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Canadian Journal of Career Development/Revue canadienne de développement de carrière

Robert Shea, Editor/Rédacteur en chef

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Editorial

This issue marks a number of new beginnings.

First, the Canadian Journal of Career Development has partnered with the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling. This partnership will allow the journal to be at the forefront of research on career and counselling issues in Canada. The ability to disseminate innovative research from around the world will continue to be available free of charge through an open access agreement with ContactPoint and CERIC. With this partnership we will also enjoy an opportunity to disseminate research and best practices through regional and national learning events in the coming months.

We began a few short years ago with a goal to provide current and timely research to practitioners and support researchers around the world in an effort to disseminate their research. Our spirits are buoyed by their continued support of the Journal. The ability to continue to provide free access to our publication and provide it in hard copy and online allows us to reach thousands of practitioners and researchers around the world, many of whom would not be able to access the research otherwise.

Secondly, I am pleased to announce that we have surpassed the 2,000 mark for individual subscribers. This is a significant milestone for a journal that is still relatively new on the world stage. We are further pleased with the significant interest that the international career community has shown in the Journal.

Third, we continue to garner international respect and support. In the past month alone we have had a reprint of a previous article on *Career Portfolios* by John Stewart (Volume 1, No. 1) published by the Professional Association in India; we have entertained a request from a publisher in England to complete a book review of a new resource book on *Career Training and Personal Planning for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders* (Lundine and Smith, 2006). This will appear in a future volume of the Journal. In this current issue we have articles from France and Australia. All in all, it has been a wonderful experience to watch the Canadian Journal of Career Development gain prominence on the world stage.

We genuinely hope that with your support as our loyal readers and with the continued support from Canadian and International researchers we will provide a scintillating journal that disseminates leading edge research for practitioners and researchers around the world.

On behalf of the editorial team I thank you for your continued belief in the Journal and hope that in some small way the Journal has enhanced your practice and inspired you to continue the wonderful work you do.

Rob

Robert Shea
Founding Editor

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

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Abstract

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

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

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

To add more understanding of career decision making among young

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

Contextual Influences for South Asian Children of Immigrants

Intergenerational Conflict in Families

A common metaphor used to describe intergenerational conflict experienced by children of immigrants is "walking between two different worlds" (Goodnow, Miller, & Kessel, 1995; Ghuman, 1997; O'Connell, 2000; Patal, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996; Phelon, Davidson, & Yu, 1991). The metaphor presupposes a straightforward clash between two different value systems, resulting in an unbridgeable gap between generations that causes youth to be in a forced-choice dilemma (Kim-Goh, 1995). Often, when researchers

mentioned the challenges of second-generation children of immigrants, as in Saran's (1985) work on the South Asian experience, they described children of immigrants experience with their parents as leading to depressive and suicidal states. The tensions that children of immigrants experience when navigating between two different cultures and value systems were discussed as a problem of incomplete assimilation (Das Gupta, 1997; Kar, Campbell, Jimenez, & Gupta, 1996). Implicit in the idea of culture conflict is that the children of immigrants see their lives as problematic (Ballard, 1979). Further studies are required to discover how Indo-Canadian young women experience culture conflict in making various decisions regarding how to live their lives.

Parental Influence on Educational Decision Making

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

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

Development of a Sense of Self-Efficacy during Young Adulthood

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

Bandura suggests that efficacious people can handle a variety of tasks and can predict a number of outcomes, such as academic achievements, social competence, and career choice (Bandura, 1997; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

Bandura identified three ways in which self-efficacy effects psychological functioning. First, activities in which people choose to engage are those that they believe they can master. Second, self-efficacy determines the amount of motivation to achieve goals in the face of obstacles or difficulties. Third, one's level of self-efficacy determines if a person's thinking process is self-aiding

or self-hindering. In sum, Bandura posited that a strong sense of self-efficacy determines the amount of control people exercise in their lives to help them translate self-belief into accomplishment and motivation.

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

Lent's Social Cognitive Career Theory

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

Methodology

The research study was based on a qualitative descriptive case study (Yin, 2003) to examine what contextual factors contribute to the career decision-making process among Indo-Canadian young women entering the applied social sciences at the post-secondary level. A descriptive case study approach requires the researcher to begin with a

theory in the literature (Yin, 2003). From the Social Cognitive Career theory (SCCT), a selected set of propositions exploring contextual factors were examined. The descriptive theoretic patterns of the study can then be compared to the propositions embedded within the SCCT theoretical framework. The purpose of this methodology is to see if the patterns that emerge within the data set fit the SCCT theoretical propositions under consideration, and to explore the usefulness of the theory to understand an ethnic minority group (Yin, 2003).

Central Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

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

Participants

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

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

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

Interview procedure

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

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

Interview data analysis

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

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

Validity and Reliability Procedures

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

Results

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All the young women perceived that certain values embedded within Canadian dominant society would be values found within the applied social sciences. Since they lived in a multicul-

tural society, the young women believed that the values of “multiculturalism and respect for diversity” would be reflected in the helping professions. They also believed that dominant society valued “equality of women” which would also be supported in the work environment that they were pursuing. The young women drew from the value of respect for diversity and equality for women held by dominant society and wanted to enact the values within their chosen profession.

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

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

The young women also acknowledged that support in the family was shown through “actions” and not through verbal demonstrations of affection, which they also enacted in their relations with others. The participants learned the values of helping people by

observing how their parents helped people within the ethnic community. They also had a strong sense of “obligation” that they felt towards their family in fulfilling certain responsibilities, such as aiding younger siblings. They also felt a strong sense of “responsibility” to help people who were disadvantaged in society through volunteer work in the temple or in various agencies within the dominant community.

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

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

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

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

Discussion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Evaluation of an Online Psychoeducational Career Workshop

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Abstract

A description is provided of the development, delivery and evaluation of an online career development workshop for post secondary students at two colleges and a university in Canada. The workshop was evaluated using pre-post tests of knowledge, student self-reports of skill and knowledge acquisition, focus groups, and a comparison between students' knowledge outcomes for students participating in the workshop online and in person. The results indicated that career development workshops and perhaps other similar forms of student services could effectively be offered online.

Student support services for post secondary students are commonplace for on-campus students and are increasing in relevance for students who study at a distance (LaPadula, 2003). These services facilitate student admission, registration, retention and other factors contributing to successful student experiences and outcomes. A specific type of student service is that of career counselling and advising, focusing on assisting students with career related decisions, such as choosing courses and acquiring work. This service helps students to make the successful transition from the role of student to worker at the time of graduation. Career counselling and advising can be offered to individual students or to a group in the form of a psychoeducational workshop. Psychoeducational groups are task oriented, facilitate the development of human potential, and use self-assessment and reflection methods to increase self awareness (Authier, 1977).

One such career workshop was successfully offered at the University of Calgary during in-person sessions to groups of 50 students who were preparing to apply for work experience posi-

tions (Crozier & Lalande, 1995). Work experience programs, such as cooperative education, internship programs, and practicum placements allow students to alternate work placements and academic terms, thereby increasing their employability. Students also acquire self-knowledge and knowledge of the world of work, and these insights facilitate life long career decisions. The career workshop for these students was designed to enhance their ability to acquire work experience positions, as the application process for these positions is highly competitive. Informal evaluations of these workshops indicated the participants increased their skills and knowledge in the areas of resume writing, interview strategies and job search techniques.

Due to the increasing numbers of students registering for this service and limitations in resources for staffing and space, the option of delivering this career workshop in an online environment was pursued. Other post secondary institutions in the region that offered similar services were approached to discuss the possibility of collaborating in a project to redevelop this workshop for delivery in an online environment. A group consisting of four post secondary institutions was successful in acquiring funding from Alberta Advanced Education to develop a new Internet based program, "Ex-Scape: Experience student and placement education" (Ex-Scape).

This article provides an overview of the Ex-Scape program along with a description of how the original in-person workshop was redeveloped to meet the needs of the collaborating institutions and also be delivered online. Research conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the new program will be described along with a summary of

the results of this research. Implications of these results for the future development of online career development services will be considered.

Development and Delivery of Ex-Scape

The collaborating parties met regularly over a two-year period to revise the content of the original workshop and to reformat it for delivery over the Internet. The content was revised to include specific examples that are relevant to students at each post-secondary institution. It was also updated to include the latest information. The learning objectives of Ex-Scape are to (a) acquire the knowledge of effective job search strategies including resume writing, portfolio development, interview strategies, career research, and labor market information; (b) improve knowledge of personal skills, values, interests and accomplishments related to conducting an effective job search; (c) acquire experiential work positions; and (d) improve the decisions students make about educational programs.

