemployed, and how prepared they felt for their job search (A. Nystrom, personal communication, March 1, 2002; J. O’Neill, personal communication, March 8, 2002).
While the inclusion of qualitative data in the pilot project evaluation process is certainly positive, it still remains unclear whose needs and desires these programs serve. According to the ideals of health promotion, interventions targeting a specific population should involve that group as an equal and active partner in the planning, implementation and evaluation stages (Green & Kreuter, 1991). Although the Older Worker Pilot Project is an improvement in terms of evaluation, the failure to include older workers in its inception suggests that the underlying objectives of the program may be more about ensuring their contribution to the economy (and program continuity) than addressing the unique and diverse needs of participants. Involvement of older workers in the development of programs is necessary to ensure these interventions address participant needs (Green & Kreuter, 1991). For instance, though an older adult may experience several periods of unemployment after an initial job loss, current job search programs do not conduct long-term follow-up to determine whether the participant remains reemployed or shortly returns to an unemployed state. The extent to which older persons who desire to work are maintaining employment after being rehired is a worthy outcome for assessment. With the guidance of older workers, these programs may begin to focus more on health and well-being outcomes rather than short-term job search success. As is, older worker program evaluations rarely consider the health of the individual in the assessment of their effectiveness (Avison, 2002).

**Areas for Improvement**

Drawing upon examples in other countries, such as Japan and the European Union, apparent are various means by which older worker programs in Canada may be improved. A few have already been discussed, such as the need for a more bottom-up approach that includes older persons in program planning, implementation and evaluation. This could be accomplished through focus groups, representation of older workers on steering and panel review committees, and greater input from program participants. This type of involvement would help ensure that program goals, methods and structure are both acceptable and appropriate for the group they purport to serve.

Also mentioned is a need to include more health-related objectives in the measurement of program success. Only one study could be identified that specifically evaluated program effectiveness in terms of a health-related objective, in this case, reduced depressive symptomatology (Rife, 1992). Hence, an important expansion to current evaluations would be to address programs’ ability to assist participants in coping with the stress, threats to personal identity, and feelings of decreased control that can accompany job loss. Rife (1994) advocates for the assessment of informal and formal support as well as the use of clinical screening instruments to identify pronounced depressive symptomatology by community-based programs providing job search training and placement programs for older workers.

Other issues upon which programs targeting the needs of displaced older workers in Canada may improve include: better communication between program funders, implementers and participants; greater collaboration between government and business; and an attempt to take a preventative and proactive approach to the issue of job loss in late career. Regarding the first issue, it would appear that communication between HRDC, the organizations receiving funding for these programs, and the target population of older workers are not well established. For example, the evaluation report conducted by HRDC in 1999 holds valuable information for program
implementers but has not been disseminated to all of these programs (R. James, personal communication, March 8, 2002). The utility of conducting an evaluation project is questionable if the front-line workers are not able to benefit from its content. A lack of awareness of the recently initiated Older Worker Pilot Project (that includes a total of 15 programs in British Columbia) is also evident; employment counselling staff at a local HRDC office were unaware of its existence. Obviously, more effective communication is needed to ensure that programs take advantage of recent knowledge and that settings where unemployed older workers seek assistance are fully aware of available resources.

Efforts to increase the collaboration among business, governments and communities may be one way to promote greater knowledge dissemination and awareness. According to Canada’s Framework for Population Health (Advisory Committee on Population Health, 1994), the link between employment and health suggests that “the involvement of employment and business sectors is essential to bring about changes to ensure that the workplace fosters good health” (p 19). A national initiative established in 1975 to encourage greater workforce participation of older adults in Japan (the country with the highest international rates of labour force participation for an older adult population according to Statistics Canada, 1999), indicates that securing the interest and support of various levels of government and local business are key to their success (Bass & Oka, 1995). Initiatives that forge partnerships among key stakeholders ensure that interventions are feasible, relevant and understood by those who may have a direct or indirect influence on their success as well as those who are intended to benefit from them. One way in which this type of collaborative effort may occur is by involving businesses and influential community organizations as well as sites where older persons may be likely to work. Then, representatives from these settings, governmental bodies such as HRDC and British Columbia’s Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Labour, and the target population could form steering committees with a mandate to plan and/or evaluate programs for older workers. This type of arrangement would foster greater understanding of the situation of displaced older workers and facilitate greater involvement of local businesses and other organizations in programs, such as through job placement opportunities. In Britain, for example, the Hands on Support and Training (HOST) program matches skills and experience of older unemployed managers with projects proposed by local companies or entrepreneurs. After a training program to restore their confidence and latent skills, these older workers assist the start-up of local projects, demonstrating their relevant and valuable experience and abilities to potential employers (Collis, Mallier, & Smith-Canham, 1999).

Finally, given the influence of work on health and the potentially deleterious effects of job loss in late career, consideration of a more proactive approach to dealing with the issues of older displaced workers is warranted. Based on a thorough attempt to identify best practices in the employment of older workers in the European Union, Walker and Taylor (1999) advocate for a holistic approach to age and employment involving “an integrated policy that would encompass the whole career” that includes “both preventative measures (such as lifelong education) and remedial ones (training for older workers lacking specific skills, for example in new technology)” (p. 72). These authors suggest that implementation of policy and practice with a strict focus on older adults, such as encouraging older workers to remain in the workplace throughout late career by increasing the age of pension eligibility, could have negative implications
for aging employees who need to retire early due to ill health. An alternative approach would involve interventions that address the entire lifespan such as ongoing training and education as a normative part of the work experience. According to one advocate of lifelong learning (Schultz, 2000), this should involve a focus on teaching basic skills that are easily transferred across jobs (e.g., computer skills, written communication, financial planning, good health practices). Also, innovative work arrangements such as job sharing and flexible work hours, while challenging to develop, would provide more variety and options to meet the needs and lifestyles of persons of all ages (Wanner, 1994). Collaboration among business, government and education sectors, already identified as an area for improvement, would be critical to making such a proactive, life-span approach successful.

Summary and Conclusion

Examination of older worker programs in Canada brings to light important issues. First, the health implications of unemployment and job loss, particularly as it relates to persons in latter career stages, must be better understood. Research addressing this issue should be disseminated to those who plan and implement programs aimed at unemployed individuals over age 44. Evaluation of effectiveness should consider the ability of programs to achieve outcomes beyond reemployment including those related to health and well-being.

Second, the development and evaluation of these programs must involve greater participation from their target groups. To date, it appears that fiscal objectives imposed in a top-down fashion by governments define these programs. Without the input of older workers themselves, a program’s structure, process and goals may be inappropriate or irrelevant to the group it purports to serve. Related to the first point, this type of participatory action would undoubtedly lead to an increased effort by older worker programs to buffer the negative impact of unemployment on mental and physical health.

Third, a better system of communication between those who fund, implement and participate in these programs is required given the finite resources available to program planners. Lines of communication would be further improved through addressing a fourth issue, the need for multi-sectoral collaboration among stakeholders. This type of cooperative effort would foster understanding, support and input from all parties that have vested interest the success of the intervention.

Finally, a philosophical shift in focus is required to more effectively address the issue of involuntary job loss in late career. This would entail the reallocation of resources away from remedial programs to those that take a more proactive approach to the problem. These programs might involve life-long learning efforts to ensure that people remain competitive in the workplace across the lifespan as well as the development of a wider and more flexible array of employment options to reflect the diverse abilities, needs and lifestyles that exist within the population.

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Relentless Accountabilities and Co-‘authoring’ Our Professional Lives

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This article is targeted at veteran counsellors, though those new to the field might be interested by the issues and questions raised. The primary question I raise here is: What does it mean to practice accountably these days while remaining accountable to our personal, family and community lives? Counselling is a career one can easily get lost in because the demands are so great, and our energies so finite. So, in the article which follows I ask you to join me in exploring issues which are part of the great balancing act of meeting our work and professional obligations, staying motivated to that work, and seeing that our relationships (to ourselves and others who matter to us) remain healthy. I raise and invite your reflection on elements of this balancing act with the hope that you can constructively use such reflection to further guide you in your career and personal development as counsellors. The outcomes of this reflection could reaffirm your relationships to your present balancing act, or possibly nudge you to achieve a more personally satisfying balance of the professional and personal in your life.

Balancing Accountabilities

Frontline practice in counselling has never carried a greater weight of accountability. A combination of developments has brought this on but practicing as a counsellor has come to mean doing more in less time, with greater scrutiny than formerly was the case (Johnson, 1995). Our professional bodies expect adherence to increasingly detailed codes of ethics and conduct, not the least of which is the trend toward stricter adherence to empirically validated treatments and diagnostic procedures. Laws and legal judgments affecting how we counsel convey a sense that we practice in a minefield where seemingly innocent missteps can easily result in grave professional consequences. Our clients are increasingly more consumer-savvy, bringing internet-researched understandings of their concerns and what to do about them while expecting collaboration in areas formerly considered by many as our prerogative. The service contexts where we practice feel the squeeze of greater accountability, too, passing on to us what clients, funders and other partners in delivering counselling services expect of them. New intervention methods and research findings proliferate making it impossible to comprehensively stay on top of all developments within our profession. And, this is all before we factor in the personal and relational dimensions of being a counsellor. Buffeted by these competing aspirations and expectations, defining oneself as a counsellor has never been more challenging. Already a high burn-out profession, we face what most workplace stress researchers know: there’s a slippery slope between losing influence over the nature of our work, and burn-out (Grosch & Olsen, 1994). Even the word accountability might leave some of you cringing as it carries with it connotations of yet more obligation and scrutiny. The purpose of this paper and its reported activities is to re-visit what it means to define our roles in the face of all that
pulls on us personally and professionally. Behind it is a rationale: we can become better authors of our own experience when we resist being ‘authored’ by our experiences.

**Method**

This article is based on a workshop designed to help counselling professionals re-connect with their intentions, commitments, values, professional and personal relationships, and the place counselling occupies within their lifestyle. The guiding ideas behind the workshop are narrative and social constructionist, assuming that the meanings we live by are constructed primarily through social interaction (Bruner, 1990; Gergen, 1999; McNamee & Gergen, 1999). Cumulatively, these interactions help us make sense of our experiences, usually in story form. But, we are not passive in our personal stories; we author and narrate them in relating to our social experiences, making use of the plausible understandings available to us. From this perspective, the workshop, like similar others (e.g., Strong, 1997), aims to engage participants in speaking in novel ways about their experience, inviting them to relate to (and possibly alter) their personal narratives of experience in new and preferred ways. It is because our stories gain their significance in the sharing (Newman & Holzman, 1999) that I facilitate workshop experiences that are primarily interactive, using questions to promote unfamiliar perspectives and discussions. While on one hand I believe that a coherent personal story of experience can be a valuable, touchstone resource, I am also wary of the potential of some stories to cohere and conserve problematic understandings (Newman, 2000; White & Epston, 1990). For example, a counsellor may feel stuck in a constricted or ‘stale-dated’ story of their career; or, conversely, they may find their counselling story one which promotes creativity and resilience in meeting relentless professional challenges. So, the activities of this workshop offer participants opportunities to bring greater clarity and coherence to their personal stories of being counsellors, while affording possibilities to revise those stories as the questions invite them to speak from new perspectives.

If we want to consider our careers stories we live (Cochran & Savickas, 1997), it helps to be living them according to preferred plotlines (Eron & Lund, 1996). Of course, these stories are not solely our creation; they have many co-authors, so to speak. Our career stories are, in effect, as much negotiated as co-authored, because to live them means to see how they fare as we take them into our counselling and other life experiences and relationships. Most experienced counsellors can point to developments where relationships and particular experiences became wanted or unwanted co-authors. Counselling is a profession where sometimes our cumulative professional experience can develop into a story Ram Dass (Dass & Gorman, 1985) once referred to as “the helper’s prison”. Regardless, the workshop invites participants to reflect on, and share different perspectives, to further the possibilities that we live preferred career stories. To gain, optimally, from the exercises/questions that follow (you will also see them as appendices at the end of the article), find two conversational partners with whom you can discuss your answers: a fellow counsellor, and a trusted non-counsellor friend or family member. Simply reading, and reflecting on the answers will not have the same effect.
Our Relationship With Our Intentions

The story behind how we chose to be counsellors can feel like a faint recollection, as we become veterans in our field. But, behind any commitment to something as demanding as a career are our intentions. Lose sight of them, and we can feel we’re living, to paraphrase Peter Hansen (1985), other peoples’ stories for our lives. As with any long-term endeavour (e.g., a marriage, having children), however, our intentions change over time. As our motivations in becoming counsellors meet the demands of front-line practice, new motivations emerge while others recede in terms of personal significance. Many of us entered counselling with a starry-eyed-change-the-world enthusiasm and if our subsequent experiences didn’t make us cynics, we learned to scale back our hopes and expectations. We may have had career-changing experiences in the course of our practice, as we worked with new populations, found new approaches to practice, or took on roles beyond the consulting room. As our personal lives changed; so possibly changed the centrality of career to our personal identity, and the importance we placed on family and community. Some of us will have been counselling clients ourselves, prompting previously unthought of questions regarding what we do. Worse, as narrative therapist Michael White (1997) highlighted, our intentions in being counsellors are often pathologized by media characterizations of our professional personalities (see “What about Bob” or “The Prince of Tides”), implying that we use our work to address our personal shortcomings.

Like ships blown off course it is possible that we no longer feel guided by our intentional compass us as our career pulls us forward with its many demands. In this initial part of the workshop participants are asked to revisit their relationship with their intentions. This wording might seem unusual: do we have intentions or do we relate to them? My answer is that both apply. While we may claim something as an intention, what we do with it later – our relationship to it in guiding our actions – can be an entirely different matter. Our intentions are our personal constructions of what matters to us; how we relate to them as potential resources in going forward is the concern here. In solution-focused therapy talk, living by our intentions is living “on track” (Walter & Peller, 1992). So, early in the workshop attention is given to articulating intentions and exploring the relationships participants have with them as resources in leading a preferred life.

The questions that follow are intended for counsellors to use in dyads at the workshop. In one sense, the presuppositions of these questions invite counsellors to articulate and clarify their seldom-considered professional intentions. In another way, sharing their answers to such questions with others, for some narrative theorists (e.g., Holstein & Gubrium, 2000), can help people affirm and commit to what they “talk into being”. So, these questions are meant to engage counsellor participants in the workshop in reflective processes they make public to at least one professional colleague. Inviting people into such a metacognitive stance (e.g., Flavell, 1977) on their practice of counselling, and their motivations for it, via such discussions, can itself be an empowering experience. The discussions also hold the potential to articulate change-promoting beliefs, a key feature in Prochaska, DiClemente and Norcross’ (1992) stages of change model. Since the counsellor participants’ audience is another counsellor skilled in helping people articulate often-difficult ideas and feelings, listening is usually anything but passive. Roles are exchanged with each party taking up being a listener
and speaker, taking turns interviewing or being interviewed from questions like those that follow:

1) What initially motivated you to become a counsellor?
2) What are the primary intentions you bring to counselling now?
3) If these changed between starting as a counsellor and now, what prompted the change?
4) In reflecting on your interactions with clients and peers, where do you feel your intentions best show through in those interactions? Illustrate with examples.
5) What challenges do you face in keeping “on track” with your intentions? How can you rise to those challenges and still feel “on track”?
6) What has your relationship with your career intentions been like as you’ve faced the different challenges in being a counsellor? In other words, have your intentions been as much of a source of guidance and inspiration in your work as you would like? Explain.
7) In the long-run, what will tell you that have practiced and lived in ways that have you feeling you’ve kept ‘in sync’ with your intentions?

As mentioned earlier, social constructionists see meanings gaining their significance in relationships through “objectivizing” what is discussed, crystallizing ideas into meaningful words that can be revisited in future thinking or conversations (McNamee & Gergen, 1999). Narrative therapists, in particular (e.g., Epston, 1994; Strong & Flynn, 2000), consider documentation as a resource capable of furthering preferred stories, so the “interviewers” are also asked to be “documenters” of responses that their interviewees consider noteworthy. In this way, each respondent may complete the workshop with notes useful for further reflection.

**Our Relationship With Counselling**

Michael Sussman (1995) called ours “a perilous calling”. Whether we consider the contexts in which we practice, the nature of our clients and their presenting concerns, the increasingly prescriptive and litigation-fraught professionalism to which we are bound, or the administrative and collegial aspects of our work, we serve many ‘masters’ where the stakes are often high. Family therapist, Jay Haley (1987), considered relationships potentially ‘crazy-making’ (double binds) if we can’t influence them where this matters to us. Yet, the average counsellor practices in hierarchical circumstances where they have little influence over how they practice. In an era where healthcare services are increasingly rationed, when the pressures on us to produce outcomes are reinforced with micro-managerial strategies that one writer likened to having “big brother in the consulting room” (Wylie, 1994), the push for accountability in our work has never been greater (Johnson, 1995). And, this is before we factor in the intense feelings we work with that some researcher-clinicians feel contribute to “compassion fatigue” or burnout, two potential occupational hazards of counselling (e.g., Figley, 1995; Grosch & Olsen, 1994).

While there are day in day out vagaries in our work, when we generalize our counselling experience it can be understood as a story with a seeming trajectory. This story connotes a relationship we have with our work and professional identity. But it has many co-authors, and to the extent possible the workshop aims to engage
participants as authors/editors-in-chief of their professional stories. We can become alienated from our own experience when this capacity and influence diminishes for us (Newman & Holzman, 1997) so the workshop aims to reconnect participants with novel ways of construing, and acting within, their roles and circumstances. Characterizing counselling as something we have a relationship to, can feel initially awkward for participants. Consistent with a narrative therapy approach, the view shared here is that we can *externalize* aspects of our experience we consider intrinsic to who we are such as our professional identity. One imaginative twist on this concept involves interviewing one person in a relationship, requesting them to speak *as if* they could accurately and faithfully represent how their partner would want to be heard (Epston, 1993, Snyder, 1995). In this workshop, however, participants are asked to go one step further: the counsellor’s professional identity itself is interviewed, as if it could give feedback on the relationship the counsellor has with ‘it’. In this sense, the interviewer asks the interviewee to speak as if s/he was her/his professional identity with ‘its’ own voice. A related example, from the externalizing practices of narrative therapy, is to request to speak to a client’s temper, as if that temper had its own personality (see Epston, 1992). The conceptual separation of the person from an influential aspect of her/him permits novel forms of reflection. Such exercises are also commonplace for those familiar with psychodrama (e.g., Blatner & Blatner, 1997), and in my experience most participants easily orient to them after some initial clarification of instructions. These kinds of questions come up late in the next series of questions. Again, in pairs, participants are asked to take turns as interviewers/documenters and interviewees.

**Questions.**

1) What are key factors, other than those you (as your professional identity) bring to counselling, that influence how you practice? To what extent have these come to define your practice? Explain.

2) Share your views on what it means to practice accountably. Be sure to include personal views as well as those from your employer, clients and professional organizations. Describe your experience in trying to reconcile these views.

3) Identify those factors that most support AND most erode the quality of your relationship with counselling.

4) When do you feel your relationship with counselling is at its best? What occurs then and what has you feel that this is when your relationship with counselling is at its best?

5) Here you are asked to imaginatively separate you the person from you the counsellor. Then, please give feedback to you the person in answering the following: a) what are the most important qualities that s/he (i.e., you the person) brings to counselling? b) how would you characterize the present relationship you the counsellor have with you the person? c) what does the counsellor in you need most from him/her?

6) Continuing on in this manner, but reversing roles so that you the person are in the ‘hot seat’: a) what experiences does s/he (the counsellor) bring to your life that you most/least appreciate? b) how would you characterize the present relationship you have with him/her? c) what do you most need from him/her to live a preferred life?

Clearly, these are unusual questions, but when effective, they draw participants into examining new perspectives on their professional and personal lives. Characterizing ourselves as having a relationship to our practice can help us stand back
from it and assess how it is, and how we would like it to be. In the case of looking at a marriage or a friendship, we might think to ourselves: if only the other person could be a better person than I’d have a better relationship with him/her. However, it is harder to make such an argument about how we invest ourselves professionally. Examining that investment, and considering how we could optimally influence it, is the intent of these questions.

Relating to our Professional Relationships

We’re in a relationship profession. Whether we consider our relationships to clients, employers, our professional organizations or our colleagues, the heart of our work takes place in relationships our skills help us create and co-manage. Of course, we’re not channeling the spirit of Carl Rogers (1961) into every one of these relationships. Professionally, we juggle our multiple roles to be warm and empathic, productive and conscientious, ethical and competent, and supportive and resourceful. An insidious thing can happen to people (like us) who make themselves so constantly available to others: they can lose their ability to recognize and assert their needs. Here is where a virtue of selflessness can cross the line and become a vice. Healthy veterans in the helping professions often come to this realization, finding means to address it, while balancing their commitment to clients; others can hit a personal and professional wall with this challenge (Berger, 1995). Left unattended, such issues can nudge counsellors precipitously toward a slippery slope from which professional boundary violations are more likely to occur (Peterson, 1992). Conversely, sometimes the relentless relational demands on us spill over into our personal lives: prompting a retreat into isolation, even in our closest relationships where sharing the seemingly mundane aspects of daily life pales in contrast to the dramas of participating in clients’ lives (Deutsch, 1985).

Alongside those dramas can be complicated professional relationships that require deft skill in upholding. There are bosses to please, other human service professionals to partner with or lobby as we help clients, and the normal stuff of ‘workplace politics’. Not surprisingly, many counsellors feel “peopled out” at the end of their workday. As the wife of a physician once told me, “he gave at the office”. In short, there are relational tugs on our professionalism and civility constantly and these can stretch our sense of sociability, at the same time as we have social needs personally.

This part of the workshop asks participants to look at their relationships, cognizant that they are discussing them in relationships. Somehow sharing our experiences and preferences with another ups our investment in acting on what we share. This is what feminist and narrative therapists refer to as witnessing (Weingarten, 2000) or audiencing (Adams-Westcott & Isenbart, 1995) where our internal dialogue can be externalized, and take on a shared and often greater significance.

questions.

1) Where are your work relationships most/least satisfying to you? Explain.
2) Are there any differences in you personally, or socially, from the time you entered counselling until the present? To what do you attribute this sameness or difference? How would long term friends or family members answer this question as it pertains to you?
3) In what ways have your professional relationships enriched/eroded your most important relationships? Explain.

4) Being experienced as a counsellor, what advice would you give to someone entering the profession when it comes to balancing the relationship demands of this work? How did you come to have this opinion?

5) What more can you do to optimize the relationship balancing act so that you are doing more than just ensuring everyone else’s needs are met, while yours go unattended? Describe, if you can, what that optimal balance might look like.

These questions can sometimes provoke painful recognitions, asking us to speak from aspects of our experience we can comfortably hear from our clients, but perhaps not from ourselves. Sharing such recognitions can promote a shared empathy and appreciation for the hard work counsellors do. One of the greatest burnout factors in our profession is the isolation that comes with not managing this relationship, in ways that covers everyone’s needs, excluding our own. These discussions have the potential of opening counsellors to other similar conversations thereafter.

Our relationship with practice

Practicing as a counsellor involves ceaseless assessments, decisions and interventions – all of which can bring changes to the lives of our clients. Sometimes the expectation can feel like we are supposed to be batting 1000 when practically our shared triumphs with clients don’t come close to that. We are paid to make a difference, and rising to the challenge means pitting our competence against problems that won’t easily resolve. Our clients, and sometimes our employers, can equate what we do with medical intervention, expecting quick improvements as we administer treatment to clients, as if our interventions were akin to medications (Stiles & Shapiro, 1989). Staying on top of the ceaseless innovations in counselling can be quite daunting; staying inspired by our ideas and interventions presents another challenge. Most master practitioners undertake shifts in the ideas and interventions they bring to counselling through the course of their career (Jennings & Skovholt, 1999). Bandwagon approaches come and go, research highlights new things to focus our clinical attention on, and we can lose faith in approaches that come to feel stale for us. At the same time, assessment and intervention seemingly require greater exactitude, as emphases on correct DSM-IV diagnoses and empirically validated treatments become increasing administrative expectations for how we practice.

Defining competent practice is not a precise science and has been the focus of many debates (e.g., Beutler, 2000). Despite such ambiguities about “good practice”, it is more likely that we will hear about “screwing up” in our work than about our shared successes with clients. Regardless, we have ourselves to satisfy and one measure of our success is that we become obsolete professionally to our clients. The modal number of sessions clients will see us for is one (that’s for 40% of what we do) and what apparently is considered helpful usually has little to do with the methods we use or our crafty interventions (Duncan & Miller, 2000; Talmon, 1990). Still, we have an understandable desire to practice competently, and succeed in navigating the complex expectations our clients and employers have of us.

Turning to our work and feeling good about it clearly involves several factors. We want to be inspired, feel competent, know we’re making a difference, and feel at
home in what we do. This next set of questions is designed to tap into these factors, promoting consideration of our current competence while extending our sense of where we can continue to build on it.

questions.

1) What does it mean for you to practice competently? Where do you recognize your competence most as you counsel?
2) What ideas and innovations in your practice most inspire you? Explain.
3) If I interviewed some of your clients who felt most helped by you what would they tell me about your work with them that they most appreciated?
4) When do you feel most/least alive in your work as a counsellor? Please elaborate.
5) Looking ahead to when you move on from counselling, what are some of the key things you would like to point to you as the accomplishments and qualities you brought to your work? Are there things you need to yet do to see these qualities and accomplishments realized?

These questions conclude the workshop and serve as a good springboard to bring closure to the workshop.

Conclusion

It was Socrates who once said, “the unexamined life is not worth living” (cited in Helm, 1997, 38a). This workshop is presented as an opportunity to “take one’s professional bearings”. The motivation is to help counsellors reflect on and clarify where they stand, and what they want to do about some central issues related to long term, professionally and personally accountable (it is unusual to see these words paired up with notions of accountability) practice. Many workshops addressing such a topic are psychoeducational and usually focus on relevant information. This workshop is intentionally participatory, with the hope that engaging people in speaking to their experiences will make further discussion and action based on the workshop discussions easier.

In debriefing the exercises, the participants are asked to consider how they will make use of the documentation put together for them by their interviewers. They are also asked what they would like to do to continue the conversations begun on these issues beyond the workshop. There are no expected outcomes in terms of where the workshop might take participants, but it is hoped that the exercises will engage them in becoming more active authors of their professional lives.

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Appendix A – Relating to our Intentions Questions

(to be answered in role-changing pairs – use the back of the page if required)

1) What initially motivated you to become a counsellor?
2) What are the primary intentions you bring to counselling now?
3) If these changed between starting as a counsellor and now, what prompted the
change?
4) In reflecting on your interactions with clients and peers, where do you feel your
intentions best show through in those interactions? Illustrate with examples.
5) What challenges do you face in keeping “on track” with your intentions? How can
you rise to those challenges and still feel “on track”?
6) What has your relationship with your career intentions been like as you’ve faced the different challenges in being a counsellor? In other words, have your intentions been as much of a source of guidance and inspiration in your work as you would like? Explain.

7) In the long-run, what will tell you that have practiced and lived in ways that have you feeling you’ve kept ‘in sync’ with your intentions?

Appendix B – Relating to Counselling Questions

(to be answered in role-changing pairs – use the back of the page if required)

1) What are the key factors, other than those you bring to counselling, that influence how you practice? To what extent have these come to define your practice? Explain.

2) Share your views on what it means to practice accountably. Be sure to include personal views as well as those from your employer, clients and professional organizations. Describe your experience in trying to reconcile these views.

3) Identify those factors that most support AND most erode the quality of your relationship with counselling.

4) When do you feel your relationship with counselling is at its best? What occurs then and what has you feel that this is when your relationship with counselling is at its best?

5) Here you are asked to imaginatively separate you the person from you the counsellor. Then, please give feedback to you the person in answering the following: a) what are the most important qualities that s/he (i.e., you the person) brings to counselling? b) how would you characterize the present relationship you the counsellor have with you the person? c) what does the counsellor in you need most from him/her?

6) Continuing on in this manner, but reversing roles so that you the person are in the ‘hot seat’: a) what experiences does s/he (the counsellor) bring to your life that you most/least appreciate? b) how would you characterize the present relationship you have with him/her? c) what do you most need from him/her to live a preferred life?

Appendix C – Relating to Counselling’s Relationships Questions

(to be answered in role-changing pairs – use the back of the page if required)

1) Where are your work relationships most/least satisfying to you? Explain.

2) Are there any differences in you personally, or socially, from the time you entered counselling until the present? To what do you attribute this sameness or difference? How would long term friends or family members answer this question as it pertains to you?

3) In what ways have your professional relationships enriched/eroded your most important relationships? Explain.

4) Being experienced as a counsellor, what advice would you give to someone entering the profession when it comes to balancing the relationship demands of this work? How did you come to have this opinion?

5) What more can you do to optimize the relationship balancing act so that you are doing more than just ensuring everyone else’s needs are met, while yours go unattended? Describe, if you can, what that optimal balance might look like.
Appendix D Relating to our Practice Questions

(to be answered in role-changing pairs – use the back of the page if required)

1) What does it mean for you to practice competently? Where do you recognize your competence most as you counsel?
2) What ideas and innovations in your practice most inspire you? Explain.
3) If I interviewed some of your clients who felt most helped by you what would they tell me about your work with them that they most appreciated?
4) When do you feel most/least alive in your work as a counsellor? Please elaborate.
5) Looking ahead to when you move on from counselling, what are some of the key things you would like to point to you as the accomplishments and qualities you brought to your work? Are there things you need to yet do to see these qualities and accomplishment
Despite the Barriers Men Nurses Are Satisfied with Career Choice

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Despite significant changes in the health care professions over the last century, nursing continues to remain a female "gendered" occupation. Men have made slight inroads in the profession and as such, continue to be a minority within the registered nurse workforce. In 2005, 5.6 per cent of the nurses in Canada were men (CNA, 2005), while men comprise about 5.8 per cent of the nursing workforce in the U.S. (HRSA, 2004). Although reasons for this gender imbalance have been debated in the literature, scant evidence is available regarding why men choose nursing and what factors are associated with their career satisfaction. The purpose of this study was to explore reasons why men in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) choose nursing as an occupation, what are the perceived barriers they experience in practice, factors associated with career satisfaction, and their reasons for recommending nursing as a career option for other males.

Literature Review

There is an abundance of literature both anecdotal and research based related to the topic of men in nursing. Most of this literature is concerned with the recruitment of men nurses and the barriers they experience in their chosen career. Men historically have been identified as having caregiver roles in organized nursing throughout history. For example, military, religious, and lay orders of men throughout the centuries have provided care to the sick and injured. Despite this history, the role of men in nursing tends to be forgotten (Mackintosh, 1997).

One of the dominant barriers identified as a major deterrent to men entering the nursing profession is stereotypes. The public perception of nursing as a sex-role occupation exclusive to females is a well-entrenched societal belief based upon the traditional image of the nurse as being white and female. This perception supported by the mass media is reinforced through images of nursing solely based upon female attributes. These beliefs influence societal perceptions for nursing and feed the cycle of bias that limits the role of men in nursing. Historically, nursing is considered to be a natural extension of a woman's role in society. The gendered nature of nursing work is reflected by the patriarchal social structure that associates the characteristics, of caring, compassion, nurturance, and empathy exclusive to women. As a result, the nursing profession is considered not to be suited to men who are believed not to have any of those attributes (Meadus, 2000). Again; these factors hinder men in choosing a nursing career.

In the nursing literature and popular press, sex stereotypes are seen as a major obstacle to men entering nursing. A common stereotype concerning men who choose nursing is that they are effeminate or gay (Jinks & Bradley, 2004; Hart, 2005). According to Jinks and Bradley, little has changed in societal attitudes towards nursing stereotypes over the years. Thus, men who chose to become a nurse may be questioned about their masculinity. Other stereotypes reported from the literature were that men
end up in nursing because they are perceived as underachievers and lack the ability to enter medical school (Poliafico, 1998).

Several researchers have examined why men choose nursing as a career option, the most common motive noted was the wish to help others; other factors were job security, salary and career opportunities (Boughn, 1994, 2004). In a recent study investigating why nursing students choose nursing other factors were reported such as, the desire to work with complex technology and the inability to get into another program (Rheaume, Woodside, Gautreau, & Ditommaso, 2003).

A large body of literature is available on factors associated with work satisfaction of registered nurses. Factors such as work setting, job stress, pay, promotional opportunities and involvement in patient care have been identified as key determinants in job and career satisfaction for nurses (Kovner, Brewer, Wu, Cheng, & Suzuki, 2006; Hoffman & Scott, 2003; Shaver & Lacey, 2003). Most of these studies have not investigated specific factors for men nurses related to career satisfaction and reasons for recommending nursing to others as a career option. A worrisome finding from a recent study was that male nurses within the first four years following graduation are leaving the profession approximately four times more frequently than female nurses. Male nurses in comparison to women also reported less satisfaction with nursing regardless of their clinical setting or position (Sochalski, 2002). With men being a minority and many leaving the profession, it is imperative that greater efforts are undertaken to understand this phenomenon and also strategies are needed for recruitment and retention of males.

Several campaigns have been undertaken within the U.S. that emphasized the recruitment of people into nursing programs. Some of these have been at the national level such as the Johnson and Johnson Discover Nursing advertising campaign. Although not specifically focused on the recruitment of men, several of the promotional materials have highlighted men in nursing on television, brochures, and posters (Buerhaus, Donelan, Norman, & Dittus, 2005). Another campaign aimed on the recruitment of males into the nursing profession has been launched by the Oregon Center for Nursing. A component of this campaign is a poster with the slogan, "Are You Man Enough To Be A Nurse" that highlights the diversity of men in nursing and a program called Men in Scrubs that specifically targets middle school and high school students. Participants in this program get an opportunity to gain insight into nursing by "shadowing" men nurses in the practice setting (Trossman, 2003 ).

Several universities within the U.S. have formalized plans for the recruitment of men into the nursing profession. The University of Iowa College of Nursing for example, has instituted a men in nursing mentoring task force whose sole purpose is to develop and to implement strategies focused on recruitment and to increase the visibility of nursing as a career choice for men (The University of Iowa College of Nursing Men in Nursing Mentoring Task Force, 2006). No formalized plans to actively recruit males into university schools of nursing have been undertaken in Canada. A national U.S. group of men and women know as the American Assembly for Men in Nursing (AAMN) was formed in 1971 to encourage men to chose nursing as a career choice and increasing the visibility of men in nursing through education of the public (The American Assembly for Men in Nursing, 2005). Recently, in Canada the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) launched the establishment of the Men in Nursing Interest Group (MINIG) with similar objectives as the AAMN (Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario [RNAO] The Men in Nursing Interest
Group, 2007). This initiative has potential to strengthen the nursing profession for all interested stakeholders throughout Canada through ongoing education and support around the image of nursing and the role of men as nurses. This may lead to a greater emphasis on the promotion of nursing as an appropriate career choice for males.

