Contextual Factors that Influence the Career Decision-Making Process for Indo-Canadian Young Women Entering the Social Sciences

Priya S. Mani
University of Manitoba

Abstract

Through the use of a descriptive case study approach (Yin, 2003), this study examined the perception of various contextual factors that are involved in the career development of Indo-Canadian young women who enter undergraduate applied social science programs. The perception of various contexts of human development that had an impact on formulating their career interests were norms and expectations based within the (a) dominant society, (b) immediate family, (c) ethnic community, and (d) various educational environments. Results indicated that students' perception of self-efficacy regarding managing various social contexts contributed to their career decision-making process. Implications for counsellors are discussed.

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The educational system of any society inherently is set up with the expectation that certain transitions occur within life. For instance, in Western cultures set transitions occur from middle schools to secondary schools and further, to college, university, or the workplace (Entwisle, 1990). Preparing for a career is considered an age-graded normative task (Nurmi, 1998). As a result of these many institutional transitions, it is likely that an evaluation of contextual or social factors related to career development is needed by career counsellors.

To add more understanding of career decision making among young adults and to reflect the diversity of Canadian culture, the study of children of immigrants needs further exploration. For instance, understanding how socialization within the family, ethnic community, and various other contexts contribute to the development of current career choices is important to explore. Very little research centers on the future career roles of children of immigrants (children born and brought up in their parents' host country) although they form an increasingly important segment of Canadian society (Fitzgerald & Betz, 1994; Maxwell, Maxwell, & Krugly-Smolska, 1996; Rumbaut, 1994). In particular, limited research focuses on Indo-Canadian young women and the various social contexts that contribute to their career decision-making process. This article attempts to examine the social forces that shape Indo-Canadian young women's experiences in the career decision-making process to enter the social sciences.

Contextual Influences for South Asian Children of Immigrants

Intergenerational Conflict in Families

A common metaphor used to describe intergenerational conflict experienced by children of immigrants is "walking between two different worlds" (Goodnow, Miller, & Kessel, 1995; Ghuman, 1997; O'Connell, 2000; Patal, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996; Phelon, Davidson, & Yu, 1991). The metaphor presupposes a straightforward clash between two different value systems, resulting in an unbridgeable gap between generations that causes youth to be in a forced-choice dilemma (Kim-Goh, 1995). Often, when researchers mentioned the challenges of second-generation children of immigrants, as in Saran's (1985) work on the South Asian experience, they described children of immigrants experience with their parents as leading to depressive and suicidal states. The tensions that children of immigrants experience when navigating between two different cultures and value systems were discussed as a problem of incomplete assimilation (Das Gupta, 1997; Kar, Campbell, Jimenez, & Gupta, 1996). Implicit in the idea of culture conflict is that the children of immigrants see their lives as problematic (Ballard, 1979). Further studies are required to discover how Indo-Canadian young women experience culture conflict in making various decisions regarding how to live their lives.

Parental Influence on Educational Decision Making

It is important to explore if Indo-Canadian young women receive conflicting messages regarding how to make a career choice and how they might manage opposing messages. For example, the central message in the dominant society might be to view career decision making as an individual process of self-discovery based on personal interests, values, and aspirations (Hartung, Speight, & Lewis, 1996) rather than viewing career decision making as an interpersonal process that incorporates a family perception of what course one should pursue (Basit, 1996; Siann and Knox, 1992; Gibson and Bhachu, 1991). It is important to explore how Indo-Canadian young women engage in the educational decision making process.

Career choice and parental expectations was documented by Beynon and Toohey (1995). They conducted interviews regarding factors that influenced the career choice to enter teaching with students of first- and second-generation Chinese and Punjabi-Sikhs in Canada. The study looked at both men and women for each ethnic group. The parental influence was pervasive, and parents seemed to be more willing to accept teaching as a career choice for women than for men. It was noted that if parents did not view their daughter's career choice in a favorable light and did not approve, the student reported more conflict with the parents, feelings of inadequacy, dissatisfaction, or uneasiness with self. Understanding these parental expectations within the family is an important step to understanding the educational experiences of Indo-Canadian young women.

Development of a Sense of Self-Efficacy during Young Adulthood

According to Bandura, an important developmental task that young adults face is their sense of competence (Bandura, 1997). A sense of competency is related to the ability to achieve goals and adapt to the environment by making use of personal resources (Cote, 1996). Personal resources can include specific skills, abilities, and self-esteem. Bandura formalized this reflection of competence through his concept of self-efficacy. He defined self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of actions acquired to achieve a good developmental outcome" (1986, p. 81).