In addition to the redevelopment of content, the web site was designed to provide a high quality, learner-centered environment. The in-person workshop provided students with opportunities for personal development through discussions, self-assessments, reflection and easy access to information from the instructor. Ex-Scape included a number of features to maintain this development and further learning. To engage the students, a number of short animations were developed to introduce content sections. Over 200 audio clips of students and employers who offered tips were included throughout the content as a supplement to the text based information. A series of nine short videos of actors in interview situations were included to demonstrate effective

interview strategies. The site is highly interactive, allowing students to complete self assessment quizzes online and prepare sections of their personal resume as they worked through the instructions. Students can also talk to other students and the instructor via the discussion forum or real time chat room, in which employers are occasionally invited to answer questions. Instant access is provided to the many high quality career information resources that are currently available online. In addition to the online program, students participated in two in-person sessions (a) a one-hour orientation session; and (b) a three-hour session where they extend their learning, critique each other's resumes and participate in mock interviews. The program was also designed to be offered as a credit course and includes features for the online administration of competency based assessments and the marking of these assessments by the instructor.

Evaluation of Ex-Scape

Evaluation of career development programs has been identified as a critical component of program design and delivery (Flynn, 1994; Hutchinson, 1994). Collins and Burge (1995) encourage the use of summative evaluations to provide student feedback on the effectiveness of computer-mediated learning. Delivering a program online requires the evaluation to determine whether there are problems with the technology or other factors (Powers, 1997). Reviews and evaluations have been conducted on educational courses that have successfully gone online, however there is a scarcity of information regarding the effectiveness of career workshops that are offered via the Internet (Levin, 1997; Monk, 1996). There was a need to assess the knowledge and skill outcomes of students who participated in this new program. There was also a need to compare the outcome success of students in the new course to those students who learned through the traditional in-person method, to determine the effectiveness of computer-mediated learning. Consequently, the developers conducted an extensive evaluation of Ex-Scape after it had been implemented with the students at three of the post-secondary institutions.

The evaluation was conducted to answer the following questions related to the effectiveness of the Ex-Scape online workshop:

1. Did the students who completed the web-based workshop improve their understanding of how to write a resume, cover letter, and participate in an interview?
2. Did the students who completed the web-based workshop acquire the skills to write a resume, cover letter, and participate in a job interview?
3. Did the students who completed the web-based workshop do as well or better in the careers knowledge and skills outcomes of the course as the students who completed the program offered in the original in-class career workshop?
4. What are the students' experiences regarding participating in an online career workshop?

Method

To assess the effectiveness of the new program, the researchers conducted (a) summative evaluations by measuring career knowledge and skill outcomes through a pre- and posttest design (Kidder & Judd, 1986); (b) an analysis of the students' evaluations of the program; (c) focus groups to determine participants' reaction to the program; and (d) skill and knowledge outcomes for 34 students who completed the program online, as compared to 8 students who completed the program in person.

Participants

Students at three post-secondary institutions in the southern Alberta region of Canada who participated in the ExScape program were invited to participate in the evaluation research. A total of 360 students participated in the evaluation, with 42 students completing pre- and posttest assessments, 291 students completing course evaluations, and 27 students participating in focus groups. The students enrolled in the online course who completed pre- and posttest assessments included 16 out of 25 first- and second-year diploma students from Mount Royal College (MRC) and 18 out of 18 first- and second-year diploma programs from

Medicine Hat College (MHC). The majority of these students were female and the average age was 19. The students enrolled in the last in-class course who completed pre- and posttest assessments included 8 out of 50 third-year students at the University of Calgary (U of C). The majority of these students were male and the average age was 22. All students completed the online or in-class course prior to applying for cooperative education or experiential work placements.

Program evaluations for ExScape were administered and completed by 291 out of 600 second- and third-year students from the U of C and MRC. The participants majored in the areas of engineering, general studies, science, social science, and business administration. The majority of students were male and the average age was 22.

Focus groups were conducted at the U of C, MHC and MRC with a total of 27 students who completed the ExScape program. The students from the U of C were third-year students in cooperative and internship programs in the areas of engineering, science, and general studies. The students from MHC and MRC were first- and second-year diploma students from the areas of health studies and business administration.

Instrumentation

Assessment tools were developed to measure knowledge in the areas of résumé writing, cover letter writing, and interview techniques. The assessments were in the format of a short quiz with a variety of question types including short answer, multiple choice and true/false questions. The résumé quiz included 20 questions, the cover letter quiz included seven questions, and the interview quiz included 21 questions. These quizzes were offered before and after completion of the program in print form to the in-class students, and in print form or online to the online students. Sample questions are provided in Table 1.

Course evaluations were utilized to survey the students' perception of their skill outcomes and to gather information concerning their impressions of the online workshop. Students completed this survey upon completion of the

workshop. The 62-question survey gathered information concerning program objectives, content, instruction, technology, and assignments using a 5-point Likert-type scale. The survey also included six open-ended questions that surveyed (a) students' expectations, (b) features that should be removed or added, (c) their overall rating of the course, (d) whether or not the student would take another online course, and (e) general suggestions or comments.

were conducted with focus groups ranging from two to eight students in each group. The length of the interviews was approximately 1.5 hours. Students in each group were guided by the following questions:

1. Please comment on your experience of registering for the program and whether the program scheduling met your needs.
2. What did you learn from the program you just completed?

have for improving this program.

9. Do you have any additional comments?

Additional questions for students who completed the on-line program:

- Please comment on the benefits you experienced of completing this program online.
- Please comment on the difficulties you experienced due to the program being offered online.

Procedure

Students who participated in the last in person session of the workshop at the U of C were asked to volunteer to participate in the research. After this workshop was completed, ExScape was offered online by different workshop facilitators for students at the U of C, MHC, and MRC. The research was conducted over an 18-month period between 1999-2001. During that time the substantive content of the program did not change, however, changes were made based on the informal feedback of the students regarding how the program was offered, for example the time students were given to complete the workshop on-line varied. All students were required to participate in the workshop prior to applying for the work experiences, however some students completed the program as a credit course, while others completed the program as a non-credit pre-requisite.

Results

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by addressing each of the research questions separately.

Analysis of pre-and post assessments to determine outcome.

Data from the pre- and posttest assessments and from the course evaluations were analyzed to determine whether students who completed the web-based workshop improved their understanding of how to write a résumé, cover letter, and how to do a job interview.

Résumé knowledge. A paired sample *t*-test was used to compare each of the student's pre- and posttest assessment of their résumé knowledge. Thirty out of 34 students completed both the pre- and posttests. Table 2 illustrates that students significantly ($p < .05$)

Table 1

Sample Questions – Resume, Cover Letter, Interview Knowledge Assessments and Course Evaluation

Resume

Name three courses you have taken that could be highlighted on the Education section of your résumé. What were the criteria you used for choosing these three courses?

The disadvantage of having a Career Objective is _____

Cover Letter

It is acceptable with most employers to take initiative and indicate that you will contact the employer in the future.

True or False

Cover letters have _____ (give a number) main sections, which include (list the sections).

Interview

In preparation for an interview you should review _____ and _____

Name three strategies that you can use during the Opening of an Interview.

Course Evaluation

Please indicate if you had any expectations, other than those listed, for this program that were or were not met by this program.

New features I would like to see incorporated into the course include:

Sample questions from this survey are provided in Table 1.

The students in the focus groups were given an opportunity to express their views regarding their learning experiences after they completed the workshop. A semi-structured interview was used employing a list of 9-11 open-ended questions that the participants were invited to respond to. Each interview was recorded with a tape recorder and later transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. A total of six interviews

3. What was good about how the instruction was delivered?
4. What was bad about how the instruction was delivered?
5. Was the instructor/facilitator helpful?
6. Did you find the information given by students and employers helpful?
7. Were you able to develop tools and strategies that will help you to find or participate in your work/practicum placement?
8. Please give any suggestions you

improved their understanding of how to write a résumé in nine of the 19 questions. Their scores were higher in the posttest than in the pretest for 8 other questions, but not significantly higher. A few of the larger differences may be due to general knowledge of résumés. For example, question two asked for three main purposes of a résumé from an employer's perspective (which may not be general knowledge). The results of the posttest showed a significant improvement of correct answers, whereas, question one, which showed

assessments, two questions from course evaluations addressed students' understanding of how to write a résumé. In the first question, 95% of students agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, "I have learned how to develop the sections of a résumé." In the second question, 88% of students agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, "I know how to profile my skills in a résumé." The close-ended survey data supported the quantitative data that students improved their understanding of how to create a résumé.

out of 32 students who completed both the pre- and posttests, are in given in Table 3. Table 3 indicates that students improved their understanding of how to write a cover letter by showing that of the 7 questions, all show improvement with three of these differences being statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

In addition to the pre- and posttest results, one question from course evaluations addressed students' understanding of how to write a cover letter. The response rate showed that 88% of students agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, "I know how to write a cover letter." The close-ended survey data supported the quantitative data that students improved their understanding of how to create a cover letter.

