The Canadian Journal of Career Development is published by Memorial University of Newfoundland. It has a mandate to present articles in areas of career research and practice that are of interest to career development practioners.

The journal is published with grant support from the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC). The opinions expressed are strictly those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Canadian Journal of Career Development, Memorial University of Newfoundland or CERIC officers, directors, or employees.

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Following final acceptance of an article for publication, all authors will be required to submit a copy in MS Word for production purposes.

For further details see inside back cover.

Les manuscrits doivent être soumis en MS Word. Les auteur-e-s doivent suivre les directives du manuel de publication de l'APA. Un résumé en français d'environ 100 mots doit être joint à chacun des articles.

Tous les articles acceptés pour publication doivent être présentés en MS Word.

Adresser les manuscrits au rédacteur en chef

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Editorial

It is an exciting time to be engaged in the field of research on career development. Within this field of research is a multitude of perspectives on career development. Yet, this is what continues to make the practice of career development so exciting. While multitude of perspectives continue to frustrate many, it similarly engages many others. It really is dependent upon the lens from which you view the field.

This journal was developed to be multi- sectoral. It continues to solicit research articles from a multitude of sectors. Articles range from research on organizational career development, secondary and post secondary research, and the public and non - profit sectors. It is through each of these lenses which the field of career development continues to expand our knowledge.

This issue contains a number of engaging and interesting research pieces. From the article entitled *Charting Workplace Transitioning Pathways of Generation – Y Human Resources Practitioners* by Carolin Rekar Munro to the article by Karen L. Milheim entitled *The Role of Collaborative Reflection in the Career Development of Adult Literacy and Basic Education Program Directors* we cut across a number of sectors.

The insightful article by Margaret Yap entitled *The Intersection of Gender & Race: Effects on the Incidence of Promotions* and Danielle Brosseau, José Domene, and Todd Dutka's article exploring *The Importance of Partner Involvement in Determining Career Decision-Making Difficulties* invites the reader into a wonderful view of how we explore career decision making.

My thanks as always go to the authors who have chosen the Canadian Journal of Career Development as their vehicle to disseminate their research. To the peer reviewers – Thank you for your time – a most precious commodity in this hectic world.

To each of the readers of this journal thank you for reading the Journal and please stay in touch as we navigate the field of career research.

Rob Shea
Founding Editor

The Canadian Journal of Career Development

Revue canadienne de developpement de carriére

Etta St. John Wileman Award
For Lifetime Achievement in Career Development

Why develop this award?

This award is designed to recognize and celebrate individuals who have devoted their lives to furthering the profession of career development.

- To celebrate individuals who have established themselves as leaders within our profession.
- Leaders who combine the role of researcher, educator, author, practioner and career leader.
- To encourage individuals in Canada and around the world to celebrate those around us who have contributed so much to our identity as career development professionals.
- To establish a significant and uniquely Canadian award that recognizes those individuals who have devoted their lives to the enhancement of career development practice, administration, research and education.

Who can be nominated?

Individuals who have demonstrated significant and long term commitment to the principles and experience outlined above.

When is the award presented?

The award is presented at the annual CANNEXUS Conference in Canada. The award is presented on a less than annual basis as is determined by the selection committee.

Who will comprise the selection committee?

The selection committee is comprised of the Founding Editor of the Canadian Journal of Career Development; a previous award winner; a career practioner; and the President of the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling.

What is awarded?

The award recipient will be presented with a hand made Innukshuk by an Inuit artisan from Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada. The Innukshuk is made from a precious stone called Labradorite native to the coast of Labrador. Each award will be presented at the annual CANNEXUS Conference.

Submissions

To ensure confidentiality and to minimize disappointment it is requested that the nominee not know about the nomination in advance.

Submissions should attest to each of the principles outlined above in the section - Why develop this award? This is an award for significant and lifetime commitment to career development. Unsuccessful nominations will be considered for a period of two further years.

Nominations

Nomination packages should be sent to:

Dr. Robert Shea
Editor
Canadian Journal of Career Development
Student Affairs and Services
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, NL Canada
A1C 5S7
Email: rshea@mun.ca

Charting Workplace Transitioning Pathways of Generation -Y Human Resources Practitioners

Dr. Carolin Rekar Munro
Royal Roads University

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present results from a study exploring experiences of Generation-Y Human Resources practitioners as they transition from academia to the workplace. Research findings are from on-line surveys, and individual and focus group interviews with 221 college graduates, 170 supervisors of these workforce entrants, and 42 educators. Emergent from data analysis is a prevailing disconnect between new recruit expectations and organizational realities. Revealed is a need for a more streamlined transition to move new recruits into the workforce in the following areas: assigned workload, strategic accountabilities, establishing internal networks, office politics, mentoring, and conflict management.

Proposed is a template for fostering academic-business partnerships that capitalize on learning for and from the workplace to ensure premier experiences are delivered to steer new recruits into the HR profession. This enables new recruits to excel in their career aspirations; and gives business leaders the edge in creating work environments that appeal to the new wave of HR practitioners, hence improving ability to recruit and retain them in a shrinking labour market. With a high premium placed on transition management new recruits enter the workforce with a full complement of competencies to advance and perpetuate organizational prosperity. Ultimately, due diligence is exercised in preparing the next generation of knowledge workers under whose leadership global communities will thrive.

Introduction

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 twofold: 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 story-lines 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 deceases 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 prob-

lems 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 so-

phistication. 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.