Bandura suggests that efficacious people can handle a variety of tasks and can predict a number of outcomes, such as academic achievements, social competence, and career choice (Bandura, 1997; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). Bandura identified three ways in which self-efficacy effects psychological functioning. First, activities in which people choose to engage are those that they believe they can master. Second, self-efficacy determines the amount of motivation to achieve goals in the face of obstacles or difficulties. Third, one's level of self-efficacy determines if a person's thinking process is self-aiding or self-hindering. In sum, Bandura posited that a strong sense of self-efficacy determines the amount of control people exercise in their lives to help them translate self-belief into accomplishment and motivation.

Deciding to pursue post-secondary education has effects other than gains of knowledge and skills in a particular domain. Other general outcomes correlate with competence such as interpersonal skills, adapting to differing contexts, attitudes, and the development of personal agency (Bandura, 1997). These tasks are of particular significance as young adults make the transition to university and the world of work. A social cognitive approach to career development, focussing on the processes through which academic and career interests develop, would be useful as self-efficacy and contextual factors are emphasized.

Lent's Social Cognitive Career Theory

Developing a strong sense of self-efficacy is essential for people in transition. Self-efficacy, as defined by Lent, Brown, & Hackett (2000), builds on Bandura's work and is related to whether resources will be properly used in the transition process and whether certain tasks will be attempted or accomplished. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) focuses on the process through which academic and career interests develop by exploring self-efficacy in relation to contextual factors. Due to ethnic and cultural differences in perception of one's environment, researchers have recognized the importance of applying SCCT to different cultural groups (McWhirter, 1997; Patton & McMahon, 1999). SCCT will be used as a base to study Indo-Canadian young women's career decision-making process to enter the applied social sciences.

Methodology

The research study was based on a qualitative descriptive case study (Yin, 2003) to examine what contextual factors contribute to the career decision-making process among Indo-Canadian young women entering the applied social sciences at the post-secondary level. A descriptive case study approach requires the researcher to begin with a theory in the literature (Yin, 2003). From the Social Cognitive Career theory (SCCT), a selected set of propositions exploring contextual factors were examined. The descriptive theoretic patterns of the study can then be compared to the propositions embedded within the SCCT theoretical framework. The purpose of this methodology is to see if the patterns that emerge within the data set fit the SCCT theoretical propositions under consideration, and to explore the usefulness of the theory to understand an ethnic minority group (Yin, 2003).

Central Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:
1. How do vocational interests develop for Indo-Canadian young women?
2. How does self-efficacy contribute to their vocational interests?
3. What role does socialization in the dominant society, family, ethnic community, and school play in formulating educational and career interests for Indo-Canadian young women?
4. How does participating or viewing others' (role models) participation in relevant educational and career activities contribute to their experience of self-efficacy in career decision making?

Participants

In this study, a criterion case selection strategy was used (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). A criterion case selection strategy requires having pre-set criteria to guide the selection of participants. The criteria for selecting the participants were: (1) they completed Kindergarten to grade 12 schooling in Canada, which would qualify them as being second generation (Zhou, 1997), (2) both parents of each participant would have been born and raised in India, (3) they were enrolled in an undergraduate program in an applied social science program, (4) they represent the same religious background, and (5) they were young women between the ages of 20-25.

The primary method used to find participants was to approach individuals at random and ask if they would be

interested in engaging in the study. A total of 87 Indo-Canadian young women were randomly selected, out of which 7 students completed both sets of interviews and the questionnaires. The seven participants were enrolled in their third or fourth year in undergraduate degree programs in British Columbia and were between the ages of 20-25, completed Kindergarten to grade 12 schooling in Canada, and both parents of each participant were born and raised in India. All the participants also shared the same religious background and were Sikh. The young women were divided into two groups representing the applied social science programs: Social Work and Child and Youth Care. Both academic programs were defined as applied social science programs because they incorporated practicum experiences into their degree requirements.