**Methodology**

**Ethical Considerations**

The necessary steps were taken to ensure that the rights of all subjects were recognized and protected throughout the study. Confidentiality with respect to both participants and storage of data was maintained throughout. Ethical approval was granted from the Human Investigation Committee, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Consent was implied by completion of the survey.

**Sample and Setting**

Using a descriptive design, the researchers surveyed the opinion of 62 nurses on reasons for entering the profession and perceived barriers to being a male practicing in a predominantly female oriented profession. Open-ended questions were included to allow participants to voice their recommendations regarding recruitment and satisfaction with career choice and willingness to advise a career in nursing.

In 2005, 5,629 RNs were employed in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL); 250, (4%), of these were men (ARNNL, 2005). The convenient sample included all males who agreed to participate in research as identified by their response on the ARNNL registration form (n = 78). Subjects were also recruited using an advertisement included in an ARNNL mail out and snowball sampling. In total, 102 questionnaires were distributed, 87 were sent through the regular mail system and 15 were delivered via the internal hospital mail system. To aid return, all questionnaires contained a stamped self-addressed envelope.

**Instrument**

Data were collected using a self-report questionnaire developed by the researchers. No appropriate published instrument for examining men’s career choice and barriers specific to nursing was available. Questions related to career choice and barriers were partially based upon findings from a qualitative research report prepared by the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) on men in nursing (Hanvey, 2003). By reference to this report and existing literature, the draft questionnaire was developed and pilot tested for face and content validity. Two nurses, one a content expert on men in nursing and two male nursing students completed the survey. As a result of this review, adjustments were made to increase item clarity and readability.

The final questionnaire assessed the following four areas: 1) Demographic data; 2) Reasons for entering the nursing profession; 3) Perceived barriers experienced by men in nursing and 4) Recruitment strategies, Career satisfaction, and Career recommendations.

Reliability testing of the instrument indicated a Cronbach’s Alpha of .63 for the subscale measuring the reasons for career choices and the barriers subscale had an alpha
of .81. With this population, the internal consistency levels suggest that the subscales adequately measure the constructs.

**Results**

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Indices of central tendency were calculated and depending on the level of data, tests of difference were computed. Alpha was set at p<.05. Sixty-two questionnaires were returned to the researchers for a return rate of 60%. The mean age of the sample was 38.1, with a range of 23 to 58 years, respondents had been practicing nursing for one to 35 years, with a mean of 13.2 years. Overall, the subjects had been in the same position for an average of 6.3 years. Most (80.6%) were employed full time, 8.1% were part time, 9.7% worked in casual positions and only 1.6% were unemployed. The majority of nurses worked on a medical/surgical adult practice setting (see Table I) and as expected 68.3% were employed by the Eastern Health Authority; this region is the most populated geographical area in NL.

Table I

**Practice Setting (n = 61)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Med/Surg Adult</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Home</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICU/CCU</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Health</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second part of the questionnaire examined why men choose nursing as a career. The subjects were requested to rate their reasons on a scale from 0 ("not important") to 3 ("very important"). The most common motives (in descending order) for becoming a nurse (see Table II) were career opportunities, job security, and the salary. Other reasons identified as important were the opportunity to travel and having a family member in the profession. In the category labeled other, nine respondents stated that they chose nursing because they wanted to be part of a caring profession and they felt it was a calling.
Table II

Reasons for Choosing Nursing (n = 62)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Choosing Nursing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Opportunities</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Security</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family in the Profession</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew a Nurse</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer or Patient</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet Women</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Mean = mean score (average based on the following scale: 0 = not at all to 3 = very important) and SD = standard deviation for each of the identified reasons for choosing nursing.

In the third section of the survey, subjects were asked to circle the number which best reflects their assessment of perceived barriers (see Table III) encountered when they first decided to enter the nursing profession. Using the same rating scale, 0 to 3, the most commonly perceived barriers (in descending order) to being a male in a female dominated profession were: sexual stereotypes, female oriented profession, lack of recruitment strategies, and few male role models portrayed in the media.

Table III

Barriers to Men in Nursing Practice (n = 62)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Stereotypes</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate Recruitment</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Oriented Profession</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Exposure to Male Role Models in the Media</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Salary</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients prefer Female Nurses</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family’s View of Nursing as a Career Choice</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Mean = mean score (average based on the following scale: 0 = not at all to 3 = very important) and SD = standard deviation for each of the identified barriers for choosing nursing.

Further analysis was completed and the respondents were grouped by age, level of education and practice roles. At Alpha p < .05 there were no significant differences between age groups, levels of education or practice roles in terms of reasons for career choices or barriers experienced.
Instrument Part II

In this section of the survey, subjects were asked three open-ended questions: What do you think would increase the recruitment of male nurses? Are you satisfied with the choice that you made? Please explain. Would you recommend nursing to other males? Please explain.

All nurses stated there is a lack of recruitment initiatives specifically aimed at males to consider nursing as a career choice. Many of the study subjects articulated the invisibility of men in nursing and offered particular suggestions such as: a greater need to work on demystifying the stereotypes, more media advertisements promoting men as nurses, using testimonies from nurses during recruitment, promoting travel and career opportunities that nursing offers, and increasing the salaries.

In response to the questions on career satisfaction, over 93 per cent of the subjects were satisfied with choosing nursing as a career. Specifically, 58 subjects, out of 62, were satisfied with their career choice and would recommend it to others. Four nurses, of the 62, were not satisfied or were unsure, of whether they would recommend nursing to others. Some of the narrative responses demonstrate their satisfaction with being a nurse:

“Absolutely satisfied, it is who I am. It isn’t just a job to me, I live my nursing role.”
“I had entered nursing in the hopes of getting an education and then applying to the RCMP, but I enjoyed the profession so much I stayed.”
“Yes, I do this job for the caring and safety of my patients and this gives me great satisfaction.”
“Extremely satisfied-it met my professional needs and my personal needs.”
“I believe it was a ‘calling’ because I always wanted to do it and still do. My father had the same feeling but 50 years ago could not afford it, and men were not encouraged to take on this profession.”
“To be a professional career person; to have a career by age 21; to be part of one of the oldest professions to care for sick, disabled.”
“Yes, the profession has been very good to me and I can’t imagine doing anything else.”

Discussion

Within this study, regardless of age, educational background and practice role, men in nursing reported the main reasons they chose nursing as a career were: job security, career and travel opportunities, and salary. Similar findings have been reported in the literature. In a study investigating how gender affected motivation for choosing nursing for freshman in three nursing programs in the U.S. male students in comparison to female students put greater emphasis on aspects such as salary, job security, and the social image of the profession (Zysberg, & Berry, 2005). To recruit more men strategies should be designed based upon these factors that influenced men's decision to enter a nursing program. It is imperative that school and career counselors emphasize these qualities when providing career advice to young men interested in a nursing career. With the unstable economy, the financial security, career and geographic mobility that nursing offers are benefits important to men. These can be stressed during recruitment efforts for this population.
Other reasons for choosing nursing as a career identified by study subjects were: attraction to the social image of the profession; belief that the job would be rewarding; and congruence of a caring personality with their perceptions of being a nurse. These qualities need to be addressed during recruitment. It is also recommended that future research include further investigation of these concepts.

The findings of this study highlight that men remain an untapped resource and continue to be overlooked during recruitment efforts for the nursing profession. The subjects in this study reported that inadequate recruitment and lack of male role models in the media continue to be a barrier that inhibits men from choosing nursing as a career choice. A lack of recruitment efforts directed at the male population was identified as the top barrier. Even though it is the 21st century and nursing is a growing career, limited recruitment of men continues to impact males who may wish to pursue nursing as a career choice. Recruitment strategies specifically targeting men need to become top priority. Advertisements/promotional materials that portray nurses in masculine ways should be developed to counter any stigma held by society. These posters should prominently be exhibited in places and locations frequented by the male population. A television ad campaign directed at men and shown during the news and sport events is another initiative that should be undertaken. Such materials would be an excellent resource for use by guidance and career counsellors in assisting individuals with career planning.

Despite the fact that men have been working in the profession for a number of years, stereotypes continue to be a barrier in the clinical setting. Nurses in this study reported being satisfied with their career choice and were willing to advise others to choose nursing as a career option. These findings were supported by their narrative responses. However, the movement of men into nursing is slow and gender bias continues to impact the profession. Unless a concentrated effort by all concerned stakeholders is undertaken to aid recruitment and retention, discrimination of men who are nurses will continue and men will still represent a small percentage of the registered nurse population. The focus on the occupation of nursing as a career needs greater development with an emphasis on the characteristics of gender neutrality by professional associations, university schools of nursing, and school and career counsellors. An objective for nursing organizations and nursing programs is to aid recruitment efforts by challenging the societal stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. These endeavors may lead to an increase of men joining the nursing profession.

Given the small sample size of this study, the results need to be interpreted with caution. The use of a convenience sample of nurses within one Canadian province may not be representative of nurses in other provinces or those outside of Canada. Additionally, the questionnaire used in this study should be refined and retested using a larger sample of men nurses. Also the authors recommend doing further qualitative investigations looking at career satisfaction among male nurses. These studies may aid discovery of particular factors that are responsible for satisfaction in choosing a nursing career. Such findings may be useful for preparation of promotional materials in recruitment efforts and thus benefit retention of nurses.
Conclusion

If the nursing profession is sincere in its efforts to create a gender neutral workforce, then it needs to address the issue of not actively recruiting men. A major priority is a greater emphasis on the development of gender appropriate materials for nursing recruitment and career promotion. Such initiatives are necessary if the profession wishes to address the current issue of nursing shortages and lack of diversity among the nursing workforce. The time for nursing is to act now to deal with gender bias, recruit more men, and to take bold steps to correct the gender imbalance. These steps can only help strengthen the health care workforce which will benefit the profession and also the population served by nurses.

References


Patterns of Workplace Supervisory Roles: Experiences of Canadian Workers

Robert D. Hiscott
University of Waterloo

Recent transformations across a wide range of contemporary work organizations are evident in flattened hierarchies with fewer levels of graded authority, reduced ranks of middle managers and smaller core workforces (Foot and Venne, 1990; Leicht, 1998; McBrier and Wilson, 2004). Given such transformations, it is reasonable to expect an increasing proportion of regular full-time workers to assume supervisory roles in the workplace, as evolving organizational demography dictates revised divisions of labour with many such responsibilities being assigned to non-managers. Accordingly, the specific form/content and span of control of supervisory responsibilities will likely become even more important for the career development and progress of large numbers of workers. This paper investigates four dimensions of supervisory duties as experienced by Canadian workers over a six-year period, through the secondary analysis of longitudinal panel data from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID, Panel 2, covering 1996 to 2001 inclusive). An analysis of specific dimensions of supervisory duties is essential since position or job titles may not accurately reflect the actual supervisory roles of workers (Pergamit and Veum, 1999; Rosenfeld, Van Buren and Kalleberg, 1998; Rothstein, 2001). Beyond this, the four dimensions were combined into a basic supervisory duty experience scale to distinguish broad levels of experience (from none to high). Log-linear modelling techniques were applied to explore the interactive effects of sex of worker, university education and occupational sector for first-reported job (at the beginning of the longitudinal panel) upon supervisory duty experience. Significant bivariate and trivariate interaction effects were also explored through percentage tables to reveal the complexity of these associations.

Supervisory Roles in the Contemporary Workplace

Previous empirical research has documented considerable numbers and proportions of workers assuming supervisory roles in the workplace, especially in terms of supervising the work of others (Jacobs, 1992; Rothstein, 2001; Pergamit and Veum, 1999, Rosenfeld, Van Buren and Kalleberg, 1998, Maume, 2006). While employee-oriented supervision may represent only one of many possible skill dimensions associated with management work (Schippman, Prien and Hughes, 1991), supervising other workers represents a common and important dimension of supervisory responsibilities in the modern workplace.

Yet this form of duty is often distinct from managerial or true decision-making authority within the workplace (Rosenfeld, Van Buren and Kalleberg, 1998; Rothstein, 2001; Smith, 2002). To illustrate, drawing on US General Social Survey data, Rothstein (2001:666) found large percentages of workers reported supervising the work of others, but much lower proportions of these same workers indicated that they had full responsibility for setting pay or determining promotions of subordinate workers,
leading him to conclude that control over pay and promotions likely represents “… a higher grade of responsibility than control over their job tasks, and may be associated with a higher rung on the job ladder.” Beyond supervising other workers, the present research explored three other supervisory duty dimensions captured in Canadian SLID data, including influencing budget and staffing, influencing pay and promotions, and deciding work for others. Together, these four dimensions of supervisory responsibility represent useful indicators of the scope of supervisory experiences of workers in the modern workplace.

Given recent transformations within work organizations, supervisory roles in the workplace are expected to assume even greater importance for worker careers paths and progression over time. Accepting one or more supervisory duties in the workplace may potentially reduce negative consequences for workers associated with “career blockage” (Foot and Venne, 1990, Rothman, 1998), or may reduce the risk of reaching a “professional plateau” in the course of a career (Lee, 2002), as new responsibilities would help workers to develop additional skills to remain employable, marketable and current in their occupations or professions. Assuming supervisory roles in the workplace is consistent with the emergence of the “boundaryless career” (Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom, 2005), which highlights individual worker accountability for career development and progress in an era of downsized organizations and flattened hierarchies. It is also consistent with emerging “spiral career trajectories” (entailing multiple lateral changes and fewer upward moves within flattened work organizations – Foot and Venne, 1990), supplanting traditional linear career paths of upward status mobility via formal promotions in the workplace. Assuming supervisory responsibilities may alter workers’ subjective assessment of “career plateau” reflected in their perceived prospects for advancement within an organization (Nachbagauer and Riedl, 2002). Further, taking on supervisory duties in the workplace may reduce the destruction of individual worker “human capital” (experience within a given occupation or industry) ensuing from high levels of occupational / industrial mobility (Kambourov and Manovskii, 2004), and may reduce the negative economic consequences associated with high external mobility over time (Dwyer, 2004; le Grand and Tåhlin, 2002; Kambourov and Manovskii, 2004).

Factors Influencing Supervisory Responsibility Experiences

This analysis focused on three important factors expected to influence the supervisory responsibility experiences of Canadian workers – gender, attainment of university-level education, and initial occupational sector of employment (for the first-reported job of workers at the beginning of the survey panel in 1996). Beginning with gender effects, previous research has documented that female workers are less likely to assume supervisory duties relative to their male counterparts (Jacobs, 1992; Smith, 2002; Rosenfeld, Van Buren and Kalleberg, 1998, Maume, 2006), and also less likely to attain higher levels of supervisory responsibility (Smith, 2002; Rothstein, 2001). Despite the trend of growing female employment in a range of traditional male-dominated professional and managerial occupations (Hughes, 1995; Jacobs, 1992; Cooke-Reynolds and Zukewich, 2004), there remains a high degree of gender occupational segregation in post-industrial labour markets which limit career advancement opportunities for females to positions of authority in the workplace. “Glass ceiling” effects continue to limit female workers’ success in terms of workplace
authority level, with relatively few women attaining senior management positions (Jacobs, 1992; Smith, 2002). Smith (2002:532) identified gender differences in workplace authority as a significant source of gender inequality, arguing that “The relative location of men and women within the structure of the economy, and their proportional representation within such structures, account for more of the gender gap in authority than the human capital attributes of workers”. For the present research, it was hypothesized that female workers would be more likely to report no supervisory duty experience in the workplace over the six-year period relative to their male counterparts. Conversely, male workers were hypothesized to exhibit ‘high’ levels of supervisory duty experience (signified by at least some experience on all four duty dimensions over time), relative to female workers.

The human capital model is a useful perspective for interpreting and understanding supervisory responsibility experiences of workers over time. Personal investments in human capital (such as university education) impact employment outcomes (such as occupational sector), which in turn can influence the likelihood of attaining supervisory roles in the workplace. Canary and Canary (2006) found that within personal career narratives of supervisors, most interviewees identified individual-level determinants of education and training as contributing to their career development and impacting one or more career moves over time. Previous research has demonstrated that personal investments in different forms of human capital (including education, training and development, career tenure, and hours of work) enhances prospects for attaining supervisory authority in the workplace (Smith, 2002; Metz and Tharenou, 2001). For the present research, it was hypothesized that workers with any university-level education would be more likely to report ‘high’ levels of supervisory duty experience, while those without any university education would be more likely to have no supervisory duty experience over the six-year period.

Occupational sector of employment was used in this analysis as a basic indicator of occupational status within the labour force, broadly distinguishing management, professional, white collar and blue collar occupations. Previous empirical research has not specifically explored the relationship between occupational sector and supervisory duty experience in the workplace, although hypotheses were articulated drawing on an understanding of the content of each of these broad sectors. For the present research, it was hypothesized that workers initially employed in the management occupational sector would be most likely to exhibit ‘high’ levels of supervisory duty experience over time, given the obvious linkage between managerial authority and supervisory roles in the workplace. Second, workers initially employed in professional occupational sectors (such as natural and applied sciences, social sciences and related, and health occupations sectors) were hypothesized to be more likely to report ‘high’ levels of supervisory duty experience. Third, workers from white collar (sales and service) and blue collar occupational sectors were hypothesized to be most likely to have no supervisory duty experience over time.

While there are many other factors which may influence or impact supervisory responsibility experiences over time, the present research concentrated on these three variables investigating interactions with the dependent variable of level of supervisory duty experience of workers. Beyond testing hypothesized relationships between each of these three influencing factors (gender, university education and occupational sector) and the level of supervisory duty experience of workers over time, trivariate interactions involving pairs of factors and the dependent variable of supervisory duty
experience were also explored. Although formal hypotheses were not specified for trivariate interactions, it was generally expected that the nature and strength of associations between gender and supervisory duties, and university education and supervisory duties, would be mediated by occupational sector. Multivariate log-linear modelling techniques were applied to statistically prioritize relationships, accompanied with interpretation of specific associations found within both bivariate and trivariate percentage tables.

**Research Methods**

The research methodology employed was secondary analysis of longitudinal survey data from the *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics* (SLID, Panel 2, 1996-2001). This is a national survey collected by Statistics Canada, designed and stratified to be broadly representative of the Canadian labour force (excluding residents of the northern territories, residents of institutions and persons living on Indian reserves). Each SLID longitudinal panel is comprised of approximately 30,000 individual Canadians with multiple interviews conducted with the same survey respondents over a six-year time period. As noted by Giles (2001:365), “In SLID, the focus extends from static measures to the whole range of transitions, durations and repeat occurrences of people’s financial and work situations.” The scope, breadth of content and large sample size of SLID, along with its longitudinal design made it ideal for exploring the dynamic nature of experiences of Canadian workers with respect to supervisory roles in the workplace. Four distinct supervisory duties were recorded in SLID for employment positions held at the end of each year of the panel (1996 to 2001 inclusive). Only Canadian workers with a valid occupation code for all six years of the SLID panel (signifying employment in all years) were included in this secondary data analysis. Data presented in tables below were weighted to produce estimates of the Canadian working population, in accordance with SLID data release guidelines.

The four facets of supervisory duties captured in SLID data include influencing budget and staffing, influencing pay and promotions, deciding work for others, and supervising others. For each of these four dimensions, end-of-year states were binary coded to indicate either not having or having the supervisory role (coded ‘0’ or ‘1’ respectively). These binary variables were then aggregated across all panel years to capture the 64 possible permutations of binary outcomes across the six years ($2^6$), ranging from ‘000000’ signifying no supervisory experience on a given dimension, to ‘111111’ denoting continuous experience with that duty. Given sample size limitations, it was not practical to examine each of the 64 distinct permutations representing stability and mobility in supervisory duty experiences, so permutations were collapsed into a smaller set of logically-coherent categories reflecting broader patterns. The collapsed supervisory experience scales were anchored by two stable end categories of no experience and continuous experience over time. Intermediate scale categories represented different forms of mobility including being promoted to the duty, demoted from the duty, and a residual category for various forms of irregular or mixed mobility. The constructed supervisory duty experience scale represents a continuum of the form and extent of supervisory experience on each of these four dimensions, depicting both stability and mobility in experience, and trends over time (promotion, demotion and irregular patterns).
The supervisory duty experience scales are presented in Table 1 below for each of the four duty dimensions. About two-thirds of Canadian workers had no duty experience over the six-year period with influencing budget and staffing or pay and promotions, while less than half had no experience with deciding work for others and supervising others. Conversely, only about a third of the population had experience with influencing budget and staffing or pay and promotions, duties which are typically associated with more senior managerial occupations. At the other end of the continuum, continuous supervisory experience over the six-year period ranged from about one in 31 workers influencing budget and staffing, to about one in ten workers supervising others. These two end categories of no experience and continuous experience represent true stability on these supervisory duty dimensions (no change over time). In total, these two categories accounted for between half of workers (51.8 percent) for supervising others, to over two-thirds (71.1 percent) for influencing pay and promotions. Conversely, between 28.9 and 48.2 percent of all workers exhibited at least some degree of mobility or change over time across these four dimensions of supervisory duties.

Table 1

Supervisory Experience Scale For Four Supervisory Duties For Canadian Working Population (1996-2001)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisory Duty</th>
<th>No Experience</th>
<th>Demoted from Duty</th>
<th>Mixed Mobility</th>
<th>Promoted to Duty</th>
<th>Continuous Experience</th>
<th>Canadian Working Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence Budget and Staffing</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>8,691,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence Pay and Promotions</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8,691,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide Work for Others</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8,691,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise Others</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>8,691,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) Panel 2 (1996-2001)

1. Held duty in 1996, but was demoted from duty sometime after 1996 and did not assume duty again.
2. All irregular patterns of mobility, of both promotion to and demotion from supervisory duty during 6-year time frame.
3. Promoted to supervisory duty sometime after 1996 and continued to perform duty up to 2001.
4. Includes only Canadian workers reporting an occupation in each of the SLID survey years – 1996 to 2001 inclusive.
There is a relatively tight range in promotion percentages, from almost one in thirteen for influencing pay and promotions, to one in nine for supervising others. ‘Promoted to duty’ signified that workers did not hold the duty at the beginning of the survey panel (1996), but assumed the role sometime after and continued to hold the duty to 2001. Demotions from duties ranged from about one in 24 workers for influencing pay and promotions, to about one in twelve for supervising others. ‘Demoted from duty’ indicated that workers held the duty initially in 1996, but dropped the role some time after that, and did not resume the duty. Unfortunately, demotions could not be broken down further to distinguish voluntary or involuntary demotions – whether the decision to give up a supervisory role was that of the worker, or his/her employer. Canadian workers were more likely to be promoted to than demoted from a given duty, with a difference of about three percentage points across the four dimensions. This implies a net gain or increase in experience on each of these duty dimensions over time.

When Canadian workers are mobile with respect to these supervisory duties, they are less likely to follow a standard path (either promotion or demotion), and more likely to exhibit an irregular form of mobility. Mixed mobility refers very broadly to all forms of irregular mobility in relation to given roles, and in total exceeds the combined percentages for the more pure forms of mobility – promoted to and demoted from duty. Between about one in six and over one-quarter of workers exhibited mixed mobility across these four dimensions. Within the residual mixed mobility category (not shown in Table 1), the most common occurrence was short-term limited experience (Out-In-Out) with each of these four roles. Canadian workers were more likely to test or try out a supervisory role (exhibiting the Out-In-Out pattern), than to have a temporary interruption from a given duty (the reverse In-Out-In path). All other irregular mobility (involving multiple promotions to and demotions from a given duty over six years) accounted for about one in ten workers at most. Data in Table 1 revealed both stability and mobility, and complex patterns of experience with respect to these four supervisory duty dimensions.

**Data Analysis**

Having introduced supervisory duty experience on these four dimensions in an aggregate profile, the focus of subsequent analysis is on a collapsed, basic scale reflecting the degree of experience across all four duties, with categories of ‘none’ (no experience with any of the four duties between 1996 and 2001), ‘some’ (indicating experience with at least one of the four duties over time), and ‘high’ (at least some experience on all four of these duties). The effects of gender, university education and occupational sector for first reported jobs of Canadian workers upon the collapsed supervisory experience scale are explored initially using bivariate percentage tables (Tables 2 and 3 below). Log linear modelling is then applied as a heuristic technique to statistically prioritize relationships or interactions between the three independent variables and the dependent variable of supervisory duty experience (Table 4). This leads to the identification of two important trivariate interaction terms which are then investigated more closely through trivariate percentage tables (Tables 5 and 6).
Summary Supervisory Experience Scale (1996-2001) By Sex and Education of Canadian Worker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisory Duty Variable / Category</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Working Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working Population</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>8,691,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex of Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>3,812,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>4,879,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education of Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No University Education</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>6,678,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, Some University</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>2,013,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) Panel 2 (1996-2001)

1. No experience on any of four supervisory dimensions between 1996 and 2001.
2. Experience on all four supervisory dimensions for at least some time between 1996 and 2001.
3. SLID sample data weighted to produce working population estimates.

In aggregate terms (first panel of Table 2), over a third of all Canadian workers had no supervisory duty experience, while about two in five exhibited some experience, and less than a quarter of the population reported ‘high’ supervisory duty experience. In terms of gender effects, over a quarter of male workers exhibited ‘high’ supervisory duty experience compared to about one in six female workers (8.9 percentage point difference). Conversely, female workers were much more likely to report no supervisory duty experience relative to male workers (12.1 percentage point difference). Hence at the bivariate level, there is a clear gender distinction in supervisory duty experience in favour of male workers. This is entirely consistent with gender differences in supervisory roles reported in previous empirical research. With respect to university education, there is a stronger association with supervisory duty experience at the bivariate level. Over a third of Canadian workers with at least some university exhibited ‘high’ supervisory duty experience compared to less than one in five without any university education (16.2 percentage point difference). Conversely, two in five workers without any university education had no supervisory duty experience over time compared to about one-quarter of workers with some university education (14.8 percentage point difference). Hence, education does matter and having any university-level education has a markedly positive impact on the likelihood of assuming supervisory roles in the workplace.

The third determinant of supervisory duty experience explored in this paper is occupational sector of employment, reflected in the classification of the first reported job of Canadian workers in 1996, as coded using the 1991 Standard Occupational Classification or SOC (Statistics Canada, 2005). Although SLID survey data revealed significant occupational mobility over the course of the six-year panel period, the focus for this analysis is on the first reported occupation in 1996 since this would represent a
starting or reference point and serve as a potential springboard for subsequent supervisory duty experiences over time. Table 3 below profiles the collapsed supervisory experience scale for ten broad occupational sectors of employment. There are substantial differences in supervisory duty experiences across the ten occupational sectors profiled, with management occupations being the most obviously distinct sector. About three in five workers in management occupations exhibited high supervisory duty experience, and over 90 percent reported at least some experience over time. This is an expected finding since authority and control associated with managerial positions generally entails direct supervisory responsibilities such as those captured in the SLID survey. The next highest supervisory duty experience profile was found for the natural and applied sciences occupational sector (which would include engineers, architects, and related professional and technical occupations). About a third exhibited ‘high’ supervisory duty experience, and fully three-quarters of workers from this sector reported at least some experience over time. Other professional-oriented sectors also had high supervisory experience profiles including social sciences and related occupations, as well as art, culture, recreation and sport occupations.

Table 3

*Summary Supervisory Experience Scale (1996-2001) By Occupational Sector in 1996 (First Reported Job)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisory Duty SOC Sector in 1996</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Working Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Occupations</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>843,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business, Finance and Administrative Occupations</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>1,600,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and Applied Science and Related Occupations</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>449,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Occupations Occup. in Social Science, Education, Government Service and Religion</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>461,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occup. In Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport Sales and Service Occup. Trades, Transport and Equipment Operator Occup. Occupations Unique to Primary Industry</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>585,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>238,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>2,101,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>1,302,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>432,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>676,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workers from traditional blue collar occupational sectors (the last three sectors in Table 3) exhibited the lowest profiles of supervisory duty experiences with the highest percentages of no supervisory experience, along with those from the white collar sales and services occupational sector. Conversely, workers starting out in managerial or professional occupational sectors exhibited much stronger profiles of experience, and were generally less likely to report no supervisory duty experience. One notable exception to this pattern was seen for the health occupations sector with a high percentage for no duty experience and a very low percentage for ‘high’ supervisory duty experience. The content of this sector (ranging from high status professional positions to highly-skilled technical to less-skilled assisting occupations) along with the relative independent and often autonomous nature of work of many health care practitioners may partially explain the lower supervisory duty experience profile found for this occupational sector. As well, workers from the business, finance and administrative occupations sector exhibited an average supervisory experience profile which is not surprising given the wide diversity of occupations within this sector, ranging from clerks and secretaries to professional accountants and auditors.

A wide variation was found across the occupational sectors for the ‘high’ supervisory duty experience category, ranging from a low of 12.0 percent for workers in blue collar processing, manufacturing and utilities occupations to the high of 61.1 percent for workers in management occupations (49.1 percentage point difference). The same is true for the other end of the scale, with no supervisory duty experience ranging from as low as 7.1 percent for workers starting in management occupations to 50.8 percent for workers in the same blue collar sector (43.7 percentage point difference). Even excluding the obviously distinct management occupations sector from consideration, there are still substantial percentage differences for these two scale categories (‘none’ and ‘high’) across the remaining nine occupational sectors. Hence, the strength of this bivariate association is not uniquely attributable to differences between workers initially employed in management and non-management occupations. Despite large magnitude differences across these ten occupational sectors, it warrants noting that workers throughout the Canadian labour force (covering managerial, professional, white-collar and blue-collar occupational sectors) have supervisory opportunities – across all ten occupational sectors, half or more of workers exhibited at least some supervisory duty experience over the six-year time frame.

Log-linear modelling was applied to the four-variable data array (sex by university education by occupational sector by collapsed supervisory experience scale, producing a 120-cell table) as a heuristic device to statistically prioritise both bivariate and trivariate interaction terms (all involving the dependent variable of level of supervisory duty experience), leading to selection of an optimal model. All data were weighted to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occup. Unique to Process, Manufacturing and Utilities</th>
<th>37.4%</th>
<th>40.4</th>
<th>22.2</th>
<th>8,691,400</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* Data from Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) Panel 2 (1996-2001)
incorporate SLID survey design effects, and then re-weighted to produce the original sample size for correct sample-based statistical contrasts using log-linear modelling. A forward hierarchical inclusion design was applied to the data array beginning with the model of structural independence (assuming no relationships between independent and dependent variables), and progressively testing each possible interaction term and selecting the best term at each stage for inclusion in the final model. At each stage of model testing, a single interaction term is selected for inclusion in the optimal model – the term which maximizes the reduction in the maximum likelihood estimate (\(L^2\) statistic). Only interaction terms which include the dependent variable of supervisory duty experience are tested since this is the primary variable of interest.

Table 4


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Specification - see variable legend below</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>(L^2)</th>
<th>(\Delta L^2)</th>
<th>(R^2)</th>
<th>(\Delta R^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D))</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1712.12</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D), (S*D))</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1519.27</td>
<td>192.86</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D), (U*D))</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1407.14</td>
<td>112.14</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D), (O*D))</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>564.31</td>
<td>1147.81</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D), (O<em>D)(U</em>D))</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>402.66</td>
<td>299.72</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D), (O<em>D)(S</em>D))</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>204.59</td>
<td>299.72</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D), (O<em>D)(S</em>D)(U*D))</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>160.70</td>
<td>134.52</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D), (O<em>D)(U</em>D)(S<em>D), (S</em>U*D))</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>146.37</td>
<td>125.07</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D), (O<em>D)(U</em>D)(S<em>D), (U</em>O*D))</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>125.17</td>
<td>105.79</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D), (O<em>D)(U</em>D)(S<em>D), (U</em>O<em>D)(S</em>U*D))</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>92.02</td>
<td>66.32</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D), (O<em>D)(U</em>D)(S<em>D), (U</em>O<em>D)(S</em>O*D))</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39.47</td>
<td>39.47</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((S)(U)(O)(D), (O<em>D)(U</em>D)(S<em>D), (U</em>O<em>D)(S</em>O<em>D)(S</em>U*D))</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>15.97</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S: Sex of Worker U: University Education O: Occupational Sector D: Supervisory Duty Experience

Table 4 reports all tested log-linear model contrasts for supervisory duty experience data ordered from simplest to most complex model. Given the large sample size drawn from SLID Panel 2 for analysis, virtually any statistical contrast of maximum likelihood estimates (simply comparing \(L^2\) statistics) would be deemed statistically significant at conventional alpha criteria levels. To avoid this complication in statistical contrasts, the unique effect of each interactive term inclusion at each stage is assessed using an \(R^2\) analog statistic (so named because it takes on the properties of a multiple \(R^2\) with values ranging from zero for no improvement in fit, to 1.0 for a perfect fit, attained only with the saturated log-linear model containing all possible interaction terms involving the dependent variable). Model building continues until the inclusion of additional interaction terms yields modest reductions to maximum likelihood estimates reflected in negligible change to \(R^2\) analog values.
Moving beyond the model of structural independence (first block of Table 4), the most significant bivariate interaction term is occupational sector by supervisory duty experience (O*D – the last row of block 2), which reduces the maximum likelihood statistic by 67 percent (as revealed by the $R^2$ analog statistic). The next stage of model building (block 3) tests the remaining two bivariate interaction terms, and identifies sex by supervisory duty experience (S*D) as a highly significant term, resulting in a further 15.8 percent reduction in maximum likelihood estimate, above and beyond that contributed by the interaction of occupational sector by supervisory duty experience – this is shown as $\Delta R^2$ which quantifies statistical improvement between the optimal models at block 2 and 3 stages. Beyond this, the university education by supervisory duty experience interaction term (U*D) yields a smaller reduction to maximum likelihood estimates, with a $\Delta R^2$ of only 7.9 percent, above and beyond the previous model. The block 4 log-linear model (including all possible bivariate interaction terms involving the dependent variable) is selected as the optimal bivariate model to serve as a baseline for subsequent testing of trivariate interaction terms.