Figure 1: Blueprint for Generation Y Transitioning from Academia to the Workplace
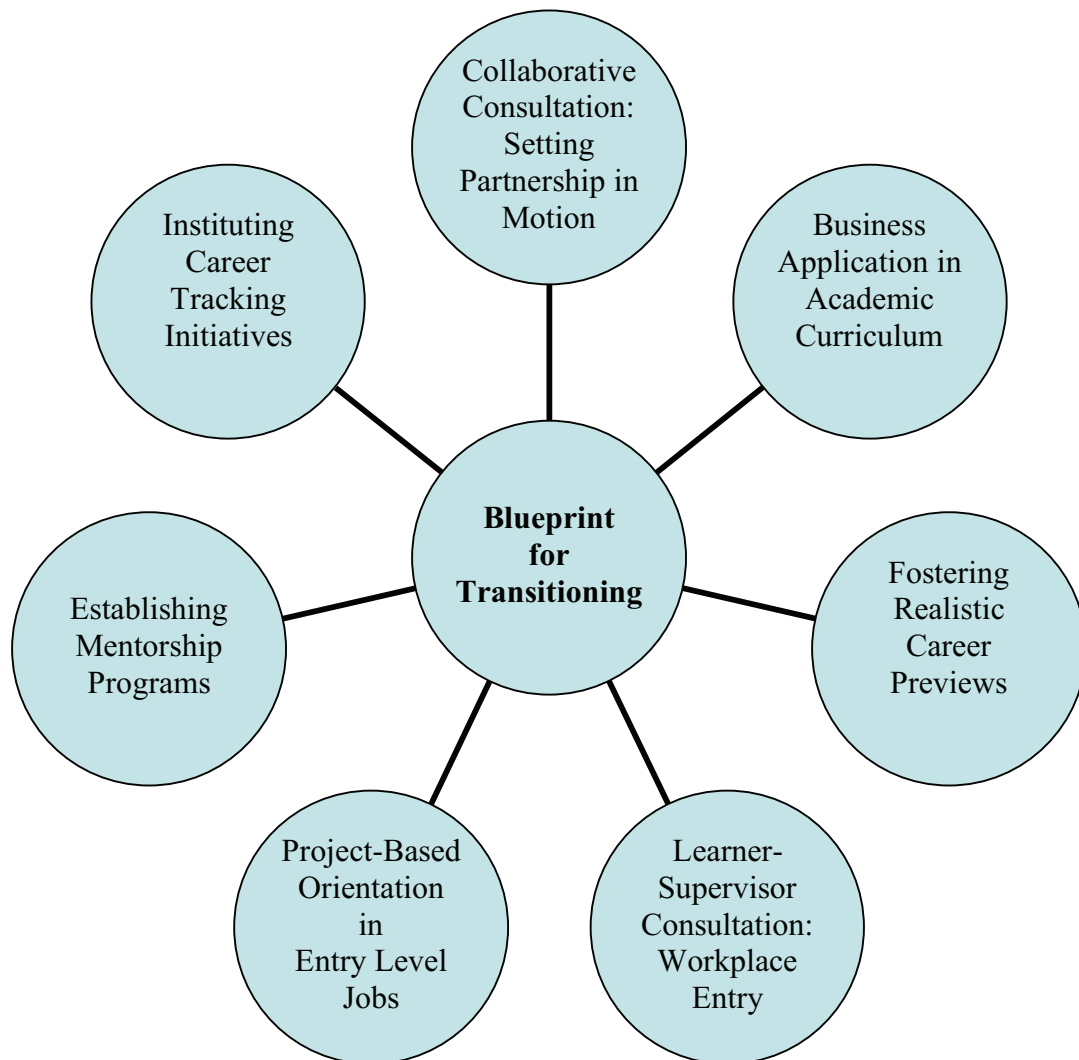
Evaluation affords an opportune time to critique strengths and limitations of each component of the transitional process – learning, development, service, teaching, and partnership. From the strengths, best practices are extrapolated for crafting policies and procedures that perpetuate consistency in 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 indis-

putably imperative as part of society's due diligence in preparing the next generation of knowledge workers under whose leadership global communities will thrive.

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The Role of Collaborative Reflection in the Career Development of Adult Literacy and Basic Education Program Directors

Karen L. Milheim
Penn State University

Abstract

Management development literature from a variety of fields shows reflection as effective means of career development (Ayas & Zeniuk, 2001; Condermin & Morrin, 2004; Harada, 2001; Jacobs & Heracleous, 2005). This qualitative, phenomenological study explored collaborative forms of reflection and their influence on the career development of adult literacy and basic education program directors. Findings show that participants engaged in several forms of collaborative reflection that contributed to their career development in various ways.

Keywords: career development, reflection, reflective practice, professional development, adult literacy

Introduction to the Study

Few resources, such as job specific training and development programs, exist that support the career development of directors of adult literacy and basic education programs. A lack of funding forces most budgets to be shifted towards the career development of staff, particularly instructors of adult literacy and basic education. Yet, despite the lack of career development opportunities, directors of these programs remain an integral part of overall program operations. They are required to handle all facets of program operations, including resource acquisition, financial matters, human resources, training and development, and funding. They also plan, organize, and evaluate programs, work with staff and outside organizations; develop and implement training programs; effectively communicate and give presentations; manage budgets; and generate funding for operations (Alamprese, 1999). Most directors in these

adult education settings learn "on-the-job," developing professionally through various types of learning situations. This study explores how directors of adult literacy and basic education programs develop in their careers, particularly in light of the lack of professional development opportunities available to them. One way to examine this phenomenon more closely is through the concept of reflection and its role in the career development process of these individuals. This study focuses on collaborative reflection, in particular, which, through this study, shows to play an important role in the career development of its participants.

Reflection can be characterized as a method to further oneself in their career (Condermin & Morrin, 2004). For this study, the term *reflection* is defined as any type of reflection that occurs in practice, which leads to the career development of a participant. *Collaborative reflection* is defined in the same way, yet indicates reflection is occurring with others, either in group or one-on-one situations, as opposed to the forms of reflection in isolation. The concept of reflection in practice is the guiding framework for this study, with adult literacy and basic education programs serving as a setting for the research.

Adult literacy and basic education programs offer a unique opportunity to explore collaborative reflection with respect to its role in career development. Directors working in these particular program settings often confront issues such as poor physical work conditions, isolation, lack of resources, and program concerns (Lytle, Belzer, & Reumann, 1992; Smith, Hofer, & Gillespie, 2001). Despite these barriers, directors are often required to learn their jobs on their own, rather than having

access to training, mentoring, coaching, or similar types of resources to assist with their career development. Therefore, reflection, particularly among colleagues, is often a necessity in order to develop professionally. Yet, little is actually known about how this reflection with others occurs, or, how it actually influences the career development process of these individuals.

The purpose of this study is to explore collaborative reflection and its role in the career development of adult literacy and basic education program directors. The overall purpose of this study is two-fold: 1) to explore directors' perceptions of how they develop professionally and 2) to explore the role of collaborative reflection in their career development process.

Guiding this study are the following questions:

1. What are participants' perceptions concerning how they develop professionally in their careers?

2. How do participants experience collaborative reflection in their practice?

3. How does the experience of reflection contribute to the career development of participants?

Collaborative Reflection and Career Development

The concept of reflection in relationship to learning and career development can be linked back to Socrates (Daudelin, 1996); however, Dewey (1910, 1933, 1938) formalized the concept of reflection. In his earlier works, Dewey presented the idea of "thought" and training individuals how to think and reflect; his notion of reflective thought informed theorists by placing importance on the integration of new experience with past experience through

the process of reflection (Rigano & Edwards, 1998). Dewey's works remind us that reflection is a complex, rigorous, intellectual enterprise that takes time to do well (Rodgers, 2002); we can see the role of reflection in any form of learning activity (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985).

Since the time of Dewey's writing, the evolution of the concept of reflection has been defined through the works of many, with multiple perspectives supporting or challenging Dewey's original definition of the term. The works of Habermas, Freire, and Mezirow have significantly influenced our perceptions of the role of reflection in teaching and learning settings (Redmond, 2006). Other frameworks, such as those presented by Schön (1983), Boud (1995), and Kolb (1984), focus on the role of reflection within organizational and developmental contexts.

More recently, management and executive professionals have received a significant amount of attention with respect to the impact of reflection on their career development. As pointed out by Daudelin (1997):

> There is an immense learning potential in the challenges managers confront and the problems they solve during their everyday working experience. Managers need support to make sense out of these developmental experiences. What is required is a way of exploring causes, developing and testing hypotheses and eventually producing new knowledge. The process of reflection plays a key part in this. (p. 282)

Because of the numerous types of reflection occurring in practice, this study focuses specifically on collaborative reflection and its impact on career development. To understand this process more fully, a more detailed review of literature focused on collaborative reflection and its link to career development follows.