Interview knowledge. A paired sample *t*-test was used to compare each student's pre- and posttest assessment of the interview. Out of 21 questions, there was improvement in scores for 20 questions in the posttest, with 18 of these differences being significant at the 0.05 level (see Table 4).

In addition to the pre- and posttest results, four questions from course evaluations addressed students' understanding of how to perform in an interview. In the first question, 83% of students agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, "I know how to profile my skills during an interview." In the second question, 86% of students agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, "I have increased my understanding of how to effectively handle the stages of an interview." In the third question, 86% of students agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, "I understand how my values are important in an interview." In the fourth question, 72% of students agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, "I can draw from my past experiences to answer Behaviour Description Questions." The close-ended survey data supported the quantitative data that students improved their understanding of how to perform in an interview.

Analysis of data to determine skills outcomes.

A response frequency analysis of the responses to the course evaluations was conducted to determine whether students who completed ExEscape perceived that they acquired the skills to

Table 2

Paired Samples t-test, Résumé Knowledge Assessment – Online Groups (N=30)

	Maximum Score	Pretest (Mean)	Posttest (Mean)	Post-Pre (Mean)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q2	3	1.33	2.50	1.17	2.43	29	.02*
Q7	1	.43	.80	.37	3.27	29	.00*
Q8	1	.27	.53	.27	2.50	29	.02*
Q10	1	.17	.40	.23	2.25	29	.03*
Q12	4	1.53	2.20	.67	2.09	29	.05*
Q13	6	1.80	3.03	1.23	4.03	29	.00*
Q17	1	.27	.63	.37	3.27	29	.00*
Q18	3	1.23	2.10	.87	3.43	29	.00*
Q19	3	1.07	2.33	1.27	5.00	29	.00*

NOTE: All non-significant paired sample *t*-test analyses were omitted.
**p* < .05

little statistical improvement, asked how many pages a résumé should be and found that most students answered correctly on both the pre-and posttests.
In addition to the pre- and posttest

Cover Letter knowledge. A paired sample *t*-test was used to compare each student's pre- and posttest assessment of cover letters. The results of this analysis, based on the responses of 29

Table 3

Paired Samples t-test, Cover Letter Assessment – Online Groups (N = 29)

	Maximum Score	Pretest (Mean)	Posttest (Mean)	Post-Pre (Mean)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q1	1	.97	.93	-.03	-.57	28	.57
Q2	1	.97	.86	-.10	-1.80	28	.08
Q3	1	.86	.93	.07	.81	28	.42
Q4	3	1.62	2.96	1.35	4.12	28	.00*
Q5	6	3.27	4.49	1.21	3.57	28	.00*
Q6	1	.76	.90	.14	1.28	28	.21
Q7	1	.38	.79	.41	3.55	28	.00*

NOTE: All non-significant paired sample *t*-test analyses were omitted.
**p* ≤ .05

Table 4

Paired Samples t-test, Interview Knowledge Assessment – Online Groups (N = 32)

	Maximum Score	Pretest (Mean)	Posttest	Post-Pre (Mean)	t (Mean)	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q1	3	1.44	2.41	-.97	3.52	31	.00*
Q2	5	3.97	4.63	-.66	2.45	31	.02*
Q3	3	1.09	2.56	-1.47	5.97	31	.00*
Q4	2	.47	1.06	-.59	4.72	31	.00*
Q5	1	.34	.31	.03	-.30	31	.77
Q6	1	.81	.97	-.16	1.97	31	.06
Q7	1	.69	.91	-.22	2.52	31	.02*
Q8	3	2.10	2.74	-.65	3.07	30	.01*
Q9	3	.52	2.45	-1.94	8.91	30	.00*
Q10	5	1.87	3.42	-1.55	2.95	30	.01*
Q11	2	.55	1.68	-1.13	5.62	30	.00*
Q12	4	2.19	3.94	-1.74	5.37	30	.00*
Q13	2	.19	1.32	-1.13	7.11	30	.00*
Q14	1	.16	.45	-.29	3.06	30	.01*
Q15	1	.47	.94	-.47	4.68	30	.00*
Q16	4	.47	3.13	-2.66	7.73	31	.00*
Q17	9	7.28	8.56	-1.28	3.91	31	.00*
Q18	1	.50	.88	-.38	4.31	31	.00*
Q19	1	.94	1.00	-.06	1.44	31	.16
Q20	1	.72	.97	-.31	2.78	31	.02*
Q21	3	1.16	2.81	-1.21	7.76	31	.00*

*p < .05

write a résumé, cover letter, and participate in a job interview.

A total of 291 students from the U of C and MRC taking the online program responded to a survey question asking if they acquired skills to develop a résumé; 98% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they did draft a résumé. From the same group of students, 91% agreed or strongly agreed that they did draft a cover letter. A total of 86% of the same group of students agreed that they have acquired the skills to participate in a job interview.

Analysis of students' reported online learning experiences.

Qualitative analyses were conducted on the responses to short-answer questions in the course evaluation and the focus group data. Out of the 291 students who completed the evaluation survey, 66 students responded to the short answer questions. Each student's response to every short answer question was transcribed and the data was examined to reveal possible categories. Themes quickly emerged for the responses to the short answer questions.

The following themes emerged from students' impressions of what they felt were the most important issues surrounding the web-based course. The frequency of responses categorized in each theme is reported in brackets.

1. Expectations for the course were met (30).
2. Require more time to complete website (20).
3. Would like more interaction with peers, instructors (8).
4. Wanted accurate time line for completion of the course (6).
5. Require more information on specific job search topics (2).

The second theme was identified by students who were given a one-week timeline to complete the workshop. The timeline was adjusted after this group was evaluated.

Out of the 291 students who completed the survey, 194 students indicated that they would take another online course, with 82 students responding to the following question: "In the future, I would take another online course because:"

1. Online course is flexible (42).
2. Can work at own pace (23).
3. Online course was very beneficial (7).
4. Able to go back and review material (5).
5. Easy course; user-friendly (3).
6. More time to complete (2).

Out of the 291 students who completed the survey, 78 students indicated they would not take another online course, with 45 students responding to the following question: "In the future, I would not take another online course because."

1. Prefer interaction with instructor and peers (14).
2. Took too long to complete (13).
3. Lack of interest; already covered information (6).
4. Poor, slow connections (5).
5. Not enough feedback (3).
6. Hard to look at a computer screen for long (2).
7. Motivation was a problem (2).

The majority of students indicated that they would take another online course. Students who said they would not take another online course gave a number of reasons including learning style preference, frustration with technology, and concern that it took more time to complete the workshop online than in-person.

The focus groups were taped and the tapes were professionally transcribed. The transcribed data was combined and divided into statements, then colour coded by meaning, grouped into clusters of meanings and finally transformed into four themes. Students' comments were recorded under each theme. The following themes emerged from the 27 students' impressions of their learning experiences (a) students liked the flexibility of working online, (b) students were able to use the strategies learned online, (c) Ex-Scape offered variety, and (d) special features of the program were helpful.

Comparison of data for in-class and on-line participants.

Data was collected to compare the outcomes of the group of students who completed the workshop in-person with the outcomes of the group of students who completed the workshop online. However, due to the lack of volunteers from the in-class student group the sample size was too small to allow for a

meaningful analysis. A simple comparison of the paired samples *t*-test analysis for both groups indicates that the online group had a similar amount of improvement in their knowledge and skills, as did the in-class group of students. See Tables 5, 6, and 7 for a comparison of

the statistical results of the online and in-class groups in the areas of résumé, cover letter, and interview knowledge outcomes.