Trivariate interaction terms are tested in subsequent blocks presented in Table 4 to determine if more complex terms should be included to define the optimal model. Inclusion of the trivariate interaction term of university education by occupational sector by supervisory duty experience (U*O*D) results in the greatest reduction in maximum likelihood estimates, with a $\Delta R^2$ of 3.1 percent above and beyond the best bivariate interaction model. The addition of the interaction term of sex by occupational sector by supervisory duty experience (S*O*D) results in another 2.3 percent improvement, and this log-linear model is selected as optimal for explaining relationships between this set of variables. The final block shown in Table 4 tests the last of the three trivariate interaction terms of sex by university education by supervisory responsibility (S*U*D) with negligible improvement of 1.0 percent.

Previous tables (2 and 3) profiled bivariate relationships with the dependent variable corresponding to each of the three bivariate interaction terms included in the optimal log-linear model. The two trivariate interaction terms contained in the optimal model are profiled in percentage form in Tables 5 and 6 below. Beginning with the interaction between education, occupation and supervisory duty experience, Table 5 reveals that Canadian workers with some university education consistently had higher supervisory duty experience profiles across all ten of the SOC occupational sectors. However, the education effect varied markedly in magnitude across these ten sectors. Differences between workers with and without university education in ‘high’ supervisory experience percentages ranged across the sectors from 2.9 to 33.3 percentage points for workers from social sciences and related occupations, and those from processing, manufacturing and utilities occupations sectors, respectively. Percentage differences between workers with and without university education with no supervisory duty experience ranged from 6.1 to 29.5 percentage points for workers from these same two occupational sectors, respectively. However, caution should be exercised with the interpretation of results for the blue collar processing, manufacturing and utilities occupational sector, given the relatively small number (both in unweighted sample size and working population estimate) of workers in this sector with any university education. Beyond this, the largest percentage point differences between workers with and without university education were found for natural and applied sciences, and health occupations sectors, with ‘high’ supervisory duty experience differences in the order of 19 percentage points.
For workers without any university education, levels of ‘high’ supervisory duty experience ranged from as low as one in ten workers (10.8 percent for workers in the processing, manufacturing and utilities occupations sector) to over half (56.0 percent for workers in management occupations). Levels of high supervisory duty experience were markedly higher for workers with some university education, ranging from about one in five (20.1 percent for workers in primary industry occupations) to almost three-quarters (70.7 percent for workers in management occupations). Once again, workers starting out in management occupations were distinct from workers from all other
occupational sectors with a markedly higher profile of supervisory duty experience. For the ‘high’ supervisory experience category, the percentage of workers from management occupations is 26.6 to 31.4 percentage points greater than the second highest occupational sector, for workers with and without university education, respectively. This confirms that workers starting out in management occupations – with or without university education – are much more likely to have had experience involving all four of the supervisory duties examined over the six-year time frame.

Turning to the interaction between sex, occupation and supervisory duty experience, Table 6 shows that male workers had higher supervisory duty experience profiles relative to female workers across all ten SOC occupational sectors. Male workers consistently exhibited higher percentages in the ‘high’ supervisory experience category, while female workers consistently had greater percentages in the ‘none’ category. However, beyond this general pattern there was marked variation in the magnitude of gender differences across the ten occupational sectors. Differences between male and female workers in ‘high’ supervisory experience percentages ranged from 1.5 to 18.6 percentage points for workers from primary industry occupations, and those from social sciences and related occupations sectors, respectively. Percentage differences between male and female workers with no supervisory duty experience ranged from 2.1 to 23.4 percentage points for workers from health occupations, and those from social science and related occupational sectors, respectively. Male workers from social science and related occupations, and from business, finance and administrative occupations were much more likely to exhibit ‘high’ supervisory duty experience relative to female workers from these same occupational sectors, with differences of 18.6 and 17.6 percentage points, respectively. Conversely, female workers from social science and related occupations, and processing, manufacturing and utilities occupations were much more likely to have no supervisory duty experience relative to male workers, with differences of 23.4 and 22.3 percentage points, respectively.

Table 6

*Summary Supervisory Experience Scale (1996-2001) by Occupational Sector in 1996 (First Reported Job) By Sex of Worker*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of Worker</th>
<th>female</th>
<th>Worker</th>
<th>male</th>
<th>Worker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Occupations</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>273,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business, Finance, Admin. Occup.</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>1,124,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>569,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>476,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural &amp; Applied Science Occup.</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>84,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Occupations</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>376,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc.Sci., Educ., Govt. Serv., Relig.</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>350,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art, Culture, Recreation, Sport Occ.</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>129,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; Service Occupations</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>1,141,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades, Transport, Equipment Oper.</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>67,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Industry Occupations</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>96,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing, Mfg., Utilities Occup.</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>168,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working Population</strong></td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>3,812,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) Panel 2 (1996-2001)

For male workers, levels of ‘high’ supervisory duty experience ranged from about one in eight workers (12.9 percent for workers from primary industry occupations) to almost two-thirds (65.1 percent for workers from management occupations). For female workers, ‘high’ supervisory experience levels ranged from as low as one in 16 workers (6.2 percent for workers from processing, manufacturing and utilities occupations) to just over half (52.7 percent for workers from management occupations). Consistent with previous findings, both male and female workers starting out in management occupations exhibited markedly greater supervisory duty experience relative to workers from the remaining nine occupational sectors. The percentage of workers with ‘high’ supervisory duty experience for workers from management occupations is 25.3 and 31.4 percent greater than that found for the second highest occupational sector for female and male workers, respectively. While significant gender differences remain, both male and female workers starting out in management occupations were much more likely to report experience with all four supervisory duty dimensions over time.
Discussion and Conclusions

Over three in five Canadian workers reported at least some supervisory duty experience between 1996 and 2001, with more than half deciding work for, and supervising other workers, and about a third influencing budget and staffing, and pay and promotions in the workplace. Beyond the prevalence of supervisory responsibilities revealed by the aggregate profile, the multivariate log-linear modelling results and analysis of percentage tables provided support for each of the bivariate hypotheses stated above. Specifically, male workers, workers with any university education, and workers from management (especially) and certain professional occupational sectors exhibited markedly higher profiles of supervisory duty experience over the six-year time frame. Conversely, female workers, those without any university education, and workers from both blue and white collar occupational sectors were more likely to report no supervisory duty experience over time. Based on the cumulative R\textsuperscript{2} analog statistic from the optimal bivariate stage model (Table 4), log-linear modelling confirmed that approximately 90 percent of variation found in the 120-cell, four-variable data array could be accounted for through the inclusion of these three bivariate interaction terms (of gender, university education and occupational sector, each by supervisory duty experience of workers).

Log-linear modelling also identified two trivariate interactions (university education by occupational sector by supervisory experience, and sex by occupational sector by supervisory experience) as statistically important, accounting for an additional five percent of explained variation within the data array, yielding a cumulative total R\textsuperscript{2} analog value of 96.1 percent (Table 4). Closer inspection of the percentage tables for these two trivariate interaction terms (Tables 5 and 6) revealed that associations between university education and supervisory experience, and sex and supervisory experience were mediated to some degree by occupational sector of employment. The strengths of the bivariate associations were clearly impacted by the occupational sector where workers were initially employed at the beginning of the survey panel.

In terms of notable interactive combinations, male workers from management occupations were the most likely to report experience on all four supervisory duty dimensions over time (70.7 percent), followed by university-educated workers from the same occupational sector (65.1 percent). University-educated workers from natural sciences and related occupations also exhibited a ‘high’ supervisory experience profile (42.7 percent), along with male workers from business, finance and administrative occupations, and social sciences and related occupations sectors (33.7 and 33.4 percent, respectively). Conversely, workers without any university education from the health occupations sector were the least likely to report a ‘high’ level of supervisory experience over time (5.8 percent), as well as female workers from blue collar occupational sectors (ranging from 6.2 to 11.4 percent across the three sectors). From the other end of the scale, female workers from each of the three blue collar occupational sectors were most likely to report no supervisory duty experience (ranging from 51.7 to 67.6 percent across sectors), along with female workers from white collar sales and services occupations (50.4 percent). As well, workers without university education from blue collar sectors of processing, manufacturing and utilities occupations, and trades, transport and equipment operator occupations were most likely to have no supervisory duty experience over time (at 51.9 and 46.2 percent, respectively).
This analysis focused on four distinct dimensions of supervisory responsibilities in the workplace (influencing budget and staffing, pay and promotions, deciding work for others, and supervising others), as captured in SLID longitudinal panel data, and subsequently reduced to a basic supervisory duty experience scale. While these four dimensions are clearly important in defining workplace supervisory roles, they are certainly not exhaustive. There are other facets of supervisory responsibilities in the workplace – these would include the number of subordinates supervised, relative position within the organizational hierarchy, the scope or extent of decision-making responsibilities within organizations, and whether decision-making authority is exclusive or shared. These facets were not captured through SLID and accordingly could not be investigated. Future research could explore these and other dimensions of workplace supervisory roles to better appreciate the full scope and context of such duties.

The temporal design of the SLID longitudinal panel (covering a six-year period between 1996 and 2001) restricted the analysis of supervisory duty experiences to a relatively short time span. Given typical career durations of thirty or more years, the panel design covers only a small segment of total career experiences of workers. If feasible, future research could broaden the scope of investigating supervisory experiences and career outcomes either through the use of more extended longitudinal panel surveys, or through survey methodologies which gather more retrospective data encompassing a broader time frame. For research on the many and varied forms of job mobility, Rosenfeld (1992) highlighted the importance of examining complete work histories, which would go well beyond the limited time frame afforded by SLID longitudinal data. Ideally, future research could address the full career histories of workers, from the school-to-work transition to currently-held positions. Despite the aforementioned limitations to the measurement of supervisory duty experiences, these SLID data did reflect the prevalence of such experiences among Canadian workers, and also exposed the dynamic and evolving nature of such duties over even a relatively brief time span in the careers of workers.

While log-linear modelling techniques applied in this paper were very useful for identifying and statistically prioritizing both bivariate and trivariate interaction effects involving the dependent scale of supervisory duty experience, this analysis was clearly restricted in terms of the number of factors or determinants which could feasibly be included in the model. Even working with the large-scale national sample captured in SLID, higher dimension data arrays (more than the four-variable/120-cell array explored here) would produce serious statistical complications with unacceptable numbers of ‘sampling zero cells’ and associated inflated sampling errors. Other multivariate techniques (such as multinomial logistic regression to investigate a three-category ordinal dependent variable) could certainly accommodate greater numbers of independent variables in a given model, but are far less suited to exploring complex interaction effects among determinants or factors within the model. The primary purpose of this analysis was to explore complex interactive effects with supervisory duty experience. This was accomplished through the application of log-linear modelling techniques to a limited set of variables, supplemented by assessing and interpreting identified interaction effects within percentage tables.

Future research could explore other factors or determinants which may influence or impact supervisory responsibility experiences over time, going beyond the gender, university education and occupational sector effects investigated here.
Differences in work time arrangements (employment status, working hours, weeks worked) between male and female workers may impact supervisory duty experiences in the workplace, with consequences for career progression and mobility. Among workers with some post-secondary education, the field or discipline of study, or possession of specific educational credentials may directly influence subsequent supervisory responsibility experiences in the workplace. Other career-related factors such as tenure with a given organization, occupational and industrial mobility, as well as career interruptions may alter supervisory duty experiences. As well, individual-level socio-demographic attributes such as age, race or ethnicity (and gender interactions with these characteristics) may also have some bearing on the likelihood of assuming supervisory duties in the workplace. Future research investigating these and other factors or determinants is important given the prevalence of supervisory roles among workers, and the consequences for longer-term career development and progress for workers.

References


Leicht, K. (1998). Work (if you can get it) and occupations (if there are any)? *Work and Occupations, 25*(1), 36-48.


New Realities in the Work World: The Impact on Workers and on the Professional Practice of Career Counsellors

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Once associated with difficult situations and largely reserved for the poor, paid work began to serve, starting in the 1940s, as the main safety net for social risks and as a clear sign that a person was participating in the development of society (Castel, 1995). Modernity, which accompanied the effects of the industrial revolution, started out as a period of collective fulfillment in which paid work played an important role as a regulator of social order (Chalifour, 1997). In the last twenty years however, the work world has undergone considerable change at the economic, social, and technological levels. These changes have led to the emergence of new forms of work that are more demanding, flexible and nonstandard, and to the appearance of new issues in socio-occupational integration.

The reconfiguration of the work world is reducing, for a large segment of the work force, the chances of finding a lasting and satisfying job. Workers now have to make several transitions in this evolving, uncertain context where career paths are no longer straight, upward-bound, and lifelong. Consequently, they must re-evaluate their work market status all throughout their career and make numerous occupational and personal choices. These challenges encourage people to adopt a different view about their career and redefine the place of work in their lives. For some people, the diverse statuses and employment situations give them the freedom and space they need to fulfil themselves in other life roles. Others, however, feel it is impossible to find a stimulating, enriching job that also meets their daily needs. In certain cases, the lack of occupational and financial stability can, regardless of age and gender, result in a decline in living conditions and make it increasingly complex to manage occupational, family, and social responsibilities. These circumstances indirectly contribute to making guidance and career counselling an important social issue as well as a process likely to last from the beginning to the end of people’s working lives (Guichard & Huteau, 2001). In order to maximize their chances of finding and keeping a job and their ability to deal with the related problems, a growing number of people are turning towards career counsellors. However, while the current structure of the work world affects many types of people, this structure also makes it more complicated for career counsellors to help their clients make personal and occupational choices. Counsellors must adjust to the
characteristics of the people they are guiding, to the possibilities of different fields of work, and to the demands of the work world to which they themselves are subjected.

Given the above briefly outlined elements, the first goal of this article will be to discuss the results of recently conducted research into the many new forms of work that are being created, focusing, in particular, on how workers are affected and how they attempt to deal with the inherent challenges. The second goal of this article will be to analyze how these changes are impacting on the professional practice of career counsellors.

**Changes in the Work World**

The economic benefits of the Second World War (1939-1945) pushed Canada and most of the industrialized countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) into a period of prosperity (1945-1975)\(^\text{14}\) which was without precedent in terms of its scale (Crompton & Vickers, 2000; Singh, 2004).

The relative stability of this prosperous period was characterized by full employment and facilitated by the emergence of the welfare state, all of which helped to reinforce paid work and the redistribution of wealth (Chalifour, 1997). Because the workforce was not sufficient enough to ensure industrial productivity, countless workers, many of whom came from the rural sector, seized the chance offered during this period to escape poverty and improve their living conditions (Paugam, 2004).

In addition to full employment, it was normal for workers to find a stable, permanent job (Marchand, 1998). The governments of that period likewise invested in social security policies and programs dealing, in particular, with unemployment, health, family, and retirement (Bédard & Grignon, 2000; Desrochers, 2000). Unions were most active during the 1970s, and, due to the economic stability of the time, had more bargaining power when negotiating their work conditions. Moreover, a large number of women and young baby-boomers also began to work.

Nonetheless, certain authors such as Singh (2004) have stated that 1945-1975 period, from a purely statistical point of view, was an "anomaly" in the history of industrialized countries' economic development. The 1973-1975 oil crisis and the 1981-1982 recession quickly demonstrated that the "thirty glorious years" were nothing other than an exceptional economic period. These crises were marked, among other things, by high unemployment, loss of jobs, and increased inflation (Crompton & Vickers, 2000). The recession in the 1990s created similar effects and though fewer workers lost their jobs than during the 1980s, those who did tended to stay unemployed longer (Bédard & Grignon, 2000).

There has clearly been a considerable change in the work world when we look back over the last few decades. Currently, even though countries like Canada, and in particular some of its provinces, have full or close-to-full employment, socio-occupational paths are nonetheless becoming increasingly precarious. The upheaval that occurred in the middle and particularly at the end of the 1970s disillusioned many workers. Indeed, stable work is no longer the norm. It has given way to nonstandard work.

\(^{14}\) In the French-speaking world, this period is called "les Trente glorieuses" (the thirty glorious years), Fourastié, 1979.)
work\textsuperscript{15} which, according to Matte, Baldino and Courchesne (1998), increased by 135% between 1976 and 1995, and could even proportionately surpass standard work by 2017. People who are entering or re-entering the labour market are especially affected by the rise in this type of employment. This is particularly true for women, immigrants, younger, and older workers (Conseil permanent de la jeunesse, 2001). Many people now find it very difficult to find suitable work because of this more flexible, nonstandard, and complex type of employment. In this context where one's educational level is no longer enough to ensure a stable career path (Fournier, Pelletier & Beaucher, 2003), workers, young and old alike, are experimenting with numerous social and occupational transitions that are often unpredictable and involuntary (Fournier & Bujold, 2005).

There are those who believe that these changes in the work world are the result of structural factors such as globalization, international competition, and technological improvements (Matte & al., 1998). At the same time that world trade is being liberalized, international competition is becoming more intense. This competition is most evident in North America and Western Europe where labour costs are high (Van Liemt, 2004). Companies have consequently adopted a series of "flexible" measures intended to increase competitiveness and confront constant, ferocious, and unpredictable competition by producing more at a lower cost (Desrochers, 2000; Vinokur, 1997). These structural changes have also made the work lives of people more complex, in particular because of the new skills and the new efficiency standards that are required (Appay, 1997).

This new configuration has led to a different view of the role of workers and greater recognition of their knowledge (Capron, 2004). Workers are no longer expected to be drones who execute a simple task (Paugam, 2003). They are required, whatever their qualifications, to play a more active role in their work (Paugam, 2000).

Even though the greater recognition accorded to employees has resulted in more work latitude, this latitude can also be attributed to a general improvement in the workers' qualifications and the introduction of new technologies (Paugam, 2003). Improving technologies have not only made the production process more mentally demanding, they have made it more flexible and continuous (Capron, 2004). New information and communication technologies such as the Internet, e-mail, telephone, and videoconference services are resulting in an ever faster work rate. Nonetheless, while greater use of technology tends to favour an ever-more qualified labour force, it also excludes unqualified workers, thereby widening the gap between the two (Desrochers, 2000).

Even though these recent changes are making some workers' tasks easier and more satisfying, the greater intensity, stress and fatigue has engendered more suffering for other workers (Capron, 2004; De Bandt, Dejours & Dubar, 1995). Subjected to tight

\textsuperscript{15} There are many definitions of nonstandard or atypical work. Nonstandard work is generally defined as fixed-term employment whose status is poorly defined (Fournier, Bourassa and Béji, 2003; Matte et al. 1998). Job insecurity is an essential element of the definition of nonstandard work and several types of work can be qualified as nonstandard: part-time work, self-employed work without employees, multiple employment (more than one job at the same time), and temporary work (fixed-term, casual, seasonal, placement agency work, and all work whose finishing date is determined) (Vosko, Zukewich & Cranford, 2003).
deadlines and intense productivity pressure (Paugam, 2000), workers, to be efficient in their work, must deal every day with sometime paradoxical demands involving prescribed work, their expected latitude, and the real possibilities available to them in terms of the time, material, and information needed to carry out tasks (Huez, 1997).

Furthermore, more intense work and a lack of job and financial security sometimes contributes to a decline in living conditions and makes it increasingly complex to manage occupational, family, and social responsibilities (Burchell, Ladipo & Wilkinson, 2002; Fournier & Bujold, 2005; Hoque & Kirkpatrick, 2003; Lachance & Brassard, 2003; Malenfant, Larue, Jeté, Vézina & St-Arnaud, 2004; Spain, Bédard & Paiement, 2006).

Over the last few years, researchers at the Centre de recherche et d’intervention sur l’éducation et la vie au travail (CRIÉVAT, centre for research and interventions in education and work life) have conducted considerable research into the new forms that work is taking, examining, from different points of view, their impact on various clientele. Several of these studies have served as a basis for the following section, which pays particular attention to current career path challenges, ranging from complex occupational and life choices to work-family balance and changes in the social representation of work.

New Forms of Employment and Diverse Career Paths

Research that has been undertaken by researchers from CRIÉVAT in the last fifteen years among different groups of workers has led to a better understanding of career paths based on nonstandard work. Three main studies were analyzed in order to describe how these new types of employment affect people's lives at work and outside work. The primary research method used was that of the interpretative paradigm in education research (Boutin, 2000; Poisson, 1991). Semistructured interviews were conducted with all the subjects. The first study, which was longitudinal, looked at the career entry of a group of 150 graduates up to six years after graduating (Fournier, Pelletier & Beaucher, 2003). When the researchers realized that, even after this period, almost 60% of the graduates still held nonstandard jobs, a second, cross-sectional study was conducted with a group of 125 workers from 20 to 65 years old who had held nonstandard jobs for at least three years (Bujold & Fournier, 2008; Fournier & Bujold, 2005). A third study, likewise cross-sectional, was also conducted among workers 45 and over who were on an atypical career path.

Some interesting observations can be drawn from the results of these three studies concerning the repercussions of nonstandard employment on the work and non-work lives of these people. For example, close to one third of the people surveyed considered that their career path allowed them to fulfill themselves and gain work experience that they otherwise would not have had in a permanent job. These people reported being well integrated in the labour market despite the irregularity of their work life. They had the impression, moreover, of having achieved, over the years, some mastery of a particular field of which they were proud. And even though many of them pointed out that they would like to improve their general employment conditions, especially their revenue, most of them observed that they had a certain control over

[16] The three studies discussed here were conducted with samples that were equally distributed according to gender and educational level (high school, community college, or university).
their work life despite their nonstandard work status. This control allowed them, furthermore, to pursue their goals in life. Some of the participants specifically mentioned that they were able to take advantage of periods of unemployment by spending more time with their families, in community activities, or in training programs. Nonstandard work provided them with the opportunity to undertake significant projects in other parts of their lives. In brief, for approximately a third of the participants who were interviewed over the years, their relationship with work was rather positive. Far from destabilizing them, their work lives, which were punctuated by a series of relatively unpredictable jobs, helped them to keep their lives moving in the right direction by meeting their needs, motivations, and aspirations.

However, for a majority of the people interviewed (approximately two thirds), the repercussions of regularly occurring nonstandard work seemed to be rather detrimental. Some of them held jobs for which they were plainly overqualified and considered that their abilities were not sufficiently recognized, a fact which did not contribute to building a positive occupational identity. Others worked in relatively stable jobs that sometimes were even relatively well paid but which they did not enjoy. For others, each improvement in their situation was followed by a decline which gave them the impression that they continually had to start over from "scratch." These people were especially disappointed about not being accepted and integrated in a given field. They sometimes mentioned being tired of continuously having to prove themselves and depending on the good will of their employers. Their occupational situation generated considerable stress, in particular because of the uncertainty about their short and medium-term future and even, in some cases, their immediate survival. Finally, the vast majority of those who did not enjoy their atypical career path likewise reported feeling short-changed in non-work activities and projects. In short, close to two thirds of the interviewees felt that regularly occurring nonstandard work disqualified them from normal life and led to rather negative perceptions of work: self-fulfilment opportunities were limited, occupational identities took a beating, non-work life was greatly destabilized, and, for a few respondents, career paths were synonymous with failure and powerlessness. These people considered that the balance between the different areas of their lives was fragile and unstable, that non-work projects were difficult to envisage, and that atypical career paths led to a decline in general living conditions and to a very pronounced feeling of occupational and personal precariousness.

The interviewed workers developed strategies for navigating career paths founded on non-standard work, the main strategies involving a modification of their career and life goals. For example, some people decided to change from one field of work to another due to difficult work conditions that were jeopardizing their family life (e.g., irregular work hours) or that were keeping them from developing a more solid, coherent occupational identity (e.g., too much part-time work). A second strategy consisted in redefining one's life values and goals. This was particularly the case for people who described how they had completely re-evaluated their life choices and deliberately renounced the competition of the work world and its corresponding performance, efficiency, and productivity values. This is likewise true for those who chose to change the way they consumed and thereby reduce their financial needs. A third strategy involved working very hard so as to cope with occupational and financial precariousness. People who adopted this strategy frequently felt overrun by workplace demands, often feeling they had no life outside of work. From their point of view however, overworking became the only way of ensuring their financial independence.
and meeting employer demands, and as such, constituted a relatively acceptable compromise. The last common strategy consisted in choosing to see work from a purely utilitarian viewpoint and to no longer personally invest oneself in this area of life. This was the case, for example, for those who actively searched for personal gratification and well-being outside of work life and saw their job as a means to pursuing personal projects. It is obvious that the strategies that people developed to adapt to the new realities of the work world involved choices whose repercussions extended well beyond their work life. In a context marked by insecure, convoluted career paths, the career and life choices that people made were constantly questioned, necessitating the consideration of complex and diverse elements.

The Growing Complexity of Career and Life Choices

Given these changes in the work world, what is a person's career path now based on? In an attempt to answer this question, two successive studies were conducted, the first with 60 women from 16 to 62 years of age, the second with 12 men from 24 to 62. These studies were exploratory, inductive, and qualitative in nature, and employed a semistructured interview for data collection.

The study conducted with the women indicated that the main way that the participants shaped their identity and developed life projects was through their social relationships. Work life was not an isolated, separate aspect of their lives. All the different life roles, including in their love, family, and social lives, influenced the direction their career paths took. While participants saw work as an aspect of their lives that was essential to their fulfilment, they did not separate it from the rest. This view, which is referred to as a global perspective, led to complex, tortuous, and distinctive career paths. This type of path was composed of a series of commitments, stoppages, and rehirings in which continuity was found in the social relationships that gave meaning to the path, as described from a subjective, reflective viewpoint by the interviewed women.

The relationship dimension, as it has been progressively defined through previous research, consists in an openness to, quest for, and availability for social interactions that are made up of reciprocal relations which allow people to develop and know themselves. The relationship dimension has four dynamic, complementary aspects that motivate, initiate, orientate, and integrate the activities and values that are pursued as part of one's self-fulfilment at work.

The careers of the interviewed women did not unfold in a linear manner. In addition to being influenced by the current changes in the work world, they were also affected by conjugal, maternal, family, social, economic, financial, and technological realities (Spain, Bédard & Paiement, 2003). A typology of the strategies used by the interviewed women emerged from the first results. It was comprised of three main types, namely: the exclusive strategy, which was used by women who concentrated on one role at a time; the integrated strategy, used by those who invested in work and family life by planning various life cycle stages; and the intermittent strategy, employed by women who approached work life and family in an unpredictable and sporadic manner (Spain & Bédard, 1990).

A subsequent study explored the career paths and choices of men. There were linear paths where the initial training led to a job with one or several employers. There were also sinuous paths where the initial training set the starting direction, though
several paths were then taken. Fractured paths were, however, the most frequent. They were made up of a series of career breaks where the initial training did not necessarily correspond to the subsequent choices. The participants on this path had a weakened occupational identity and difficulties making employment choices. Their career progression was unpredictable, sporadic, and interspersed with periods of unemployment. The men in this sample displayed a path diversity that was attributable not only to the new parameters of the work world but also to family, social, and economic contexts. According to them, taking other, significant people into account had affected their occupational decisions many times (Spain, Bédard & Paiement, 2004).

The occupational decisions that the men took involved pragmatic, relationship, and developmental issues. The pragmatic issues could be seen in the need to earn a living or increase one's income, the desire to seize an opportunity or be more comfortable, the wish to improve their work or living conditions, and the way they wished to spend their time and organize their lives. Relationship issues could be seen in the proximity or distance between teenagers and their parents, siblings and peers, between young workers and their colleagues, boss, and clients, between spouses, between parents and their children, and between mentors and their apprentices. They could also be seen in the citizen's view of their social usefulness and the adult's quest for recognition, influence, or power. As for developmental issues, they refer to the stimulating effect on one's personal evolution of returning to school, taking training courses, drawing lessons from colleagues, taking pleasure in one's work, being promoted, using one's skills, fulfilling one's ambitions, meeting challenges, taking on responsibilities, performing, succeeding, creating, respecting oneself, and giving priority to one's quality of life. These issues were combined in various ways depending on the person. The choices made by participants increasingly had to take into account spouses and other family members, obliging people to learn how to reconcile their occupational role with their other roles in life.

**Work-Family Balance**

Changes in the work world, particularly the feminization of the labour force and the growth in two-income couples, has given rise to a lifestyle in which many people have to deal with several occupational and family responsibilities (Lachance & Brassard, 2003). Given that the risk of incompatibility and conflict between the different life roles has increased, couples must now reconsider who does what in the family and house so as to respect both members' occupational aspirations. These changes led the researchers and practitioners to ask questions about the relationship between work and family life. It soon became clear that a better understanding of the factors underlying inter-role conflicts was needed due to the conflicts' harmful consequences for the participants, their families, and their workplaces.

Though the inter-sex differences in the reconciliation of life roles have been studied many times, the results have often been contradictory. A quantitative study (Lachance, Brassard & Tétreau, 2005) was conducted with 106 professionals (53 men and 53 women) who were matched in terms of age and job title so as to control for third variables that might influence the results. The results seem to indicate that there were more similarities than differences between the sexes with respect to individual, family, and organizational characteristics. The women were similar to men in terms of career concerns, life role salience, work attitudes, dyadic adjustment, and life satisfaction.
Likewise, they did not report more work-family conflicts, even though the description of family roles highlighted a significant difference in work-home management conflicts. Furthermore, the considerable differences in the distribution of tasks were in keeping with the traditional model of male and female roles and suggest that family responsibilities were primarily the mother’s domain whatever her work status. Even though male involvement with the children and the domestic chores has been increasing over the years, the men’s participation in these activities was still less than that of the women. The results of a quantitative study conducted among 133 ophthalmologists were consistent with the above-mentioned results (Viviers, Lachance, Maranda & Ménard, 2007). The ophthalmologist study revealed, moreover, that the large number of hours devoted to parental and domestic responsibilities was related to family-work conflicts and distress, women under 45 being particularly affected. That being said, these ophthalmologists noted that work interfered with personal life more than personal life interfered with work. This result might have been attributable to the personal investment required by their profession that limits the energy and time available for their other activities. Given that there are precise professional expectations and formally prescribed roles, it was easier for the ophthalmologists to limit their family commitments since they had more control over this area of life.

Given that people invest more in roles that they deem important and that the stressors stemming from these roles have more impact on well-being, it was postulated that the risk of experiencing conflict and its consequences is greater in people who accord considerable importance to several life roles. This postulate was examined in a quantitative study of 486 adults (Lachance, Gilbert & Tétreau, 2006). Three commitment profiles for the roles of worker, spouse, parent, and person in charge of a home management were identified. The first two were characterized by a high level of engagement in either the family (FAMILY) or worker (WORK) roles, whereas the third group was comprised of people who were strongly committed to both areas of life (DUALITY). Contrary to expectations, the people in the DUALITY profile did not report more inter-role conflicts or consequences. This finding not only reinforces the growth hypothesis stating that having several roles has beneficial effects, it underlines the importance of considering the reasons why people take on their life roles. The study likewise revealed that people in the DUALITY and FAMILY profiles had greater life satisfaction, a better dyadic adjustment, and less work-home management conflicts than people in the WORK profile. The family would thus seem to represent one of the most important areas of life.

Surprisingly, gender distribution across the profiles was not significantly different. A similar commitment to work among highly educated people, as well as the modern desire to fulfill oneself both in one’s work and family life could explain these results. Moreover, it is important to distinguish between commitment, which corresponds to the importance of a role for a person’s identity, and participation, which refers to time invested. This distinction helps us to understand why the men and women in the sample showed similar profile distributions even though they were different in terms of work-leisure, work-home management, and family-work conflicts, as well as in terms of the time devoted to their various roles.

So as to identify the strategies that facilitate the reconciliation of life roles, three studies were conducted among populations that were likely to find it difficult to assume their occupational and family responsibilities due to the amount of time invested in the care of a child or older family member. In the first study, home-based
interviews were conducted with 139 parents of school-aged children with an intellectual disability and 4 focus groups were held (Lachance, Richer, Côté & Poulin, 2004). The second study involved 159 couples from the "sandwich generation" who had to care for both children and an aging parent. Of the 159 who answered the questionnaire, 36 then participated in semistructured, individual interviews (Lachance, Malais & Ducharme, 2005). The third, qualitative study involved 60 semistructured interviews of caregivers helping aged family members and living in 7 different environments (Maltais, Lachance, Richard & Ouellet, 2006).

The result of the quantitative parts of the first two studies showed that the average level of inter-role conflict was fairly low (Lachance & al., 2004, 2005). Indeed, undertaking several roles seemed to represent a source of personal accomplishment and to contribute to a feeling of competency. Some of the parents and caregivers stated that holding a job gave them a break from caregiving, in addition to the financial advantages.

The analysis of the focus groups and the semistructured interviews nonetheless added nuance to these conclusions. Many of the parents and caregivers, in particular the women, had lowered their occupational goals by opting for a non-standard job, taking temporary retirement, or dropping out of the labour market because it was too difficult to reconcile their various life roles (Lachance & al., 2004, 2005; Maltais & al., 2006). Furthermore, this decision was more often imposed than chosen. Insufficient social and organizational measures for work-family balance led these people to consider more personal solutions which, though they undoubtedly reduced inter-role conflicts, also put several of the respondents in more precarious financial and social positions (Lachance & al., 2004). It is thus not at all surprising that there was a disturbing proportion of participants with a high stress level in the quantitative part of the studies.

Even though the traditional family model of the male provider might seem outdated to younger generations who are entering the labour market expecting equal employment opportunities and equal sharing of family responsibilities, the research results from groups at risk of inter-role conflicts suggest that the gap between the sexes is far from having been closed.

The latest changes in the work world have thus had a considerable influence on people's personal and occupational paths, particularly on the way they see work, that is as an activity which plays a central role in their existence.

**Social Representation of Work**

Whether it be because of new post-materialist values (Inglehart, 1997), a social representation of work based on pleasure (Flament, 1996), the new capitalist spirit (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999), or the promotion of self-fulfilment at work (Lalive d'Épinay, 1998), people are forming new representations of their work which are influenced by and are in turn influencing the new conditions of socio-occupational integration.

For example, a recent study of business administration students showed that these students had internalized, during their university career, the new norms of the business world (Negura, Maranda & Yergeau, 2006). Twenty-one of these students were invited to take part in a semistructured interview on "objective and subjective time." The data revealed that the students' social representation of time was strongly influenced by the ideas of excellence and productivity conveyed by the present-day
managerial culture. The students' time was structured to optimize the use of available resources so as to satisfy the most demanding requirements of employers. This representation perhaps explains the excellent competitiveness of these students in the labour market. According to the research results however, their well-being was greatly affected; the students talked about the strong emotional tension that stemmed from the conflict between their perception of their internal resources and that of institutional, university requirements.