Reflection does not need to take place in isolation. As Bolton (2005) suggests, examination of one's practice should occur alongside open discussions with peers on pertinent issues, and through discussions with colleagues

from outside the practitioners' field. Research has shown that interaction with others can strengthen the reflective process in a variety of ways, prompting research to explore the opportunities presented by communication with others in a work setting. Interaction among practitioners is often linked to reflection in practice (Harada, 2001); collaboration has been found to be an intricate and evolving process based on a foundation of trust that allows the process to grow and emerge as career development (Albrecht, 2003).

Reflection among coworkers in the career development process has been shown to allow practitioners to explore their own points of view by comparing and discussing them with that of their colleagues (Williams, 2005). Collaboration occurs in many forms, including sharing of ideas and knowledge creation (Ayas & Zeniuk, 2001; Melnychuk, 2001), and receiving feedback from more experienced peers (Parsons & Stephenson, 2005). However, these collaborative forms of communication do not necessarily mean reflection will occur. As Ayas and Zeniuk (2001) found in their case study, in order for a collaborative workplace of reflective practitioners to exist and be effective, alternative approaches towards learning should be implemented.

One important aspect of collaborative reflection with respect to its role in career development is the use of reflective dialogue. This process consists of conversations with others where factors such as context and emotions of an individual as well as the thought processes play a role (Brockbank, McGill, & Beech, 2002). Individuals interact with colleagues in order to move from personal reflection towards interaction with others in the development of a reflective practice. Engaging in a reflective dialogue creates a different learning climate with those involved. It is unlike ordinary meetings where there may be detachment and varying degrees of involvement. If reflective dialogue is happening effectively, all are engaged. "There will be an intensity of listening and contributions, while the endeavor is to create and challenge meanings and understanding, where each person is at-

tending to the issue of the moment." (Brockbank & McGill, 1998, p. 106)

Reflective dialogue has been shown to enhance the career development of professionals, specifically at a supervisory level (Pearce, 1995). It has also shown to be a critical element in the process of strategic innovation (Jacobs & Heracleaous, 2005), providing a framework for understanding how individuals within organizations think about strategy. Mezirow and Associates (2000) present another view of reflective dialogue. They contend that reflective discourse among individuals is an opportunity to challenge assumptions through discussion with colleagues. Through this process, those included in this process become more socially and contextually aware of these presuppositions when reaching conclusions and making decisions.

Reflective dialogue is also an important aspect of the mentoring process, a shared approach used to promote collaborative reflection (Smith, 1999). Mentoring programs typically partner experienced practitioners with novice practitioners in an effort to allow collaboration, guidance, and shared practices while peer mentoring programs allow those at similar levels in their professions mentor each other in a similar manner. Research shows that mentoring programs are a strategy to promote reflection within a variety of professional settings, indicating it to be an important factor in learning how to reflect in practice (Knowles, Borrie, & Telfer, 2005; Walkington, 2005). Barnett (1995) suggests this be carried out through a staged, thoughtful process in which mentors and their mentees move through several stages, including imitation, cultivation, separation, redefinition, disillusionment, parting, and transformation.

Learning to reflect on one's practice as part of the mentoring process has resulted in significant, positive outcomes to career development. One important outcome of the mentoring process is the development of new, organizational knowledge through reflection among those in the mentoring relationship (Egbu, 2006). Peer mentoring situations, in particular, have shown that peer mentoring enhances reflective

practice among professionals by encouraging discussion among peers (Arsenault, 2006). Problem-solving and higher-order thinking have also resulted from professional mentoring situations as well (Barnett, 1995).

It is apparent through the research that collaborative forms of reflection occur in various ways, and have a positive impact on practice as well as the career development process. This body of literature serves as the underpinnings for this study, as it also shows a clearer picture of how reflection with others can influence career development

Methodology

Research Design

A qualitative, phenomenological research design was used to conduct this study. The overall purpose of qualitative research is to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, to delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making, and to describe how people interpret their experience (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Qualitative data are comprised of detailed descriptions of people and events in natural settings; depth and understanding emerge from recording what people say in their own words and capturing their modifiers or qualifiers with carefully worded probe questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The type of qualitative research used in a study is dependent on the design; for this study phenomenology was ideal because it focuses on the essence or structure of an experience (Creswell, 2003; Merriam & Associates, 2002) as described by participants in a study (Creswell, 2003). The interpretation of these reflective strategies and methods, as well as the similarities and differences between them, are aligned with the interpretive nature of phenomenological research. Merriam and Simpson (2000) state that: "phenomenologists are interested in showing how complex meanings are built out of simple units of direct experience. This form of inquiry is an attempt to deal with inner experiences unprobed in everyday life."

Participant Selection

To select participants for this study, purposeful sampling was used. Purposeful sampling is the selection of information-rich cases for study in depth, from which one can learn about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton, 2002). A critical part of the sample selection was the qualification of potential participants for the study. Selected participants in this study were a group of ten directors of adult literacy and basic education programs who, at the time of the study were: 1) currently responsible for directing an adult education program, with over 90% of their time on the job during the week dedicated to managing or directing the program; 2) referred by a professional organization related to adult education, or from other participants in the study; and 3) in the role of an adult education program director for a minimum of 5 years at the time the interview was conducted (either in their present position, or a position with another organization).

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected through one-on-one, semi-structured taped interviews with ten total participants; each interview ranged in length from one to two hours. Questions were designed to prompt discussion in several areas, including the role of participants in their work setting, and what learning strategies they use to develop their careers; how participants cope with problems and decision-making processes, and the methods used to handle moments of discouragement. Semi-structured interviews related to these topics generated discussion of reflection and its role in the career development of participants in this study.

Data Analysis

Davies (2007) offers several important guidelines for content analysis which were used during the analysis phase of this study:

1. Remembering the goal is to explore individual or situational perspectives,

2. Reminding yourself of the research questions and continually coming back to them,

3. Maintaining a dynamic and circular relationship between data analysis and data collection,

4. Working with scripts which are functional for my specific readability preferences,

5. Coming up with a coding method, either through colors or highlights, which will allow me to cross-compare interviews, and

6. Considering all responses and not dismissing any "throwaway" remarks.

The analysis phase of this study relied on bracketing, as described by Husserl (1927). The concept of bracketing, according to Husserl, relies heavily on our perceptions of experiences and separating those experiences from outside influences. An overall awareness and subsequent notations of this during the analysis phase assisted with the bracketing process.

After gathering all transcripts, they were reviewed several times and major areas relevant to the purpose of the study were noted, with specific focus on details, stories, and moments throughout each interview that led to the engagement of reflective practice and the furthering of the professional development of the individual.

After noting these areas for consideration, interviews were compared for similarities. As a result, major themes emerged that ran through the data that are subsequently detailed in the findings. Specifically, when reviewing themes and supporting topics, color-coding to separate relevant quotes and additional statements that support the findings of this study were used. This entailed choosing separate colored highlighters for each theme, and using that color to highlight any relevant dialogue in the transcripts. This color-coding method allowed for differentiation among topics, and organized information efficiently and effectively. Specifically, it allowed to organize topics and potential areas for discussion, as well as bring attention to any potential, quotable statements.