The analysis of the focus groups for students who participated in the online and in-class sessions revealed

that both groups (a) thought the information obtained from the workshop was valuable, (b) indicated that they gained confidence for the interview, (c) believed they had prepared a more effective resume upon completion of the workshop, and (d) expressed a desire for more feedback from their instructors. Although the in-class focus group was a small sample size of five students, this data indicates the in-class students had similar experienced outcomes and the desire for increased instructor feedback, as did the students in the online focus groups.

Table 5

Paired Samples t-test, Cover Letter Knowledge Assessment – Online and In-class Groups

	Online groups n=29			In-class group n=8		
	t	df	Sig.	t	df	Sig
Q4	4.12	28	.00*	6.61	7	.00*
Q5	3.57	28	.00*	3.00	7	.02*
Q7	3.55	28	.00*	2.05	7	.08

NOTE: All non-significant paired sample *t*-test analyses in both online and in-class groups were omitted.

**p* < .05

Table 6

Paired Samples t-test, Résumé Knowledge Assessment – Online and In-class Groups

	Online groups n=30			In-class group n=8		
	t	df	Sig.	t	df	Sig
Q8	2.50	29	.02*	3.00	7	.02*
Q19	5.00	29	.00*	2.65	7	.03*

NOTE: All non-significant paired sample *t*-test analyses in both online and in-class groups were omitted.

**p* < .05

Table 7

Paired Samples t-test, Interview Knowledge Assessment – Online and In-class Groups

	Online groups n=32			In-class group n=8		
	t	df	Sig.	t	df	Sig
Q1	3.52	31	.00*	3.04	7	.02*
Q2	2.45	31	.02*	2.38	7	.05*
Q9	8.91	31	.00*	2.39	7	.05*
Q10	2.95	31	.01*	2.91	7	.02*
Q11	5.62	31	.00*	3.42	7	.01*
Q12	5.37	31	.00*	3.32	7	.01*
Q13	7.11	31	.00*	3.86	7	.01*
Q16	7.73	31	.00*	2.38	7	.05*
Q18	4.31	31	.00*	4.58	7	.00*
Q21	7.76	31	.00*	4.58	7	.00*

NOTE: All non-significant paired sample *t*-test analyses in both online and in-class groups were omitted.

**p* < .05

Discussion

The results of this research suggest that the students who participated in ExScape demonstrated a significant improvement in their knowledge in the areas of resume, cover letter and interview. The students also reported that they had acquired the skills to draft a resume, cover letter and perform in an interview. These findings support the use of online delivery as an effective method of delivery for career development workshops.

There is also evidence to suggest that online delivery methods in general can be as effective as in person delivery methods, because there was not a significant difference between the online group and the in-class group in each volunteers' individual pre- and posttest scores. There was also no significant difference when comparing the online group on the in-person group's overall test scores. The effectiveness of the online delivery method, however, is likely determined by the nature of the online web site and instructional design. ExScape utilized a variety of functions to increase student motivation and interaction (animations, interactive forms, samples, video-clips, and audio-clips). In-person instruction was also utilized to supplement the online learning component for skill practice and discussion.

The findings from the students' self reports regarding their positive experiences with online learning in the workshop are consistent with the statistical analysis results. Students indicated that overall they were able to learn from the course and found the flexibility in online learning to be beneficial. The focus

group results further supported these findings.

However, this research had some limitations that suggest caution must be taken in the confidence one has in these results. The study did not look at potential differences in student retention, motivation, learning styles, class conferencing issues, or instructional time spent online or off line. There were difficulties in obtaining complete data from student volunteers. This resulted in collecting a small sample of pre-and posttests from the last in-class group, and relying on the use of self-reports from students through course evaluations to indicate whether or not students were able to write a résumé and cover letter, and perform acceptably in an interview. Larger samples are required to improve the validity of the results and a control group would also be advisable. It is also difficult to determine whether the effectiveness of online delivery is related to the design and delivery utilized in the ExScape program. Further research is recommended to assess the effect of various web site designs and instructional components on learning outcomes.

The study suggests that career development workshops and perhaps other similar forms of student services can be effectively offered online. With the growing number of students in post-secondary institutions and resource shortages in student services, online delivery of similar career workshops may provide a means to provide services to larger numbers of students. This may also be an effective option for educational institutions that offer degrees online, as the demand for student services increases amongst their student populations.

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Implication extra-académique et transition éducation-travail: Quelques observations à partir d'une enquête en France

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Résumé

L'implication des étudiants dans des activités non académiques, par exemple culturelles ou sportives pratiquées en famille ou au sein d'associations, exerce-t-elle une influence sur leur insertion professionnelle ? L'objectif de cet article est de présenter quelques éléments de réponse à partir d'une enquête auprès d'une centaine de diplômés de trois universités françaises. L'article expose d'abord un cadre d'interprétation théorique de l'activité extra-académique, emprunté à l'économie du travail, et centré sur l'importance que revêt, dans la décision de recrutement, le risque de concurrence entre les activités non marchandes du candidat et sa future implication professionnelle. La méthode d'analyse statistique, consistant pour l'essentiel en régressions linéaires et logistiques, est ensuite présentée. Enfin, les résultats montrent que l'implication extra-académique favorise l'insertion professionnelle, mais seulement dans certains cas. Une implication effective, mais d'ampleur limitée, dans des activités sociales organisées par des institutions extérieures à l'espace domestique ou amical, peut favoriser un accès rapide à des emplois de qualité. Mais une très forte implication dans des responsabilités associatives, ou le fait de mettre en avant un fort investissement dans des activités familiales, peuvent être perçus comme une menace pour l'implication professionnelle, et un facteur de risque de démission ultérieure, et peuvent avoir par conséquent un effet négatif sur l'issue du processus d'insertion.

Mots clés : curriculum vitae – insertion professionnelle des diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur

Introduction

Les activités extra-académiques des étudiants favorisent-elles ou au contraire desservent-elles leur insertion professionnelle ? L'activité extra-académique est celle qui se déroule en marge des études proprement dites. Elle peut être de nature marchande (par exemple les jobs d'étudiants) ou non marchande (par exemple le bénévolat en associations). Elle se distingue des activités académiques définies comme strictement intégrées au cursus de formation (participation aux enseignements, mais aussi stages en entreprise et études validées à l'étranger). Les influences qu'exercent la formation ainsi que l'emploi en cours d'études sur l'insertion professionnelle ont été souvent analysées (par exemple par Brunello et Comi (2004), Comte (2004), Giret (2001), Plassard et Ben Sédrine (1998), en ce qui concerne le premier point ; et par Béduwé et Cahuzac (1997), Chaplin et Hannaway (1996), Ehrenberg et Sherman (1987), ou encore Light (2001), en ce qui concerne le second. Il n'en va pas de même en ce qui concerne le rôle des activités extra-académiques non marchandes. C'est à ces dernières que l'on s'intéresse dans cette étude.

Une manière d'approcher l'influence des activités extra-académiques non marchandes sur l'accès à l'emploi consiste à partir des logiques de recrutement des employeurs. Plusieurs travaux sur cette question montrent que les logiques de recrutement accordent une place centrale au risque de démission ultérieure (par exemple Viscusi, 1980 ; Blau et Kahn, 1981 ; Ragan et Smith, 1982 ; Renes et Ridder, 1995 ; Garcia-Minguez et Sanchez-Losada, 2003). Dans ces approches, les modulations de salaires et de conditions de travail pratiquées à l'embauche par les

employeurs en fonction du salarié s'expliquent essentiellement par le fait que les salariés ont des comportements différents en matière de démission et de sortie de marché du travail, et qu'ils font par conséquent encourir à l'employeur des risques plus ou moins élevés. Sattinger (1998) explique essentiellement le comportement de démission lui-même par la plus ou moins forte implication du salarié dans des activités non marchandes. L'implication du salarié dans des activités sociales, par exemple dans sa vie familiale ou dans des activités associatives, devient ainsi un déterminant décisif du recrutement, du salaire et des conditions contractuelles de travail. Les preuves empiriques montrant que les employeurs accordent une importance significative à l'implication non marchande restent à apporter. Mais la question est importante et d'intérêt général puisqu'elle met en cause l'utilité qu'il peut y avoir, pour les étudiants, à faire état de leurs activités extra-académiques dans leurs *curriculum vitae* au moment de la recherche d'emploi.

L'objectif de cette communication est de proposer quelques éléments de réponse empiriques. Le premier point présente le cadre théorique auquel se réfère l'étude, le deuxième la méthodologie utilisée, et le troisième les résultats obtenus.