An earlier study that was carried out among 70 company managers from the Quebec City and Montreal regions shed light on the internalization of new productivity standards (Negura & Maranda, 2004). The study looked at how the managers' attitudes toward hiring of former drug addicts are produced by two «natural logics» (Grize, 1993), based on their social representations of ex-addicts and companies. The managers who had a business-related education (MBA, industrial relations, etc.) tended to refuse to hire former drug users since the latter represented a risk for the company. In the managers' eyes, the sole goals of their companies were productivity and excellence, concepts which were incompatible with the acknowledged failures of ex-drug users. On the other hand, managers who had completed non-business-related studies (work psychology, sociology, etc.) were more open to hiring these people. Their openness was based on the idea that companies had a social responsibility and that drug abuse could not be considered as a uniquely personal weakness. This study thus demonstrated that the social representations of managers gave rise to specific attitudes when hiring new employees, especially with regard to those whose profiles seemed out of keeping with the expected performance criteria.

In another study (Negura, in press) conducted with 14 independent workers from the Ottawa and Montreal regions, a paradoxical perception of their general work situation was observed. Despite the fact that the participants in this study declared that they felt overloaded and distressed about their unstable work status, they also said that they were generally satisfied about their work situation. Their social representation of work could explain this apparent paradox. The fact that they saw work as a constant, disciplined effort eliminated the psychological tension created by the heavy workload that they considered to be normal. They perceived self-employment as an entrepreneurial activity that involved risk and instability, flexibility and performance, thereby leading them to put the insecurity stemming from their job status into perspective and to reduce the probability of being dissatisfied with their work. The latitude that came from this type of work was even sometimes seen as a means of self-fulfilment as well as a possibility to reconcile work with other areas of life, particularly spousal relationships.

The social representations of both employers and employees play an important role in the present-day socio-occupational integration of people, especially people who are at risk of being excluded. Knowing these representations could greatly help career counsellors in their work.

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17 In this research, a restricted definition of independent work was used. It is defined as work conducted only by the worker, without the help of employed workers, and excluding an employer-employee relation with their clients. This is the most precarious category (D'Amours, 2006) of all the categories of self-employed workers in Canada. In 2004, self-employed workers constituted 14.4% of the working population (Statistics Canada, 2005).
Impact on the Work of Career Counsellors

As has just been shown, the current labour market is dominated by incessant changes – some companies start up while others close down, while still others develop at such a fast pace that their employees must be able to adapt quickly and acquire new skills. Likewise, the choice in training and career possibilities has increased steadily since the 1950s (Cooper & Burke, 2002). All of this has had a direct influence on people’s educational and career-integration paths. Many young people now find it hard to choose, integrate or re-integrate into careers, keep a job, deal with reassignments and new jobs, conciliate work and personal life, and prepare their retirement. Consequently, more numerous and diversified requests for professional career counselling are arising out of the complex situations created by this uncertainty, instability and questioning.

These new realities demand a broader approach from counselling. As has been noted in the literature, there is no one theory or practice in helping relations that can pretend to be universal (Hansen, 2002, 2006; Kemmis, 2005; Le Bossé, Chamberland, Bilodeau & Bourassa, in press; Polkinghorne, 1999). Counselling that is sensitive to labour market, social, and life-style changes, to the numerous personal and occupational paths, and to the ensuing difficult guidance choices does not easily incorporate stereotypical, unequivocal answers. When modern career counsellors work every day in a precise context with clients experiencing “common” problems, they must regularly reconsider the way they see and do things in order to meet the particular needs of each client even if they as counsellors prefer a certain theoretical approach. For example, the medical model,\(^\text{18}\) which has strongly inspired the approach to helping relationships and the expectations of clients, is increasingly revealing its limitations in this regard (Le Bossé & al., in press). Indeed, another epistemology of our practice is slowly taking root (Schön, 1996) which encourages practitioners to adopt another approach that is better adapted to contemporary situations. Several studies have recently examined the evolution of professional practices – in particular those in career counselling and in education (Bourassa, Leclerc & Filteau, 2005; Peavy, 2001; Perrenoud, 2001, 2004a). The various possible implications of this new approach for career counsellors are briefly presented here.

the counsellor as guide. One thing is becoming increasingly clear when the work of present-day practitioners such as career counsellors in education or employment related services is studied: if they are to understand and resolve the specific difficulties their clients are going through, they cannot do so without their clients. Seen from this viewpoint, clients are no longer considered to be "undecided, wounded, or destitute patients" whom practitioners must treat with remedies derived from accepted theories. Rather, they are seen as being competent,\(^\text{19}\) and this competency is just as necessary for successful counselling as that of the counsellor. Clients have a valuable understanding of their situation along with personal and even professional experience that should be put to use in the helping process. Clients also, however,

\(^{18}\) According to this model, practitioners are seen as "heelers" or "saviours," the holders of accepted knowledge and solutions that must be bestowed upon clients. Practitioners focus on the failings of their clients, who are attributed a passive role.

\(^{19}\) This provides a successful alternative to the inadequacy perspective inherent in the medical model.
ponder about where they are going, run into difficulties, and perceive needs that they cannot always satisfy by themselves. Counsellors thus become valuable allies who help clients find answers and solutions that are useful and significant. In this approach, practitioners no longer fulfill the role of specialists in the classical sense of the term, of holders of a grand theory (Polkinghorne, 1999) that is used to reveal the true nature of things and to indicate the precise measures which need to be taken to solve career problems. Rather, they act as guides (Ardoino, 2000; Beauvais, 2006; Clavier & di Domizio, 2007) who bring their personal experience and skills to a task that involves the co-construction of meaning, projects, and alternatives that will allow their clients to progressively overcome the difficulties they encounter.

**the counsellor: an astute handyman.** Because they cannot rely on absolute truths and unfailing procedures, and because they must continually reinvent the wheel and adapt their approach to the situations facing them, counsellors can also be seen as astute handymen (Peavy, 2001; Perrenoud, 1994, 2004b). They must work with and for their clients to find possible ways of solving problems or carrying out important projects. To accomplish this, counsellors must rely on their professional habitus, modifying it when need be, draw inspiration from pertinent concepts and theories, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, turn to colleagues and other people, and develop new ideas and strategies to be tested in real life. The process and results of their work become a unique composition that is validated through its progressive adjustments and concrete effects.

From an epistemological viewpoint, this is a socio-constructivist and eclectic approach. It is deemed socio-constructivist because of its intersubjectivity and its relationship with the Other, whether real or symbolic, and also because of its attempt to develop more viable approaches to dealing with the questions and problems stemming from the personal, cultural, and social realities of their clients (Peavy, 2001). It is also deemed eclectic (Hansen, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1999) because it draws, fairly explicitly, on different approaches and disciplines (Morin, 1997), and because it uses diverse means to help its clients. Nothing is neglected by counsellors to help clients develop solutions and personal abilities that can be employed to overcome their obstacles, uncertainty, and distress.

**the counsellor: a complexity analyst.** As we have seen, career counsellors are operating in a new socio-occupational reality by trying to find the best possible solutions for the different needs of the people and groups they accompany. Counsellors find themselves at the centre of different, complex situations that influence both their professional choices and the possibilities available to the people consulting them. To take advantage of these complex situations, practitioners must first be able to analyze

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20 Concept developed by Bourdieu (see especially Bourdieu, 1994), and applied by Perrenoud (1994) in his analysis of professional practice.

21 This does not mean excessive eclecticism. It would, for example, be difficult to simultaneously support two theses that are epistemologically irreconcilable. Furthermore, practitioners can borrow ideas or strategies from other approaches to enhance those that they normally use (Polkinghorne, 1999).
them and understand the dynamic relations between the various elements and levels; in short, they must be capable of complex thinking (Morin, 2005). This is accomplished for example by: understanding how clients represent their current difficulties; taking into account the clients' specific skills and limitations; considering and even including other people involved in the problem; cooperating with other practitioners; identifying institutional and other constraints and resources likely to affect the helping process; dealing with the different, even contradictory goals of the various actors; comprehending the influence of their goals as practitioners and people; and understanding the current state and variations of the worlds of education and work (Bourassa & al., 2005).

When practitioners consent to work with a complex representation of the modern world and the counselling problems to which this gives rise, they must also then be aware of how the numerous elements at play, be they contextual (personal, interpersonal, organizational, institutional, social) or temporal (short, medium, or long term), influence the situation and each other.

the counsellor: a reflective practitioner. The counselling practice, as we have seen, cannot be reduced to a strict application of idealized intervention models, which Schön (1996) refers to as "technical rationality." Counsellors must regularly invent, review, and modify their approach. Because they must work with different actors, with unusual requests for help and, in particular, with the changing realities of the education and work worlds, counsellors must exploit the knowledge they have garnered over the years (which nourishes their professional habitus), and adapt and even develop it further. Nonetheless, this constant refining and adjustment of their counselling expertise does not occur without some effort. If they are to achieve this, counsellors must fully exploit their reflective abilities by seeing themselves as an object worthy of attention and analysis. As Perrenoud (2004a) wrote, drawing on Schön (1987, 1994): "Reflective practitioners are those (…) who observe their actions as if in a mirror, (…) who reflect upon these actions and strive to understand how and why they do what they do, sometimes unwillingly" (p.37-38).

A better understanding of the postulates underlying their approach to counselling can help practitioners to better understand how they accompany people, why they are sometimes ineffective, and where their unexplored, potential improvements lie. Otherwise, practitioners risk going astray themselves, subjected as they are to the numerous changes of modern-day life. They must therefore ensure they have the necessary tools to set their own course and enhance their counselling skills.

Conclusion

It is clearly evident that changes in the work world, and particularly recent changes, affect people, groups, and organizations in various ways and contribute to the emergence of new socio-occupational problems.

As the research conducted by the authors of this article shows, the reconfiguration of the work world in the last few years and the new types of employment have reduced many people's chances of obtaining or creating stable, satisfying careers. This reconfiguration has forced many people to follow irregular career paths marked by precariousness, assorted jobs, and periods of unemployment. Due to these situations and the related difficulties, people are led, at different moments
in their lives, to redefine their personal and occupational projects by taking into account pragmatic, relational, and developmental issues, whether this be done explicitly or not.

Among the considerable changes in the work world, three are particularly noteworthy: the growth in the female labour force, the rise in dual-income couples, and the emergence of a related problem, namely work-family balance. Reconciliation attempts result in a constant search for realistic and efficient ways of managing the many investments and responsibilities inherent in each area of life. Some people adapt so well to reconciling the different areas of their lives that it becomes an important source of self-fulfilment. For others however, in particular women, work-family responsibilities give rise to inter-role conflicts that, due to a lack of social and organizational measures, lead them to make heartbreaking personal and occupational choices, such as opting for a part-time job, considering a relatively long absence from the labour market, or seriously reconsidering their career choices.

Other studies have shown that new ways of representing this human and social activity are arising out of the modern work world. The principles of excellence, performance, and latitude at work are increasingly transcending organizations and workers. The work practices ensuing from these principles provoke a justified feeling among workers of being overloaded, stressed, and even psychologically distressed.

The various studies discussed here have not only shed light on new problems in the work world but likewise on the unease that people feel and the imbalance they see between their life projects and career path. Some of these people will turn to career counsellors in order to better understand the difficulties they are encountering and to find relevant, adapted solutions. As might be expected, this new work world is also impacting on the work of career counsellors. Thus, the second goal of this article was to analyze the effect of these impacts on their professional practice.

We observed in our studies that career counsellors, who are subjected to many diversified, changing, and complex demands, are striving to find an approach that provides optimal support for their clients. We have thus attempted in this paper to clarify this approach by proposing four dimensions that help to characterize it, namely the career counsellor as guide, astute handyman, complexity analyst, and reflective practitioner. Since none of these general analyses and solutions can always succeed in responding to the clients' various demands, it is increasingly clear that counselling must be adapted to each person or group. Furthermore, counselling must take advantage of people's abilities by inviting them to work with counsellors to co-develop alternatives to the difficulties they face. This co-development of alternatives should take the form of a joint, improvised, and adapted response informed by different types of resources and knowledge (scientific, experience-based, technical) from various sources (practitioners, clients, and others) to meet the clients' needs as well as possible. It is also noteworthy that, to achieve pertinent results, career counsellors must be able to analyze the complexity of the problems they encounter. This requires that several elements (e.g., the clients' requests, possibilities and limits) be considered and their consequences be evaluated. All of these aspects lend credence to the idea that if career counsellors are to refine their own expertise, then they must be the object of their own analysis. In short, they must be reflective practitioners in search of constant development.
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Introduction

For several years, organizations have been rocked by profound structural changes, compounded by the advent of management philosophies that have impacted work organization and the nature of the job market. Central to the structural modifications that are radically transforming organizations is a generalized and constant goal: to enhance organizational flexibility (Keller & Seifert, 2005; Atkinson, 1984; Chênevert and Tremblay, 1995). There is every indication that this quest for flexibility and the growth of different forms of atypical employment in the workforce are two indissociable phenomena. Issues related to commitment are necessary components of analyses of atypical employment, given that the use of non-standard workers heightens autonomy, independence and distance between individuals and organizations (Torka, 2004; Payette, 1998). Forms of atypical employment such as self-employment considerably transform the aspects of control because in these cases control is manifested largely by the attainment of objectives and results included in a global mandate. Organizational control is thus limited to products, not processes, and human resource management can be compared to a client/supplier process.

As various forms of atypical employment gain ground, the consolidation of contingent work strengthens the thesis of the constantly decreasing core workforce (Ogoshi, 2006; Booth, 1997; Macbride-King, 1997). There is a consensus that these forms of employment are constantly growing within the Canadian labor force, and even more extensively in Europe and North America as a whole (Buschoff and Protsch, 2008; Booth, 1997; Hipple, 2001; Krahn, 1991, 1995). Some authors argue that by increasingly targeting external flexibility, organizations are partially relieving themselves of the responsibility of career management (Brousseau et al., 1996; Hall, 1996). The predominance of management practices oriented toward increasing organizational flexibility and consolidating non-standard employment thus directly contributes to accelerating the evolution of the traditional career paradigm.

Organizational career management conventionally implied the existence of professional mobility channels that enabled individuals to ascend through a series of positions and functions, along with an identification system of potential candidates and management mechanisms that support and direct individuals (Smith & Sheridan, 2006; Caudron, 1994). In this career management system, individuals would spend little time organizing their career paths because they followed fairly standardized models that corresponded to criteria such as qualification, age, stage and seniority. These career

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models evolved within social and organizational environments that were relatively stable and predictable, which represents a stark contrast with new careers, whose development and consolidation unfold in unstable, constantly changing organizational settings. As a result, the representation of the traditional career no longer constitutes a universal reference paradigm, even if several “nostalgic” scholars continue to cling to universality and desperately wish the paradigm to hold true. The multiple jobholding and self-employment forms of atypical work deserve particular attention owing to their substantial, continuous and rapid growth (Edwards & Hendrey, 1996; Kranh, 1995).

The research question that underlies our analysis is as follows: what are the organizational and individual determinants that increase the probability that a standard worker will join the ranks of multiple-jobholders and self-employed workers. Our hypotheses examine the probability of a standard worker’s engaging in one of these two forms of atypical employment. To our knowledge, most studies on this topic are limited to descriptive analyses whose main objective is to identify the individual characteristics of atypical workers (Akyeampong, 1997; Kranh, 1995; Webber, 1989). Apart from Carr’s (1996) study of self-employment determinants, few scholars have seriously attempted to predict the use of specific forms of atypical employment, and none have conducted this type of analysis with respect to both multiple jobholding and self-employment in the Canadian labor force; these analytical goals are the principal objectives of this article.

Determinants of Atypical Employment

Most studies of internalization and externalization of work are grounded in the theory of market duality proposed by Doeringer and Piore (1971). This theory states that internalization of work, generally discussed in the context of the internal job market, enhances the stability of labor while enabling an organization to better control its employees. In addition, in an organization that has a hierarchical structure that favors mobility between jobs, the internal market provides employees with the necessary competency and career development opportunities to ensure organizational loyalty. Nonetheless, because this approach encourages stability and control, it is costly and sometimes inefficient to implement for companies that operate in an unstable and turbulent environment (Davis-Blake & Uzzi, 1993).

In contrast, externalization of work enhances organizational flexibility, making it easier for companies to weather changing market conditions and respond rapidly to organizational requirements. Externalization of work enables an organization to adjust its personnel to changing market requirements and thus reduce administrative and labor costs. Companies can also terminate a position without tarnishing their corporate image; additionally, they acquire easy access to specialized resources, without having to offer long-term commitment in exchange (Belous, 1989; Matusik & Hill, 1998). Externalization of work is thus a strategy that directly contributes to the emergence and consolidation of what have been labeled “boundaryless careers.”

Unlike the traditional career paths that are generally characterized by a linear and sequential trajectory within the same organization, boundaryless careers entail individual paths that exceed the frontiers of the traditional job status. Such paths are associated with new forms of careers that atypical job growth generates strongly. Whereas job market conditions propel individuals toward this type of career, the recent literature specifies that many people will opt for a boundaryless career owing to the
exchange value of their human capital or because of their experience on the job market. An additional motivator is that this type of career furthers the development of workers’ expertise through contact with several companies instead of only one (Marler et al., 1998), a situation that certainly applies to a large proportion of the worker population.

As Davis-Blake and Uzzi (1993) observed, the factors that influence internalization of work are identical to those that induce externalization of work. The analytical model that we have adopted places particular emphasis on the factors specifically linked to organizational characteristics (e.g., sector of activity, unionization), job and career attributes (e.g., type of job, promotions, mobility) and individual characteristics (e.g., gender).

**organizational characteristics.**

**sector of activity.** Some sectors of activity have been traditionally identified as being atypical-labour intensive owing to their strong propensity to promote externalization of work. For example, the construction sector and the services sector endorse a staffing strategy that is oriented toward the use of atypical jobs, more specifically self-employed workers and multiple jobholding, arising from the seasonal nature of their activities or the customer service requirements (Bregger, 1996; Hipple, 2001). In contrast, sectors such as the public sector have a low historical rate of recourse to atypical jobs. This phenomenon has been attributed to the government’s need to demonstrate its social responsibility and attitude of good corporate citizenship (Davis-Blake & Uzzi, 1993). Nonetheless, it is difficult to clearly identify the precise influence of a sector of activity on the probability of adopting a specific atypical job form.

**unionization.** Studies of the relation between unionization and atypical jobs have not consistently yielded conclusive results (Bielmann et al., 1999; Davis-Blake & Uzzi, 1993). Nonetheless, it has been shown that to avoid the union influence, some organizations attempt to externalize work so as to maximize the use of human resources outside of union control. Nevertheless, recent studies conducted in the United States report that only 5.9% of atypical employees are unionized, versus 14.8% of full-time employees (Hipple, 2001). In addition, unions are historically opposed to externalization of work and often oblige employers to use this practice sparingly by emphasizing the need to increase stability and job security in order to create an atmosphere conducive to collective bargaining (Davis-Blake & Uzzi, 1993).

**job and career attributes.** As mentioned above, the literature demonstrates that the search for flexibility extends to central activities that are non-critical for organizations. As a result, atypical work is not limited to low-skilled jobs and poorly qualified occupational categories (Caudron, 1994; Hipple, 2001; Matusik & Hill, 1998); in consequence, all occupational categories should be equally affected. The specialized literature reveals that many self-employed individuals are highly educated, which implies that they hold skilled occupations (Carr, 1996; Meyer & Bruce, 1996).

For at least the past decade, many career analysts have studied issues that directly call into question the traditional notion of the career. The classic view has since been overturned, a phenomenon that is even more evident in a context of generalized atypical employment. Given that the scarcity of hierarchical movement is
manifested as one of the characteristics of the generalization of plateauing of traditional careers, and also as a net trend toward the systematic use of non-standard employment, the absence of promotions substantially increases the probability of being an atypical worker (Marler & Milkovich, 2000; Simard, 2000). In 1994 atypical Canadian workers were more likely to be in careers with non-ascending movement than standard workers, although this factor did not considerably influence the probability of being an atypical worker (Carr, 1996; Simard, 2000).

**individual characteristics.** Several individual variables may also influence the probability of being self-employed or holding multiple jobs. Gender, education and age are notable examples. Whereas the overall effect of these variables is inconsistent, gender is an exception: the specialized literature suggests that for several reasons women are more present than men in atypical jobs examined as a whole.

We have grouped some of the most frequent explanations into two broad categories. First, a more self-determined explanation for the higher presence of self-employed women is personal choice. These workers are motivated by the search for greater flexibility, given the presumed effects of this flexibility on the reduction of conflict related to the work/family balance (Hipple, 2001; Jurik, 1998; Marler & Milkovich, 2000).

In contrast, in a perspective dominated by a more Schumpeterian approach to structural constraints, self-employment corresponds to a response to unemployment or a refuge for aging workers. Carr (1996) established that men and women have different motivations for seeking self-employment, but that overall these motivations originate from constraints on career choices. However, from a strictly factual standpoint, men far outnumber women among self-employed workers, a trend that has been identified in American studies (Matthews & Moser, 1995).

Lastly, our previous research has found that Canadian multiple jobholders do not form a very homogeneous group (Simard, 1997). The same finding applies to self-employed workers (Carr, 1996; Jurik, 1998; Marler & Milkovich, 2000). These forms of atypical jobs are associated with unequal individual characteristics, conditions and living opportunities for the same type of workers (Carr, 1996; Hipple, 2001).

**Research Methodology**

To attain our research objectives, we used secondary data produced by Statistics Canada, namely the micro-data file of the General Social Survey (GSS). In this article, we examine respondents in Section H, i.e. individuals in the labor force at the time of the survey (which excludes retired people but not active people age 65 and over). The sample therefore comprises 6,365 cases. Note that two samples are analyzed: 808 individuals for regression of multiple jobholders and 1,204 for self-employed workers.23

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23 To obtain equal groups in logistic regression analyses, we used a sampling factor of 0.08 for multiple jobholders and 0.125 for self-employed workers.
Operational Definition of Variables

**dependent variables.** The dependent variables are dichotomous, and correspond to the job status of respondents—multiple jobholder or self-employed. Multiple jobholding is covered directly in question H1, which asks the respondent whether they held more than one job in the week preceding the survey. Self-employment is a constructed variable that encompasses individuals who claim to be self-employed professionals in question H13, and those who consider themselves self-employed workers in question H8, and who have no employees, i.e. the reply to question H9. This transformation and control are necessary to avoid counting respondents that fall into more than one variable more than once. In addition, if a self-employed worker has employees, he/she is considered an employer rather than a non-standard worker.

**independent variables.** We will now describe the seven independent variables integrated in the two logistic regression equations. First, there are two organizational characteristics: the sector of activity in which the respondents primarily situate their work activity in the past five years, and whether the respondents held a unionized job five years ago. The latter variable is dichotomous, and is listed in raw form in the database. For the sector of activity, we have recorded the original Statistics Canada variable constructed based on an open question. This variable includes 18 sectors of activity, whereas the variable we used encompasses the primary sector, the manufacturing sector and the commerce sector.

Job and career attributes are the focus of questions that determine the occupational category held five years ago, along with the number of job changes without vertical mobility and promotions in the past five years. The occupational category held five years ago is determined by an open question coded according to the 16-category Pinéo scale. We have recoded this variable in six categories by grouping professionals in the first category, managers in the second, supervisors and foremen in the third, vendors in the fourth, manual labourers in the fifth and farmers/farm workers in the sixth.

The number of movements in the past five years is obtained from a question that asks the respondent to indicate the number of different jobs held, specifically the holding of different positions within the same company or another company. The sum of these two variables provides the basis for the variable used in this study. Variance is low after six jobs, and we have grouped respondents into seven categories: from one to seven and up. The number of promotions is evaluated by an open question. Similar to the number of jobs, we have grouped respondents into five categories: none, one, two, three/four and five and up. Lastly, for individual variables, we use gender (1=female; 2=male) and age. This variable is produced based on a metric variable, and includes five categories: 18-29, 30-44, 45-59, 60-64, and 65 and +.

In the bi-variate analyses used to describe the families of multiple jobholders and self-employed workers, we also use the number of hours worked per week, annual income and the highest level of education attained. The duration of the work week is obtained by an open question that yields a metric variable that we have used as such. The respondents’ annual income is recorded by the same type of variable and is used in raw state, whereas the level of education is measured by an ordinal 12-category scale, with the lowest category corresponding to no education. The variable has five
categories: graduate studies, certificate, undergraduate studies, college studies and the equivalent of a Secondary V (Grade 11) diploma or less.

Methods of Analysis

To adequately answer the questions raised by the literature, logistic regression analysis and various bi-variate analyses have been used. For logistic regression, we used the ENTER method to force all variables into the equation. The four category variables (sector of activity, number of movements, number of promotions and occupational category) are integrated in the regression model using the deviation technique. This technique allows generation of coefficients expressing the differing impact of each of the categories of the variable in relation to the general effect of the variable. The three other variables are dichotomous, and are integrated in the model using the “indicator” technique, which allows selection of the category of the variable included in the constant. The logistic regression analysis initially evaluates the validity of the global model, i.e. the model’s capacity to reproduce original data at a level of significance of $\alpha = 0.05$. In this case, the null hypothesis that expresses the similarity of the global model to the model that contains the constant only must be accepted. Whereas the results of the classification table have been used by some scholars, this statistic is not reliable, as it is largely descriptive (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 1989). The chi-square statistic, which clarifies the significant character of the variation of -2 log likelihood, may be used. To identify the variables that influence the probability of becoming a multiple jobholder or self-employed worker, we use Wald’s statistic to evaluate the importance of the contribution of a variable or variable category. To tease out the individual effect of the significant variables, the impact of each variable is translated into a net variation (percentage) of the base probability. 24

To isolate the families within each of the atypical forms of employment selected, we performed a cluster analysis with the annual income and duration of the work week variables. The groups produced in these analyses will be used as independent variables in bi-variate analyses to produce the descriptive results.

Results

The General Social Survey indicated that 7.2 % of the respondents were holding multiple jobs. Self-employed workers represented 11.6% of the GSS, a result that is comparable with corresponding American data (Edwards & Hendrey, 1996; Segal, 1996).

The logistic regression analysis shows that the validity of the global model is significant because the value of the chi-square of Goodness of fit is 482.245— the critical distribution of chi-squares with 27 degrees of freedom is 55.47 — $p = 0.000$ — for the model relating to self-employment, whereas the statistics for multiple jobholders are 113.765 for the chi-square. 25 The global model is significant because

$\frac{[(1+e^{-(a+b)})^{1/2} - (1-e^{-a})^{1/2}]}{(1-e^{-a})^{1/2}}\cdot 1.$

Other statistical tests allow evaluation of the significance of the -2 log likelihood whose classification ensues from the model. Several authors including Hosmer & Lemeshow (1989) warn that these results should not be used to assess the predictive capacity of the model because

24

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overall the coefficients are different from zero (p = 0.000). The two models thus generate valid predictions of the probability of being a multiple jobholder or self-employed worker. Nonetheless, the predictive capacity of the two models is not identical. The statistic of Cox and Snell, which provides a pseudo $R^2$, reveals that the model used for multiple jobholders explains only 13% ($R^2 = 0.131$) of the probability of the shift from standard work to multiple jobholding, whereas that of self-employment is markedly stronger ($R^2 = 0.330$).

Only three variables are excluded from the model used for multiple jobholding: age group, gender and union membership. Regarding self-employment, two variables are rejected: number of jobs in the past five years and age group.

**Organizational characteristics**

Table 1 presents the results of the logistic regression analyses performed for multiple jobholders and self-employed workers. The sector of activity has a determining influence on the probability of being self-employed (Wald = 100.7830). This result differs substantially from that of multiple jobholders. Table 1 reveals that 8 out of 12 sectors of activity of the original variable have a significant effect on the probability of being a self-employed worker. Of these sectors, four produce a negative effect and the remaining four a positive effect.

Table 1

*Net variation in the probability of holding multiple jobs or being self-employed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Multiplication factor Exp (B)</th>
<th>Percentage points</th>
<th>Net variation in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-employed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing sector</td>
<td>-0.8025</td>
<td>-19.5 %</td>
<td>-29.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1.1498</td>
<td>20.1 %</td>
<td>30.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical and public service</td>
<td>-1.1977</td>
<td>-29.1 %</td>
<td>-44.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>1.2067</td>
<td>20.8 %</td>
<td>31.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, real estate</td>
<td>0.5443</td>
<td>11.1 %</td>
<td>16.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>1.0743</td>
<td>19.2 %</td>
<td>29.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.7278</td>
<td>-17.6 %</td>
<td>-26.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>-2.9472</td>
<td>-56.6 %</td>
<td>-86.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior and middle management</td>
<td>-0.5625</td>
<td>-13.5 %</td>
<td>-20.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One promotion or more in past 5 years</td>
<td>-1.4303</td>
<td>-34.3 %</td>
<td>-52.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No union membership in past 5 years</td>
<td>0.5194</td>
<td>10.6 %</td>
<td>16.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.4487</td>
<td>9.3 %</td>
<td>14.2 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple jobholder

| Construction                     | 0.5206                         | 10.1 %            | 46.7 %             |

they are overly influenced by factors independent of the performance level of the model, notably the segregation point (0.5) and the relative size of each of the groups.
The probability of being self-employed decreases by 86.1% for individuals that work in public administration, 44.2% in the communications and public services sector, 29.7% in the manufacturing sector and 26.9% in the education sector. In contrast, the personnel services sector increases this probability by 31.6%, construction 30.6%, management services 29.2% and finance, insurance and real estate 16.8%. Regarding multiple jobholding, the results show a weaker effect of sector of activity on this variable (Wald = 14.5669). Nonetheless, for individuals working in the construction sector, the probability of holding multiple jobs increases by 46.7%, whereas that of workers in finance, insurance and real estate decreases by 41.2%. In the latter case, the influence is strong but negative, which indicates that this sector does not use multiple jobholding; this does not imply, however, that all forms of atypical jobs are excluded.

Lastly, unionization exerts a mitigated influence on the probability of being self-employed, but not of holding multiple jobs, which is explained by the fact that multiple jobholders use atypical forms of employment that are generally unionized, such as part-time work. Therefore, holding a non-unionized job five years before the study increases the probability of being self-employed by 16.1%.

### Job and Career Attributes

Regarding the influence of the occupational category held five years ago, Table 1 shows that 2 out of 7 categories of the original variable affect the probability of holding multiple jobs. The influence of this variable is comparable to that of the sector of activity (Wald = 15.2970). The two most influential categories are professionals and semi-professionals, and senior and middle managers. For the first group (respondents that held a professional or semi-professional position five years ago), the probability of holding multiple jobs increases by 52.6%, whereas it decreases by 33.4% for respondents that held a senior or middle manager position five years before the survey.

For self-employment, Table 1 illustrates that the influence of the professional category is fairly weak (Wald = 16.4104). Accordingly, 1 category out of 7 of the original variable affects the probability of self-employment. Note that respondents that were senior and middle managers five years earlier are 20.6% less likely to be self-employed. This result is consistent with that obtained for multiple jobholders, and indicates that this occupational category is affected by these atypical forms of employment, perhaps even by all types of non-standard work.

In addition, Table 1 reveals that some career elements have a marked influence on the probability of being in a multiple jobholding situation. This is notably and clearly the case with frequency and direction of movement in the five years preceding the study (Wald = 53.8196 and Wald = 41.1818). Respondents that experienced one or more promotions in the past five years were 32.7% less likely to hold multiple jobs and 52.2% less likely to be self-employed. Moreover, a very high frequency of non-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Probability Increase/Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, real estate</td>
<td>-0.6395</td>
<td>-8.9 % -41.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and semi-professional</td>
<td>0.5790</td>
<td>11.4 % 52.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior and middle management</td>
<td>-0.4941</td>
<td>-7.2 % -33.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 jobs or more</td>
<td>0.5078</td>
<td>9.8 % 45.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One promotion or more in past 5 years</td>
<td>-0.4820</td>
<td>-7.1 % -32.7 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
hierarchical movement (over five jobs) increases the probability of holding multiple jobs by 45.4%. In contrast, frequency of movement in the past five years does not influence the probability of being self-employed.

**Individual Characteristics**

Regarding self-employment, only one individual characteristic influences the probability of carrying on this form of atypical employment: the gender of the respondent. Accordingly, men have a 14.2% higher probability of being self-employed. As for multiple jobholding, no individual variable emerged from the logistic regression analysis, which implies that men and women have an equal probability of holding multiple jobs.

**Multiple Jobholding and Self-employment: Homogeneity or Heterogeneity?**

Table 2 shows that it is possible to isolate three broad families of multiple jobholders: a majority of insecure (51.7 %), followed by consolidated (40.7 %) and a minority of stars (7.6 %), who are characterized by very high income. The stars also report the longest work weeks, yet their results are similar to the consolidated family. In contrast, the stars clearly stand out from the insecure because of their considerably longer work weeks. When annual income is taken into consideration, stars are categorically differentiated from insecure and consolidated by a much higher average annual income. Table 2 shows that men and women are equally represented in the group of multiple jobholders. However, two out of three women fall into the insecure family, whereas, inversely, two thirds of the star family are men. Stars account for most of the university graduates that hold multiple jobs, whereas the insecure group comprises more individuals with a high school diploma or less.

**Table 2**

**Families of multiple jobholders and self-employed workers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hrs. work/week</th>
<th>Multiple jobholders</th>
<th>Self-employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insecure</td>
<td>Consolidated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Studies</td>
<td>2.3%**</td>
<td>6.7%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>13.1%**</td>
<td>21.5%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. certificate</td>
<td>1.7%**</td>
<td>5.2%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>26.9%**</td>
<td>34.1%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or less</td>
<td>56.0%**</td>
<td>12.0%**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 2 distinguishes three significantly different families among the self-employed. The first is made up of *conquerors*, who comprise 17% of the population, the second family, *survivors*, accounts for 36.7% and *victims* are the majority, at 46.4%. Similar to multiple jobholders, one family of self-employed workers clearly stands out from the others. *Conquerors* have an annual average income of $89,158, i.e. twice as high as that of *survivors* and five times higher than that of *victims*. In terms of education, *conquerors* encompass the majority of self-employed university graduates, whereas the *victims* family comprises more than half of respondents with high school diplomas or less. In contrast with multiple jobholders, men are over-represented in self-employment, at 61.6% of the population holding this type of atypical job. Moreover, men constitute the majority among the *conquerors* and the *survivors*. In terms of duration of work week, *conquerors* significantly stand out from the other two families because of their considerably longer average schedule.