Once the topics and potentials areas for discussion were identified, an additional comparison was conducted to ensure analysis of the data was exhausted. As a result, additional themes emerged which are presented in the findings.

Findings

For adult literacy and basic education program directors, the board of directors (board), co-workers, and other colleagues in the field provided opportunity for career development through collaborative reflection. A description of the findings related to the collaborative reflection that occurred with respect to these three groups, starting with the board of directors follows.

Collaborative Reflection with the Board of Directors

Directors' experiences of collaborative reflection with their respective boards are a key factor in their career development. In brief, a board is often essential to the governance of a non-profit organization, including the majority of the adult education programs included in this study. In the case of the organizations involved in this study, board members were typically executives of large organizations, educators from outside the organization itself, and directors of businesses involved in literacy initiatives as philanthropy. Through this study, it was discovered that board members were often responsible for collaborating with directors to reflect upon specific, critical incidents that occurred in the organization, providing opportunity to work through and learn from difficult situations. When faced with a difficult personnel situation, Deb (all names were changed to maintain confidentiality), for example, went to one of the board members for further discussion:

> We talked for about a half hour. I explained [the situation] and he gave me some really great ideas on how to handle it because, of course, a lot of issues these days have legal implications and you can't just go running off at the mouth.

When Deb speaks about her relationships with the board, exchanges such as this one are viewed as more than an advice-seeking session. Deb proclaims that, through discussions such as these, she has learned from the board. The evolvement of their working relationship, development of an understanding of accountability, and experiencing development of good habits in practice, such as how to stay calm in crises, how to be a more courteous person, and how to learn from past mistakes for betterment of future practice all stemmed from interactions with the board on a continual basis.

In Sarah's situation, she made a point to keep the board aware of what was happening with the adult education unit of the organization she worked for, allowing her to foster a productive, reflective dialogue with them when necessary. To do this, she believed that it was critical to continually prepare the board so they knew what is going on with her particular department:

> I'm always involved in the board prep so that they know what's going on with us. I think it's dangerous if you don't have your adult ed. program positioned in that way. I talk to other [programs] and they'll have their adult ed. sort of an ancillary program. There's advantages. The advantage is people don't know what you're doing. The disadvantage is that people don't know what you're doing. It can come back to haunt you.

Sarah chose to use the board to her advantage in developing her practice through reflective dialogue. They were active in her decision-making, and she participated in the board meetings, and she went to them for support in a variety of situations. She perceived that the reflective dialogue she maintained with them assisted her in all of these areas.

In addition to the board, coworkers within an organization were also perceived as playing an important role in the career development through reflection. This collaboration with co-workers was the case for many of the individuals interviewed for this study. In many situations, directors' experiences in the development of a reflective dialogue with coworkers, and reflection within group settings were necessary for the overall success of the director, as well as the organization.

Collaborative Reflection with Coworkers

A good example of reflective dialoging within practice occurred when a turnover in the position of the overall program director at an adult education center resulted in the remaining directors and managers developing what was labeled a "learning circle" with each other. Eric, the director of educational programs at the center says that the lack of overall leadership led the group to form an informal leadership team (the "learning circle"), which consulted regularly to help steer operations.

Sarah, an educational program director for a larger, regional teacher resource center, found that the supervisors who worked for her had been some of the most influential relationships she had forged in her 19-year tenure with the organization, offering opportunity for development through reflection in an experience she called the "collaborative leadership approach". This approach provided opportunities to learn that there was "no one way" to do something right.

In some situations, however, collaborative, reflective dialogue with coworkers was relatively non-existent, hindering the role reflection had in areas such as decision-making, learning new tasks, and problem solving. The absence of interaction among coworkers seemed to follow from a perceived lack of internal resources, management style, and the replacement of internal relationships with ones external to the organization. In addition to relationships with internal staff and board members, directors tended to rely on managers of other programs or professionals in the field to collaborative reflect. The majority of these relationships were valuable to many of the participants in this study for experiencing reflection in practice, thus, contributing to their overall professional development.

Collaborative Reflection with Professional Colleagues

Several participants mentioned a state professional development conference, as well as other conferences and

meetings, as a valuable opportunity to experience engagement with other members of the field outside their own, respective organizations, thus positively impacting their careers. For many, these conferences allowed for the discussion of current events in the field as well as overall support and feedback for how one handles certain situations in practice. Eric's organization, in particular, promotes professional development through conferences and provides funding for staff to attend such events. While these types of events offered more formalized training and workshops for career development, Eric believed having staff commit to the conference is a priceless opportunity to experience socialization within the field, allowing him the opportunity to learn from those external to his organization. For others, a lack of time and financial resources hindered the opportunity to attend such programs.

Because Eric's organization was supported by a larger, nationwide non-profit, and the fact that he worked for a United Way agency, he had the benefit of using resources from multiple, external resources. His opportunities for collaborative reflection with respect to the development of his career were greater than they would be in an organization with less resources or affiliations. However, Eric stated that he got calls from other managers all of the time asking for advice on how to deal with certain issues, and believed that extended partnerships were a constant source for experiencing learning opportunities.

For Kara, interaction with an individual on a program evaluation team led her to reflect more about her own participation in national and local electronic list-serves as well as her own professional activity. Kara's experience of interacting with this particular individual through the evaluation process made her want to think about adult education on a more national level; thus, she changed her overall participation in some of the career development opportunities available to her.

Experiences in practice that led to career development often occurred through the reflective, collaborative nature of the relationships directors forged with those internal and external to the organization. These opportunities for collaborative reflection led to career development in a variety of ways. The essence of these experiences is discussed in the next section.

Discussion

Phenomenological research deals with inner experiences of everyday practice (Merriam & Associates, 2002). To do this, this study draws upon the essence of the lived experience (Patton, 1990) of each participant, looking to draw parallels between collaborative forms of reflection and career development of program directors. The next section describes four separate areas related to the essence of the experience of collaborative reflection with respect to career development, including:

1. Development of the ability to work through difficult situations,

2. Decision-making and learning from mistakes,

3. Discovery of multiple approaches, and

4. Progressive knowledge acquisition related to current happenings in the field.

Working through difficult situations

For the participants, career development often took the form of developing the ability to work through difficult situations through the experience of collaborative reflection. Those who had more developed relationships outside the field sought out colleagues or board members; those who were more comfortable with internal staff, or newer to their roles relied more heavily on internal resources. Regardless, the impact of having a support system was crucial to the development of the ability of working through difficult situations in practice. This supports previous findings that indicate collaborative relationships as being an important part of the career development process with respect to reflection (Albrecht, 2003; Harada, 2001; Williams, 2005).

The findings of the present study, however, indicate that directors chose to spend more time building relationships based on the amount of collaborative reflection that occurred with certain colleagues or groups. In general, if a participant preferred relating to board members, they spent more time building those relationships; if they relied more on internal staff, they made a point to be more inclusive of them. This was not the case in every situation, but it was a trend that undergirded the relationship building process. The existing literature does not explore the relationships of group members outside the group dynamics. That is, if directors "prefer" to collaborate with certain individuals and not others, we know little about the dynamics that remain among those who are "left out" of the collaborative process and the director themselves.