Interview procedure

The research was conducted in a six-phase process: (1) participants were given a two-part non-standardized qualitative questionnaire created by the researcher prior to the first interview. The first part, called Factors that Influence Career Decision Making Questionnaire, was a modified version of Julien's non-standardized questionnaire (1997) entitled The Search for Career-Related Information by Adolescents. The second part of the questionnaire, called Functions of Coping Efficacy Questionnaire, was based on the tenets of the social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 2000) and the work of Hackett and Betz (1981). (2) Participants engaged in a 90 minute guided interview which consisted of targeted open-ended questions. Questions were asked in a systematic manner to control for order effects. The questions revolved around: (a) vocational interest development, (b) how self-efficacy appraisals contributed to vocational interest development, (c) explicit and implicit messages received from different social forces regarding women and work, (d) key learning experiences that furthered their understanding of the world of work, and (e) view of role models in the field. At the end of the interview, the researcher collected the questionnaires and invited

open-ended descriptions of issues pertinent to the participant that might not have been covered in the interview. (3) Transcription of the first interview and a cross comparison between questionnaires and the interview transcript was conducted to identify gaps. Systematic case study notes were maintained by the researcher documenting observations after each interview. (4) Transcription of the first interview was sent to the participant to review the accuracy of statements. (5) A second 30 minute interview was scheduled with the participant for the researcher to clarify ideas that arose from reviewing the initial transcript. The second interview was also audio taped, transcribed, and reviewed by participants. (6) The transcription of the first interview ranged from 16 to 26 pages in length, typed in 10-point font, and single-spaced per participant. Due to the volume of data, the researcher decided that 25% of each coded interview would be reviewed by two Sikh Indo-Canadian graduate students who acted as independent raters of the data to ensure consistency of results.

Interview data analysis

Data analysis of the interviews and questionnaires consisted of four phases: In the first phase the researcher created a list of domains (topic areas) of analysis. The domains of analysis, based on the predefined concepts found within the social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000), were: a) contextual affordance, b) structure of opportunity, c) learning experiences, d) self-efficacy beliefs, e) outcome expectations, f) interest development, g) choice goals, and h) choice actions. In the second phase, a line-by-line analysis of each transcript consisted of categorizing all interview statements into particular domains. The table consisted of each domain of analysis and corresponding interview statements. In the third phase, two Sikh Indo-Canadian graduate students acted as independent raters of the research and reviewed the table to ensure that the interview statements were appropriately sorted into the most appropriate domain. The researcher asked each coder to look at each statement within each domain and state whether they saw an occurrence

(+) or a non-occurrence (-) for each statement (Kvale, 1996). Having pre-set definitions formulated from the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) for each domain of analysis ensured agreement over the checkers interpretations of the statements. The final phase of analysis consisted of a cross-case analysis by examining the data within a particular domain across participants and representing the patterns in written form. Selected statements from the transcripts were included in the analysis of the results section and appear in quotes. The participants requested that the quotes selected would be used by more than one participant in order to protect their identity. As such, the portrayal of the breadth and depth of the interview statements was limited.

Validity and Reliability Procedures

Validity of the data is based on Yin's (2003) three criteria. First, *internal validity* was achieved through triangulation of different sources of data, having a selective sample, and having the participants check the accuracy of their interview statements. Second, *reliability* was attained through consistent data analysis procedures and by establishing two inter rater reliability checks. Third, *external validity* was established through analytical generalization of the results of multiple cases to theory (Yin, 2003). As such, within the results section further discussion of selected propositions of the Social Cognitive Career Theory will be examined in relation to the research findings.

Results

Proposition #1 An individual's occupational or academic interests are reflective of his or her concurrent self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

All seven participants demonstrated that their academic interests were reflective of their self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. Such interests were formed when individuals were immersed in the helping field through involvement in their ethnic community at an early age. They all were exposed both directly and vicariously to diverse acts of charity and

were reinforced actively by family or ethnic community members for their "good service" to others. Through repeated activity engagement, modeling, and feedback from people in the ethnic community they acquired a set of "helping skills" and developed a sense of their efficacy while engaging in acts of charity. By the time they engaged in volunteer work within the dominant society they were in late adolescence. The participants formed enduring interests based on their sense of efficacy in the helping field. They anticipated positive outcomes and that engaging in the helping field would generate "personal satisfaction". Evidence from all seven participants supported Lent's proposition that individuals would aspire to develop choice goals for occupations or academic fields consistent with their primary interests formed at an early age. The data for all seven of the participants also support Lent's sub-proposition that interests will stabilize for an individual by late adolescence or early adulthood. By completion of high school all the participants recognized that they wanted to be in the applied social sciences. Four of the seven participants had a crystallized career choice goal within the helping field that they were clearly aiming towards while they were in high school. The other three participants discovered their specific career choice within the helping field when they were in their first two years of college or university.