**Discussion**

Overall, the results related to the effect of the sector of activity show that self-employment tends to span more sectors of activity than multiple jobholding. The fact that Canadian self-employed workers work in various sectors of activity clearly reveals the extent that this form of work has penetrated the job market. These results corroborate Matusik and Hill (1998), who describe the advantages of using atypical employment in some organizational environments, because this approach supports the creation of knowledge and competencies that organizations inevitably require. However, the results obtained confirm a trend toward polarization, or rejection of recourse to self-employment in certain sectors of activity, given that four of the sectors have a positive influence on the probability of holding this form of atypical job, while four other sectors have a negative effect. This finding therefore indicates resistance to generalization of externalization strategies. Apparently, some sectors of activity refuse to use self-employment, i.e. this employment link is not part of their organizational reality, whereas other sectors rely on it considerably. There is notable
underrepresentation of self-employment in sectors traditionally related to government activities, which have never opted for this type of employment (Hipple, 2001). In this respect, our results confirm the conclusions found in the specialized literature (Jurik, 1998; Matusik & Hill, 1998). Nonetheless, the case of the manufacturing sector is somewhat surprising. Although the manufacturing sector has always concentrated human resources and means of production, one would expect, as Matusik and Hill (1998) suggest, that organizations in this sector would opt for the use of atypical employment, especially given that a number of self-employed workers would presumably agree to work as subcontractors, under service contracts, in premises and with equipment situated outside of the organization.

Further, self-employment can easily expand in the manufacturing sector because, like real estate, the form and organization of work lends itself well to this type of employment. In contrast, the construction sector has a positive effect on both self-employed workers and multiple jobholders. This sector should therefore be considered to place particular value on strategies based on external flexibility, together with fewer employee commitments and employment costs (Tremblay, D.G, 1990). Because the construction sector produces a significant effect for both types of atypical jobs analyzed, our results partially support the conclusions of other studies on the subject (Bregger, 1996). This is hardly surprising because this sector is characterized by frequent fluctuations in activity that oblige organizations and individuals to be flexible. Consequently, it is not surprising that several authors (Davis-Blake and Uzzi, 1993; Matusik & Hill, 1998) reported that organizations that operate in an unstable or seasonal environment would benefit greatly from adopting a strategy of externalization and from offering atypical jobs. In addition, this sector of activity is replete with small contractors, subcontractors and craftspeople that can easily engage in multiple jobholding and self-employment.

To conclude the discussion of sector, it is worth noting that holding a job in the management services sector increases the probability of self-employment. Indeed, our results illustrate a trend toward outsourcing of many activities formerly carried out by the core workforce of organizations. It would be interesting to more precisely determine the management activities that are most affected. Overall, it is clear that atypical work affects activities that were formerly carried out by the central core workforce (Booth, 1997; Chênevert and Tremblay, 1995; Jacob, 1993). It would also be interesting to investigate, in future studies, the size of the organization because the number of employees within a specific sector may impact the formality and longevity of the job relationship and thus become an important determinant of atypical employment.

In the area of unionization, our results reflect those of Blanchflower and Meyer (1994) in that the fact of having held a unionized job five years earlier reduces the probability of becoming self-employed. The advantages of unionization in terms of job conditions and job security may be dissuasive factors in the decision to abandon a traditional job in favor of self-employment. Nonetheless, the growing presence of atypical workers poses a major challenge for unionized organizations: that of representing workers whose interests vary considerably and whose presence in the job market is often virtual (Mackbride-King, 1997; Wever, 1997).

At first glance, for both multiple jobholding and self-employment, the results relating to occupational category held five years ago confirm that individuals in hierarchical situations are unlikely to engage in atypical work. These results
corroborate studies (Addison & Surfield, 2006; Brousseau et al. 1996; Hall, 1996) that conclude that new careers lack a hierarchy. At the very least, one can presume that individuals that find themselves in traditional career paths, characterized by relative job stability, promotions and high social status, as is the case for senior and middle managers, are not truly affected by the phenomenon studied. Our results nonetheless illustrate that more highly skilled jobs such as those held by professionals and semi-professionals, are beginning to be slightly but significantly affected by multiple jobholding. Here again, the results show that atypical work extends to activities and functions that call for skills previously found within the core workforce; in other words, the phenomenon concerns essential but non-critical tasks (Booth, 1997; Chênevert and Tremblay, 1995; Jacob, 1993).

With regard to multiple jobholding, the results related to the frequency of movement confirm the findings reported in the literature, namely that respondents that have experienced high non-ascending mobility are more likely to hold multiple jobs. In line with the literature on new careers, this observation implies that multiple jobholders experience more mobility than the majority of workers with traditional career itineraries. In contrast, frequency of movement does not influence the probability of being self-employed. There are two possible explanations for this situation. First, several self-employed workers may have been in a very stable job situation before the study; this possibility should be explored. In addition, one should bear in mind that self-employed workers do not change jobs frequently, the changes mainly concern the clientele.

Lastly, for these two forms of non-standard employment it is clear that hierarchical experiences are not predominant, reflecting a fundamental characteristic of new careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Bailly et al., 1998; Hall, 1996). Studies on career plateauing (Tremblay, 1995) have demonstrated the way in which the concept of the traditional career is being increasingly eroded by structural or individual blockage mechanisms.

Concerning individual variables, only the gender of the respondent exerts a significant influence. Indeed, our results point in the expected direction. The gender of the respondent does not influence the probability of holding multiple jobs. In addition, the results obtained for self-employment support the specialized literature (Matthews & Moser, 1995), which states that men have a higher probability of being self-employed than women. These results suggest that in the atypical job context, occupational distribution apparently perpetuates stereotypes associated with traditional jobs. For instance, male self-employed workers are concentrated in professional and managerial professions, whereas women predominate in secretarial and office jobs, a pattern that reproduces within atypical jobs the same sexual stereotypes found in traditional jobs (Maler & Milkovich, 2000). Moreover, these results confirm those of Carr (1996), which clearly demonstrates that men and women do not hold atypical jobs for the same reasons and at the same ages.

Following the analyses of the differentiation between multiple jobholders and self-employed, we assert that these two forms of atypical jobs differ. Despite similarities within each of these two types of non-standard work, it is quite evident that the families are by no means homogeneous groups. In addition, the differentiation of families within the multiple jobholder and self-employed worker groups highlights the discriminating influence of education. Our results show that the higher the respondents’ education, the more likely they will belong to the star or conqueror
family, a finding that corroborates the conclusions of several researchers (Carr, 1996; Jurik, 1998). Therefore, even if the trend is clearer for the stars, multiple jobholders and self-employed workers follow the same logic pattern as standard workers, in that education apparently engenders markedly better living conditions. Annual income of both stars and conquerors is much higher than the average income. Nonetheless, higher income often co-occurs with longer work weeks. Women are over-represented among the insecure and the victims, which tends to indicate that they do not occupy choice places in the atypical labor force.

Conclusion

The results of this study clarify the role of some organizational and individual variables in the probability of being a multiple jobholder or self-employed worker. Eight out of twelve sectors of activity influence this probability for self-employed workers. As for determining sectors, we have observed that the probability of being a self-employed worker decreases by 86.1% among respondents that work in public administration, thus confirming the lack of importance placed on this employment link in the government apparatus. The sector variable nonetheless has a more mitigated effect on multiple jobholding, because only two sectors of activity influence the probability of holding multiple jobs. More generally, our results clearly demonstrate that the construction sector is characterized by a constant search for external flexibility, because only this sector positively influences the probability of joining one of the atypical groups studied.

In terms of career-related factors, ascending mobility plays a unique role. This effect, homogeneous for both multiple jobholding and self-employment, is significantly manifested with respect to the probability of engaging in either of these atypical forms of employment. The fact of being promoted in the five years prior to the survey thus substantially reduces the chances of belonging to one of the two atypical employment categories studied, whereas non-ascending mobility increases only the probability of holding multiple jobs. Further, individuals that held senior and middle manager positions five years prior to the survey have a substantially lower probability of holding multiple jobs and being self-employed, thus confirming the persisting impact of more traditional career paths on occupational categories with a high hierarchical status. Consequently, we can consider that individuals in a situation of blockage in traditional paths may be inclined to adopt these forms of atypical employment in order to satisfy expectations beyond promotion and financial status.

Lastly, aside from the fact that men are over-represented in the self-employed category and that their probability of taking on this atypical employment is higher, gender has no influence on multiple jobholding. It is worth mentioning that these two forms of atypical employment are subdivided into families that are not homogeneous in terms of annual income, level of education, hours worked and average age. In addition, women are much more prevalent in the families that have the most precarious job and living conditions. Nonetheless, major differences exist among the families of multiple jobholders and self-employed workers, and prudence is thus recommended to avoid indiscriminately pairing the concepts of atypical and precarious. In conclusion, although precariousness is indeed present, it is not a sine qua non of atypical employment.
References


Wishful Thinking or HR Challenge?”, *Management Revue*; 2004; 15, 3, 324-343.


Introduction

Depuis plusieurs années, les organisations sont secouées par de profonds changements structuraux, aggravés par l’apparition de philosophies de la gestion qui ont des répercussions sur l’organisation du travail et la nature du marché de l’emploi. Au cœur des modifications structurelles radicales qui touchent les organisations se trouve un objectif généralisé et constant : l’amélioration de la flexibilité organisationnelle (Keller et Seifert, 2005; Atkinson, 1984; Chênevert et Tremblay, 1995). Tout indique que cette quête de flexibilité et la croissance des différentes formes d’emplois atypiques chez la population active sont deux phénomènes indissociables. Les questions relatives à la mobilisation sont des éléments nécessaires aux analyses de l’emploi atypique, étant donné que le recours à des travailleurs non conventionnels augmente l’autonomie, l’indépendance et la distance entre les personnes et les organisations (Torka, 2004; Payette, 1998). Les formes d’emplois atypiques, comme le travail autonome, transforment considérablement les aspects du contrôle puisque, dans ces cas, le contrôle s’exerce pour une grande part par l’atteinte des objectifs et les résultats d’un mandat global. Le contrôle organisationnel est donc limité aux produits, non aux procédés, et la gestion des ressources humaines peut être comparée à une relation client/fournisseur.


La gestion de carrière organisationnelle classique impliquait l’existence de canaux de mobilité professionnelle qui permettaient aux individus de grimper les échelons par une série de postes et de fonctions, ainsi que d’un système d’identification des candidats potentiels et de mécanismes de gestion qui appuyaient et dirigeaient les individus (Smith et Sheridan, 2006; Caudron, 1994). Dans ce système de gestion des carrières, les personnes pouvaient ne consacrer qu’un peu de temps à organiser leur...
cheminement de carrière, puisqu’ils suivaient des modèles assez standardisés qui correspondaient à des critères tels que la qualification, l’âge, le niveau et l’ancienneté. Ces modèles de carrière ont évolué dans des environnements sociaux et organisationnels relativement stables et prévisibles, qui contrastent nettement avec les nouvelles carrières dont le développement et la consolidation se font dans un environnement organisationnel instable et en constante mutation. Il en résulte que la représentation de la carrière traditionnelle ne constitue plus un paradigme de référence universel, même si plusieurs universitaires « nostalgiques » continuent de s’accrocher à la notion d’universalité et veulent désespérément que le paradigme reste le même. Les formes d’emplois atypiques que sont le cumul d’emplois et le travail autonome méritent une attention spéciale en regard de leur croissance importante, continue et rapide (Edwards et Hendrey, 1996; Kranh, 1995).

La question de recherche à la base de notre analyse est la suivante : quels sont les déterminants organisationnels et individuels qui augmentent la probabilité qu’un travailleur ordinaire rejoigne les rangs des travailleurs autonomes ou cumulant les emplois. Notre hypothèse examine la probabilité qu’un travailleur ordinaire s’engage dans l’une de ces deux formes d’emplois atypiques. À notre connaissance, les plupart des études sur ce sujet se limitent à des analyses descriptives dont le principal objectif est d’identifier les caractéristiques individuelles des travailleurs atypiques (Akyeampong, 1997; Kranh, 1995; Webber, 1989). Sauf Carr avec son étude des déterminants du travail autonome (1996), peu d’universitaires ont sérieusement tenté de prédire le recours à des formes spécifiques d’emplois atypiques, et aucun n’a effectué ce type d’analyse à la fois sur le cumul d’emplois et le travail autonome de la population active canadienne; ces résultats d’analyse forment les principaux objectifs du présent article.

Déterminants d’un Emploi Atypique

La plupart des études sur l’internalisation et l’externalisation du travail sont basées sur la théorie de la dualité du marché proposée par Doeringer et Piore (1971). Cette théorie énonce que l’internalisation du travail, généralement discutée dans le contexte du marché interne de l’emploi, améliore la stabilité de la main-d’œuvre tout en permettant à l’organisation de mieux contrôler ses employés. En outre, dans une organisation dont la structure hiérarchique favorise la mobilité entre les emplois, le marché interne fournit aux employés les compétences nécessaires et les possibilités de développement de carrière pour assurer leur fidélité. Néanmoins, comme cette approche encourage la stabilité et le contrôle, elle est coûteuse et parfois difficile à appliquer pour les compagnies qui opèrent dans un environnement instable et turbulent (Davis-Blake et Uzzi, 1993).

En contraste, l’externalisation du travail améliore la flexibilité organisationnelle, facilitant ainsi l’adaptation aux conditions changeantes du marché et la rapidité de réponse aux demandes organisationnelles. L’externalisation du travail permet à une organisation d’adapter son personnel aux exigences d’un marché changeant et donc de réduire les coûts d’administration et de main-d’œuvre. Les compagnies peuvent aussi mettre fin à un poste sans ternir leur image; de plus, elles obtiennent un accès facile à des ressources spécialisées, sans devoir offrir un engagement à long terme en échange (Belous, 1989; Matusik et Hill, 1998).
L’externalisation du travail est donc une stratégie qui contribue directement à l’émergence et à la consolidation des « carrières sans limites ».

Contrairement aux cheminement de carrière traditionnels, qui sont généralement caractérisés par une trajectoire linéaire et séquentielle au sein d’une même organisation, les carrières sans limites donnent lieu à des cheminnements de carrière qui dépassent les frontières des états de travail traditionnels. De tels cheminnements sont associés à de nouvelles forms de carrières créées par la croissance des emplois atypiques. Tandis que les conditions du marché de l’emploi propulsent les individus vers ce type de carrière, la documentation récente mentionne que beaucoup de gens opteront pour une carrière sans limites en raison de la valeur d’échange de leur capital humain ou de leur expérience du marché de l’emploi. Un autre élément de motivation est que ce type de carrière favorise le développement de l’expertise des travailleurs en les mettant en contact avec plusieurs entreprises au lieu d’une seule (Marler et al., 1998), une situation qui s’applique certainement à une grande proportion de la population active.

Comme Davis-Blake et Uzzi (1993) l’ont observé, les facteurs qui influencent l’internalisation du travail sont identiques à ceux qui incitent à recourir à l’externalisation du travail. Le modèle analytique que nous avons adopté met spécialement l’accent sur les facteurs liés aux caractéristiques organisationnelles (par ex. : secteur d’activité, syndicalisation), aux caractères qualitatifs de l’emploi et de la carrière (par ex. : type d’emploi, promotions, mobilité) et aux caractéristiques individuelles (par ex. : genre).

**Caractéristiques Organisationnelles**

**secteur d’activité.** Certains secteurs d’activité ont de tout temps été identifiés comme ayant activement recours au travail atypique en raison de leur forte propension à favoriser l’externalisation du travail. Par exemple, le secteur de la construction et le secteur des services endossent une stratégie de dotation en personnel orientée vers l’utilisation d’emplois atypiques, plus précisément les travailleurs autonomes et ceux qui cumulent plusieurs emplois, dû à la nature saisonnière de leurs activités ou au besoin de s’adapter aux exigences du service à la clientèle (Bregger, 1996; Hipple, 2001). En contraste, les secteurs comme le secteur public ont historiquement un faible taux de recours aux emplois atypiques. Ce phénomène a été attribué au besoin du gouvernement de démontrer sa responsabilité sociale et une attitude de bon citoyen (Davis-Blake et Uzzi, 1993). Néanmoins, il est difficile d’identifier clairement l’influence précise d’un secteur d’activité sur la probabilité d’adopter une forme spécifique d’emploi atypique.

**Syndicalisation.** Les études portant sur la relation entre la syndicalisation et les emplois atypiques n’ont pas toujours donné des résultats concluants (Bielmann et al., 1999; Davis-Blake et Uzzi, 1993). Néanmoins, il a été démontré que pour éviter l’influence syndicale, certaines organisations ont tenté de sous-traiter le travail afin de maximiser l’utilisation des ressources humaines hors du contrôle du syndicat. Quoi qu’il en soit, des études récentes menées aux États-Unis rapportent que seulement 5,9 % des employés atypiques sont syndiqués, contre 14,8 % des employés à temps plein (Hipple, 2001). De plus, les syndicats sont traditionnellement opposés à l’externalisation du travail et obligent souvent les employeurs à n’utiliser cette pratique
que de façon restreinte en plaidant la nécessité d’augmenter la stabilité et la sécurité d’emploi afin de créer une atmosphère propice à la négociation collective (Davis-Blake et Uzzi, 1993).

**Attributs des Emplois et des Carrières**

Comme il est mentionné précédemment, la documentation démontre que la recherche d’une flexibilité s’étend aux activités centrales non critiques pour les organisations. Il en résulte que le travail atypique n’est pas limité aux emplois peu spécialisés et aux catégories d’emploi n’exigeant que peu ou pas d’instruction (Caudron, 1994; Hipple, 2001; Matusik et Hill, 1998); en conséquence, toutes les catégories d’emploi devraient être touchées également. La documentation spécialisée révèle que beaucoup de travailleurs autonomes sont très instruits, ce qui implique qu’ils détiennent des postes spécialisés (Carr, 1996; Meyer et Bruce, 1996).

Depuis au moins dix ans, plusieurs analystes ont étudié les enjeux qui remettent en question la notion traditionnelle de la carrière. L’opinion classique a depuis été renversée, un phénomène qui est encore plus évident dans un contexte d’emploi atypique généralisé. Vu que la rareté du mouvement hiérarchique se manifeste comme l’une des caractéristiques de la généralisation du plafonnement des carrières traditionnelles et aussi une nette tendance vers le recours systématique de l’emploi non conventionnel, l’absence de promotion augmente substantiellement la probabilité de devenir un travailleur atypique (Marler et Milkovich, 2000; Simard, 2000). En 1994, les travailleurs atypiques canadiens étaient plus susceptibles que les travailleurs ordinaires de se trouver dans des carrières n’offrant pas de mouvement ascendant, bien que ce facteur n’ait pas eu d’influence considérable sur la probabilité d’être un travailleur atypique (Carr, 1996; Simard, 2000).

**Caractéristiques Individuelles**

Plusieurs variables individuelles peuvent aussi influencer la probabilité d’être travailleur autonome ou de cumuler plusieurs emplois. Le sexe, l’éducation et l’âge sont des exemples importants. Tandis que l’effet global de ces variables est erratique, le sexe fait exception : la documentation spécialisée suggère que les femmes sont plus présentes que les hommes dans l’ensemble des emplois atypiques étudiés, et ce, pour de nombreuses raisons.


Par contraste, et dans une perspective dominée par une approche plus schumpétérienne des contraintes structurelles, le travail autonome correspond à une réponse au chômage ou un refuge pour les travailleurs vieillissants. Carr (1996) a établi que les hommes et les femmes choisissent le travail autonome pour des motifs différents, mais que dans l’ensemble ces motifs tirent leur source des contraintes quant au choix de carrière. Toutefois, d’un strict point de vue factuel, les hommes sont
nettement plus nombreux que les femmes chez les travailleurs autonomes, une tendance identifiée par des études américaines (Matthews et Moser, 1995).

En dernier lieu, notre recherche précédente avait conclu que les travailleurs canadiens qui cumulent plusieurs emplois ne forment pas un groupe très homogène (Simard, 1997). La même conclusion s’applique aux travailleurs autonomes (Carr, 1996; Jurik, 1998; Marler et MIlkovich, 2000). Ces formes d’emplois atypiques sont associées à des caractéristiques individuelles, des conditions et des possibilités de vie inégales pour le même type de travailleurs (Carr, 1996; Hipple, 2001).

Méthodologie de Recherche

Pour atteindre nos objectifs de recherche, nous avons utilisé des données préexistantes de Statistique Canada, à savoir le fichier de microdonnées de l’Enquête sociale générale (ESG). Dans le présent article, nous examinons les répondants de la section H, c.-à-d. des individus faisant partie de la main-d’œuvre active au moment de l’enquête (ce qui exclut les retraités, mais pas la population active âgée de 65 ans et plus). L’échantillon comprend donc 6 365 cas. Remarquez que deux échantillons sont analysés : 808 individus pour la régression du cumul d’emplois et 1 204 travailleurs autonomes.  

Définition Opérationnelle des Variables

variables dépendantes. Les variables dépendantes sont dichotomiques et correspondent à l’état d’emploi des répondants : travailleur qui cumule les emplois ou travailleur autonome. Ceux qui cumulent plusieurs emplois sont couverts directement à la question H1, qui demande aux répondants s’ils ont exercé plus d’un emploi pendant la semaine précédant l’enquête. Le travail autonome est une variable construite qui regroupe les individus qui se déclarent des professionnels à leur compte à la question H13, et ceux qui se considèrent eux-mêmes comme des travailleurs autonomes à la question H8, et qui n’ont pas d’employés, c.-à-d. la réponse à la question H9. Cette transformation et ce contrôle sont nécessaires pour éviter de compter des répondants qui se retrouvent plus d’une fois dans plusieurs variables. De plus, si un travailleur autonome a des employés, il est considéré comme un employeur plutôt qu’un travailleur non conventionnel.

variables indépendantes. Nous allons maintenant décrire les sept variables indépendantes intégrées dans les deux équations de régression logistique. D’abord, il y a deux caractéristiques organisationnelles : le secteur d’activité dans lequel les répondants situent principalement leurs activités de travail dans les cinq dernières années et si les répondants ont occupé un emploi syndiqué il y a cinq ans. Cette dernière variable est dichotomique et elle est inscrite en forme brute dans la base de données. Pour le secteur d’activité, nous avons enregistré la variable originale construite par Statistique Canada et basée sur une question ouverte. Cette variable comprend 18

27 Pour obtenir des groupes égaux dans les analyses de régression logistique, nous avons utilisé un facteur d’échantillonnage de 0,08 pour les personnes qui cumulent les emplois et de 0,125 pour les travailleurs autonomes.
secteurs d’activité, tandis que la variable que nous avons utilisée comprend les secteurs primaire, manufacturier et commercial.

Les attributs d’emploi et de carrière sont le point central des questions qui déterminent la catégorie professionnelle d’il y a cinq ans, avec le nombre de changements d’emplois sans mobilité verticale ni promotion dans les cinq dernières années. La catégorie professionnelle d’il y a cinq ans est déterminée par une question ouverte codée en fonction de la classification des professions en 16 catégories de Pinéo. Nous avons recodé cette variable en six catégories en groupant les professionnels dans la première catégorie, les gestionnaires-cadres dans la seconde, les superviseurs et les contremaîtres dans la troisième, les vendeurs dans la quatrième, les ouvriers manuels dans la cinquième et les fermiers et travailleurs agricoles dans la sixième.

Le nombre de mouvements durant les cinq dernières années est obtenu par une question qui demande aux répondants d’indiquer le nombre d’emplois différents exercés, et plus précisément l’occupation de différents postes dans la même entreprise ou une autre. La somme de ces deux variables fournit la base de la variable utilisée dans la présente étude. La variance est faible après six emplois et nous avons groupé les répondants en sept catégories de ‘un’ à ‘sept et plus’. Le nombre de promotions est évalué par une question ouverte. Comme pour le nombre d’emplois, nous avons groupé les répondants en cinq catégories : aucune, une, deux, trois/quatre, et cinq et plus. En dernier lieu, pour les variables individuelles, nous avons utilisé le sexe (1=femme; 2=homme) et l’âge. Cette variable est produite en se basant sur une variable métrique et comporte cinq catégories : 18-29, 30-44, 45-59, 60-64, et 65 et plus.

Dans les analyses bivariantes utilisées pour décrire les familles de travailleurs cumulant plusieurs emplois et les travailleurs autonomes, nous avons aussi utilisé le nombre d’heures travaillées par semaine, le revenu annuel et le plus haut niveau de scolarité atteint. La durée de la semaine de travail est obtenue par une question ouverte qui produit une variable métrique que nous avons utilisée comme telle. Le revenu annuel des répondants est enregistré par le même type de variable et est utilisé à l’état brut, tandis le niveau de scolarité est mesuré par échelle ordinale de 12 catégories, où la plus basse catégorie correspond à aucune scolarité. La variable comporte cinq catégories : études supérieures, certificat, études de premier cycle, études postsecondaires et l’équivalent d’un diplôme de secondaire V (11e année) ou moins.

Méthodes D’Analyse

Pour répondre adéquatement aux questions soulevées par la documentation spécialisée, nous avons utilisé l’analyse de régression logistique et les diverses analyses bivariantes. Pour la régression logistique, nous avons recouru à la méthode ENTER pour forcer toutes les variables dans l’équation. Les quatre variables de catégorie (secteur d’activité, nombre de mouvements, nombre de promotions et catégorie professionnelle) sont intégrées dans le modèle de régression avec la technique de déviation. Cette technique permet de générer des coefficients qui expriment l’impact divergent de chacune des catégories de la variable par rapport à l’effet général de la variable. Les trois autres variables sont dichotomiques et sont intégrées dans le modèle en utilisant la technique de l’« indicateur », ce qui permet la sélection de la catégorie de la variable incluse dans la constante. Au départ, l’analyse de régression logistique évalue la validité du modèle global, c.-à-d. la capacité du modèle à reproduire les
données originales au niveau de la signification de $\alpha = 0.05$. Dans ce cas, l’hypothèse de différence nulle, qui exprime la similitude du modèle global au modèle qui contient la constante, doit seulement être acceptée. Bien que les résultats de la table de classification aient été utilisés par certains universitaires, cette statistique n’est pas fiable, étant donné qu’elle est surtout descriptive (Hosmer et Lemeshow, 1989). On peut utiliser la variable chi carré qui clarifie le caractère signifiant de la variation de $-2$ du logarithme du rapport de vraisemblance. Pour identifier les variables qui influencent la probabilité de devenir un travailleur qui cumule les emplois ou un travailleur autonome, nous avons recours au critère de pessimisme de Wald pour évaluer l’importance de la contribution d’une variable ou d’une catégorie de variables. Pour tirer au clair l’effet individuel des variables signifiantes, l’impact de chaque variable est traduit en une variation nette (pourcentage) de la probabilité de base.\(^{28}\)

Pour isoler les familles dans chacune des formes atypiques d’emplois sélectionnées, nous avons procédé à une analyse typologique avec les variables du revenu annuel et de la durée de la semaine de travail. Les groupes produits dans ces analyses serviront de variables indépendantes dans les analyses bivariées pour produire des résultats descriptifs.

**Résultats**

L’Enquête sociale générale indique que 7,2 % des répondants avaient plusieurs emplois. Les travailleurs autonomes représentaient 11,6 % de l’ESG, un résultat comparable aux données américaines correspondantes (Edwards et Hendrey, 1996; Segal, 1996).

L’analyse de régression logistique montre que la validité d’un modèle global est importante parce que la valeur du chi carré de la qualité de l’ajustement est 482,245 — la distribution critique des chi carrés avec 27 degrés de liberté est 55,47 — $p = 0,000$ — pour le modèle concernant le travail autonome, alors que les statistiques pour ceux qui exercent plusieurs emplois sont de 113,765 pour le chi carré.\(^{29}\) Le modèle global est significatif parce que les coefficients sont dans l’ensemble différents de zéro ($p = 0,000$). Les deux modèles génèrent donc des prédictions valables de la probabilité de devenir un travailleur qui cumule les emplois ou un travailleur autonome.

Néanmoins, la capacité prédictive des deux modèles n’est pas identique. La statistique de Cox et Snell, qui donne un pseudo $R^2$, révèle que le modèle utilisé pour les travailleurs qui cumulent les emplois n’explique que 13 % ($R^2 = 0,131$) de la probabilité de passer du travail conventionnel au cumul d’emplois, tandis le travail autonome est nettement plus fort ($R^2 = 0,330$).

Seulement trois variables sont exclues du modèle utilisé pour le cumul d’emploi : l’âge, le sexe et l’appartenance à un syndicat. Concernant le travail

\(^{28}\left[\left(1 + e^{-(a+b)}\right)^{-1} - 1\right].\)

\(^{29}\)D’autres tests statistiques permettent d’évaluer la signification du logarithme du rapport de vraisemblance -2 dont la classification résulte du modèle. Plusieurs auteurs, dont Hosmer et Lemeshow (1989), font une mise en garde à l’effet que ces résultats ne devraient pas être utilisés pour évaluer la capacité prédictive du modèle parce qu’ils sont trop influencés par des facteurs indépendants du niveau de performance du modèle, particulièrement le point de ségrégation (0,5) et la taille relative de chaque groupe.
autonome, deux variables sont rejetées : le nombre d’emploi au cours des cinq dernières années et le groupe d’âge.

**Caractéristiques Organisationnelles**

Le tableau 1 présente les résultats des analyses de régression logistique effectuées pour les travailleurs qui cumulent des emplois et les travailleurs autonomes. Le secteur d’activité a une influence déterminante sur la probabilité d’être travailleur autonome (Wald = 100,7830). Ce résultat diffère considérablement dans le cas des travailleurs occupant plus d’un emploi. Le tableau 1 révèle que 8 des 12 secteurs d’activité de la variable originale ont un effet important sur la probabilité de devenir un travailleur autonome. De ces secteurs, quatre produisent un effet négatif et les quatre autres ont un effet positif.

**Tableau 1**

*Variation nette de la probabilité de cumuler plusieurs emplois ou d’être travailleur autonome*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Facteur de multiplication Exp (B)</th>
<th>Points de pourcentage</th>
<th>Variation nette en %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travail autonome</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secteur manufacturier</td>
<td>-0,8025</td>
<td>-19,5 %</td>
<td>-29,7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1,1498</td>
<td>20,1 %</td>
<td>30,6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration et service public</td>
<td>-1,1977</td>
<td>-29,1 %</td>
<td>-44,2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>1,2067</td>
<td>20,8 %</td>
<td>31,6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, assurance, immobilier</td>
<td>0,5443</td>
<td>11,1 %</td>
<td>16,8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestion</td>
<td>1,0743</td>
<td>19,2 %</td>
<td>29,2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Éducation et service public</td>
<td>-0,7278</td>
<td>-17,6 %</td>
<td>-26,9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration publique</td>
<td>-2,9472</td>
<td>-56,6 %</td>
<td>-86,1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestion (cadres supérieurs et intermédiaires)</td>
<td>-0,5625</td>
<td>-13,5 %</td>
<td>-20,6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Une promotion ou plus – 5 ans avant</td>
<td>-1,4303</td>
<td>-34,3 %</td>
<td>-52,2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non syndiqué – 5 ans avant</td>
<td>0,5194</td>
<td>10,6 %</td>
<td>16,1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homme</td>
<td>0,4487</td>
<td>9,3 %</td>
<td>14,2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumul d’emplois</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>0,5206</td>
<td>10,1 %</td>
<td>46,7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, assurance, immobilier</td>
<td>-0,6395</td>
<td>-8,9 %</td>
<td>-41,2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionnel et semi-professionnel</td>
<td>0,5790</td>
<td>11,4 %</td>
<td>52,6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestion (cadres supérieurs et intermédiaires)</td>
<td>-0,4941</td>
<td>-7,2 %</td>
<td>-33,4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 emplois ou plus</td>
<td>0,5078</td>
<td>9,8 %</td>
<td>45,4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Une promotion ou plus – 5 ans avant</td>
<td>-0,4820</td>
<td>-7,1 %</td>
<td>-32,7 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

La probabilité de devenir travailleur autonome baisse de 86,1 % pour les personnes qui travaillent dans l’administration publique, de 44,2 % dans le secteur des
communications et des services publics, de 29,7 % dans le secteur manufacturier et de 26,9 % dans le secteur de l’éducation. En contraste, le secteur des services du personnel augmente cette probabilité de 31,6 %, la construction de 30,6 %, les services de gestion de 29,2 % et la finance, l’assurance et l’immobilier de 16,8 %. Concernant les personnes qui détiennent plusieurs emplois, les résultats montrent que le secteur d’activité a un effet moindre sur cette variable (Wald = 14,5669). Néanmoins, pour les individus qui travaillent dans le secteur de la construction, la probabilité de cumuler plusieurs emplois augmente de 46,7 %, tandis que celle des travailleurs du secteur de la finance, de l’assurance et de l’immobilier baisse de 41,2 %. Dans ce dernier cas, l’influence est forte mais négative, ce qui indique que ce secteur n’a pas recours au cumul d’emploi; ce qui ne signifie pas, toutefois, que toutes les formes d’emplois atypiques sont exclues.

En dernier lieu, la syndicalisation exerce une influence mitigée sur la probabilité de devenir travailleur autonome, mais pas de cumuler les emplois, ce qui s’explique par le fait que les personnes qui cumulent les emplois utilisent des formes atypiques qui sont généralement syndiquées, comme le travail à temps partiel. En conséquence, avoir exercé un emploi non syndiqué cinq ans avant l’étude augmente la probabilité d’être travailleur autonome de 16,1 %.

**Attributs d’emplois et de carrières**

Concernant l’influence de la catégorie professionnelle occupée il y a cinq ans, le tableau 1 montre que 2 des 7 catégories de la variable originale affectent la probabilité de cumuler plusieurs emplois. L’influence de cette variable est comparable à celle du secteur d’activité (Wald = 15,2970). Les deux catégories les plus influentes sont celle des professionnels et semi-professionnels, et celle des cadres supérieurs et intermédiaires. Pour le premier groupe (les répondants qui occupaient un poste en tant que professionnel ou semi-professionnel il y a cinq ans), la probabilité de cumuler plusieurs emplois augmente de 52,6 %, tandis qu’elle baisse de 33,4 % dans le cas des répondants qui occupaient un poste de cadre supérieur ou intermédiaire cinq ans avant l’enquête.

Pour le travail autonome, le tableau 1 montre que l’influence de la catégorie professionnelle est relativement faible (Wald = 16,4104). Par conséquent, 1 catégorie sur 7 de la variable originale affecte la probabilité d’un travail autonome. Notez que les répondants qui étaient des cadres supérieurs ou intermédiaires il y a cinq ans sont 20,6 % moins susceptibles d’être travailleurs autonomes. Ce résultat est compatible avec celui obtenu pour les détenteurs de plusieurs emplois et indique que cette catégorie professionnelle est affectée par ces formes atypiques d’emplois, et peut-être même par tous les types de travail non conventionnel.