Decision-making and learning from mistakes

Also, participants' reflections on their past or future actions with others often sought reaffirmation of a decision which was already made or about to be made; that is, collaboration with others in the field gave confidence to those in the decision-making role. Certainly, in these particular situations, reflective practice is taking place. As Merriam and Cafferella (1999) state, "reflective practice allows one to make judgments in complex and murky situations -- judgments based on experience and prior knowledge" (p. 232). In some situations, when directors did not know how to handle a problem, outside assistance was necessary to decide on a probable, ideal solution. That said, trust and confidentiality among colleagues, whether internal or external, showed to be incredibly important elements in collaboration.

The process of reflecting on practice also led to improved decision-making. Learning from mistakes, an essence of the experience of collaborative reflection typically arose out of conversations with individuals at higher levels either within or outside the organization. These types of mentoring situations, in general, have shown to be an important factor in learning how to reflect in practice (Knowles, Borrie, & Telfer, 2005; Walkington, 2005). For the participants in this study, formal mentoring situations often provided opportunity to collaboratively reflect on mistakes, consider other options, or provide alternative solutions.

A common thread among many of the participants that allowed for directors to learn from their mistakes through collaborative reflection was the respect they held for those who had worked in the field for long periods of time; often, they sought conversations from those who they (or others) held in high regard. Just as important is the approachability of these outside mentors to assist less-experienced directors when they make mistakes. This openness allowed participants to be less inhibited when approaching these in-dividuals, allowing a friendly, productive relationship developed.

The development of strong, trusting, understanding relationships was a key to effective collaborative reflection among colleagues. Therefore, it was common for participants to strive to achieve respect from staff and their peers in the field. Not surprisingly, those who forged strong relationships seemed to benefit more from experiencing collaborative reflection; they had a strong network of "go-to" people for support and collaboration. Also important to note is that of the few participants who seemed less inclined to seek support through reflective dialogue, these individuals lacked development opportunities in practice from conversations with colleagues. They often sought support internally or from other sources.

Discovering multiple approaches

Relationship development often led to discovering and experiencing multiple approaches towards various areas of practice. Strong relationships and the development of multiple solutions often went hand-in-hand. When more individuals were involved in tasks such as decision-making, working on projects, and discussing new ideas, multiple approaches to these emerged. The discovery of multiple approaches develops practice in a variety of ways. As Kreber (2004) suggests, a multi-faceted, educational development initiative towards reflective practice should include the promotion of meaning, recording of experiences, addressing learning goals, and self-regulated learning. In this study, most notably, the experience of collaborative reflection that is inclusive

of multiple individuals within the organization led to a more collaborative working environment, where each individual felt as though they were contributing.

More importantly, particularly within an adult education agency setting where there are varying backgrounds and viewpoints among individuals involved, the inclusion of many individuals in reflection led to a more critical approach towards elements of practice. This is particularly aligned with Mezirow and Associates' (2000) view which sees reflective dialogue as an opportunity to challenge assumptions through discussion with colleagues. Along those lines, it was common among several directors to come to different conclusions about areas of practice once reflective dialogue occurred. Where there may have been one, well-defined solution or idea towards a specific situation, reflective dialogue allowed directors to see the situation from viewpoints of others, creating opportunity to change practice to accommodate what was truly happening from multiple points of view.

Keeping current in the field

A final finding, which describes an additional facet of the essence of collaborative reflection, is that discussion with others was often sought in order to keep relevant in the field. Specifically, instead of attending formal training sessions, the discourse regarding political influences, student requirements, state mandates, curriculum, program development, and other areas was developed further primarily through discussions with others.

Looking at these findings from a closer lens it becomes clear that the relationships a director develops with others are vital to career development with respect to the experience and essence of collaborative reflection in practice. It was not uncommon for participants to rely on opinions, discussion, and conversations with others to make decisions in their jobs. Without strong, developed relationships with others in the field, the network of individuals who could assist them with making decisions would also be affected. Key to this relationship development is the

trust building that occurs among managers and other individuals. Without trust from both parties, the experience of collaborative reflection would be less productive. This interdependency of strong working relationships and decision-making was a major factor in the experience of reflection in practice and the development of these skills.

Along these same lines, collaborative reflection often was a welcome reprieve when managers were faced with many similar situations or when they became overwhelmed with too many decisions that needed to be made. The experience of collaborating with others for input allowed managers to remain less stagnant in their roles, either re-affirming decisions they already had made, or developing new solutions to old problems and issues.

Recommendations for Practice and Future Research

As research continues to explore the relationship between reflective practice and professional development, this study furthers the understanding of reflective practice as a framework in management development, with particular focus on collaborative reflection.

It is already known that professional development often occurs through reflective practice (Condermin & Morrin, 2004). Reflective practice has been studied in relationship to management development from various perspectives pertaining to how one makes sense out of development opportunities in practice (Daudelin, 1996). More specifically, individuals can reflect in various ways, including the critical reflection and questioning of daily happenings within practice (Brookfield, 1990, 1991; Mezirow, 1991). This self-assessment process leads to further understanding of how one can make better, informed decisions, solve problems, and learn through the reflective process (Boud, 1995).

Another implication for the concept of collaborative reflective practice, in particular, is its general applicability to management development, especially as organizations look at new, innovative ways of managing programs. Often, organizations look to implement more formalized training programs to encour-

age management development. As most participants said this training was helpful for more administrative tasks, it did not emphasize some of the other relevant areas management development that emerged review of literature. Development of decision-making, problem-solving, and collaborative working relationships, all common areas of more formal management development programs such as interpersonal skills, knowledge management, strategic planning, and creativity (Evans, 2005) are also important.

To address the need for innovation in programming, organizations should look towards first fostering reflective practice, as it plays an integral role in professional development. Gosling and Mintzberg (2004) support this suggestion, recommending integration of management education with practice as well as a less prescriptive classroom environment, and encouragement of reflective practice. While the managers who participated in this study all seemed to develop collaborative reflective practices in their practice over time, more awareness of it, and its contribution to professional development would allow learning to occur more readily.

Along these lines, some of the more studied, proven techniques of working towards collaborative reflective practice might allow for it to occur more readily in practice as well. As Liimatainen *et al.* (2001) concluded in their study of the development of reflection among nursing students, various approaches and methods toward reflection are needed to support learning from practice. For ABE managers, maximizing collaborative reflection through deliberate strategies could enhance their professional development by choosing the techniques that work for them.

Collaborative reflective practice proved to be an important part of each participant's development in this study, regardless of his or her personality type or values. Literature linking reflection to an individual's values or personality type to professional development in practice is scarce. Wellington and Austin (1996) discuss a multifaceted approach towards orienting reflective practice in education that considers values, but fails to look beyond one's values towards education. Further research is certainly needed in this area.