Proposition #2 An individual's occupational interests also are influenced by his or her occupationally relevant abilities, but this relation is mediated by one's self-efficacy beliefs (Lent et al., 1994; 2000)

Three of the seven young women defined themselves in high school as being a relatively "strong" science or mathematics student. Despite having the ability to persist in the sciences, they chose not to do so, as they did not find the field "personally satisfying". For these three participants, exploration and discovery of new interest areas was an important factor that they considered as part of their self-development and felt confident enough to engage in "self-exploration". Another four out of

the seven young women felt that neither the sciences nor mathematics were their strongest subjects, but persisted in completing the subjects to see if their experiences would change over time. Despite low performance level in the area, they felt confident enough to complete and pursue the sciences before limiting their career options. Only when they had accumulated enough evidence based on their performance and sense of personal satisfaction did they determine that the area was not a career choice.

In regard to their ability to know that they could help people in the applied social sciences, all seven believed that they had the capacity to do so, based on volunteer and work experiences that they had accumulated over time. Their belief in their ability to do well in the field was based on the feedback that they had received from others about their ability to work with people. In regard to knowing if they would do well academically within the applied social sciences, six of the seven participants knew by the end of high school that their academic strengths and personal interests were in the applied social sciences. However, one participant ventured into the helping field unsure of her academic ability but felt confident that she had the capability to do well in the applied social sciences.

Proposition #3 Self-efficacy beliefs derive from performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological reactions (emotional arousal) in relation to particular educational and occupationally relevant activities (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

Successful accomplishments were considered important for the participants when making self-efficacy appraisals. It was noted in all seven participants that they would identify a success only if a personal goal was achieved under conditions that they felt were challenging. Success achieved under conditions of challenge appears to be more strongly related to self-efficacy than is success achieved under limited difficulty or challenge (Lent, 2000). Lent also proposed as a sub-proposition that being exposed to role models and learning vicariously

through them would have an impact on one's sense of self-efficacy. Five participants mentioned that lack of Indo-Canadian women working in their field did not hinder their interest or influence their sense of self-efficacy to enter the career role. In actuality, it acted as further motivation to sustain their career interest as they wanted to address the lack of Indo-Canadian women seen in the helping professions. What did influence their career choice was watching other individuals engaging in career related behavior, and learning vicariously from them. The observed individual was likely in a position of authority and did not have to be Indo-Canadian for their experiences to be meaningful to the young women. In regard to social persuasion, contrary to Lent's sub-proposition that individuals value their own self appraisals over other direct feedback, all seven participants stated that they valued "encouragement and feedback" regarding their performance from people who were working in the field over their own self-appraisals and that it helped them to sustain their career interest. In relation to task performance, the sense of self-efficacy was enhanced for all the participants when they felt "positive and relaxed" about their performance in the field. They were able to maintain their sense of "excitement and stamina" when they could acknowledge their own sense of "personal growth" as a professional in the field.

Proposition #4 Outcome expectations are generated through direct and vicarious experiences with educational and occupationally relevant activities (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

Engaging in direct experiences in the field through a practicum placement, volunteer work in the dominant society and ethnic community, and work experiences they were able to develop a better sense of the outcome expectations they could anticipate in the field. Direct experiences held more weight for all seven participants than vicariously experienced accounts of other people's experiences in the field. The aspects that they did allow to have an influence over their career and academic development were in regard to their siblings' advice regarding how to

"navigate the educational system". For three of the seven participants, the "practical advice" given by family members who had been through the system held weight for the young women who had older siblings to draw on for support. For these participants, their older siblings were also actively searching for jobs in the participants' field of interest and passing on information. Four participants who were the eldest sibling in the family aided their younger siblings by providing academic assistance, advice, and support.

Proposition #5 Contextual affordance would indirectly affect a person's career decision-making process and choice of occupation (Lent et al., 2000).