En outre, le tableau 1 révèle que certains éléments de la carrière ont une nette influence sur la probabilité de se retrouver dans une situation de cumul d’emplois. C’est clairement le cas en ce qui a trait à la fréquence et à la direction du mouvement dans les cinq ans qui ont précédé l’enquête (Wald = 53,8196 et Wald = 41,1818). Les répondants qui ont connu une ou plusieurs promotions dans les cinq dernières années étaient moins susceptibles dans une proportion de 32,7 % de cumuler plusieurs emplois et moins susceptibles dans une proportion de 52,2 % d’être travailleurs autonomes. De plus, une fréquence très élevée de mouvement non hiérarchique (plus de cinq emplois) augmente de 45,4 % la probabilité de détenir plusieurs emplois. En contraste, la
fréquence de mouvement dans les cinq dernières années n’influence pas la probabilité d’être travailleur autonome.

**Caractéristiques Individuelles**

En ce qui a trait au travail autonome, une seule caractéristique individuelle influence la probabilité d’adopter cette forme d’emploi atypique : le sexe du répondant. La probabilité qu’un homme soit travailleur autonome est 14,2 % plus élevée. Quant au cumul d’emplois, aucune variable individuelle n’émerge de cette analyse de régression logistique, ce qui implique que la probabilité de cumuler plusieurs emplois est égale chez les hommes et les femmes.

**Cumul D’emplois et Travail Autonome : Homogénéité ou Hétérogénéité?**

Le tableau 2 montre qu’il est possible d’isoler trois grandes familles de personnes qui cumulent plusieurs emplois : une majorité d’*insécurés* (51,7 %), suivie des *accomplis* (40,7 %) et d’une minorité de *stars* (7,6 %), qui se caractérisent par un revenu très élevé. Les *stars* rapportent aussi les plus longues semaines de travail, pourtant leurs résultats sont semblables à ceux de la famille des personnes accomplies. En contraste, les *stars* se démarquent clairement des *insécurés* en raison de leurs semaines de travail considérablement plus longues. Lorsqu’on prend en compte le revenu annuel, les *stars* se démarquent nettement des *insécurés* et des *accomplis* par un revenu annuel moyen beaucoup plus élevé. Le tableau 2 montre que les hommes et les femmes sont représentés à parts égales dans le groupe des travailleurs qui cumulent les emplois. Toutefois, deux femmes sur trois se retrouvent dans la famille des *insécurés*, tandis qu’au contraire, les deux tiers de la famille des *stars* sont des hommes. Les *stars* constituent la majorité des diplômés universitaires qui cumulent les emplois, tandis que le groupe des *insécurés* comprend plus d’individus avec un diplôme d’études secondaires ou moins.

**Tableau 2**

*Familles des travailleurs cumulant les emplois et des travailleurs autonomes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Travailleurs cumulant les emplois</th>
<th>Travailleurs autonomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insécurés</td>
<td>Accomplis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H de travail/semaine Niveau de scolarité</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Études supérieures Baccalauréat</td>
<td>2,3 %**</td>
<td>6,7 %**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13,1 %**</td>
<td>21,5 %**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificat université Collège</td>
<td>1,7 %**</td>
<td>5,2 %**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26,9 %**</td>
<td>34,1 %**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondaire ou moins</td>
<td>56,0 %**</td>
<td>12,0 %**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Le tableau 2 distingue trois familles très différentes parmi les travailleurs autonomes. La première est constituée de conquérants, qui forment 17 % de la population; la deuxième famille, celle des survivants, compte pour 36,7 % et les victimes sont la majorité, à 46,4 %. Comme pour les travailleurs occupant plusieurs emplois, une famille de travailleurs autonomes se démarque clairement des autres. Les conquérants ont un revenu annuel moyen de 89 158 $, c.-à-d. deux fois plus élevé que celui des survivants et cinq fois plus élevé que celui des victimes. En termes d’éducation, les conquérants comprennent la majorité des diplômés universitaires qui sont travailleurs autonomes, tandis que la famille des victimes comprend plus de la moitié des répondants avec un diplôme d’études secondaires ou moins. En contraste avec ceux qui cumulent les emplois, les hommes sont surreprésentés chez les travailleurs autonomes : 61,6 % de la population qui occupe ce type d’emploi atypique. De plus, les hommes constituent la majorité des conquérants et des survivants. En termes de durée de la semaine de travail, les conquérants se démarquent de manière significative des deux autres familles en raison de leur horaire considérablement plus long.

**Discussion**

Dans l’ensemble, les résultats liés à l’effet du secteur d’activité montrent que le travail autonome tend à se répandre dans plus de secteurs d’activité que le cumul d’emplois. Le fait que les travailleurs autonomes canadiens travaillent dans une variété de secteurs d’activité révèle clairement à quel point cette forme de travail a pénétré le marché de l’emploi. Ces résultats corroborent Matusik et Hill (1998), qui décrivent les avantages de recourir aux emplois atypiques dans certains environnements organisationnels, parce que cette approche favorise la création de connaissances et de compétences dont les organisations ont inévitablement besoin. Toutefois, les résultats obtenus confirment une tendance vers la polarisation, ou le rejet du recours au travail autonome dans certains secteurs d’activité, vu que quatre des secteurs ont une influence
positive sur la probabilité d’occuper cette forme d’emploi atypique, tandis que quatre autres secteurs ont un effet négatif. Ce résultat indique donc une résistance à la généralisation des stratégies d’externalisation. Apparemment, certains secteurs d’activité refusent de recourir au travail autonome, c.-à-d. que ce lien d’emploi ne fait pas partie de leur réalité organisationnelle, tandis que d’autres secteurs s’y fient considérablement. Il n’y a pas de sous-représentation notable du travail autonome dans les secteurs traditionnellement liés aux activités du gouvernement, qui n’ont jamais opté pour ce type d’emploi (Hipple, 2001). À cet égard, nos résultats confirment les conclusions qu’on trouve dans la documentation spécialisée (Jurik, 1998; Matusik et Hill, 1998). Néanmoins, le cas du secteur manufacturier est quelque peu surprenant. Bien que le secteur manufacturier ait toujours concentré les ressources humaines et les moyens de production, on pourrait s’attendre, comme le suggèrent Matusik et Hill (1998), à ce que les organisations de ce secteur optent pour le recours à l’emploi atypique, compte tenu surtout qu’un certain nombre de travailleurs autonomes accepteraient probablement de travailler comme sous-traitants, en vertu de contrats de services, dans des lieux et avec des équipements situés à l’extérieur de l’organisation.

De plus, le travail autonome peut facilement prendre de l’ampleur dans le secteur manufacturier parce que, comme dans le secteur immobilier, la forme et l’organisation du travail se prêtent bien à ce type d’emploi. En contraste, le secteur de la construction a un effet positif sur les travailleurs autonomes et sur ceux qui occupent plusieurs emplois. Ce secteur devrait donc être considéré comme accordant une valeur particulière aux stratégies basées sur la flexibilité externe, associée à moins d’engagement des employés et moins de coûts salariaux (Tremblay, D.G, 1990). Parce que le secteur de la construction produit un effet important sur les deux types d’emplois atypiques analysés, nos résultats appuient partiellement les conclusions d’autres études sur le sujet (Bregger, 1996). Ceci est peu surprenant car ce secteur se caractérise par de fréquentes fluctuations d’activité qui obligent les organisations et les individus à être flexibles. Conséquemment, il n’est pas surprenant que plusieurs auteurs (Davis-Blake et Uzzi, 1993; Matusik et Hill, 1998) rapportent que les organisations qui opèrent dans un environnement instable ou saisonnier auraient grandement intérêt à adopter une stratégie d’externalisation et à offrir des emplois atypiques. De plus, ce secteur d’activité regorge de petits entrepreneurs, sous-traitants et artisans qui peuvent facilement s’engager dans le cumul d’emplois et le travail autonome.

Pour conclure la discussion sur les secteurs, il est bien de noter qu’occuper un poste dans le secteur des services de gestion augmente la probabilité du travail autonome. À vrai dire, nos résultats illustrent une tendance vers l’impartition d’un grand nombre d’activités autrefois exécutées par la main-d’œuvre permanente des organisations. Il serait intéressant de déterminer plus précisément les activités de gestion les plus touchées. Dans l’ensemble, il est clair que le travail atypique affecte les activités autrefois exécutées par la main-d’œuvre permanente (Booth, 1997; Chênevert et Tremblay, 1995; Jacob, 1993). Il serait également intéressant d’étudier dans le futur la taille de l’organisation parce que le nombre d’employés dans un secteur précis peut avoir des conséquences sur la formalité et la longévité de la relation de travail, et donc devenir un déterminant important de l’emploi atypique.

Dans le domaine de la syndicalisation, nos résultats vont dans le sens de ceux de Blanchflower et Meyer (1994) en ce que le fait d’avoir occupé un emploi syndiqué cinq ans plus tôt réduit la probabilité de devenir travailleur autonome. Les avantages de la syndicalisation en termes de conditions de travail et de sécurité d’emploi peuvent être
des facteurs dissuasifs dans la décision d’abandonner un travail traditionnel en faveur
du travail autonome. Néanmoins, la présence croissante des travailleurs atypiques pose
un défi majeur aux organisations syndicales : celui de représenter des travailleurs dont
les intérêts varient considérablement et dont la présence sur le marché du travail est
souvent virtuelle (Mackbride-King, 1997; Wever, 1997).
À première vue, à la fois pour le cumul d’emploi et pour le travail a
utonome,
ces résultats liés à la catégorie professionnelle occupée il y a cinq ans confirment que les
personnes occupant des postes hiérarchiques sont peu susceptibles de s’engager dans un
travail atypique. Ces résultats corroborent les études (Addison et Surfield, 2006;
Brousseau et al. 1996; Hall, 1996) qui concluent que les nouvelles carrières manquent
de hiérarchie. À tout le moins, on peut présumer que les personnes qui se trouvent dans
un cheminement de carrière traditionnel, caractérisé par une relative stabilité d’emploi,
des promotions et un statut social élevé, comme les cadres supérieurs et intermédiaires,
ne sont pas vraiment concernées par le phénomène étudié. Nos résultats illustrent
néanmoins que les emplois de plus haute spécialisation comme ceux des professionnels
et semi-professionnels, commencent à être affectés de manière significative par le
cumul d’emplois. Ici encore, les résultats montrent que le travail atypique s’étend aux
activités et aux fonctions qui demandent des compétences qu’on trouvait auparavant
dans la main-d’œuvre permanente; en d’autres mots, le phénomène concerne des tâches
essentielles mais non critiques (Booth, 1997; Chênevert et Tremblay, 1995; Jacob,
1993).
En ce qui a trait au cumul d’emploi, les résultats relatifs à la fréquence du
mouvement confirment les résultats rapportés dans la documentation, à savoir que les
répondants qui ont connu une grande mobilité non ascendante sont plus susceptibles
d’occuper plusieurs emplois. Conformément à la documentation sur les nouvelles
carrières, cette observation signifie que les travailleurs qui occupent plusieurs emplois
connaissent une plus grande mobilité que la majorité des travailleurs qui ont un
cheminement de carrière traditionnel. En contraste, la fréquence des mouvements
n’influence pas la probabilité de devenir travailleur autonome. Il existe deux
explications possibles pour cette situation. D’abord, de nombreux travailleurs
autonomes peuvent avoir été dans des situations d’emplois très stables avant l’étude;
Cette possibilité devrait être explorée. En outre, on devrait garder à l’esprit que les
travailleurs autonomes ne changent pas d’emploi fréquemment, le changement concerne
surtout la clientèle.
En dernier lieu, pour ces deux formes d’emplois non conventionnels, il est clair
que les expériences hiérarchiques ne sont pas prédominantes, ce qui témoigne d’une
caractéristique fondamentale des nouvelles carrières (Arthur et Rousseau, 1996; Bailly
ont démontré comment le concept de carrière traditionnelle est de plus en plus érodé par
les mécanismes de blocage individuels ou structurels.
En ce qui a trait aux variables individuelles, seul le sexe des répondants exerce
une influence significative. À vrai dire, nos résultats pointent dans la direction attendue.
Le sexe des répondants n’influence pas la probabilité de cumuler les emplois. De plus,
les résultats obtenus en regard du travail autonome sont compatibles avec la
documentation spécialisée (Matthews et Moser, 1995) à l’effet que les hommes sont
plus susceptibles d’être travailleurs autonomes que les femmes. Ces résultats suggèrent
que dans un contexte d’emploi atypique, la répartition dans les catégories
professionnelles perpétue apparemment les stéréotypes associés aux emplois.
traditionnels. Par exemple, on retrouve les travailleurs autonomes masculins surtout chez les professionnels et les gestionnaires, tandis que les femmes prédominent dans les emplois de secrétariat et de bureau, un modèle qui reproduit dans les emplois atypiques les mêmes stéréotypes sexuels qu’on trouve dans les emplois traditionnels (Maler et Milkovich, 2000). En outre, ces résultats confirment ceux de Carr (1996), qui démontrent clairement que les hommes et les femmes n’occupent pas des emplois atypiques pour les mêmes raisons ni aux mêmes âges.

Après une analyse de différenciation entre les personnes cumulant les emplois et les travailleurs autonomes, nous affirmons que ces deux formes d’emplois atypiques diffèrent. Malgré des similitudes entre ces deux types de travail non conventionnel, il est assez évident que les familles ne sont aucunement des groupes homogènes. De plus, la différenciation des familles au sein des groupes de travailleurs autonomes et de ceux qui cumulent les emplois met en lumière l’influence discriminatoire de la scolarité. Nos résultats montrent que plus la scolarité des répondants est élevée, plus ils sont susceptibles d’appartenir à la famille des stars ou des conquérants, un résultat qui corrobore les conclusions de plusieurs chercheurs (Carr, 1996; Jurik, 1998). En conséquence, même si la tendance est plus nette pour les stars, les personnes qui occupent plusieurs emplois et les travailleurs autonomes suivent le même modèle logique que les travailleurs conventionnels : l’éducation engendre manifestement de meilleures conditions de vie. Le revenu annuel des stars et des conquérants est de loin supérieur au revenu moyen. Néanmoins, un revenu plus élevé est souvent associé à des semaines de travail beaucoup plus longues. Les femmes sont surreprésentées parmi les insécurés et les victimes, ce qui tend à indiquer qu’elles n’occupent pas des places de choix au sein de la main-d’œuvre atypique.

Conclusion

Les résultats de cette étude clarifient le rôle de certaines variables organisationnelles et individuelles dans la probabilité de devenir un travailleur qui cumule les emplois ou autonome. Huit des douze secteurs d’activité influencent cette probabilité pour les travailleurs autonomes. En ce qui a trait aux secteurs déterminants, nous avons observé que la probabilité de devenir travailleur autonome diminue de 86,1 % chez les répondants qui travaillent dans l’administration publique, ce qui confirme le manque d’importance accordée à ce type d’emploi dans l’appareil gouvernemental. La variable secteur a néanmoins un effet plus mitigé sur le cumul d’emplois, parce que seulement deux secteurs d’activité influencent la probabilité de cumuler les emplois. En général, nos résultats montrent clairement que le secteur de la construction se caractérise par une recherche constante de flexibilité externe, ce secteur étant le seul qui influence positivement la probabilité de joindre un des groupes atypiques étudiés.

En termes de facteurs liés à la carrière, la mobilité ascendante joue un rôle unique. Cet effet, homogène pour les travailleurs autonomes et ceux qui cumulent les emplois, se manifeste de manière significative quant à la probabilité de s’engager dans l’une ou l’autre de ces formes atypiques d’emplois. Le fait d’être promu cinq ans avant l’enquête réduit donc substantiellement les chances d’appartenir à l’une de ces deux catégories d’emplois atypiques étudiés, tandis que la mobilité non ascendante n’augmente que la probabilité d’occuper plusieurs emplois. En outre, pour les individus qui occupaient des postes de cadres supérieurs ou intermédiaires cinq ans avant
l’enquête, la probabilité est considérablement plus faible de cumuler les emplois ou d’être travailleur autonome, ce qui confirme l’impact persistant des cheminement de carrière plus traditionnels sur les catégories professionnelles de statut hiérarchique élevé. En conséquence, nous pouvons considérer que les individus en situation de blocage de cheminement traditionnel peuvent être enclins à adopter ces formes d’emplois atypiques de manière à satisfaire leurs attentes au-delà des promotions et du statut financier.

En dernier lieu, excepté le fait que les hommes sont surreprésentés dans la catégorie des travailleurs autonomes et que la probabilité qu’ils occupent cet emploi atypique est plus forte, le sexe n’a pas d’influence sur le cumul d’emploi. Il est intéressant de mentionner que ces deux formes d’emplois atypiques sont subdivisées en familles qui ne sont pas homogènes en termes de revenu annuel, de niveau de scolarité, d’heures travaillées et de moyenne d’âge. De plus, les femmes prévalent largement dans les familles qui comportent le plus d’emplois précaires et de conditions de vie précaires. Néanmoins, des différences importantes existent au sein des familles des travailleurs autonomes et des personnes qui cumulent les emplois, et la prudence est de mise pour éviter l’appariement indiscriminé des concepts de ce qui est atypique et précaire. En conclusion, bien que la précarité soit en fait bien présente, ce n’est pas un déterminant de l’emploi atypique.

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Examining how new recruits adapt to change comes at a critical time when a new wave of HR practitioners, Generation Y (Gen Y), makes its debut on the business stage. Gen Y – those born between 1981 and 2000, bring a distinct set of values, expectations, and behaviours to the workplace. Characterized as entrepreneurial and independent; digitally savvy; rejecting micromanagement; and valuing empowerment, challenge, and excitement (Izzo, 2002), Gen Y has an unorthodox approach to career management that does not parallel traditional paths charted by Baby Boomers and Generation X.

Prevailing trends show more than half of Gen Y recruits resign from their first job within seven months (Saratoga Institute, 2000). Cited in the literature are low levels of trust and loyalty to corporate cultures, attributed to intense media scrutiny of corporations tainted with scandal (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001) and having witnessed several instances of organizational downsizing (Loughlin & Barling, 2001). Consequently, they have become sceptical; mistrustful, and apathetic toward traditional hierarchies and authority (Martin & Tulgan, 2002). With Gen Y declared “the most entrepreneurial generation in history”, organizations are confronted with the added weight of convincing young workers that working for a corporation has greater appeal than self-employment (Martin, 2005).

Gen Y brings an impressive, portfolio of academic credentials and requisite skills in technology to the workplace along with lofty expectations for fast-track promotion, raises, perks, independence, flexible work arrangements, and a need for fun (Zemke, 2001). They expect continuous recognition and daily feedback (Hastings, 2008). They also call for managerial support as well as clear and comprehensive instructions, yet seek autonomy to chart the path and pace for achieving goals (Yeaton, 2008; Martin, 2005). Given their pressing sense of immediacy and impatience, Gen Y is unlikely to be enticed by promises of distant pay raises and promotions (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). As stated by senior management interviewed by Weber (2008), “You want to think about how to prepare the next generation to move into leadership and they’re already thinking about buying the company.” (p.52).

Dissonance between personal expectations and organizational realities coupled with low tolerance of work environments that fail to deliver expectations, frequently result in swift resignation responses (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002; Nyce & Schieber, 2002). Job jumping every two years in search of greater compensation or purposeful work is the norm due to a boundaryless view of career and an awareness of their sought-after technological expertise (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). Gen Y’s definition of long term commitment is one year (Martin, 2005), and only one in five anticipates tenure with the same company for six years or longer (Hastings, 2008).

Security is still valued by younger workers, but is defined as career security whereby they build a solid portfolio of transferable skills permitting them to change jobs (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Hira, 2007). Gen Y attitudes, expectations, and
behaviours bring a new set of opportunities and challenges to the HR profession that press for unconventional approaches to attract, motivate, and retain their expertise.

Complicating the situation is the grave reality of a shrinking labour force coupled with heightened demand for HR practitioners as organizations comprehend the value-added contribution to bottom line and to competitive edge afforded by premier management of their workforce. The generation of workers currently in the workforce and available to replace Baby Boomers are 20% fewer in numbers (Statistics Canada, 2007). Statistics Canada (2007) reported that the labour force is precariously balanced with one employee leaving for every one employee entering, yet in ten years a sharp negative replacement ratio is expected with more retirees than workforce entrants. The Conference Board of Canada (2006), forecasts an accelerated rate of retirement beginning in 2012 when 30% of older, “front end” Baby Boomers which represent 6.6 million workers reach age 65. By 2030, a quarter of Canada’s population will be 65 and ready to retire (assuming age 65 departure). By 2016, a shortage of one million workers is predicted (Barrett, 2005; McIntyre, 2007), yet more disturbing is the forecast of over ten million more jobs than people capable of filling them by 2010 (Thompson, 2003).

Instinctively, Canada looks to the United States as a source of potential labour, yet it faces the same dilemma. Approximately 60 million U.S. Baby Boomers are expected to retire in the next 15 years (Drake Beam Morin, 2003; McClintock, 2003) and 19% of Baby Boomers in management positions are forecast to retire in the next five years (Carey, 2003). International recruitment offers little resolution as census data reports sixty-one countries are experiencing below average birth rates to meet workforce replacement needs (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2005).

Increasing demand for HR expertise, a dwindling labour force in which to compete for talent, and a new workforce profile raise the stakes for investigating how recruits experience transition and where change is needed in order to become employers of choice and to staff positions with star performers. Ultimately, transition management could become a key ingredient in building organizational prosperity and sealing competitive advantage.

The purpose of this paper is two-fold: to present results from a study exploring experiences of Gen-Y HR recruits as they transition from academia to the workplace; and to propose a pathway to streamline the transition. Results and change initiatives from this study can be used not only to enhance HR graduates’ transition into their respective roles; but used on a macro level by HR practitioners to develop organization-wide policies and procedures to support transitioning of all new recruits. HR is ideally positioned to advocate for and direct this initiative, given their front line accountability for developing, managing, and sustaining work environments that attract, motivate, and retain workforce talent to achieve high productivity levels. According to Batt (2002), organizations with high involvement HR championing progressive workplace initiatives report lower employee turnover.

Research Findings

This research is framed within a grounded theory approach which focuses on developing defensible theories that are informed by events, as well as the interactions of people and their communications (Halloway & Todres 2003). Strengths related to grounded theory include “strategies that guide the researcher step by step through an analytic process; the self-correcting nature of the data collection process; the methods’
inherent bent toward theory and the simultaneous turning away from a contextual description; and the emphasis on comparative methods” (Chamaz 2000: 522).

Research findings from this study are cumulative results from on-line surveys, and individual and focus group interviews with 221 college graduates in their first year of employment, 170 supervisors of these workforce entrants, and 42 college educators. For research purposes, the spotlight is on recent college graduates from Human Resources programs in Ontario, Canada. The majority of HR programs in Ontario colleges have accredited courses toward a professional designation granted by the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) – the governing body regulating course curriculum. Hence, the high degree of consistency in competency profiles of HR graduates creates a level playing field of knowledge when pursuing careers which, from a research perspective, decreases the probability that there are significant academic variances to rationalize why some graduates are more, or less, effective in transitioning into the workplace.

During data collection, participants shared experiences, insights, and observations of the academic-workplace transition; specifically, addressing challenges faced, changes experienced, and significant learnings. Emerging from content analysis of data were the following thematic categories: assigned workload, strategic accountability, establishing internal networks, office politics, mentoring, and conflict management.

**assigned workload.** New HR recruits described first year of employment as a radical shift from academic familiarity to labour market urgency. Having come from academic stability – less likely rocked by external influences – the volatility of the work environment was disarming, causing 58% to doubt ability to ride winds of change.

In light of apprehensions, new recruits credited academic training for equipping them with skills to secure employment (73%); comprehending HR roles (71%); and developing general business acumen (54%). Supervisors awarded high satisfaction ratings to new recruits for critical thinking (81%), problem solving (78%), and analytical skills (73%); with lower ratings assigned to verbal communication skills (60%), written communication skills (54%), and taking initiative (37%).

A prevailing workplace stressor noted by new recruits was disproportionate amounts of clerical work requiring administrative competency that, in their opinion, were disconnected from the HR competency profile honed during their studies. New recruits estimated 75% of daily routines devoted to administrative tasks, with 77% perceiving their professional portfolio as undervalued. Especially frustrating was being privy to departmental commotion surrounding HR start-ups, yet asked to contribute administrative support instead of HR expertise.

New recruits and educators concurred that dissatisfaction stemmed from a shaky continuation of project-based initiatives in the workplace that new recruits were familiar with from application-based learning environments where projects replicated real-life scenarios. Having developed HR competencies, they sought work environments to test drive knowledge, skills, and abilities developed in academia.

Educators also argued that the disconnect was rooted in lack of awareness of competencies brought to the workforce, potential of college graduates, and characteristics of Gen Y. Although 53% of supervisors acknowledged the disconnect, they explained that no job is immune from administration and it orients new recruits to departmental operations. Although 51% of new recruits agreed, they remained
disgruntled that administration occupied a larger than anticipated portion of workload. According to Kofman and Eckler (2005), the greatest anxiety plaguing Gen Y is lethargy resulting from accountabilities that fail to challenge intellect.

The remaining 25% of workload devoted to project-based initiatives posed their own set of challenges. Eighty-one percent expressed difficulty prioritizing work given the constant flux of change and were unnerved by the revolving door whereby assignments – originally stamped as “top priority” - were shelved and replaced with assignments deemed of greater importance. Frustration mounted when midway through research they were asked to embark in different directions – with no assurances they would return to finalize previous projects. Often spinning in attempts to re-focus their efforts, they questioned their value-added contributions not having seen projects through to fruition.

**strategic accountability.** Although there was clarity regarding HR functionality in the broader organizational context, new recruits questioned how their specific roles and responsibilities contributed to strategic mandate. Survey results revealed 18% were fully aware of job-organization linkage, and 56% required clarification. Of the 56%, the majority pointed to heavy administrative workloads and compartmentalization of projects as blocks to construing strategic relevance. In sharp contrast, 72% of supervisors affirmed that they communicated strategic relevance as part of orientation, and 65% communicated how projects fulfilled strategic mandate.

Under the umbrella of role ambiguity, new recruits noted they were hesitant volunteers. With a fragile grasp of role, new recruits were reluctant to risk embarrassment by offering input that may be skewed from organizational reality. Risks potentially jeopardizing stellar professional reputations being honed were not worth taking, especially at this sensitive time in their careers when management was vigilant as to what professional impact they would make.

New recruits were not under illusions of grandeur that they would contribute to revolutionary organizational change, but needed to grasp a thread of connectivity between entry level and organizational mandate. Noted in the survey, 76% declared that this information fed motivation and established credibility. Instead of undertaking assignments in a vacuum – with analysis and recommendations void of linkages to organizational values, vision, and direction – they could frame their work within the organizational context. Subsequently, their work would stand as legitimate strategic contributions from which their professional reputation would be honed. According to 68%, making clear and focused connections are fundamental in preparation for management positions.

**establishing internal networks.** New recruits expressed elevated levels of social anxiety during their inaugural year. Finding their place on “the team” – with its dynamic and complex web of interactions – was a complicated strategic manoeuvre requiring laser-precision. There was no prescribed methodology for executing this mission, but art and science leveraging of observation and executive decision making as to the precise moment to ask questions and offer input.

Results indicated 48% preferred to be observers during initial involvement with teams; scrutinizing communication patterns, norms, power brokers, personalities, work habits to achieve success, and behaviours to gain team acceptance. Having come from academic settings, new recruits were cognizant of their Gen Y jargon used in
conversations with college colleagues, with admission by 58% of being self-conscious about verbal presentation skills and 65% apprehensive about business writing skills. Sixty-seven percent were carefully examining speech patterns, vocabulary use, and written correspondence used by seasoned practitioners to discern business etiquette.

Of the 52% choosing participatory roles in initial involvement with teams, 29% were satisfied with their actions, and 48% assessed their actions as premature. In haste to carve out professional identity and overzealous need to impress management, their contributions often missed the mark hence, creating a less than favourable impression. In hindsight, they would have engaged in team shadowing and reflection on process before leaping forward with input.

**office politics: negative side of organizational interactions.** One of the most illusive and complex dynamics faced was office politics. Survey results revealed 87% struggled to respond, with 69% choosing flight responses to avoid politically-loaded scenarios. Of the 31% who became involved, they assumed involvement would solidify acceptance by the team. In hindsight, 71% regretted getting trapped in political webs for they became locked in grapevine cliques that detracted time and energy from work. Through trial and error they learned avoidance was a safer route.

According to supervisors, circumventing office politics was not an option. No organization is anesthetised from political clutches, and 89% concurred that proficiency in managing hurdles created by office politicking was a measure of professional success. Sidestepping office politics was perceived as indifference to the inner machine fuelling interpersonal dynamics, or incompetence in rising to the challenge of crafting responses that shut office politics down when on the brink of sabotaging work.

Educators explained that the study of organizational political behaviour was compulsory in college curriculum, but complexities of office politics coupled with power dynamics, personality differences, demographic mix, and organizational norms made formulating definitive courses of action in response to politics improbable. However, new recruits were not unfamiliar with politics as many experienced “academic politics” when collaborating with colleagues on projects. According to new recruits, as team interactions became hot beds of political activity, their typical response was to ignore disruptive behaviours and sprint toward the task finish line vowing never to work with perpetrators of team discord. It was easier to evade disruptive behaviours, since flagging process issues often escalated into unbridled conflict which further derailed relations and resulted in substandard final products.

On average, new recruits grasped the political landscape of the workplace within six months of employment, with their greatest challenges being ability to differentiate truth from fiction in storylines communicated (57%); and ascertaining informal power hierarchies in operation (41%). Pressure to take sides in office debates were averted by 52%, with 39% taking a stance on issues and regretting their decision.

**mentoring.** Mentoring was identified by 85% of new recruits as the cornerstone of successful workplace transitioning to fully embrace organizational priorities, structure, and culture. Results indicated 32% were satisfied with mentoring received; 38% required more concentrated support systems; and 21% received no mentoring. Similar results were received when asked about quality of feedback. New recruits were pleased with formal performance evaluations, with 64% not recommending any changes. However, low grades were assigned to quality of informal
daily feedback, with 16% fully satisfied, 36% moderately satisfied, and 35% dissatisfied. Of the 35% dissatisfied, 37% received more criticism than praise, and 40% rarely received any feedback. Seventy-eight percent expected job feedback to pattern academic feedback.

Aggregate data shown to supervisors were met with shock as results were lower than expected. Supervisors cited a range of constraints prohibiting them from offering strong support systems. Given a business landscape of unprecedented and unpredictable change and an HR culture characterized by chronic hours, fatiguing workloads, multi-tasking, and shrinking deadlines, support systems often take a backseat. Supervisors spend exorbitant amounts of time at the boardroom table locked in strategic discussion and devote little, if any time, to new recruits. Junior staff are typically delegated the task of supervising new recruits, but often are not trained in effective feedback. Hence, new recruits craving feedback to gauge rightness of their directions are left unsatisfied.

New recruits agreed without feedback, time and energy was wasted trying to figure out the basics or focusing efforts in the wrong direction. Proceeding through early career stages with trial and error approaches was identified as career suicide, especially when attempting to make a favourable impression. Feedback was earmarked as the fuel that galvanized effort toward excellence in task completion and in shaping their professionalism. According to Folger and Cropanzano (1998), there is a strong correlation between perception of management support and employee commitment.

conflict management. When asked about approaches to resolving interpersonal conflicts and disparities between personal and workplace expectations, 77% were resolute in their conviction not to address concerns with management. Expressed were reservations that raising such concerns would be perceived as having poor conflict management skills and subsequently, reflected in performance evaluations – possibly tarnishing their professional image and hindering promotion into positions demanding exemplary conflict management. Given the signature importance of being a team player able to work through conflict, new recruits did not want questions ignited about their conflict management skills.

To safeguard their professional reputation, new recruits chose to consciously bury issues and focus on assigned tasks (38%), seek advice from colleagues employed elsewhere (36%), or resolve issues under their own steam (23%). New recruits conceded that these approaches temporarily shield discontent, yet over time sustaining the façade was exhausting and gradually began to erode work relations and quality of work. If conflict did not subside, 41% were prepared to resign, with 29% casually scanning the job market for their next career move. Sixty-two percent viewed their first job as a trial run en route to finding a company with whom to formally launch a long term career.

When asked to rate overall satisfaction with transitioning experiences on a Likert scale, the average response was 5.8 – “10” denoting “outstanding”. Sixty-two percent stated their personal lives were submerged by uphill battles to understand their new role, carve out professional identity, and deliver value-added contributions. Although overstretched, with 29% showing symptoms of burnout, new recruits agreed that these were growing pains as they settle into their chosen profession.
Analysis of Results

Inevitably, a more streamlined transition is needed to move new recruits from academia to the workplace. Although new recruits credited academia with providing solid knowledge to launch their careers, work is still required for workplace readiness. Preparation must progress beyond aptitude and interest assessments to find connectivity between person, job, and organization; and on how to be resourceful in one’s job search. Although these practices are staples of career preparedness, transitional challenges raised in this study invite more assertive approaches.

If no action is taken there are risks that the divide may be sustained or expanded. The business community risks losing status as employers of choice and facing turnover when dissatisfied new recruits resign. Turnover has a crippling effect, especially on bottom line. Costs of turnover stemming from three primary sources – separation costs for departing employees; replacement costs associated with recruitment and selection; and training costs for new hires – are two to three times the monthly salary of departing employees (Mercer, 2002). Recruitment and selection costs alone for an entry level position are $6000 Cdn. ((Leibowitz et al., 1991). Costs are likely higher as equations do not include indirect costs, such as decreased morale, lower productivity preceding resignation, and overtime payouts for employees juggling responsibilities of employees who have left.

Turnover perpetuates the cycle of recruiting, selecting, and training which is expensive and robs time and attention from strategically important work that fulfils the organizational mandate. With the complexion of the workplace constantly changing as a result of a steady stream of new employees, sustaining organizational stability in performance and productivity is challenged; especially critical in consumer-driven landscapes where consistency and excellence in service and product delivery are demanded. Also jeopardized is succession planning that relies heavily on workplace constancy. With short lived tenure it becomes problematic to work with employees on mapping internal career progression and providing requisite professional development, especially for leadership in key functionalities requiring intense mentoring to ensure competence.