In a broader sense, the adult education institutions that prepare ABE managers to work in the field of adult education should consider development of educational opportunities along these lines as well. As the need for ABE and similar programs continues to rise, development of those working in this field will continue to be critical. This may include promotion of collaborative reflection, awareness of self-reflection, and other, relevant topics that are not typically offered through formalized coursework.

As collaboration within practice was a key finding which contributed to the development of ABE managers, the implication is that more opportunity for this to occur should be considered. Organizations should look to promoting more deliberate, collaborative opportunities with the sole purpose of allowing managers to work together to discuss, problem-solve, generate ideas, and resolve issues. Also, interpersonal skills, group dynamics, and communication skills are also important, so that managers can effectively engage in collaboration.

It is already known that reflective practice has significant implications for management development. As Raelin (1993) points out:

> Management as a holistic skill must blend theory and action. Theory makes sense only through practice, but practice makes sense only through reflection as enhanced by theory. Managers need both, and they need interaction between the two if they are going to prepare themselves to cope with the changing landscape of business experience. (p. 88-89)

Raelin's views have a profound implication for future ABE management research. As was notable in this study, reflection was a holistic, less prescriptive process. Researchers need to address this viewpoint more fully to better understand how more holistic views of reflection impact learning in practice. Most current studies focus on one "type" of reflective practice, rather than a conceptual, less structured point of view. As research goes forward, consideration of this viewpoint will impact practice in the field of ABE management development, and other fields as well.

Next, there is a definite link between personality type and reflection in practice. Yet, this study can only make general assumptions based on the data collected. Research needs to explore this area more fully, addressing questions pertaining to how certain personalities and values are related to how reflection occurs in practice. By doing this, fields of practice can better understand how to address the learning of certain personality types or make changes and revisions to existing programs to better serve the needs of employees.

As Kreber (2004) and Moon (1999; 2004) both note, reflective practice is an unclear term; this study expands our knowledge of this framework in various ways. Most importantly, the exploration of collaborative reflective practice took place within a specific educational context; however, the participants were not teachers or students, as is typical in the research in this area. Also, since this study explored management professionals in an adult education setting, the study was able to extract the essence of certain experiences which are typical of this specific population, allowing us to see beyond some of the experiences of the participants normally studied in this setting. Therefore, as Kreber (2004) calls for further involvement in the actual process of reflective practice (rather than a more solitary activity), the reflective practices among ABE managers may begin to touch the surface of the broader questions regarding what collaborative reflective practice essentially is, and how it is effective.

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

Dr. Margaret Yap
Ryerson University

Abstract

Using administrative data from a large firm in Canada, this empirical paper first explores the determinants of promotions and then looks at the advancement experiences of white women, minority men and minority women relative to white men. Findings show that white men enjoy a comparative advantage over white females, minority males and minority females. Both horizontal segregation (job family) and vertical segregation (job levels) have significant negative implications on the career advancement of race/gender minority groups. Organizations' policies, programs and practices that strive for a transparent promotion process will help ensure fair advancement opportunities for all employees, irrespective of their gender or race.

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 re-turns. 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 then 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 analyses of a sample of employee 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, in-dustry, 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:

$$\Pr(y_j \,^1\, 0 \mid X_j) = f(X_j b)$$

where the outcome (or dependent variable) is a dichotomy indicating the incidence of promotion to the next higher job level, f is the standard normal cumulative distribution and b 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[1]. 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.

Supply Side Variables

The model also includes a set of conventional human capital and demo-graphic 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, fol-lowed 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 interrup-

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[1] 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.

tions 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.

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

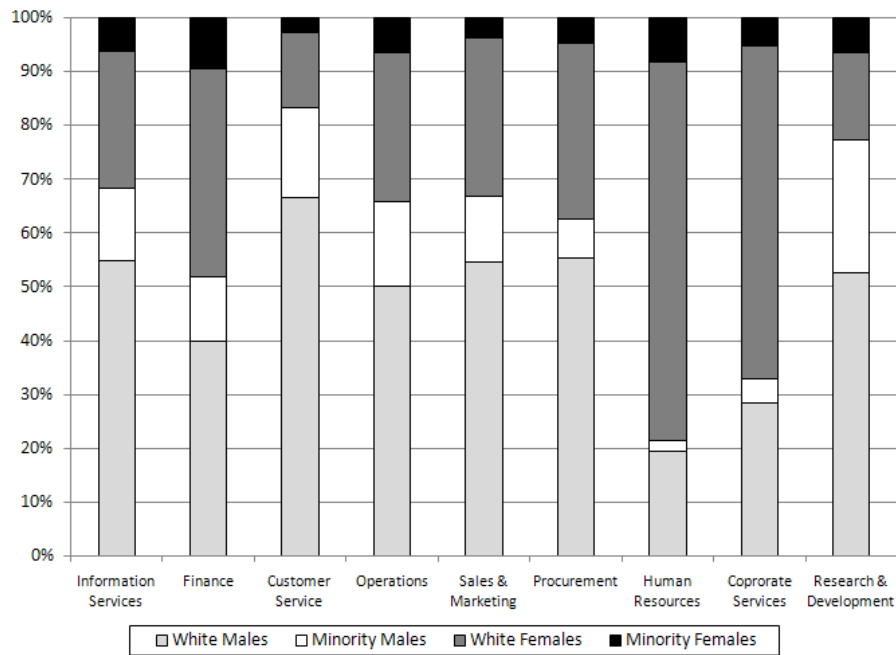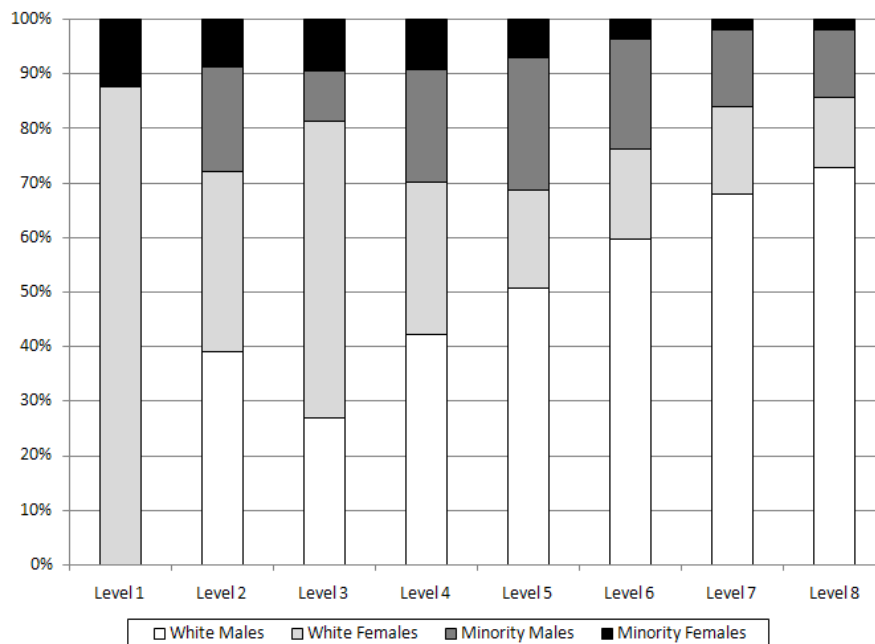Figure 1   Distribution of Race/Gender Groups by Job Family

Figure 2   Distribution of Race/Gender Groups by Job Level

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.