1. Le cadre théorique de référence

Pour Sattinger (1998), l'employeur qui recrute est essentiellement sensible aux coûts de rotation, induits par la recherche et la formation d'un remplaçant en cas de démission du titulaire d'un poste. Le risque qu'un agent recruté abandonne ultérieurement son emploi fait donc l'objet d'une attention particulière. Pour réduire ce risque,

l'employeur classe systématiquement les candidats à l'embauche en deux groupes. Dans chaque groupe figurent des candidats à fort et à faible risque de démission. Le premier groupe comprend surtout des candidats qui présentent *a priori* un faible risque de démission et, en ce sens, minimise le risque de démission. La proportion d'agents à haut risque y est faible. Dans le second groupe, au contraire, sont rassemblés surtout les agents qui présentent un risque de démission élevé. Ces agents à risque élevé sont ceux qui, par ailleurs, sont impliqués dans des activités non-marchandes, et plus généralement tous les agents dont les caractéristiques biographiques peuvent laisser présumer un risque élevé de démission. Vis-à-vis du groupe à risque élevé, l'employeur a le choix entre discrimination à l'embauche et discrimination salariale. La seconde possibilité est cependant la moins probable si la réglementation proscribit toute discrimination salariale à fonctions identiques. Le groupe à risque élevé aura donc vraisemblablement à faire face à une discrimination à l'embauche : les conditions de travail qui lui seront proposées seront moins avantageuses, et ses membres auront une plus grande difficulté à obtenir des entretiens d'embauche.

La participation du candidat à des activités non marchandes joue donc dans cette perspective un rôle central pour expliquer les différences d'accès à l'emploi entre candidats par ailleurs identiquement qualifiés et productifs. L'implication dans des activités non marchandes peut être interprétée comme un facteur de risque de démission ultérieure. Cependant le jeu de ce facteur est loin d'être *a priori* clair. Sattinger considère que chaque employeur interprète à sa manière le risque de démission lié à l'implication non marchande. L'implication non marchande peut donc faire l'objet d'appréciations contradictoires par les employeurs : elle peut être interprétée comme un engagement concurrent à l'implication professionnelle et associée à un risque élevé de démission, fermant ou freinant par conséquent l'accès à l'emploi. Mais elle peut tout aussi bien être interprétée, par exemple lorsqu'elle prend la forme de l'implication familiale, comme un indice de stabilité, et

favoriser ainsi l'embauche. Dans leur étude, Bédoué et Cahuzac (1997) par exemple observent que « ce sont également les étudiants mariés qui se retrouvent le plus fréquemment sur la trajectoire de référence, comme si la stabilité affective entraînait la stabilité d'emploi ou vice-versa ... » (p. 103). Ce sont les différents effets des formes variées d'implication non marchande qu'on cherche à estimer dans cette étude.

2. Méthode

L'étude repose sur des données collectées par enquête en janvier 2004 auprès de personnes ayant obtenu en 2000 un diplôme de niveau Master dans l'une ou l'autre des trois universités de Strasbourg (France).

Sur 450 diplômés interrogés, 120 réponses exploitables ont été obtenues, dont 98 émanant de diplômés qui étaient effectivement en situation de première insertion professionnelle (emploi, recherche d'emploi ou préparation de concours) pendant la période comprise entre l'obtention du diplôme et l'enquête. Ce sont ces 98 personnes en situation de première insertion professionnelle pendant les 40 mois de la période septembre 2000 – janvier 2004 qui constituent la population de l'étude. En sont donc exclus les diplômés qui avaient déjà une expérience professionnelle bien établie lors de l'obtention du diplôme (étudiants en reprise d'études ou étudiants salariés) ainsi que les diplômés restés en inactivité (notamment en poursuite d'études) après l'obtention du diplôme. La note technique ci-dessous présente plus en détail la population étudiée.

L'influence des variables d'implication extra-académique sur les variables d'insertion professionnelle est estimée par régression linéaire classique suivant la méthode des moindres carrés ordinaires. On distingue six catégories de variables indépendantes : quatre qualitatives (situation matrimoniale, responsabilités associatives, domaine d'implication extra-académique et cadre d'exercice de l'activité extra-académique) et deux quantitatives (temps consacré aux activités extra-académiques et nombre d'enfants). On distingue par ailleurs six catégories de variables dépendantes : salaire, catégorie socioprofessionnelle,

durée des contrats de travail, durée d'accès au premier emploi, temps total passé en emploi et temps total passé au chômage pendant la période d'insertion. On estime en outre par régression logistique dichotomique l'influence de l'implication extra-académique sur la probabilité d'obtenir un contrat à durée indéterminée (CDI) dès le premier emploi, et sur les probabilités d'obtenir un CDI et de connaître le chômage pendant la période d'insertion. La note technique ci-dessous précise le traitement statistique effectué.

Note technique

Description de la population de l'étude

La population de l'étude, composée à 53 % de femmes, avait en moyenne 26 ans lors de l'obtention du diplôme. Trois grands domaines disciplinaires y sont représentés : Sciences (Physique des matériaux, Sciences de l'environnement), Lettres et sciences humaines (Communication, Études germaniques, Géographie, Psychologie), Sciences sociales (Droit Finance, Gestion, Sciences politiques, Sociologie). Au cours de leurs études supérieures, deux tiers des diplômés se sont impliqués dans des activités extra-académiques de nature sportive, culturelle ou sociale, et 30 % ont été membres d'associations. La durée de l'implication est variable, six mois au plus pour les moins impliqués jusqu'à plusieurs heures par semaine pendant toute la durée des études pour les plus impliqués. L'enquête montre que les diplômés font systématiquement état de ces activités dans leurs *curriculum vitae* et au cours des entretiens de recrutement. Au début de la période d'insertion professionnelle, 13 % des diplômés vivaient en couple mais, en règle générale, ces jeunes diplômés n'avaient pas d'enfant à charge (4 cas d'enfants à charge seulement). Au cours de la période d'insertion, quasiment tous ont exercé un emploi (91 %) même brièvement (au moins 4 mois), et 40 % n'ont jamais connu le chômage. Les emplois obtenus se situent tous (à une exception dans l'exploitation forestière près) dans l'industrie et le tertiaire. Trente secteurs d'activité y sont représentés, les plus fréquents étant les services aux entreprises (13 %), l'administration publique (5 %), les servic-

es de santé et d'action sociale (5 %) et, à parité (4 % chacune), l'industrie chimique, la banque, l'éducation, la recherche et développement ainsi que les activités associatives. Les employeurs sont à 80 % des petites et moyennes entreprises (entre 20 et 499 salariés), le reste se partageant également entre grandes entreprises (500 salariés et plus) et très petites entreprises (moins de 20 salariés). Les emplois occupés se situent à 90 % en France, mais l'implantation géographique est très diversifiée : seulement un tiers des diplômés ont occupé des emplois dans la région où ils ont fait leurs études, et les autres emplois se répartissent sur plus de 20 départements. Les postes occupés correspondent généralement aux niveaux « Cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures » ou « Professions intermédiaires ». Cependant, 7 de ces diplômés, qui sont pourtant de niveau Master, ont tout de même eu à occuper pendant la période d'insertion des postes de niveaux « Employés » ou « Ouvriers ». Aucun emploi ne se situe dans la catégorie « Exploitants agricoles », et un seul dans la catégorie « Chefs d'entreprises ». Les salaires mensuels nets en équivalent temps complet sont compris entre 560 et 3000 euros (930 à 5000 dollars canadiens environ), correspondant en moyenne à 1 476 euros pour le premier emploi et à 1 846 euros en fin de période (environ 2460 et 3080 dollars canadiens respectivement). Le salaire mensuel net moyen était de l'ordre de 1800 euros en France en 2000.

Traitement statistique

Les écarts-types sont estimés par méthode de White, robuste à l'hétéroscédasticité de forme inconnue. Des variables indicatrices (dummy) sont utilisées pour mesurer l'effet des variables qualitatives. L'implication de type matrimonial est décomposée en deux modalités mutuellement exclusives (« Avec conjoint » et « Sans conjoint ») représentées chacune par une indicatrice. Suivant le même principe, l'exercice de responsabilités associatives est décomposé en trois modalités (« Aucune activité associative », « Activité associative sans prise de responsabilité » et « Activité associative avec prise de responsabilités »)

; le domaine d'activité en quatre modalités (« Sport », « Culture », « Social » et « Plusieurs domaines ») ; et le cadre d'exercice en cinq modalités (« Solitaire », « En groupe d'amis », « En famille », « En institution » et « Dans plusieurs cadres à la fois »). Chaque indicatrice est codée 1 quand l'individu correspond à la modalité, et 0 sinon. Pour chaque variable qualitative, la modalité la plus fréquente est exclue de l'estimation et sert de référence pour l'interprétation des résultats. Sont ainsi exclues des estimations les modalités « Sans conjoint », « Aucune activité en association », « Activités dans le domaine du sport » et « Activités exercées dans le cadre d'une institution ».