Implications for academia take the form of eroded reputation if programs fail to deliver graduates with a full complement of workforce skills. Turbulent workforce initiations may also get communicated through academic grapevines to the next wave of learners preparing for the workplace. If repairs to transitioning potholes are not executed, these messages may snowball and be communicated to potential college entrants, leaving blemishes on the institution’s reputation as it tries to compete for star students. This translates into lower enrolment of new students and graduates returning for advanced credentials, reduced capacity to attract funding which leads to reduced budgets for program delivery, and program cuts. It may also impact the calibre of educators attracted to academic institutions which, if profiles of educators are not par excellence, the quality of instruction comes into question.

That which new HR recruits experience during these formative years is what they know and consequently model. Rocky transitions have implications for how new recruits will perform as they progress to senior HR roles, especially how they design orientation programs for new recruits not just in their own departments, but throughout the organization. Hence, a less than stellar transition may be perpetuated throughout
organizational entry level positions and, given the impactful first impression it carries, may perpetuate organization-wide turnover.

Repairing the highway traveled from academia to the workplace requires 360-degree involvement from key stakeholders in the transitioning process – educators, community organizations, and new recruits while in their academic role as learners. Although partnerships to some degree exist, they need to be more firmly entrenched and have more prominence in the architecture of academia and business, with all stakeholders pledging joint accountability.

Blueprint for Transitioning

Proposed is a template for fostering academic-business partnerships that capitalizes on learning for and from the workplace. Although the blueprint originates from HR research, it is intended for use in all disciplines.

The objective is to promote phased introduction to the work world by weaving partnerships into academic and business landscapes with more pronounced visibility and earlier in learners’ academic careers. Gradual transitioning from learners’ sophomore years into employment enables incremental advancement of business knowledge; regular assessment of skills against expected competencies and performance expectations; and builds confidence in the competency profile offered to the labour market. With progressive transitioning, learners conceivably enter the workforce having ironed out questions, concerns, and anxieties which could mitigate the reality shock that immobilizes learners when starting careers.

Heightened contact between learners and supervisors in this partnership advances the business world’s understanding of Gen Y. Specifically, business leaders learn about Gen Y needs and expectations; their perceptions of business and recommendations for change; and qualities of work environments and jobs that are enticing. Not only does this enhance how generations understand and communicate with each other, but also gives supervisors the edge in creating work environments that appeal to workforce entrants, hence improving ability to recruit and retain them.

Partnership empowering business to sustain excellence in creating climates conducive to Gen Y needs can be a competitive advantage when competing for star performers in a shrinking labour pool. Synonymously, academia benefits from elevated image and visibility in the community when they stay current on business expectations and deliver market-ready graduates – earning the coveted distinction of preferred academic institution from which employers recruit graduates.

The proposed partnership is supported by 81% of supervisors, 76% of learners, and 72% of educators, agreeing the bulk of the transition should not rest on the months proceeding graduation as the learning curve is too steep. Survey results indicated 77% of supervisors preferred “business ready” graduates – trained and positioned for employment without prolonged orientation.
collaborative consultation: setting partnership in motion.

Quintessential to the academic-business model is collaborative consultation whereby parties exchange needs, expectations, resources, and assets giving clarity to that which is brought to the table and that which drives their involvement. It also provides a venue for business to enlighten academia about current business priorities and challenges; share workplace learning initiatives; and communicate performance standards and employability skills expected of graduates. Correspondingly, academia articulates how instructional design, delivery, and evaluation are tailored to meet business expectations and foster competency development.

To fuel ongoing collaboration, an academic-business advisory committee should be established meeting quarterly to review status of initiatives; explore new directions en route to perfecting the recipe for balancing academic and workplace learning; and tackle challenges that surface. In doing so, stakeholders have a finger on the pulse of the transitioning process so minor derailments are corrected before causing irreparable damage. To give voice to diverse perspectives and to prevent the committee from becoming insular and operating in a knowledge vacuum, 360-degree communication channels can be developed to canvass insights and recommendations from the larger community.
business application in academic curriculum. Integrating business culture into academia entails comprehensive review of curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation scouting for learning objectives to be enriched by business application. Duly noted, many academic institutions capitalize on business application through workplace practicum, and - provided placements promise application-based orientations - they serve as valuable outlets to pilot run skills and abilities before graduation. Proposed in this blueprint is a more expansive plan whereby business linkages are widely dispersed throughout the curriculum providing a wide swath of activities exposing learners to business diversities and complexities. Consequently, business applications ready learners for both the workplace and practicum demands.

Course assignments necessitating contact with the business community – such as, interviews and surveys to collect data – are befitting for cultivating business-oriented curriculum. Experienced is the richness of diverse research methodologies coupled with synthesizing scholarly works; and a training ground for mastering interview and survey skills for employment marketability.

To augment appeal of these assignments in the eyes of learners, copies of completed assignments can be given to business practitioners for assessment alongside academic grading. Feedback from business leaders should be similar to that which learners would receive if employed by the organization. If assignments take the form of class presentations, business leaders could be invited guests providing feedback. The advantages are two-fold: vicarious learning for the entire class from feedback on each presentation; and plenary debriefing where learners and business leaders dialogue about expectations and practices to perfect skills. Business leaders gain a better grasp of Gen Y disposition and competencies so they can deliberate on how to support preparation for the workforce.

Feedback from business leaders provides learners with a glimpse of how their work is judged in professional arenas. Since business leaders have hiring authority, it is likely learners will be sensitive and receptive to their comments. Learners should be encouraged to reflect on emergent feedback themes to acknowledge strengths – and continue refining development – and map improvements for underdeveloped skills. Preferably, confronting limitations and taking action to perfect skills will unfold while still in academia instead of in the workplace where costly consequences surface in performance evaluations; quality and quantity of projects assigned; and promotions.

realistic career previews. Academia is fraught with continually exploring career alternatives and testing capabilities and interests to ascertain if one is steering in the right occupational direction. Pressure to lock in one’s final career choice amidst boundaryless advice and an endless battery of interest, aptitude, and values assessments, can be harrowing.

Narrowing down the decision calls for introduction to the profession through realistic career previews. The aim is similar to realistic job previews – create an accurate profile of the profession so learners are fully cognizant of perks and pitfalls. This can be achieved through job shadowing, panel discussions with representation from diverse HR specialities, facilitation of classroom learning by practitioners, and invitations to networking events sponsored by professional associations. When learners get a taste of front-line opportunities and pressures; and glean first-hand advice from practitioners they weigh the data and make informed decisions about whether HR is
their destiny. Previews may also diminish unrealistic career expectations often provoking organizational turnover within initial employment years.

As perceptions of the profession crystallize, learners are asked to target three goals with corresponding action plans for moving toward full HR competency. To sustain momentum, in-class discussions are encouraged about progress, challenges, and suggestions for shifting directions. Emergent is a developmental plan serving as a roadmap for transition into business. An aggregate profile of goals could prove valuable to academic-business advisory committees enlightening them on learner priorities from which to generate new transitioning pathways.

**learner-supervisor consultation: setting the stage for workplace entry.**
Career entry is a time of reality testing when job expectations collide with realities of organizational life, giving rise to a stinging reality shock. Learner-supervisor consultation following general employee orientation should be an organizational staple, acclimatizing learners to workplace expectations. Learners comprehend their role on the supervisor’s team and how their job links to organizational vision; full extent of accountabilities; and performance standards and expectations that will frame actions. Although overstretched supervisors may be tempted to delegate orientation to junior staff, the temptation should be avoided. If the task is delegated there are not the same assurances that the right organizational tone will be set nor questions answered with the same precision and polish.

Consultation is not intended as an isolated event with a means to an end, but a continuous process woven into learner-supervisor working relationships. Periodic meetings should be scheduled to check progress, raise issues, and contemplate future pursuits. If solid rapport has been built, then a safe haven exists for learners to test their professional wings in offering feedback, suggesting change, and asking questions – even those loaded with business sensitivity. As well, supervisors gain insights into business operations through the lens of new recruits to gauge degree of success in fostering work environments conducive to productivity and satisfaction, and where change is warranted.

Although time consuming, this practice should be extended to all employees. Regularly voicing concerns and working toward minimizing barriers decreases the probability of problems festering and eventually eroding satisfaction and performance. Early detection and response to the need for change are more manageable than attempting to navigate the change process once problems take flight leaving employees despondent. Making changes based on employee input launches a cyclical feedback process whereby supervisor develop and sustain connection with employees disclosing that which is, and isn’t, contributing to workplace efficiency and effectiveness (Rekar Munro & Laiken, 2004).

**project-based orientation in entry level jobs.** Survey results disclosed learners’ preferences for project-based concentration in entry level jobs. Opportunity presents itself for supervisors and learners to dissect existing job structures and collaborate on job redesign to leverage learner and organizational needs.

Job redesign enables supervisors to capitalize on learners’ rich competency profiles by stretching walls of job accountability so learners can contribute the full gamut of their talents. Intrinsic satisfiers such as skill variety, challenge, and involvement not only enhance participation, commitment, and productivity, but
research suggests employees who embark on challenging projects early in their careers fine-tune professional resources to achieve greater success later in their careers and are less likely to resign (Harter et al., 2002). From management’s perspective, new skill sets may fill pockets of unattended departmental needs and resurrect projects that were shelved due to lack of resources. Resultantly, both parties reap benefits of job redesign – organizations acquire high performance from a skilled and committed workforce; and employees exercise unrestrained potential in gratifying careers, and are less likely to leave.

However, questions still loom as to what should be done with administrative duties opposed by new recruits. Job redesign calls for scrutiny of clerical tasks in an attempt to streamline operations for maximum effectiveness and efficiency; and to address what can be automated out. Of paramount concern should be whether full technological capabilities are harnessed in all HR functionalities, especially in manually-driven tasks. This is critical in a digitally advanced era imprinted with lightening advances, and given the arrival of Gen Y known for ultra-technological sophistication. Exercising due diligence through e-HR initiatives may alleviate many operational burdens, liberating HR practitioners to reposition themselves in project-based orientations carrying strategic relevance (Rekar Munro, 2007).

**mentorship.** Transitional challenges confronted by learners warrant prudent matching of mentor and protégé so experiences span beyond exchanges of knowledge; acclaimed for holistic value. Instituting impactful mentorship programs starts with a competency profile as the basis for selecting mentors. Screening of candidates is imperative as star performers in their designated disciplines are not inevitably predestined to be mentors, since a markedly different skill set is required for the role.

Training programs for mentors should be compulsory for universal understanding of expectations and consistency in creating climates conducive to learning. A sample of the training agenda includes: timely and constructive feedback; proactive problem solving; consulting on progress; conflict management; offering developmental assignments and support; linking learners with internal and external networks and resources; support for goal setting and generating options for action strategies; and facilitating career development discussions.

Matching of mentor and protege should be executed with the same precision afforded to training. Both participate in pre-mentoring meetings to discuss expectations, interests, work habits, and preferences to ascertain if there is “working chemistry” as the bedrock upon which to build a working relationship. The final verdict is participant-driven so both are confident there is enough to bond them – integral when managing pressure points that may arise.

Given the global and technological landscape in which business operates, mentoring is no longer reserved for face-to-face mentor-protégé contact. The predominance and ease with which teleconferencing and videoconferencing are used to connect globally present opportunities for on-line mentoring. E-mentoring offers its own brand of value: educating proteges about inter-connectedness of business operations to achieve global mandate; diversity on environmental, legal, social, economic, and political fronts; and how this intricate web of operations is managed. These experiences are beneficial for those with international career aspirations.
career tracking. Career tracking plants clear and realizable visions of potential lateral and horizontal career paths that motivate learners to excel in workplace undertakings in order to satisfy career ambitions; and improve organizational succession planning and reduce threats of turnover. If learners remain fixed on long term vision it is probable they will ride the wave of unfulfilling tasks – despite best efforts in job redesign – cognizant that their compass points in a direction that garners greater satisfaction.

Supervisors provide a goldmine of input to translate career goals into action by identifying prerequisite competencies required for success; mapping academic avenues to upgrade skills and enhance professional marketability; and recommending high visibility workplace and community assignments to enrich one's portfolio and build professional networks. To diffuse the probability of goal setting becoming an academic exercise and enhancing the probability that career strategies have management backing, career management should take its place in performance evaluations. Formal assessments ensure learners and supervisors keep career aspirations on the radar and periodically assess whether revisions are needed to fine-tune career direction.

evaluation: where do we go from here? The whirlwind of transitional activity begs periodic intermissions to evaluate the transformative path pursued. As the steering body for transition, academic-business advisory committees are best positioned to lead evaluation. Major decisions need to be made: identifying performance indicators for assessment and evaluation tools, format, and administration; and determining how far the net will be cast in canvassing feedback from the community.

Evaluation affords an opportune time to critique strengths and limitations of each component of the transitional process – learning, development, service, teaching, and partnership. From the strengths, best practices are extrapolated for crafting policies and procedures that perpetuate consistency in how stakeholders define their roles and how they deliver first-class transitioning experiences. Limitations are equally potent developmental opportunities from which to catch areas of dysfunction before they derail the process, and to canvass recommendations for metamorphasizing weaknesses into strengths. Evaluation also ignites questions for generating new research initiatives to advance understanding and management of transitioning pathways.

Feedback creates a surge in momentum from which to raise the bar and progress to the next chapter. Commitment to annual evaluation enhances the likelihood that stakeholders have a finger on the pulse of the transitioning process and are prepared to deliver a pre-emptive strike by shifting in new directions in the face of change.

Conclusion

Partnerships are powerful catalysts for ensuring premier academic and business experiences are delivered to steer Gen-Y HR practitioners into the work world – one of the steepest learning curves in their career lifespan. By comprehending how new recruits experience transition and detecting discontinuities and fractures in current practice, stakeholders can mobilize resources to provide an unparallel, first-class training ground for professional practice. With a high premium placed on transition management new recruits enter the HR profession with a full complement of competencies to advance and perpetuate organizational success; ultimately making transition management the new pillar of organizational prosperity. Some may argue
that academic-business partnerships involve distressing expenditures of resources. True – yet indisputably imperative as part of society’s due diligence in preparing the next generation of knowledge workers under whose leadership global communities will thrive.

References


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The Intersection of Gender & Race: Effects on The Incidence of Promotions

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An employee’s rank in an organizational hierarchy not only determines the level of financial rewards (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1989; Baker, Gibbs & Holmstrom, 1994a,b; McCue, 1996, Bognanno, 2001), but also confers other non-pecuniary benefits, such as more autonomy and more opportunities for personal development. Promotions also lead to higher levels of job satisfaction (Berkowitz & Kotowitz, 1993; Francesconi, 2001). Opportunity for career advancement, therefore, is a key determinant of workers’ labour market experiences.

The substantial flattening of organizations in the last two decades has eliminated several layers in most organizations' hierarchies. In this new environment, career achievement through a series of lateral moves to increase the employees’ breadth of knowledge and experience has become more common than career advancement through the organization hierarchy. Although these lateral moves may be seen as necessary building blocks for career advancement, it is upward mobility that provides significant monetary and non-monetary returns. This paper will first look at the determinants of promotions and then explore the intersection of race and gender on the incidence of promotions. Finally, this paper will assess the proportion of the gross gap in promotion opportunity between white males and white females/minority males/minority females that can be accounted for by differences in levels of productivity-related characteristics including education, age and tenure.

Previous Empirical Studies

Researchers studying promotions have mostly focused on the effect of gender. A number of studies have found that women were less likely to receive a promotion than men (Cassell, Director & Doctors, 1975; Cabral, Ferber & Green, 1981; Olson and Becker, 1983; Hartmann, 1987; Cannings, 1988; Spurr, 1990; Pergamit & Veum, 1999; Jones & Makepeace, 1996; Chernesky, 2003; Chow & Crawford, 2004; Blau & Devaro 2007). For example, Cassell, Director & Doctors (1975) looked at gender differences in the rate at which workers move up the organizational hierarchy. Based on a sample of 1,330 blue-collar and lower-level, white-collar workers from three companies in the mid-western U.S., they found that a majority of the females experienced post-hire grade promotion discrimination while a very small number of females received grade promotions as rapidly as males.

Olson and Becker (1983), using data from the U.S. Quality of Employment Panel and a promotion measure based on self-reported evaluation of job changes by respondents who did not change employer between 1973 and 1977, found that women, in general, were held to higher promotion standards than were men and, women received fewer promotions than did men with equal measured abilities. More recent studies have also found that women faced a higher promotion threshold then men (Pekkarinen & Vartianinen, 2006; Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Finally, Blau & Devaro...
(2007), using data from the Multicity Study of Urban Inequality employer survey, also found that women have lower probabilities of promotion than men.

A few researchers have found "positive" gender effects in promotions. Stewart & Gudykunst (1982) found that females enjoyed more promotions than men in a financial institution in the northeastern United States. Gerhart & Milkovich (1989) found that at lower levels in the organization hierarchy in a manufacturing firm, women received more promotions than men over a 6-year period. Hersch & Viscusi (1996), in their analysis of a sample of employees in a public utility firm, also found that women were promoted more often than men.

Finally, several studies found no gender effect at all (Eberts & Stone, 1985; Lewis, 1986; Elvira & Zatzick, 2002; Booth, Francesconi & Frank, 2003). Eberts & Stone (1985) found significant negative gender differences in promotion to administrative positions in the elementary and secondary public school system in Oregon in the early 1970s, but the effect was no longer significant by the end of the 1970s. Lewis (1986) also found no significant difference in promotion chances by gender among full-time federal white-collar workers.

With regards to race, some studies have found that Blacks or Hispanics were less likely to be promoted than whites (Hartmann, 1987; Pergamit & Veum, 1999; James, 2000) or that minorities were as likely to be promoted (Lewis, 1986; Elvira & Zatzick, 2002). For example, Elvira & Zatzick (2002) looked at data from a financial institution in one U.S. state also found no significant difference in promotion rates between whites and non-whites.

To-date, there are relatively few studies that look at the effects of race and/or gender in both Canada and the United Kingdom. Two studies that utilized Canadian data both found negative gender effects on the probability of promotions. In a survey of managerial employees in a large Canadian corporation, Cannings (1988) found that gender had a significant effect on chances for promotion even after controlling for career-relevant factors. The study found that female managers were only 80% as likely as male managers to be promoted in any given year. Swimmer (1990), studying female clerks in a large public utility, found that women were at a disadvantage when it came to advancement opportunity to junior levels of management. Similarly, two studies in the United Kingdom found negative gender effects. Jones & Makepeace (1996) found that women faced tougher promotion criteria than men in a financial company. Pudney & Shields (2000) found that male nurses were promoted more quickly than female nurses and white nurses were promoted more quickly than non-white nursing staff.

Different data on different industries focusing on different employee populations and employing different methods yielded varied conclusions on the effects of race and gender on promotions. This paper adds to the current body of research and presents empirical findings on the incidence of promotions that cover a wide range of the organizational hierarchy in the Information & Communications Technology sector. This is also one of the very few studies that explores the intersection of race and gender on this very important employment outcome.

DATA

Differences among firms, industries and the overall economic and market conditions in which they operate will affect their employees' promotion prospects. For example, large established firms may be better able to offer higher rewards, more job
security and better career opportunities (Oi, 1990; Brown & Medoff, 2001). By focusing on only one company, factors that may have a significant impact on promotion decisions, including the firm's age, size, industry, business strategy, compensation policy and career development philosophy, are appropriately controlled for. In other words, within-firm findings will not reflect any unobserved inter-firm differences that are common in national studies. The study of promotions also requires that jobs be ordered and the use of firm-level data ensures that the rankings are consistently determined based on the firm's policies. The firm's administrative records can also provide accurate information on employees’ age, job function, salary and their tenure with the firm.

This paper utilizes confidential archived administrative records on non-unionized employees as of year-end 1995 and those who commenced employment with the firm between 1996 and 2000. In this firm, there are ten job levels below the chief executive officer level, eight of which are included in the analyses. Promotion data for the top two levels representing the presidential and vice-presidential level employees were not available. The final dataset contains 22,338 employees.

Method

To examine the determinants of promotion, a multivariate probit model of promotion was estimated. The dependent variable is a dichotomous variable that takes on a value of "1" if the employee received one or more promotions between 1996 and 2000, and "0" otherwise. The probability that an employee is promoted to a higher job level between one year and a subsequent period is estimated by the following: \( \Pr(y_j \neq 0 | X_j) = \phi (X_j\beta) \) where the outcome (or dependent variable) is a dichotomy indicating the incidence of promotion to the next higher job level, \( \phi \) is the standard normal cumulative distribution and \( \beta \) is a vector of probit coefficients and \( X \) is the corresponding vector of explanatory variables together with a set of dummy variables to measure the impact of race/gender status on the probability of promotion. The estimates presented in the empirical analysis are maximum likelihood estimates that are most likely to give rise to the pattern of the observations in the data. The estimates reported in the following analyses are marginal effects, calculated as the derivative of the conditional expectation of the observed dependent variable evaluated at the sample means. These marginal effects reflect the changes in the probability of promotion for an infinitesimal change in the continuous independent variable and for a discrete change in the probability of promotion for dummy independent variables. To explore the differential effects for groups situated at different levels of the organizational hierarchy, analyses are also conducted by partitioning the data into three separate segments: the entry levels, the feeder group and the senior levels.

In addition to the dummy variable approach, this paper will employ a technique similar to the Oaxaca/Blinder decomposition (Oaxaca, 1973; Blinder, 1973) to decompose any gender/racial gap in the probability of promotion between white males and each of the minority groups into two components: an explained component due to differences in productivity-related characteristics and an unexplained component due to the differences in the returns to characteristics. This technique, decomposing the differences in probit models, has been utilized to analyze a variety of phenomena: the decline in unionism (Even & MacPherson, 1990), the impact of unionization on the
gender wage gap (Doiron & Riddell, 1994), the propensity to report a crime (MacDonald 1998), labour market participation (Blackaby et al., 1998), attitudes toward foreigners in the European Union (Gang et al., 2002), and the source of the gender gap in promotions (Cobb-Clark, 2001).

The Dependent Variable

Without controlling for any differences in characteristics, a slightly higher percentage of whites (59.4%) received one or more promotions than non-whites (55.7%), a 3.7 percentage-point differential that is statistically significant at the 1% level. Differentiating by gender, a higher proportion (57.2%) of male employees received one or more promotions, as compared to 54.7% of the female employees, a 2.5 percentage-point differential that is also statistically significant at the 1% level.

The gross promotion rates between white males and the other race/gender minority group are also compared. While the proportion of white females who were promoted was lower than that of white males (58.1% versus 60.0%), the differential is not statistically significant at conventional levels. The promotion gaps between white males and minority males (3.4 percentage-points) and between white males and minority females (7.5 percentage-points) are both significant at the 1% level. This simple comparison of gross promotion rates indicates lower promotion probabilities for both minority females and minority males.

The Independent Variables

The explanatory variables included in this paper can be classified into four main groups: a set of key independent variables representing race and gender characteristics, a set of supply side variables (human capital variables), a set of demand side variables (structural variables) and a set of control variables.

key independent variables. Race and gender are the key independent variables. It is important to note at the outset that the race variable only differentiates between whether an employee is a member of a visible minority or not, based on employees’ self-identification. To allow the investigation of the inter-relationships between gender and race in addition to their individual effects, four race/gender combination variables were also created: white males, white females, visible minority males and visible minority females\(^{30}\). These four race/gender groups may have very different labour market experiences and the creation of these variables will allow us to gauge whether visible minority females experience a “double whammy”; that is, whether they are penalized for being female and for being a member of a visible minority.

\(^{30}\) Declaration of visible minority status in Canada is based on self-identification and some employees have chosen to not self-identify their ethnicity. As such, an “undisclosed” category is included in the analyses in this paper.
Supply Side Variables

The model also includes a set of conventional human capital and demographic variables. These variables include tenure, age, education attainment, performance rating and break(s) in service.

**tenure.** Tenure is included in the model as a proxy for firm-level or specific skill accumulation. In their analyses of promotion for nonunion salaried employees in a manufacturing firm in the United States, Abraham & Medoff (1985) found evidence that seniority had a substantial negative impact on promotion decisions for 60% of the employees, whereas Stewart and Gudykunst (1982) found positive effects of tenure on promotion rates. A logical expectation is that one needs to accumulate enough firm-level skills before (s)he is considered ready to be promoted. However, it is also fair to expect that this effect is not a linear one. Studies have found a negative tenure effect on promotions after the initial years. Tenure is therefore expected to have a positive effect on the probability of promotion initially but will become a burden (negative effect) when tenure reaches a particular point in time.

**age and education.** Age and education are included as proxies for general skill accumulation. Conventional beliefs suggest that the probability of promotion increases as one's general skill increases (Prendergast 1993). Rosenbaum (1979) suggested that, as with job tenure, the relationship between age and promotion opportunity exhibits a curvilinear relationship, in the shape of an inverted U. Therefore, one’s opportunity for advancement is expected to increase with age up to a certain point and then decrease. However, other studies have found that the incidence of promotion falls with age while education effects are frequently found to be not significant in explaining the incidence of promotion (Lewis, 1986).

**performance rating.** Performance rating is included as a measure to account for an employee's performance and productivity. In this firm, objectives are usually agreed to between the employee and his or her supervisor at the beginning of a performance period, followed by an evaluation at the end of the period. Performance ratings, determined by the supervisor in consultation with the employee, are one of the outcomes of the evaluations. Two dummy variables are included in the model: one reflects superior performance and one shows that objectives have been met. Previous research studies have shown that good performance ratings usually increase the chances of promotion or career advancement (Gibbs, 1995; Igbaria & Greenhaus, 1992). In a meritocratic setting, therefore, employees who perform relatively better than others would stand a better chance to be awarded a promotion. Previous studies have found that women and minorities tend to receive lower performance ratings than their male and white counterparts (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Elvira & Town, 2001; Lyness & Heilman, 2006).

**break in service.** As the data contain consecutive end-of-year information on all employees, it allows the establishment of a “break in service” variable that identifies whether or not an employee’s tenure with the company was continuous during the time period studied. Although the reason for the break cannot be determined by the available data, these breaks can represent a termination/rehire situation or they can be due to a
parental or educational leave. A rehire or return from education leave may signal a higher level of skills whereas a return from parental leave might be seen as a depreciation in skills. However, this variable may not be statistically significant as any significant positive effect may cancel out any negative effect, depending on the nature of the breaks. Hewlett (2005) shows that women and men take “breaks” for very different reasons and that these breaks in careers may have a larger negative impact in fast-moving industries such as engineering and technology than in other sectors. Discontinuous labour market experience, especially for women who take time out for child-bearing and child rearing, may have significant negative effects on career advancement as these work interruptions are associated with skills loss (Edin & Gystavssibm 2008).

**Demand Side Variables**

To aid our understanding of the nuances of the promotion process from the firm's perspective, a set of demand side variables that account for how work is structured in this firm is included. These variables include job family, job level, and the race/gender composition of each job family/level combination.

**job family.** Employees in this firm were classified into nine job families based on the functions they perform (see Figure 1). Minorities account for a small percentage of all employees in all job families. The Human Resources function has a high representation of white females and Customer Service has the highest representation of white males.

**Figure 1**

*Distribution of Race/Gender Groups by Job Family*
**Job Level.** Employees in each job family can be situated at different job levels in the organizational hierarchy based on the complexities and the levels of responsibility of the jobs (see Figure 2). The proportion of white females is higher in the lower job levels, and decreases significantly at the higher levels in the organizational hierarchy. The opposite is true for white males: they are more likely to be situated in the top half of the organization hierarchy. The representation of racial minorities is quite low throughout the organizational hierarchy. Conventional wisdom suggests that it is increasingly difficult to be promoted as one rises up the organizational hierarchy as there are fewer positions available at more senior levels. Accordingly, if white males are more often situated at higher job levels, then the probability of promotion for white males should be lower than the other race/gender groups if promotion decisions are made fairly. For this reason, job level is included as an explanatory variable in the model.

Figure 2

*Distribution of Race/Gender Groups by Job Level*

Previous research has suggested that because men are more likely to be situated at higher levels of the organizational hierarchy, analyzing promotion data across all organizational levels may produce the spurious result that females are more likely to be promoted (Konrad & Cannings, 1997). To explore the differential effects for groups situated at different levels of the organizational hierarchy, these eight levels have been partitioned into three categories: levels 1 to 3 are defined as the entry level; levels 4 and 5 are combined as the feeder group while the remaining three levels are collectively grouped into the senior level employees. The ideal case is to partition the data by each job level, however, the relatively small sample size at each job level made it difficult to conduct statistical tests for any gender or racial differentials in career advancement opportunity. As discussed earlier, the probability of promotion is expected to decrease as one rises up the organizational hierarchy. This effect should apply to the different race/gender groups equally in a non-discriminatory environment.
**race/gender job composition.** The mix of incumbents in jobs may also contribute to differential treatment in promotions (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1989; Maume, 1999; Barnett, Baron & Stuart, 2000). To capture the effect of race/gender composition on the probability of promotion, three new variables are created: percent white female, percent visible minority male and percent visible minority female for each of the job family/level combinations. Finally, control variables to account for the year of promotion and the region where each employee worked are included.

Table 1

**Means and Proportions for Selected Variables by Race/Gender Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>White Males</th>
<th>White Females</th>
<th>Minority Males</th>
<th>Minority Females</th>
<th>The Undisclosed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion Promoted (%)</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age [in years]</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure [in years]</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion with University Degrees</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Level</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Salary [$'000]</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With “Exceed” Rating</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Break in Service</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Minority Male</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Minority Female</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Observations (%)</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for selected explanatory variables by race/gender groups. White males and white females, on average, are slightly older than the visible minorities and have accumulated a slightly longer average tenure. A higher proportion of visible minorities possess university education than white males and white females. The average job level for white males is 5.5, followed by 5.1 for minority males, and 4.6 for both white and minority females. The average salary for white males is highest at $68,400, followed by minority males at $64,000 and both female groups at $54,300.

Although about 14% of the full sample received the highest performance rating (i.e., exceed rating), the proportion of whites that received an “exceed” rating was higher than in the minority groups. Of white males and white females, almost one in five received the highest performance rating; whereas, the proportions for minority males and minority females who received “exceed” ratings were only 13% and 11% respectively. This is in line with the observation by Greenhaus et al. (1990) that nonwhites received lower job performance ratings that may indirectly affect their promotability. However, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent this difference reflects true differences in performance and the impact of discrimination. Finally, the proportion of employees with a break in service was very small -- 0.4% of white males, 0.1% of white females and 0.3% of minority groups had a break in service. The small number of employees with breaks may not allow the assessment of the impact of work interruption on the incidence of promotion.

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Empirical Results

Table 2 presents the estimates from the probit model of promotion for all employees in the sample. The first column of Table 4 reports the marginal effects on the probability of promotion for the full sample. Even after controlling for an extensive list of supply side, demand side and control variables, white females, minority males and minority females were all less likely to receive promotions than white males.

### Table 2

**Determinants of Promotion by Race/Gender Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>White Males</th>
<th>White Females</th>
<th>Minority Males</th>
<th>Minority Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dF/dx</td>
<td>Std.Err.</td>
<td>dF/dx</td>
<td>Std.Err.</td>
<td>dF/dx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[White Males]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Females</td>
<td>-0.0454**</td>
<td>0.0121</td>
<td>-0.0788**</td>
<td>0.0123</td>
<td>-0.1612**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Females</td>
<td>-0.0794**</td>
<td>0.0096</td>
<td>-0.0899**</td>
<td>0.0119</td>
<td>0.0756**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[High School or Less]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post HS/Colleg</td>
<td>0.1119**</td>
<td>0.0120</td>
<td>0.0648**</td>
<td>0.0228</td>
<td>0.0847**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Degrees</td>
<td>0.0963**</td>
<td>0.0135</td>
<td>0.0688**</td>
<td>0.0254</td>
<td>0.1082**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated</td>
<td>0.0962**</td>
<td>0.0160</td>
<td>0.0904**</td>
<td>0.0265</td>
<td>0.0879**</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Age [in years]]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age [in years]</td>
<td>-0.0089*</td>
<td>0.0039</td>
<td>-0.0089</td>
<td>0.0072</td>
<td>-0.0124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Squared</td>
<td>-0.0011*</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>-0.0021</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>-0.0022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure [in years]</td>
<td>0.0136**</td>
<td>0.0017</td>
<td>0.0079**</td>
<td>0.0027</td>
<td>0.0045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure Squared</td>
<td>-0.0006**</td>
<td>-0.0004**</td>
<td>-0.0004**</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>-0.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break in Service</td>
<td>-0.1346**</td>
<td>0.0626</td>
<td>-0.2002*</td>
<td>0.0936</td>
<td>-0.2032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Levels 1 &amp; 2]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>-0.5527**</td>
<td>0.0133</td>
<td>-0.6016**</td>
<td>0.0228</td>
<td>-0.6397**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>-0.4005**</td>
<td>0.0255</td>
<td>-0.3245**</td>
<td>0.0611</td>
<td>-0.5673**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>-0.7400**</td>
<td>0.0175</td>
<td>-0.6534**</td>
<td>0.0467</td>
<td>-0.7215**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>-0.7516**</td>
<td>0.0110</td>
<td>-0.7433**</td>
<td>0.0351</td>
<td>-0.7105**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>-0.7481**</td>
<td>0.0067</td>
<td>-0.8101**</td>
<td>0.0190</td>
<td>-0.7174**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>-0.6479**</td>
<td>0.0043</td>
<td>-0.7137**</td>
<td>0.0098</td>
<td>-0.6361**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Salary ($'000)</td>
<td>0.0145**</td>
<td>0.0005</td>
<td>0.0148**</td>
<td>0.0009</td>
<td>0.0089**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Rating</td>
<td>0.2904**</td>
<td>0.0097</td>
<td>0.2631**</td>
<td>0.0166</td>
<td>0.3058**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>0.1648**</td>
<td>0.0101</td>
<td>0.1370**</td>
<td>0.0185</td>
<td>0.1946**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Research &amp; Development]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>0.0627**</td>
<td>0.0185</td>
<td>0.0559</td>
<td>0.0309</td>
<td>0.0926*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>0.1428**</td>
<td>0.0261</td>
<td>0.1075**</td>
<td>0.0481</td>
<td>0.1109*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>0.1166**</td>
<td>0.0234</td>
<td>0.2130**</td>
<td>0.0251</td>
<td>0.2625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>0.0001**</td>
<td>0.0187</td>
<td>0.1145**</td>
<td>0.0272</td>
<td>-0.9992*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; Marketing</td>
<td>0.1730**</td>
<td>0.0158</td>
<td>0.1436**</td>
<td>0.0265</td>
<td>0.1330**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement</td>
<td>0.0828**</td>
<td>0.0264</td>
<td>0.1272**</td>
<td>0.0391</td>
<td>0.0360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>0.2440**</td>
<td>0.0319</td>
<td>-0.0163</td>
<td>0.1150</td>
<td>0.2443**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Services</td>
<td>-0.0025</td>
<td>-0.0037</td>
<td>-0.1033</td>
<td>0.0833</td>
<td>-0.0072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Composition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent White Female</td>
<td>-0.0007</td>
<td>0.0009</td>
<td>0.0066**</td>
<td>0.0019</td>
<td>-0.0013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Minority Male</td>
<td>-0.0055</td>
<td>0.0015</td>
<td>0.0007</td>
<td>0.0025</td>
<td>-0.0006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Minority Female</td>
<td>0.0035</td>
<td>0.0022</td>
<td>0.0084</td>
<td>0.0043</td>
<td>-0.0034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Ontario]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Maritimes</td>
<td>-0.0444</td>
<td>0.0399</td>
<td>-0.1035</td>
<td>0.0721</td>
<td>-0.2346**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>0.0032</td>
<td>0.0138</td>
<td>-0.0540**</td>
<td>0.0202</td>
<td>-0.0004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prairies</td>
<td>-0.0262</td>
<td>0.0121</td>
<td>0.0176</td>
<td>0.0196</td>
<td>-0.0063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>-0.1687</td>
<td>0.0333</td>
<td>-0.1600**</td>
<td>0.0538</td>
<td>-0.1693*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0.2088**</td>
<td>0.0289</td>
<td>0.2102**</td>
<td>0.0398</td>
<td>-0.0234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Promoted in 1996]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted in 1997</td>
<td>0.2417**</td>
<td>0.0117</td>
<td>0.2478**</td>
<td>0.0190</td>
<td>0.2593**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted in 1998</td>
<td>0.0430**</td>
<td>0.0121</td>
<td>0.0490**</td>
<td>0.0198</td>
<td>0.0626*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted in 1999</td>
<td>0.0145**</td>
<td>0.0122</td>
<td>-0.0032</td>
<td>0.0201</td>
<td>0.0597*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted in 2000</td>
<td>0.0510**</td>
<td>0.0118</td>
<td>0.0525**</td>
<td>0.0197</td>
<td>0.1317**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed Prob.</td>
<td>0.5654</td>
<td>0.6001</td>
<td>0.5917</td>
<td>0.5986</td>
<td>0.5966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicted Prob.</td>
<td>0.5784</td>
<td>0.6287</td>
<td>0.5956</td>
<td>0.5989</td>
<td>0.5992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Observations</td>
<td>22.338</td>
<td>7.689</td>
<td>3.383</td>
<td>2.824</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR Chi-sq</td>
<td>52.823**</td>
<td>1894.01</td>
<td>642.23**</td>
<td>789.01</td>
<td>332.89**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>-1267.12</td>
<td>-4227.54</td>
<td>-1978.40</td>
<td>-1537.84</td>
<td>-455.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R-sq</td>
<td>0.1715</td>
<td>0.1830</td>
<td>0.1396</td>
<td>0.2042</td>
<td>0.2676</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference categories in square brackets. **,* denote significance at p<0.01 and p<0.05 respectively.
White females were 4.5% less likely to be promoted than comparable white males and minority males 7.9% less likely. Minority females were 16% less likely than similar white males to receive promotions. The model was also estimated excluding those whose race/gender status cannot be identified. The results are substantially the same.