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 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 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.

Table 1   Means and Proportions for Selected Variables by Race/Gender Groups

	Overall	White Males	White Females	Minority Males	Minority Females	The Undisclosed
Proportion Promoted	56.5%	60.0%	58.1%	56.7%	52.6%	52.7%
Age [in years]	35.7	37.1	37.3	35.9	34.4	33.7
Tenure [in years]	7.0	9.6	8.6	6.4	5.3	4.1
Proportion with University Degrees	57.7%	57.1%	41.3%	77.4%	68.5%	57.1%
Job Level	5.1	5.5	4.6	5.1	4.6	4.9
Annual Salary [in $'000]	61.8	68.4	54.3	64.0	54.3	58.3
With "Exceeded" Performance Rating	13.9%	17.2%	18.7%	13.1%	11.4%	8.9%
With Break in Service	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%
% White Female	22.9	18.6	35.7	18.1	26.7	23.0
% Minority Male	19.6	19.4	15.0	22.6	20.1	20.6
% Minority Female	6.4	5.2	7.0	6.4	8.2	7.0
No. of Observations	22,338	7,689	3,388	2,826	901	7,534
[%]	100.0%	34.4%	15.2%	12.7%	4.0%	33.7%

Table 2   Determinants of Promotion by Race/Gender Group

	Overall		White Males		White Females		Minority Males		Minority Females	
	dF/dx	Std.Err.	dF/dx	Std.Err.	dF/dx	Std.Err.	dF/dx	Std.Err.	dF/dx	Std.Err.
[White Males]										
White Females	-0.0454 **	0.0121								
Minority Males	-0.0788 **	0.0123								
Minority Females	-0.1612 **	0.0192								
Undisclosed	-0.0974 **	0.0096								
[High School or Less]										
Post HS / College	0.0909 **	0.0119	0.0756 **	0.0214	0.0649 *	0.0263	0.0973	0.0508	0.0781	0.0819
Undergraduate Degrees	0.1119 **	0.0120	0.0648 **	0.0228	0.0847 **	0.0298	0.0481	0.0487	0.1694 *	0.0731
Graduate Degrees	0.0963 **	0.0135	0.0688 **	0.0254	0.1082 **	0.0378	0.0709	0.0501	0.1002	0.0823
Undisclosed	0.0962 **	0.0160	0.0904 **	0.0285	0.0878 *	0.0332	0.0899	0.0648	0.0267	0.1042
Age [in years]	-0.0089 *	0.0039	-0.0089	0.0072	-0.0124	0.0095	-0.0015	0.0123	0.0199	0.0227
Age Squared	-0.0001 *	0.0001	-0.0001	0.0001	0.0000	0.0001	-0.0002	0.0002	-0.0005	0.0003
Tenure [in years]	0.0136 **	0.0017	0.0079 **	0.0027	0.0045	0.0045	0.0223 **	0.0062	0.0493 **	0.0149
Tenure Squared	-0.0006 **	0.0001	-0.0004 **	0.0001	-0.0002	0.0002	-0.0011 **	0.0003	-0.0021 **	0.0007
Break in Service	-0.1346 *	0.0626	-0.2002 *	0.0936	-0.2032	0.2910	-0.3448	0.1516	-0.0193	0.3192
[Levels 1 & 2]										
Level 3	-0.5527 **	0.0133	-0.6016 **	0.0228	-0.6397 **	0.0368	-0.6412 **	0.0148	-0.6950 **	0.0284
Level 4	-0.4005 **	0.0255	-0.3245 **	0.0611	-0.5673 **	0.0461	-0.5553 **	0.0772	-0.6246 **	0.0786
Level 5	-0.7400 **	0.0175	-0.6534 **	0.0467	-0.7215 **	0.0374	-0.8241 **	0.0609	-0.9328 **	0.0284
Level 6	-0.7516 **	0.0110	-0.7433 **	0.0351	-0.7105 **	0.0263	-0.8168 **	0.0361	-0.7326 **	0.0302
Level 7	-0.7481 **	0.0067	-0.8101 **	0.0190	-0.7174 **	0.0159	-0.7592 **	0.0216	-0.6467 **	0.0231
Level 8	-0.6479 **	0.0043	-0.7137 **	0.0098	-0.6361 **	0.0101	-0.6528 **	0.0132	-0.5709 **	0.0199
Annual Salary ($'000)	0.0145 **	0.0005	0.0148 **	0.0009	0.0089 **	0.0015	0.0225 **	0.0018	0.0224 **	0.0035
Performance Rating										
Exceeded	0.2904 **	0.0097	0.2631 **	0.0166	0.3058 **	0.0247	0.2897 **	0.0281	0.2157 **	0.0693
Achieved	0.1648 **	0.0101	0.1370 **	0.0185	0.1946 **	0.0283	0.1717 **	0.0297	0.0907	0.0584
[Research & Development]										
Information Technology	0.0627 **	0.0185	0.0559	0.0309	0.0926 *	0.0427	-0.0746	0.0740	0.0426	0.1128
Finance	0.1438 **	0.0261	0.1075 *	0.0481	0.1109 *	0.0511	-0.0045	0.1190	0.2166	0.1372
Customer Service	0.1166 **	0.0204	0.2130 **	0.0251	0.0625	0.0569	0.1392	0.0685	-0.1964	0.1413
Operations	0.0001	0.0187	0.1145 **	0.0272	-0.0992 *	0.0439	0.0640	0.0674	-0.2044	0.1107
Sales & Marketing	0.1730 **	0.0158	0.1436 **	0.0265	0.1330 **	0.0366	0.0030	0.0712	0.2399 *	0.1032
Procurement	0.0828 **	0.0264	0.1272 **	0.0391	0.0360	0.0585	0.0054	0.1246	-0.0543	0.1633
Human Resources	0.2440 **	0.0319	-0.0163	0.1150	0.2443 **	0.0516	-0.4038	0.2086	0.3285	0.1404
Corporate Services	-0.0025	0.0375	-0.1033	0.0833	-0.0072	0.0611	0.0204	0.2010	-0.1143	0.2113
Job Composition										
Percent White Female	-0.0007	0.0009	0.0066 **	0.0019	-0.0013	0.0017	0.0087	0.0045	-0.0071	0.0049
Pecent Minority Male	-0.0055 **	0.0015	0.0007	0.0025	-0.0008	0.0035	-0.0147 **	0.0056	-0.0194 *	0.0090
Percent Minority Female	0.0035	0.0022	0.0084	0.0043	-0.0034	0.0043	0.0338 **	0.0096	-0.0039	0.0116
[Ontario]										
The Maritimes	-0.0444	0.0399	-0.1035	0.0721	-0.2346 **	0.0712	-		-	
Quebec	0.0032	0.0138	-0.0540 **	0.0202	-0.0004	0.0329	0.0817	0.0480	0.0639	0.0916
The Prairies	-0.0262 *	0.0121	0.0178	0.0196	-0.0563	0.0292	-0.0517	0.0401	-0.0052	0.0743
British Columbia	-0.1687 **	0.0333	-0.1600 **	0.0538	-0.1693 *	0.0822	-0.1843 *	0.0760	-0.2279	0.1252
Others	0.2088 **	0.0289	0.2102 **	0.0398	-0.0234	0.1103	0.3731 **	0.0359	0.0728	0.1604
[Promoted in 1996]										
Promoted in 1997	0.2417 **	0.0117	0.2478 **	0.0190	0.2593 **	0.0300	0.2763 **	0.0312	0.2217 **	0.0674
Promoted in 1998	0.0430 **	0.0121	0.0490 *	0.0198	0.0626 *	0.0287	-0.0149	0.0345	0.0998	0.0650
Promoted in 1999	0.0145	0.0122	-0.0032	0.0201	0.0597 *	0.0290	0.0191	0.0344	0.0187	0.0651
Promoted in 2000	0.0510 **	0.0118	0.0525 **	0.0197	0.1317 **	0.0270	0.0233	0.0347	0.1074	0.0655
Observed Prob.	0.5654		0.6001		0.5817		0.5666		0.5250	
Predicted Prob.	0.5784		0.6227		0.5956		0.5889		0.5233	
No. of Observations	22,338		7,689		3,383		2,824		899	
LR Chi-sq	5244.02 (43)		1894.01 (39)		642.23 (38)		789.01 (37)		332.89 (37)	
Log Likelihood	-12670.12		-4227.54		-1978.40		-1537.84		-455.57	
Pseudo R-sq	0.1715		0.1830		0.1396		0.2042		0.2676	