Contextual affordance consists of the participants indirect perception of social forces and determines if they have a positive, neutral, or a negative influence over the individual (Lent et al., 2000). For all seven of the young women, the idea that socialization remains in the background of experience in a positive, negative, or neutral manner was not reflected by the participants. The young women demonstrated the opposite to what Lent proposes in his theory, as they were aware of the different social agents in their lives and elected whether they wanted to integrate the messages from different social forces into their decision-making, or to leave certain social messages in the background of their experiences. The young women engaged in a process of negotiating their socialization experiences, which they linked to engaging in the process of "developing a bicultural identity", and felt self-confident that they could manage the negotiation. Future research might posit, based on the young women's experiences, that if negotiation of bicultural identity is high, then self-efficacy appraisal is high, and the impact of contextual affordance is low. Those aspects that they defined as remaining in the background of their experiences, but that they could also draw on in the future if needed, are discussed below.

All the young women perceived that certain values embedded within Canadian dominant society would be values found within the applied social sciences. Since they lived in a multicul-tural society, the young women believed that the values of "multiculturalism and respect for diversity" would be reflected in the helping professions. They also believed that dominant society valued "equality of women" which would also be supported in the work environment that they were pursuing. The young women drew from the value of respect for diversity and equality for women held by dominant society and wanted to enact the values within their chosen profession.

The family structure served as a socializing force in the participants lives. First, parents emphasized the value of "having an education" and encouraged their daughters to establish themselves within society, which the young women also valued. The parents also thought that it was more valuable for women to enter more male dominated careers than to enter the social sciences, because male dominated fields represented a more "stable career choice and held more prestige". The young women challenged this belief and decided to follow their own career path.

The young women felt that their mothers were a strong influence in their life, and noted that within the patriarchal structure of the family, their mothers still had a "strong voice". The participants advocated more equality of roles within the family, but acknowledged that, based on their mothers' roles in the family, it paradoxically allowed their mothers to have more voice and control in the family unit. The participants acknowledged respect for the various roles that both father and mother played; the roles were seen as individual strengths that allowed the smooth functioning of the family unit. The young women also acknowledged that they learned how to "multitask and balance life roles" by observing their mothers manage the household and felt that the skill set allowed them to do well academically in their field of study and would help them in their working life.

The young women also acknowledged that support in the family was shown through "actions" and not through verbal demonstrations of affection, which they also enacted in their relations with others. The participants learned the values of helping people by observing how their parents helped people within the ethnic community. They also had a strong sense of "obligation" that they felt towards their family in fulfilling certain responsibilities, such as aiding younger siblings. They also felt a strong sense of "responsibility" to help people who were disadvantaged in society through volunteer work in the temple or in various agencies within the dominant community.

Parents also exposed them to many cultural and religious events at the temple to foster a sense of "pride in being different". The parents also ensured that their daughters could speak Punjabi, which allowed them to communicate with elders in their ethnic community and gain more knowledge about their culture. The young women found that they learned through their religious teachings what it means to be a "good person", the value of prayer, and the underlying doctrine that men and women should be regarded as equal which they felt could be enacted within their chosen career.

The ethnic community was a socializing force as it held certain norms in common with parents. For example, male dominated fields were encouraged for women to pursue because they were deemed more valuable, "more secure", "more stable and more prestigious". Professions in the social sciences were devalued within the ethnic community. The general view was that the reasons for women to pursue a career had less to do with fulfilling personal satisfaction and more to do with contributing to a dual income to accommodate the high cost of living once married. Marriage was still considered a primary goal upon completion of a degree for young women. However, if the individual wanted to pursue a Masters degree, the delay in marriage was perceived as acceptable because it would represent attaining a potentially more stable position in society. The young women did not adopt the views held by their ethnic community.

The educational environment acted as a socialization force. As they progressed from junior high, senior high, to college and university, the participants obtained a clearer conception of how they were perceived as a student. The perception of teachers, professors

and practicum supervisors were internalized by the participants and acted as a strong socializing force. Encouragement and feedback from people in the field helped the participants to sustain their level of interest and sense of self-efficacy in career related endeavors. It was also noted in their educational experiences that their peers held the belief that one needed to pursue work that would be "personally satisfying". Although there were fields within the work force that were considered more prestigious, personal satisfaction in work took precedence. Peers also held the belief that women needed to establish themselves in a career because it would serve as a form of "self-growth". Peers also held the belief that women could enter any field and that no barriers would be present. Teachers also were viewed as encouraging more women to enter the sciences, but the participants observed that the majority of women still entered the arts or human sciences.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to explicate the various contexts of human development that influence Sikh Indo-Canadian young women's career decision-making process. The overall findings regarding the applicability of using Lent's social cognitive career theory (2000) to understand contextual factors in relation to career decision making were mixed. While some propositions of Lent's social cognitive career theory were very well supported, other areas were found to be in need of further refinement.