3. Résultats et commentaire

Les tableaux 1 et 2 récapitulent les résultats des régressions linéaires et logistiques. Les modèles expliquent entre 13 % et 41 % de la variance, suivant la variable dépendante considérée.

La première observation générale qui se dégage de ces résultats est que globalement, le temps consacré à des activités extra-académiques non marchandes influence positivement la stabilité de l'emploi : la durée d'emploi en CDI pendant la période d'insertion professionnelle augmente avec le temps consacré pendant les études à des activités extra-académiques. Cela étant, d'importants contrastes apparaissent quand on tient compte du type d'activité : l'implication associative semble exercer un effet globalement négatif sur l'insertion professionnelle ; les activités dans le domaine social favorisent davantage la stabilité de l'emploi que ne le font les activités dans le domaine sportif ; et les activités exercées exclusivement en solitaire ou dans la sphère familiale et amicale sont, en termes d'accès à l'emploi de qualité, moins efficaces que celles exercées dans des institutions extérieures.

L'implication associative

On distingue trois situations : la non participation à des associations (70 % de la population étudiée), la participation sans responsabilité (10 %) et la participation avec exercice de responsabilités (20%). Est considéré comme exercice de responsabilités le fait

d'avoir assuré par exemple des fonctions de président, trésorier ou secrétaire d'association, ou d'avoir dirigé un département d'activité de l'association. Les résultats obtenus indiquent que la participation avec ou sans responsabilités exerce un effet pénalisant en termes de stabilité de l'emploi. En effet, par rapport aux diplômés n'ayant pas été membres d'associations pendant leurs études universitaires, les diplômés ayant exercé des responsabilités associatives ont une probabilité plus faible d'accéder à un CDI dès le premier emploi ou d'occuper un CDI pendant la période d'insertion (tableau 2). Ils sont plus souvent en contrat à durée déterminée (CDD) que les autres. Et lorsqu'ils sont en CDD, la durée de leur premier contrat de travail est aussi significativement plus courte.

L'influence du domaine d'engagement

On répartit l'activité extra-académique de la population étudiée en trois grands domaines : sport, culture (peinture, sculpture, musique, chant, théâtre, opéra ...) et social (comprenant pour l'essentiel le syndicalisme étudiant, l'action humanitaire, le soutien scolaire, l'encadrement périscolaire et l'animation sociale). L'engagement s'effectue généralement dans un seul domaine et est alors le plus fréquent dans le sport (42 % des engagements), moins fréquent dans la culture (12 %) et le social (6 %), mais 40 % des engagements se sont effectués dans plusieurs domaines simultanément ou successivement.

On peut observer que le domaine dans lequel le diplômé s'est impliqué compte et influence lui aussi la stabilité de l'emploi. Par rapport aux activités sportives, les activités de type social augmentent considérablement les chances d'obtenir un CDI dès le premier emploi (tableau 2), et donnent en tous cas accès à un premier contrat de travail plus long. Le fait d'avoir eu une activité dans plusieurs domaines exerce des effets de même nature. En outre, par rapport à une activité exclusivement sportive, l'activité dans plusieurs domaines permet d'être plus longtemps en CDI et moins longtemps en CDD pendant l'ensemble de la période d'insertion.

Tableau 1

Régressions linéaires des caractéristiques d'insertion professionnelle sur les variables d'implication extra-académique

	Salaires du premier emploi N=50	Salaires en fin de période N=43	PCS ^a du premier emploi N=49	PCS ^a en fin de période N=43	Durée du premier contrat de travail N=50	Durée du dernier contrat de travail N=39	Durée d'accès au premier emploi N=51	Durée totale d'emploi en CDD ^b N=47	Durée totale d'emploi en CDI ^b N=47	Durée totale d'emploi ^b (CDD + CDI) N=74	Durée totale de chômage ^b N=49
Temps total consacré aux activités extra-académiques	-1.08 ^{NS} (-0.78)	-1.49 ^{NS} (-0.85)	1.68 ^{NS} -03 (1.12)	3.43 ^{NS} -04 (0.42)	0.53 ^{NS} (0.30)	1.17 ^{NS} (1.09)	6.2 ^{NS} -03 (0.38)	-0.07 ^{**} (-2.13)	0.07 ^{**} (1.97)	3.4 ^{NS} -03 (0.13)	8.3 ^{NS} -03 (0.46)
Responsabilités familiales	46.61 ^{NS} (0.37)	-389.09 [*] (-1.78)	-0.08 ^{NS} (-0.17)	0.35 ^{NS} (1.06)	-192.14 ^{NS} (-0.43)	53.23 ^{NS} (0.37)	6.94 ^{NS} (1.09)	-1.99 ^{NS} (-0.36)	3.69 ^{NS} (0.52)	1.69 ^{NS} (0.52)	5.60 ^{NS} (1.04)
Avec conjoint(e)	236.95 ^{NS} (0.68)	156.06 ^{NS} (0.56)	-0.19 ^{NS} (-0.49)	-0.44 ^{NS} (-1.21)	629.27 ^{NS} (1.43)	353.49 ^{NS} (0.70)	-0.93 ^{NS} (-0.13)	-12.28 ^{NS} (-1.55)	13.69 ^{NS} (1.03)	1.40 ^{NS} (0.13)	-0.27 ^{NS} (-0.03)
Responsabilités associatives	-254.82 [*] (-1.79)	-255.32 ^{NS} (-0.89)	0.18 ^{NS} (0.74)	0.21 ^{NS} (1.42)	-400.56 [*] (-1.67)	-523.30 ^{NS} (-1.59)	2.58 ^{NS} (1.23)	15.84 ^{**} (2.02)	-24.15 ^{***} (-3.51)	-8.31 ^{NS} (-1.31)	6.48 ^{NS} (1.43)
Activités associatives sans exercice de responsabilités	71.32 ^{NS} (0.58)	-38.89 ^{NS} (-0.15)	-0.05 ^{NS} (-0.25)	0.14 ^{NS} (0.81)	-497.43 ^{**} (-2.34)	-400.92 ^{**} (-1.97)	1.55 ^{NS} (1.05)	19.09 ^{***} (2.74)	-18.34 ^{***} (-2.81)	0.74 ^{NS} (0.22)	0.25 ^{NS} (0.10)
Activités associatives avec exercice de responsabilités	6.11 ^{NS} (0.02)	47.03 ^{NS} (0.16)	0.33 ^{NS} (0.91)	0.06 ^{NS} (0.19)	215.77 ^{NS} (0.77)	120.30 ^{NS} (0.46)	-0.36 ^{NS} (-0.16)	-8.71 ^{NS} (-1.16)	9.37 ^{NS} (1.10)	0.66 ^{NS} (0.22)	-2.18 ^{NS} (-0.98)
Domaine de l'activité	-39.88 ^{NS} (-0.22)	-57.86 ^{NS} (-0.19)	0.01 ^{NS} (0.06)	0.19 ^{NS} (0.65)	606.20 ^{**} (2.09)	48.96 ^{NS} (0.09)	-3.54 ^{NS} (-1.50)	-10.66 ^{NS} (-0.79)	2.04 ^{NS} (0.22)	-8.61 ^{NS} (-0.63)	1.16 ^{NS} (0.21)
Activités de type social exclusivement	129.47 ^{NS} (1.20)	202.26 ^{NS} (0.92)	-0.04 ^{NS} (-0.24)	-0.04 ^{NS} (-0.29)	306.85 [*] (1.82)	235.95 ^{NS} (1.09)	-1.40 ^{NS} (-1.20)	-15.57 ^{***} (-2.71)	16.34 ^{***} (3.03)	0.76 ^{NS} (0.21)	-2.50 ^{NS} (-1.02)
Plusieurs domaines d'activité											

Tableau 1 continued on next page.

Tableau 1 (cont'd.)