Reference categories in square brackets. **,* denote significance at p<0.01 and p<0.05 respectively.

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. 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 organi-

zation. 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 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 "unex-

Table 3   Summary of Results from Various Probit Decompositions

| | Reference Group = White Males | | | | | |
| | White Females | | Minority Males | | Minority Females | |
	Gap	%	Gap	%	Gap	%
Overall Sample						
Differences in Predicted Probabilities	0.03	(100%)	0.03	(100%)	0.10	(100%)
Due to Differences in Productivity-Related Characteristics	0.01	(43%)	-0.04	(35%)	-0.07	(30%)
Due to Differences in Returns	0.02	(57%)	0.07	(65%)	0.17	(70%)
Job Levels 1 to 3						
Differences in Predicted Probabilities	0.22	(100%)	-0.02	(100%)	0.47	(100%)
Due to Differences in Productivity-Related Characteristics	0.15	(69%)	-0.11	(55%)	0.29	(60%)
Due to Differences in Returns	0.07	(31%)	0.09	(45%)	0.19	(40%)
Job Levels 4 to 5						
Differences in Predicted Probabilities	0.07	(100%)	0.09	(100%)	0.15	(100%)
Due to Differences in Productivity-Related Characteristics	0.02	(32%)	0.01	(8%)	0.02	(10%)
Due to Differences in Returns	0.05	(68%)	0.08	(92%)	0.14	(90%)
Job Levels 6 to 8						
Differences in Predicted Probabilities	-0.09	(100%)	0.04	(100%)	0.01	(100%)
Due to Differences in Productivity-Related Characteristics	-0.06	(63%)	0.00	(7%)	-0.32	(49%)
Due to Differences in Returns	-0.03	(37%)	0.04	(93%)	0.33	(51%)

plained" component. The main findings are summarized in Table 3.

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 at-

tributed 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 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.

Table 4   Proportion Terminated by Promotion Status

	Promoted				Promoted		
	Yes	**No**	**Overall**		**Yes**	**No**	**Overall**
Males	0.24	0.39	0.30	Females	0.20	0.38	0.28
	(0.42)	(0.49)	(0.46)		(0.40)	(0.48)	(0.45)
	[9,264]	[6,919]	[16,183]		[3,365]	[2,790]	[6,155]
Whites	0.22	0.40	0.29	Non-whites	0.26	0.43	0.33
	(0.41)	(0.49)	(0.45)		(0.44)	(0.49)	(0.47)
	[6,582]	[4,495]	[11,077]		[2,076]	[1,651]	[3,727]
White Males	0.22	0.40	0.29	White Females	0.21	0.40	0.29
	(0.42)	(0.49)	(0.46)		(0.40)	(0.49)	(0.45)
	[4,614]	[3,075]	[7,689]		[1,968]	[1,420]	[3,388]
Minority Males	0.27	0.42	0.34	Minority Females	0.22	0.43	0.32
	(0.45)	(0.49)	(0.47)		(0.42)	(0.50)	(0.47)
	[1,602]	[1,224]	[2,826]		[474]	[427]	[901]

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

(1997), 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.

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

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

Abstract

Investigating the impact of systemic factors on career decision-making has become essential to ensure decision-making models remain relevant for today's workforce. The present study explored the connections between romantic partner involvement and career decision-making difficulties. Eligible participants ($N = 105$) were between the ages of 20 and 40 and currently involved in a committed romantic relationship of at least one year in duration. Hierarchical multiple regression revealed that, after accounting for gender, age and school status, level of partner involvement was a small but significant predictor of career decision-making difficulties. Limitations and implications for future research and practice are discussed.

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

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-aking 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).

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 (DR^2 = .05, *p* = .02; see Table 2). The direction of relationship between partner involvement and career decision-making difficulties was inverse (b = -.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 (b = -.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.

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).

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 coun-

selling 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 func-

tional 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's (2003) 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.

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Table 1

Demographic Characteristics (N = 105)

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

Table 2

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Testing Partner Involvement as a

Predictor of Career Decision-Making Difficulties (N = 105)

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Step 1			
Age	-0.015	0.006	-.264*
Gender	-0.040	0.071	-.055
Student or Not	-0.010	0.076	-.013
Step 2			
Age	-0.017	0.006	-.288**
Gender	-0.021	0.069	-.029
Student or Not	-0.029	0.075	-.038
Partner Involvement	-0.03	0.013	-.226*

Note. R^2 = .07 for Step 1; ΔR^2 = .05 for Step 2 (*p*s < .05).
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 3

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

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Partner Involvement	—	-.01	-.11	-.22*	-.14	-.18	-.15	-.10	-.08	-.06	-.13
Readiness											
2. Lack of motivation			.23*	-.22*	.36**	.41**	.15	.24*	.27**	.26**	.04
3. General indecisiveness			—	.23*	.34**	.38**	.21*	.28**	.38**	.25**	.17
4. Dysfunctional beliefs				—	.26*	.11	.12	.12	.10	.15	.26**
Lack of information											
5. Stages of CDM process					—	.70**	.55**	.61**	.65**	.47**	.36**
6. Self						—	.64**	.72**	.67**	.62**	.36**
7. Occupations							—	.79**	.52**	.55**	.32**
8. Obtaining information								—	.62**	.53**	.28**
Inconsistent information											
9. Unreliable information									—	.71**	.45**
10. Internal conflicts										—	.50**
11. External conflicts											—

Note. CDM = Career decision-making.
p < .05. **p* < .01

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