Salient findings of the study in support of Lent's social cognitive career theory were: (1) Early immersion in the field determined self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations, which contributed to formation of interest development during late adolescence or early adulthood. (2) The young women demonstrated self-confidence in engaging in exploration of their interests, despite having incomplete information regarding their skills and abilities to do well in the field. (3) Direct experiences in volunteer, work, and educational spheres helped the participants form outcome expectations of engaging in the field.

The findings based on the study that were contrary to Lent's social cognitive career theory were that lack of Indo-Canadian role models in the field did not have an effect on their sense of self-efficacy. They still aspired for a career regardless of not having an Indo-Canadian role model. Determining the function that role models play in one's career decision-making process is an important aspect to consider. Future research with various cultural groups who face the same situation of lack of cultural representation in their career could inquire into the function of role models in their life.

Lent had a sub-proposition stating that individual self-efficacy appraisals meant more to an individual than feedback gained from others regarding career performance (Lent et al., 2000). In all cases, evidence contradicts this proposition. Feedback from people in positions of authority, such as siblings in the family system who could offer practical support as well as practicum placement supervisors in the field, held more weight for the participants and was internalized as part of their self-efficacy appraisals. Further studies need to be conducted to assess if attributing more importance to an authority's opinion than to one's own is attributed to a cultural orientation. Another explanation is that it could be attributed to lack of self-confidence in one's new professional role.

Lent considered that socialization experiences exist as a contextual affordance (Lent et al., 2000). Contrary to Lent's social cognitive career theory, contextual affordance was actively negotiated by the participants and drawn upon when necessary to inform their career decision making process. What remained as a contextual affordance represented a selected choice on behalf of the participants. Their values, situated in their upbringing, had a bearing on their career choice. The participants selected their values that they wanted to maintain in their working life. It could be important to see if the formation of one's bicultural identity is linked to the negotiation of contextual affordance. Further studies need to address the relationship between bicultural identity and contextual affordance in relation to career decision making.

This study has implications for career counsellors who work with Indo-Canadian young women entering the applied social sciences. Due to the cultural background of the participants of the study, the research has a bearing on the manner in which career counsellors can frame their practice to address the needs and concerns of this particular cultural group. First, it is important for counsellors to know the norms of the Sikh ethnic community and the various contexts that the participant is affiliated with. Second, a counselor needs to understand the worldview of clients and inquire about the clients perception of the values that they attribute to the different contexts of their lives. Third, exploring how Indo-Canadian young women cope with making various transitions between different contexts could provide young women with more options to consider in helping them engage in career decision making. A sense of control is important for young adults to deal with the multiple challenges and demands in their ever-changing context. In addition, how individuals view various social contexts for themselves to address the challenges associated with their career choice becomes essential.

As the sample size for this study included seven participants, caution must be exercised in generalizing the findings. The sampling procedure produced a very specific group of young women who all had relatively strong levels of self-efficacy and were enrolled in the same field. The findings are less open to generalization, as it is unknown if similar experiences are held by individuals who vary in their sense of self-efficacy appraisals or by Indo-Canadian women in various educational fields of study. Due to the limited research in the field on Indo-Canadian young women and career decision making to enter the social sciences, the results of this study could serve as a starting point for researchers to examine the various social forces that shape Indo-Canadian young women's career development. Future studies could integrate a larger sample of participants in which specific practical applications can emerge and be tested.

Many research issues still need to be addressed. For example, future

research could expand on comparing how the perception of contextual factors in shaping career development of Indo-Canadian young women differs from Indo-Canadian young men. It could also be valuable to explore the differences in life-career planning between rural and urban Indo-Canadian youth, as well as differences established by limited educational and economic opportunity and the effect it has on their life-career plans. Exploring the various contexts in which career decisions are made will shed more light on understanding how to serve the needs for Indo-Canadian young women in their life-career planning.

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Author Note

Priya S. Mani is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Foundation, and Psychology, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2. Her current research interests include career development and issues pertaining to cultural diversity.

Address correspondence to Dr. Priya S. Mani, Room 211, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Administration, Foundations, and Psychology, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2. Phone: 204- 474-6979. Fax: 204-474-7564. Email: manips@ms.umanitoba.ca.