	Salaires du premier emploi N=50	Salaires en fin de période N=43	PCS ^a du premier emploi N=49	PCS ^a en fin de période N=43	Durée du premier contrat de travail N=50	Durée du dernier contrat de travail N=39	Durée d'accès au premier emploi N=51	Durée totale d'emploi en CDD ^b N=47	Durée totale d'emploi en CDI ^b N=47	Durée totale d'emploi ^b (CDD + CDI) N=74	Durée totale de chômage ^b N=49
Cadre d'exercice de l'activité extra-académique											
Activités exercées en solitaire exclusivement	115.31 ^{NS} (0.52)	-270.73 ^{NS} (-0.89)	-0.17 ^{NS} (-0.49)	0.06 ^{NS} (0.59)	72.66 ^{NS} (0.19)	-478.42 ^{NS} (-1.60)	0.94 ^{NS} (0.51)	9.07 ^{NS} (0.94)	-8.15 ^{NS} (-0.66)	0.91 ^{NS} (0.18)	-0.13 ^{NS} (-0.06)
Activités exercées en groupe d'amis exclusivement	51.29 ^{NS} (0.27)	30.13 ^{NS} (0.09)	0.02 ^{NS} (0.06)	0.48 [*] (1.68)	-204.97 ^{NS} (-0.75)	-257.81 ^{NS} (-0.97)	1.83 ^{NS} (1.00)	10.31 [*] (1.75)	-8.86 ^{NS} (-1.14)	1.44 ^{NS} (0.31)	1.00 ^{NS} (0.39)
Activités exercées en famille exclusivement	-502.30 ^{***} (-5.32)	-2021.89 ^{***} (-8.83)	1.71 ^{***} (5.40)	-	-501.75 ^{***} (-2.74)	-	6.06 ^{***} (3.52)	-7.58 [*] (-1.66)	-23.21 ^{***} (-4.52)	-30.80 ^{***} (-9.75)	7.59 ^{***} (3.75)
Activités exercées dans différents cadres	102.04 ^{NS} (0.64)	19.71 ^{NS} (0.08)	-0.31 ^{NS} (-1.38)	0.03 ^{NS} (0.41)	-25.28 ^{NS} (-0.12)	-115.85 ^{NS} (-0.61)	2.04 ^{NS} (1.12)	5.55 ^{NS} (1.05)	-5.45 ^{NS} (-1.00)	0.10 ^{NS} (0.03)	2.89 ^{NS} (1.18)
Constante	1458.99 ^{***} (14.92)	2033.88 ^{***} (8.80)	3.27 ^{***} (10.38)	2.90 ^{***} (33.30)	500.48 ^{***} (2.65)	917.06 ^{***} (9.21)	-0.11 ^{NS} (-0.06)	11.16 ^{**} (2.41)	22.60 ^{***} (4.31)	33.77 ^{***} (10.43)	1.33 ^{NS} (0.64)
R ²	0.19	0.40	0.23	0.24	0.21	0.23	0.30	0.37	0.41	0.33	0.27

^a : Les professions et catégories sociales sont classées par ordre décroissant mais codées par ordre croissant : 3 pour les Cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures ; 4 pour les Professions intermédiaires ; 5 pour les Employés et 6 pour les Ouvriers. Une relation négative indique donc qu'une hausse du facteur considéré améliore la position socioprofessionnelle.

^b : pendant les trois années de la période d'insertion.

t-stats entre parenthèses. ^{NS} : Non significatif. * : Significatif au seuil de 10%. ** : Significatif au seuil de 5%. *** : Significatif au seuil de 1%.

Tableau 2

Déterminants des probabilités d'obtenir un contrat à durée indéterminée et d'être au chômage – Rapports des cotes (odd ratios) des régressions logistiques

NB. Le premier chiffre est le rapport des cotes. Le deuxième chiffre, entre parenthésis, est la statistique z.

	Probabilité d'obtenir un CDI dès le premier emploi N=47	Probabilité d'obtenir un CDI pendant la période d'insertion N=41	Probabilité de connaître le chômage pendant la période d'insertion N=46
Temps total consacré aux activités extra-académiques	1.00 ^{NS} (0.41)	1.00 ^{NS} (0.20)	1.01 ^{NS} (1.18)
Responsabilités familiales			
Avec conjoint(e)	0.44 ^{NS} (-0.39)	-	3.63 ^{NS} (1.05)
Nombre d'enfants	-	-	-
Responsabilités associatives			
Activités associatives sans exercice de responsabilités	0.12* (-1.64)	5.13 ^{e-10} *** (-13.88)	1.73 ^{NS} (0.41)
Activités associatives avec exercice de responsabilités	0.07** (-2.05)	1.90 ^{e-09} *** (-11.32)	0.70 ^{NS} (-0.26)
Domaine de l'activité extra-académique			
Activités de type culturel exclusivement	2.88 ^{NS} (0.82)	3.32 ^{NS} (0.92)	7.04 ^{NS} (1.45)
Activités de type social exclusivement	24.18** (2.03)	0.81 ^{NS} (-0.10)	3.03 ^{NS} (0.59)
Plusieurs domaines d'activité	5.39* (1.70)	13.30 ^{NS} (1.45)	0.69 ^{NS} (-0.30)
Cadre d'exercice de l'activité extra-académique			
Activités exercées en solitaire exclusivement	1.45 ^{NS} (0.24)	1.11 ^{e-09} *** (-13.37)	1.03 ^{NS} (0.02)
Activités exercées entre amis exclusivement	0.36 ^{NS} (-0.80)	2.64 ^{e-09} NS (0.00)	0.25 ^{NS} (-0.69)
Activités exercées en famille exclusivement	-	-	-
Activités exercées dans différents cadres	0.94 ^{NS} (-0.06)	0.18 ^{NS} (-0.90)	1.55 ^{NS} (0.53)
Pseudo R ²	0.13	0.31	0.15

^{NS} : Non significatif. * : Significatif au seuil de 10%. ** : Significatif au seuil de 5%. *** : Significatif au seuil de 1%.

L'influence du cadre d'exercice

Quatre cadres d'exercice sont distingués : solitaire (qui peut concerner par exemple des activités comme la lecture, le jogging ou la pratique d'un instrument de musique) ; familial ; amical ; et institutionnel (par exemple services universitaires d'activités sportives et clubs universitaires, clubs hors université, associations organisant des activités ou des manifestations ouvertes au public, ou proposant des prestations aux usagers, conservatoires de musique, etc.). On estime également l'influence que peut exercer le fait d'avoir pratiqué dans plusieurs cadres simultanément ou successivement, par exemple une activité sociale en association et une activité sportive en solitaire. Le cadre institutionnel est le plus fréquent (44 % du total), les activités entre amis (15 %), solitaires (6 %) et en famille (2 %) les moins fréquemment citées. 33% des diplômés indiquent avoir eu des activités dans plusieurs cadres.

On observe que le cadre dans lequel s'est déroulée l'activité extra-académique compte et influence non seulement la stabilité mais aussi le statut de l'emploi, ainsi que l'accès même à l'emploi. Par rapport aux diplômés ayant exercé leur activité dans un cadre institutionnel, ceux qui ont pratiqué en solitaire ont beaucoup moins de chances d'obtenir un CDI pendant la période d'insertion. Par ailleurs, les activités exercées entre amis semblent donner accès à des emplois moins bien placés dans la hiérarchie socioprofessionnelle. Mais surtout, on peut observer que, par rapport aux activités exercées en institution, les activités exercées en famille exposent davantage au chômage et réduisent l'accès aux CDI comme aux CDD. En outre, elles allongent la durée d'accès au premier emploi, réduisent la durée du premier contrat de travail, et conduisent à des emplois moins bien rémunérés et moins bien placés dans la hiérarchie socioprofessionnelle.

Commentaire

Il apparaît ainsi que, dans la population étudiée, les diplômés qui avaient les meilleures chances d'accéder le plus rapidement aux emplois de meilleure qualité en termes de stabilité, de statut

et de salaire étaient ceux qui pouvaient signaler au recruteur avoir longuement pratiqué, parallèlement à leurs études, des activités dans le domaine social plutôt que sportif, organisées par des institutions extérieures à la sphère domestique ou amicale, et avec un degré d'engagement limité en deçà de l'exercice de responsabilités, c'est-à-dire plutôt comme participants que comme leaders.

Dans le cadre d'interprétation dans lequel s'inscrit cette étude, ces résultats signifient d'abord que les employeurs n'interprètent pas l'implication extra-académique en elle-même comme un facteur de risque de démission ultérieure. En fait, la relation positive entre durée d'implication et stabilité de l'emploi semble même suggérer que l'implication extra-académique est valorisée par l'employeur. Mais que tout dépend ensuite du type d'implication.