Most of the independent variables included in the model exhibited the expected patterns of influence. For example, employees with higher levels of education attainment are significantly more likely to be promoted. Tenure had a significant inverted U-shaped relationship with the probability of receiving a promotion: a positive effect reaching a maximum at around 11 years and declining thereafter. Break in service reduced the probability of promotion by 13%. The likelihood of promotion also decreased as one moved up the organizational hierarchy, confirming the common belief of the increasing difficulty in climbing the corporate ladder. In line with meritocratic principles, employees who performed well relative to others stood a better chance of promotion. Higher salaries were also positively and significantly related to higher promotion probability. In terms of the effect of race/gender job composition, only the variable percent minority male had significant negative effect on the promotion probability in this overall model. Percent white female had an insignificant negative effect whereas percent minority female had an insignificant positive effect on the likelihood of receiving a promotion.

Older employees seem to be significantly less likely to be promoted, and the probability further decreases the older one gets. This may potentially indicate that ageism exists in this organization. In summary, all race/gender groups were significantly less likely than white males to be promoted even after controlling for an extensive list of factors that affect the promotion probability in the overall model.

Decomposition Analyses

The dummy approach used in the analyses so far only allows for a constant shift in the probability of promotion and constrains the coefficients of the explanatory variables to be the same for each of the four race/gender groups. Results from likelihood ratio tests show that the effects of the explanatory variables (as a group) are indeed different from that for white males. In other words, treating each race/gender group as a distinct group and allowing for variation in the regression coefficients will allow us to further investigate the potential differences in probability of promotion and potential sources of the differences. Separate regressions are therefore estimated in order to account for any differences in the promotion mechanisms for each of the race/gender groups. The rest of Table 2 presents the maximum likelihood estimates from the probit model of promotion by race/gender group.

Education is a strong positive predictor of promotion of white males and white females. In general, higher educational attainment increases one’s likelihood of being promoted. For the minority group, education is not significantly related to the probability of promotion. This may potentially reflect that minorities’ education credentials are not be fully recognized by their employers (Tomaskovic-Devey, Thomas & Johnson, 2005). As visible minorities are more likely to be immigrants who may have obtained their credentials in their home countries, arguments can be made that the undervaluation is due to the fact that these credentials were not seen as comparable to Canadian standard. However, Li (2008) found that while male immigrants enjoy and earnings advantage, visible minority men actually suffered an earnings disadvantage.
Age is not a significant predictor of promotion for any group. The effect of tenure on promotion probability takes on the shape of an inverted U for all race/gender groups but the effect is not significant for white females. Break in service seems to have a negative effect on the probability of promotion but is only significant for white males. On average, a white male employee who had a break in service was 20% less likely to be promoted than a white male whose service with the company had been continuous.

The effect of job composition on the likelihood of promotion is also quite different for the four race/gender groups. Percent white female has a significant positive effect on the promotion probability for white males. White males are 6.6% more likely to receive a promotion with every 10% increase in the percent white female in the job composition. This may be an indication of a phenomenon which some researchers have called the “glass escalator” effect, where men are more likely to be promoted in female-dominated occupations (Williams 1995). On the other hand, percent white female has a negative, though not significant, effect on the likelihood of promotions of both white and minority females. Finally, percent white female increases the probability of promotion of minority males, but the effect is not statistically significant at conventional levels.

Percent minority male significantly lowers the promotion probability for white females and both minority groups, but it is only significant for the minority groups. A 10% increase in percent minority male of a job decreases the probability of promotion for minority males and minority females by 15% and 19% respectively. However, its effect on the probability of promotion of white males is positive, though not significant. Percent minority female in job composition has a significant positive effect on the probability of promotion of minority males. A 1% increase in percent minority female significantly increases minority males’ chances for promotion by 3%.

To further understand the gaps in promotion probabilities, decomposition analyses as described in the methodology section were performed using white males as the reference group for the full sample and for each of the three partitions. This methodology allows the partition of these overall gaps into an "explained" component and an "unexplained" component. The main findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of Results from Various Probit Decompositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference Group – White Males</th>
<th>White Females</th>
<th>Minority Males</th>
<th>Minority Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in Predicted Probabilities</td>
<td>0.03 (100%)</td>
<td>0.03 (100%)</td>
<td>0.10 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to Differences in Productivity-Related Characteristics</td>
<td>0.01 (43%)</td>
<td>-0.04 (34%)</td>
<td>-0.07 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to Differences in Returns</td>
<td>0.02 (57%)</td>
<td>0.07 (66%)</td>
<td>0.13 (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Levels 1 to 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in Predicted Probabilities</td>
<td>0.22 (100%)</td>
<td>-0.02 (100%)</td>
<td>0.47 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to Differences in Productivity-Related Characteristics</td>
<td>0.15 (59%)</td>
<td>-0.11 (55%)</td>
<td>0.26 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to Differences in Returns</td>
<td>0.07 (31%)</td>
<td>0.05 (45%)</td>
<td>0.16 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Levels 4 to 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in Predicted Probabilities</td>
<td>0.07 (100%)</td>
<td>0.09 (100%)</td>
<td>0.15 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to Differences in Productivity-Related Characteristics</td>
<td>0.02 (32%)</td>
<td>0.01 (8%)</td>
<td>0.02 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to Differences in Returns</td>
<td>0.05 (68%)</td>
<td>0.08 (92%)</td>
<td>0.14 (90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Levels 6 to 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in Predicted Probabilities</td>
<td>-0.09 (100%)</td>
<td>0.04 (100%)</td>
<td>0.01 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to Differences in Productivity-Related Characteristics</td>
<td>-0.06 (55%)</td>
<td>0.00 (74%)</td>
<td>-0.32 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to Differences in Returns</td>
<td>-0.03 (37%)</td>
<td>0.04 (93%)</td>
<td>0.29 (51%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The decomposition results for the overall sample presented in Table 3 show that relative to white males, white females and minority males are predicted to be about 3% less likely to be promoted, while minority females are almost 10% less likely to receive a promotion in the overall sample. About two-thirds of the gender/racial differences in promotion probability for the minority groups are explained by differences in coefficients (or returns). Differences in productivity-related characteristics account for about one-third of the differences in promotion rates. Taking into account the productivity-related characteristics of the male and female minority groups, their probability of promotion would have improved by 4% and 7% respectively. However, this “advantage” is not enough to compensate for the lower rates at which their attributes are being rewarded, relative to white males. The difference in promotion rates between white females and white males is almost evenly split between differences in coefficients (or returns) and differences in their productivity-related characteristics.

The decomposition results by partitions provide further information on the promotion process for the various groups. White females in the entry group are predicted to be 22% less likely to be promoted compared to white males. The situation is much worse for minority females who are 47% less likely than white males to receive a promotion, while minority males are 2% more likely to be promoted than white males at these job levels. Only about one-third of the differences in promotion probabilities between white males and both female groups in this segment of the organizational hierarchy are explained by differences in coefficients (or returns). The majority of the difference is explained by differences in productivity-related characteristics, i.e., the promotion gap can be significantly reduced if the female groups can increase their levels of productivity-related characteristics. In this segment of the organizational hierarchy, the difference in promotion rates between white males and minority males are about evenly split between differences in returns and differences in productivity-related characteristics. Given the level of productivity-related characteristics of the minority males, their promotion probability would have been 11 percentage-points higher, but the effect is almost totally eliminated by the differences in the rates of return to their productivity-related characteristics as compared to white males.

For employees in the feeder group, white females and minority males are predicted to be 7% and 9% less likely to be promoted as compared to white males. The situation for minority females improved from the previous sample. At these levels, minority females are only 15% less likely than white males to receive a promotion. About one-third of the difference in promotion probability between white male and white female employees in this segment is explained by differences in productivity-related characteristics (32%); the majority of the difference is explained by differences in coefficients (68%). The picture for the minority groups is quite different. About 90% of the gap can be accounted for by differences in coefficients. This means that employees in these job levels are not very different in terms of their levels of productivity-related characteristics but the attributes possessed by minority groups are not rewarded at the same rate as those of white males.

At the senior levels, white female employees are predicted to be 9% more likely to receive a promotion than white males. Two-thirds of the 9% can be attributed to white females’ higher levels of productivity-related characteristics and the balance to higher returns to their productivity-related characteristics. Minority males and minority females still suffer some disadvantages, but to a lesser extent than those in the middle levels (4% and 1% respectively). The decomposition results show that the 4%
disadvantage experienced by minority males is almost exclusively due to differential returns to productivity-related characteristics. In other words, minority males at these levels are “the same” as white males in terms of their attributes, however, they do not receive the same rate of return in opportunity for advancement that white males do. Finally, the results for minority females show that although the differential in promotion rate is small (1%), the decomposition results show that minority females possess a higher level of productivity-related characteristics than their white male counterparts and that given their level of productivity-related characteristics, they should be 32% more likely to be promoted than their white male counterparts. This advantage is completely eliminated as their productivity-related characteristics are not valued in the same way as those of white males.

Cobb-Clark (2001), using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth to investigate the role of gender in the promotion process, found that the gender gap in promotions could be explained by the differential returns to productivity-related characteristics. The analyses breaking down the organizational hierarchy into partitions contained in this paper showed that this finding is most pronounced for female employees situated at the middle levels of the organizational hierarchy. The gap in promotions between white males and the female groups at the lower rungs of the organization is more likely as a result of differences in productivity-related characteristics or attributes possessed by the minority groups as compared to white males. On the other hand, the disadvantage suffered by minority males (as compared to white males) can be explained almost exclusively by differential returns.

**Limitations**

There are a number a number of data limitations that have inhibited the potential to better understand the promotion mechanisms in organizations. First, information on employees who have terminated their employment during the time period studied is not available. To the extent that those who left differ from those in the sample analyzed, the results may be biased by the attrition rate. For example, if white males are more likely than other race/gender groups to leave the firm after being promoted, the findings on the differences will be overstated. Booth et al. (2003) concluded that women have a higher propensity than men to quit after promotion though the difference in not statistically significant; and that women who were not promoted were also more likely to quit than their male counterparts.

Table 4 shows the gross termination rates by gender and/or race for those who had been promoted and those who had not. A cursory inspection of these raw rates did not show any specific differences among the four race/gender groups. In general, those who did not receive a promotion are more likely to quit than those who were promoted.

Second, the measure of the race variable is quite broad and does not indicate “ethnicity”. This poses a limitation as numerous researchers have found that the experience among racial minority groups is not homogeneous, especially in research related to earnings differentials (Pendakur & Pendakur, 1998; Hum & Simpson, 1999; Stelcner, 2000, Christofides & Swidinsky, 2002)

Third, the dataset lacks variables that measure the impact on non-market opportunities and activities on the likelihood of promotion. Economists have often explained the lower promotion rates for women by their relative advantage in non-market roles (Lazear & Rosen, 1990), either by way of less investment or by turning
down advancement opportunities. Women's specialization in household activities is the usual argument for the differential treatments received by men and women in employment outcomes. An additional argument is that women tend to interrupt their careers for child bearing and child rearing, which may affect their intent to further accumulate their human capital. However, Winter-Ebmer et al. (1997),

Table 4

Proportion Terminated by Promotion Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promoted</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.42)</td>
<td>(0.49)</td>
<td>(0.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[9.26]</td>
<td>[6.91]</td>
<td>[16.18]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.41)</td>
<td>(0.49)</td>
<td>(0.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[6.58]</td>
<td>[4.49]</td>
<td>[11.07]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Males</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.42)</td>
<td>(0.49)</td>
<td>(0.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[4.61]</td>
<td>[3.07]</td>
<td>[7.68]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minority Males</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.45)</td>
<td>(0.49)</td>
<td>(0.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[1.60]</td>
<td>[1.22]</td>
<td>[2.82]</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>No</th>
<th>Overall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.40)</td>
<td>(0.48)</td>
<td>(0.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[3.36]</td>
<td>[2.79]</td>
<td>[6.15]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-whites</td>
<td>0.26</td>
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<td>(0.44)</td>
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<td>(0.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[2.07]</td>
<td>[1.65]</td>
<td>[3.72]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Females</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.40</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.40)</td>
<td>(0.49)</td>
<td>(0.45)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[1.96]</td>
<td>[1.42]</td>
<td>[3.38]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Females</td>
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<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.32</td>
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<tr>
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<td>[4.74]</td>
<td>[4.27]</td>
<td>[9.01]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standard deviation in parentheses. Number of observations in square brackets.

using data from the Austrian micro-census, have shown that only a minor part of the unequal gender distribution in job positions is explained by discontinuous labor market experience, as measured by past and expected future employment interruptions. In addition, the inclusion of the break(s) in service variable may have helped mitigate the issue.

Marital status is another important determinant of labour force participation and hours of work that may have an effect on promotion opportunity. However, one study has shown that marital status has no significant effect on the promotion of clerical workers after their work experience has been adequately controlled for (Ferber & Birbaum, 1981).

The models considered here also exclude certain unobservable measures of individual attributes. For example, the willingness to sacrifice one’s career for family reasons may be stronger in women and racial minorities. In other words, they may be more likely to forego promotion opportunities to avoid increased responsibilities on the job that interfere with taking care of their families. The analyses could therefore be improved if gender and racial differences in the incidence of being offered promotions are observed versus observing the actual incidence of promotion that captures the combined outcome of the offer and the acceptance of promotion.

Finally, since the dataset contains only employees at one firm, in one particular industry, the results will likely not be generalizable to the overall Canadian labour force. However, the detailed analyses, made possible by the firm-level dataset, allow us to gain a better understanding of the mechanisms of the promotion process and may help shed light on the labour market experiences of women and minorities in large Canadian firms.
Conclusion

Controlling for a wide range of variables, white females, visible minority males and visible minority females are less likely to receive a promotion than comparable white males. Education, age, tenure, break in service, salary level and performance ratings are all significant determinants of promotion for the overall sample. Age and promotion opportunity are negatively related. Tenure exhibits the predicted inverted U-shaped relationship with promotion and performance and promotion are positively related to the incidence of promotion. A break in service with the firm has a negative impact on the likelihood of promotion. Salary level is positively related to promotability, that is, employees with higher salary levels are more likely to be promoted.

Partitioning the overall sample into three job level groups shows that most of the explanatory variables in the models by segments of the organizational hierarchy exhibit similar signs to those in the overall sample except for tenure, break in service and job composition. For employees at lower job levels, tenure and promotion have a U-shaped relationship. For employees in job levels 4 and above, tenure and promotion take on an inverted U relationship. The negative effect of a break in service is only significant for employees at the senior levels of the organizational hierarchy. Finally, the racial and gender composition of jobs have significant negative effects on the probability of promotion for employees situated at the middle levels of the hierarchy. The higher the representation of white females, minority males or minority females in a job, the lower the probability of receiving a promotion for the minority groups in those jobs. The reverse is true for white males.

The decomposition exercise sheds further light on the promotion gap between white males and each of the three minority race/gender groups. Given their characteristics, the minority groups should have enjoyed higher promotion probability, but differential returns negate the positive effect. The reasons for white females’ lower promotion probability are split between their lower levels of productivity-related characteristics and differential returns compared to their white male counterparts. The lower promotion probability for white and minority females at the lower job levels is mostly due to their lower levels of productivity-related characteristics. For women and minorities at the lower job levels, focusing on skills development should help alleviate and mitigate the disadvantage. Whereas the disadvantage experienced by the minority groups at the middle levels are mostly as a result of differential returns, the picture at the senior levels is quite different for the different groups. For white females, their higher level of productivity-related characteristics and higher level of returns contributed to their higher promotion probability. The disadvantage suffered by minority males is almost exclusively due to differential returns. Finally, the positive effect of minority females’ higher level of productivity-related characteristics was completely eliminated by the differential returns. Considering the high level of productivity-related characteristics possessed by a majority of the women and visible minority employees at higher job levels, systemic barriers must have existed in the company’s policies, programs and practices. Identifying these barriers and striving towards a transparent promotion process, will not only benefit these disadvantaged groups but also allow all employees an equal opportunity to advance.
References


Stewart, L. P. & Gudykunst, W.B. (1982). Differential Factors Influencing the


The Importance of Partner Involvement in Determining Career Decision-Making Difficulties

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José F. Domene
University of New Brunswick
Todd W. Dutka
Trinity Western University

Research investigating the processes of career development and decision-making has begun to move beyond individual factors to embrace contextual and relational influences (e.g., Blustein & Fouad, 2008; Collin, 2006; Spiker-Miller & Kees, 1995; Whiston & Keller, 2004). This transition reflects the continued influence of systems theory and accommodates the needs of a changing workforce. Despite this trend in the broader field, research investigating career decision-making difficulties has remained focused on probing individual characteristics alone (e.g., Kleiman, et al., 2004; Saka & Gati, 2007; Saka, Gati, & Kelly, 2008). As Patton and McMahon (1999) and Collin (2006) have suggested, frameworks for understanding career processes that fail to acknowledge interpersonal relationships are becoming irrelevant amidst the increasing prominence of dual-career couples.

The importance of a systemic perspective on career development has been advanced by the work of Patton and McMahon (1999). In their systems theory framework (STF), career decision-making is understood as a process occurring within a myriad of individual, social and environmental systems. As the authors suggest, STF provides a cohesive conceptual basis for the investigation of relational factors in both research and counselling settings. A small but growing body of research has investigated the intersection of systems theory and career decision-making (e.g., Chope, 2008; Hargrove, Creagh, & Burgess, 2002; Okubo, Yeh, Lin, & Fujita, 2007; Pixley, 2008; Shea, Ma, & Yeh, 2007), revealing that parental pressure and expectations are often associated with young adults’ career indecisiveness. Researchers investigating multicultural career counselling have disproportionately contributed to this investigation of systemic influences on career decision-making. Unfortunately, most of these investigations have focused only on the impact of family-of-origin on career decision-making. As a result, the impact of family of procreation (i.e., spouse, committed life partner) on the career decision-making process remains inadequately delineated.

Investigation of family-to-work conflict and spillover is an exception within vocational research that has recognized family of procreation influences. This literature has focused primarily on the negative family-to-work conflicts rather than investigating the potential positive family-to-work enhancements that may be occurring (Frone, 2003). Additionally, other avenues of empirical study have explored family of procreation influences on decision-making in other life domains, such as health and religion (e.g., Roest, Dubas, Gerris, & Rutger, 2006; Stephens, et al., 2009). Although these streams of research suggest that family of procreation may have many important effects on individuals’ decision-making, there is currently little empirical evidence
delineating the impact that romantic partners have on the career decision-making difficulties of individuals.

Itamar Gati and colleagues have pioneered the measurement of career decision-making difficulties (Amir, Gati, & Klieman, 2008; Gati & Asher, 2001; Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996) and demonstrated its associations with career decision-making self-efficacy, career decision-making style (Amir & Gati, 2006), emotional and personality based facets (Saka & Gati, 2007; Saka, Gati, & Kelly, 2008) and decidedness (Kleiman, et al., 2004). Despite these advancements, research on career decision-making difficulties has yet to investigate the influences of systemic factors such as family of procreation. In light of the theoretical position advanced by Patton and McMahon (1999) and the emerging empirical research (e.g., Pixley, 2008, Roest et al., 2006; Stephens et al., 2009), this omission represents a gap in the literature. The present study began to address this deficit by investigating the importance of partner involvement in determining the amount of career decision-making difficulties experienced by adults in romantic relationships. More specifically, it was hypothesized that a significant portion of the variance in career decision-making difficulties can be accounted for by romantic partner involvement, even after controlling for a range of individual differences (i.e., gender, age, and student status).

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants ($N = 105$; see Table 1) were recruited from an urban centre in Western Canada through a variety of advertising media including local newspapers, internet, electronic mailing lists, and via flyers posted at family/community centers, churches, and local universities. Eligible participants were between the ages of 20 and 40 ($M = 29.94$ years) and were in a committed romantic relationship (dating, common law, or married) of at least one year in duration ($M = 6.60$ years, $SD = 5.35$ years).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>91.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/South Asian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Level of Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school or Grade 12 Graduate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, university or post-secondary training</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

309
Bachelor’s Degree 44 41.90
University or Professional Degree 24 22.86

Relationship status

Dating 13 12.40
Engaged 10 9.50
Married or Common-Law 82 78.10

Student Status

Student 25 23.80
Not a student 80 76.20

Employment status

Full time employment 60 57.10
Part time employment 20 19.00
Unemployed 22 21.00
No response 3 2.90

Note: Because of rounding, percentages may not total 100

Measures

A self-report questionnaire was used to collect a range of demographic information, including age, gender, and student status (i.e., “student” or “not a student”). Partner involvement in career decision-making was operationally defined as participants’ self-reported perception of their partner’s involvement, on a 9-point Likert scale. Participants’ level of career decision-making difficulty was assessed using Gati, Krausz, and Osipow’s (1996) Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ). The CDDQ probes 10 areas of career decision-making difficulty: (a) lack of readiness due to lack of motivation, (b) lack of readiness due to general indecisiveness, (c) lack of readiness due to dysfunctional beliefs, (d) lack of knowledge about the process, (e) lack of information about one’s self, (f) lack of information about occupations (g) lack of information about additional sources, (h) inconsistent information due to unreliable information, (i) inconsistent information due to internal conflicts, and (j) inconsistent information due to external conflicts. Consistent with previously reported levels of internal consistency (Amir & Gati, 2006), the CDDQ had a Cronbach alpha score of .91 in this sample.

Procedure

All measures were administered anonymously, using an online survey. Participants were instructed to complete the survey independently from their romantic partners and, in cases where both partners wished to participate, they were asked to avoid discussing their responses until both had completed the survey. Hierarchical multiple regression was subsequently used to test the predictive value of partner involvement on career decision-making difficulties. Post-hoc correlational analyses were then conducted to identify which of the 10 specific areas of career decision-making difficulty are most closely associated with partner involvement.
Results

Primary Analysis

Data screening revealed 3 outliers, which were removed from subsequent analyses. Test assumptions were met, with one exception: normality was violated in the response variable, making it necessary to conduct a square root data transformation. In the primary analysis, age, gender, and student status were treated as control variables and entered in the preliminary block. Partner involvement was then entered into the model. Results revealed that, after controlling for the effects of gender, age and school status, partner involvement remains a small but significant predictor of career decision-making difficulties, accounting for approximately 5% of the variance in the final model ($\Delta R^2 = .05, p = .02$; see Table 2). The direction of relationship between partner involvement and career decision-making difficulties was inverse ($\beta = -.23, t = 2.37, p = .02$). That is, higher partner involvement was associated with lower career decision-making difficulty. Interestingly, in the final model, age was also a significant predictor ($\beta = -.29, t = 2.89, p = .01$). Although this was not a hypothesized relationship, it is perhaps unsurprising to find that career decision-making difficulties decreased as the age of the participants increased.

Table 2

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Testing Partner Involvement as a Predictor of Career Decision-Making Difficulties (N = 105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>0.006</td>
<td>-.264*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>0.071</td>
<td>-.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.076</td>
<td>-.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>-.288**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>-.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student or Not</td>
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<td>0.075</td>
<td>-.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Involvement</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>-.226*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .07$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .05$ for Step 2 ($p < .05$). *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Post Hoc Analysis

Additionally, an exploratory post hoc procedure was conducted to determine whether partner involvement is more strongly associated with certain components of the CDDQ than others. Spearman’s rank-order bivariate correlation was used to identify the relationships between partner involvement and career decision-making difficulties (see Table 3). Results suggest that romantic partner involvement is specifically associated with ‘lack of readiness due to dysfunctional beliefs’ ($r = -.22, p < .05$). Additionally, the
relationship with the ‘lack of information about self’ factor approached significance ($r = -.18, p = .07$).

Table 3

*Intercorrelations Between Partner Involvement and CDDQ Subscales (N = 105)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Partner Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>.22</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lack of motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td>.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. General indecisiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dysfunctional beliefs</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Stages of CDM process</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Self</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.36</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Occupations</td>
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<td>.64</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Obtaining information</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Unreliable information</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Internal conflicts</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. External conflicts</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* CDM = Career decision-making.  
*p < .05. **p < .01*
These correlations were also completed for male \((n = 29)\) and female participants \((n = 76)\) separately, with results suggesting that the associations may differ by gender: For women, romantic partner involvement was only significantly associated with lack of readiness due to dysfunctional beliefs \((r = -.23, p < .05)\) while, for men, it was only significantly associated with the career decision-making difficulty of lack of information about self \((r = -.46, p < .05)\). The divergence of these results across gender suggest that the more involved a female’s romantic partner is in the career decision-making process, the fewer dysfunctional beliefs she experiences, while involvement of a male’s romantic partner decreases the lack of information about self he experiences. However, caution must be exercised when interpreting the results of the gender specific analyses, given the small size of the two sub-samples.

**Discussion**

Confirming the research hypothesis, the results of this study reveal that romantic partner involvement has a significant, albeit small, role in determining career decision-making difficulties. The more that partners were perceived as being involved in the process, the less career decision-making difficulty the individual experienced. Romantic partner involvement appeared to be particularly linked to two specific kinds of career decision-making difficulty: (a) dysfunctional beliefs, which Gati and colleagues (1996) describe as the process of overestimating the importance and impact of the decision, and (b) lack of information about the self, which is defined as a lack of awareness of personal strengths, weaknesses and potential. These results suggest that partner involvement is helpful for specific types of decision-making difficulties, and what it is helpful may be dependent on the decision maker’s gender. These results provide preliminary support for the importance of attending to the influence of family of procreation on the career development of adults who are in romantic relationships.

The present study also provides justification for further empirical exploration of family of procreation influences within career development and decision-making conceptualizations. For instance, the contextual component of Patton and McMahon’s (1999) STF, which acknowledges the influence of family on an individual’s career development in a generic sense, may be enhanced by further specification of the concept of family influence. The results of this study indicate that this influence encompasses not only family of origin, which has been the focus of most previous research, but also factors related to an individual’s family of procreation.

Although more empirical investigation is necessary, the results of this study also suggest that Gati, Krausz, and Osipow’s (1996) model of career decision-making would benefit from greater incorporation of systems theory and examination of the role that romantic partners can play in the career decision-making process. The results also suggest that romantic partner involvement is not only important but is also beneficial both in preparation and during the career decision-making process. Gati and colleagues (1996) propose that the career decision-making difficulty of dysfunctional beliefs impedes an individual’s readiness to make a career decision. The correlational analysis conducted in the present study indicates that increased partner involvement was associated with fewer dysfunctional beliefs, particularly for women. This increased communication provides an opportunity for romantic partners to listen to and then challenge individuals’ dysfunctional beliefs about their future career.
The post hoc analyses provide tentative indication that, for men, partner involvement may be particularly beneficial in reducing the career decision-making difficulty of lack of information about self. This aspect of the decision-making process involves knowledge of one’s own abilities and preferences. Romantic partners may reduce this decision-making difficulty as they are intimately aware of their partner’s gifts and abilities and may act as a resource in helping both the individual and counselor in clarifying these strengths and preferences. Future research investigating family of procreation influences on career decision-making difficulties should focus on deciphering the role partners play in minimizing these career decision-making difficulties, and further clarifying how this role differs across genders.

Implications for Counselling

The results of the present study reveal the importance of family of procreation influences in the career decision-making difficulties of individuals. Assuming the findings of this exploratory study are confirmed in future research, practitioners who are working with clients who are in committed romantic relationships should consider involving the client’s romantic partner in the career counselling process. Partners may be involved either as a resource to draw on for assistance with career decision-making difficulties or may be involved directly in career counselling. For some clients, it may be sufficient to educate them about the potential benefits of engaging in discussion with their partners regarding their career-related decisions, and using their partner as a way to double-check their assumptions (thus correcting dysfunctional beliefs). Similarly, clients may use their partners as a resource in order to obtain more objective information about themselves and their capabilities (thus correcting for problems associated with lack of information about the self). Given the benefits of open communication for couples, a secondary benefit of this approach may be to improve the quality of the romantic relationship itself.

Alternatively, those seeking professional assistance with career decision-making may benefit from a systemically-oriented career counselor who is able to actively involve the client’s partner as a resource in the career counselling process. Indeed, Spiker-Miller and Kees, discussing the specific situation of clients who are in dual-career couple relationships go so far as to suggest that “career counselors in any setting, private or public, retail or wholesale, should consider conjoint counselling with an integrated counselling approach as ‘standard operating procedure’” (1995, p. 44). Specific areas for intervention may include identification and resolution of decision-making difficulties associated with the client’s romantic partner or the nature of the relationship itself (e.g., conflicting career and relational goals), remediation of communication and conflict resolution problems, or drawing on the romantic partner’s experiences of successes in career decision-making as a model for the client’s process.

In situations where counsellors may be deliberating the value of involving a romantic partner in the career counselling process, Gati, Krausz, and Osipow’s (1996) CDDQ may be a useful tool. Given that results suggest partner involvement is beneficial for clients struggling with dysfunctional beliefs or lacking knowledge about their own abilities, counsellors may use the results of the CDDQ to identify clients explicitly suited for this type of intervention. These results will further provide support for counsellors’ suggestions and encouragement of romantic partner involvement.
Systemically-minded career counsellors employing Patton and McMahon’s (1999) STF of career development and its associated clinical tool, My System of Career Influences (McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2005) may wish to consider expanding the specification of the influence of family in the social system. The influence of family within the STF may be more clearly understood as the influences of two connected but separate systems, the family of origin and family of procreation. Counsellors may even want to alter the family influence factor within the My System of Career Influences tool in order to explicitly acknowledge both family systems and ensure that those employing this instrument recognize and probe both aspects of family influence on career decision-making.

Limitations and Future Directions

Some caution must be employed in generalizing from the results of this study, given the relatively small sample size and homogeneity of the couples’ levels of functioning. Specifically, the vast majority of participants had a functional and affectively close relationship, as measured by Gorall, Tiesel, and Olson’s (2006) Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale IV, and their responses to Holman and Jarvis (2003)’s couples’ conflict scenarios, which are grounded in Gottman’s (1994, 1998) theory of couples conflict. Therefore, it is unclear whether adults in abusive or highly conflictual relationships will experience the same beneficial effects from having partners who are more highly involved in their career decision-making. Indeed, it is possible that increased romantic partner involvement may actually be detrimental to the career decision-making difficulties of couples in dysfunctional relationships. Future research needs to be undertaken to determine if the same patterns emerge in more heterogeneous samples, or if the relationship between partner involvement and career decision-making difficulties is mediated or moderated by the quality of the romantic relationship. In addition, despite efforts to recruit individuals in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships, all participants reported being in a heterosexual relationship. Future research would benefit from being more inclusive and exploring whether these findings also apply to GLBT couples. Lastly, the study focused on longer-term, committed couples and may not be indicative of career decision-making difficulties experienced by individuals in dating or newly established romantic relationships. Thus, it is unclear whether romantic partner involvement has the same influence on the career decision-making difficulties of these divergent populations. Despite the presence of these limitations, the results of the present study reveal the importance of romantic partner involvement in career decision-making, at least for adult, heterosexual individuals in longer-term, close relationships. On the basis of these results, further research exploring the links between these variables and greater incorporation of systems theory into models of career decision-making should certainly be encouraged.

References


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