Dans ce cadre d'interprétation, l'implication dans des responsabilités associatives constituerait le symbole par excellence de l'activité non-marchande susceptible de rendre le salarié moins disponible pour l'entreprise, et donc d'accroître le risque de démission ultérieure. Il n'est pas exclu que l'implication familiale soit interprétée de la même façon : bien que les résultats obtenus ne montrent quasiment pas d'effet significatif direct résultant de l'implication familiale, on peut observer que les diplômé(e)s ayant un(e) conjoint(e) ont en fin de période un salaire plus faible et, surtout, que le fait d'afficher des activités dans un cadre familial apparaît, par rapport aux activités hors cadres domestique et amical, très pénalisant en termes de salaire, de statut, de stabilité, de durée d'accès à l'emploi et de durée de chômage. Ces deux formes d'implication, associative et familiale, semblent ainsi entraîner à la fois une plus grande difficulté d'accès à l'emploi et des conditions d'emploi moins avantageuses. On retrouve ainsi les caractéristiques manifestant la discrimination à l'embauche soulignées par Sattinger.

En revanche, la participation à des activités organisées par des institutions extérieures au cadre domestique et amical paraît être valorisée par l'employeur. Cette forme d'implication est

illustrée par exemple par la participation à des actions de sauvegarde de l'environnement, d'alphabétisation ou de soutien scolaire. Suivant le même schéma d'interprétation, cette forme d'implication présente un double intérêt. D'une part, une implication limitée suggère que le salarié ne fera pas passer ses engagements non marchands avant son activité professionnelle, et n'abandonnera pas celle-ci pour ceux-là. D'autre part, il est possible qu'une activité dans un cadre extérieur à la famille et aux amis soit interprétée – surtout si elle a été confirmée par une longue pratique – comme un indice d'aptitude à œuvrer durablement dans un collectif, indépendamment de motivations affectives. Cette forme d'implication serait synonyme de stabilité, indiquerait un faible risque de démission et accélérerait alors l'accès aux meilleures conditions d'emploi.

Conclusion

La vie étudiante s'inspire bien souvent d'une philosophie davantage hédoniste qu'utilitariste. L'étudiant(e) n'organise pas systématiquement ses activités académiques (choix de formation et participation aux enseignements par exemple) et extra-académiques en fonction de ses projets d'insertion professionnelle. Cela étant, les comportements étudiants n'en ont pas moins des conséquences en termes d'insertion professionnelle. L'objectif de cette étude était de cerner quelques unes d'entre elles.

Bien entendu, la portée des résultats obtenus ne doit pas être exagérée : la population de l'étude est de petite taille, circonscrite à une zone géographique et à un niveau de diplôme spécifiques, de sorte qu'il ne saurait être question d'en tirer déjà des conclusions universelles. Mais cette étude montre que l'analyse des comportements extra-académiques non marchands peut contribuer utilement à la compréhension du processus d'insertion professionnelle. Les indications qui en résultent non seulement peuvent être utiles aux candidats à l'emploi, mais aussi sont susceptibles de contribuer à l'efficacité des institutions d'orientation universitaire et professionnelle dans l'exercice de leur mission.

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Do Employers and Secondary School Stakeholders View the “Core Skills” as Important?

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Abstract

This article reports on the perceived importance of the Queensland Core Skills compared to other skills (Generic Competencies, Virtual Competencies and Entrepreneurial Attributes) required of graduates to generate an income in the 21st Century. One hundred and twenty two senior students, 70 employers, and 50 school guidance officers were surveyed about this issue. The ratings of importance that all participants assigned to the Core Skills were found to be significantly lower than the ratings of importance that were assigned to the other three attribute areas. The employer and school guidance officer groups were found to assign similar ratings of importance to Core Skills, Generic Competencies, Virtual Competencies and Entrepreneurial Attributes.

Whilst the Core Skills were found to be rated significantly less important than the other three attribute areas, they were, however, rated as moderately important by all participants. Moreover, the mean ratings given to these skills by the employers and school guidance officers also indicates that these skills are perceived as important, thereby suggesting that the demonstration of such Core Skills are necessary for graduating senior students to generate an income in the 21st century.

Preamble

Over half of Australia’s graduating senior students will endeavour to transfer the skills that they have acquired within their schooling to the world of work (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1993). The difficulties in achieving this will become a reality as they attempt to obtain employment, or to generate an income in their own business. Due to

the lack of available employment opportunities (Coventry & Bertone, 1998; Jamrozik, 1998a) most secondary school students already possess realistic expectations with regard to the difficulty of obtaining employment (Gow, 1992). This reality has necessitated that senior school students possess knowledge, skills and abilities that prepare them, not only to meet the competency standards required by employers of new workers, but also to assist them to adapt to new ways of generating an income.

Core Skills

Australian government policy makers and educators have been attempting, since the early 1990’s, to redirect young people from entering the workplace after Year 12 to entering further education (Dwyer & Youth Research Centre, 1996). However, more than half of Australia’s graduating senior students enter the workforce with little more than a year twelve education (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1993). Thus high school constitutes the most substantial source of formal skills they can acquire. Researchers assert that educators, who teach and enable the development of skills and competencies required in the future workplace, will ensure their graduates succeed in the changing global society (e.g. Mayer Committee, 1992; Poole, 1995; Wood & Gow, 1997). Brynner (1997) asserts that the basic knowledge and skills that are acquired through education are central to any activity in employment and that problems with basic skills lead to problems in acquiring more specific work related skills.

In 1997, 87% of senior students graduated with an assessment of particular knowledge and skills that educators and policy makers maintain are

common elements of the curriculum (Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, 1997). Within Queensland, such knowledge and skills are assessed through the Queensland Core Skills Test (QCS), consisting of 49 common curricula elements that emanate from all Board subjects and are identified as the ‘core’ of the senior curriculum. This test is thoroughly syllabus-based, but not subject specific (Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, 1997; Pitman, 1993); however, some of the common curriculum elements contain a mathematical undertone (Tasmanian Secondary Assessment Board, 1997). Nonetheless, assessment procedures were incorporated in the QCS test to ensure that only common mathematical curriculum elements were assessed.

The 49 common curriculum elements are clustered into five assessment criteria areas which include these skills: “comprehend and collect”; “structure and sequence”; “analyse, assess and conclude”; “create and present”; and “apply techniques”. The QCS test is recognised as being able to be applied to all students with similar types of education systems, for example in all OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries (Tasmanian Secondary Assessment Board, 1997).

Pitman (1993) argued that the skills, referred to as Core Skills, produced from the common curriculum elements are more realistic and attainable than the seven Key Competencies developed by the Mayer Committee (1992). The Mayer Committee (1992) reported that the seven Key Competencies (“collecting, analysing and organising information”; “communicating ideas and information”; “planning and organising activities”; “working with others and in teams”; “using mathematical ideas and techniques”;

"solving problems"; and "using technology") are needed by young people to effectively participate in the future world of work. Moreover, they were postulated as being "essential elements of a general education" and capable of being applied "cross-curricula" (Mayer, 1992, p. 8). "Cross-curricula" means that these competencies can be developed and applied across the range of common curriculum areas within the schools.

Pitman (1993) commented that teachers show acceptance of the common curriculum elements through instilling them across the curricula in all subjects, therefore, the Core Skills must be more realistic and attainable.

In the wider environment, the appropriateness of the employability attributes that are learned in the education sector have become a concern. This concern relates to the education sector not producing young people with the attributes that enable them to become employed (Poole, 1995). Therefore, graduating students who fail to benefit from the skills provided by the education system, may be ill equipped to compete for employment. Thus, there is a need to examine other competencies and attributes that may equip the graduating senior student with the capacity for generating an income in the future.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders such as families, parents, teachers, school guidance officers, employers and governments have long been acknowledged by researchers as possessing the experience, knowledge, information and influence that contribute to the senior students success at generating an income (e.g., Berkely, 1981; Dwyer & Wilson, 1991; Way & Rossman, 1996). Students have also been recognised for their contribution as stakeholders (Dwyer, 1991; Gow, 1995a; Pascoe, 1996). While there is little detailed consensus about the proportion of the contribution that these stakeholders make in assisting senior students to generate an income, there is no doubt that each stakeholder group is an important contributor.

Government

The influential nature of the government's stake in contributing to the

graduate's success at generating an income has been evidenced via a number of different policies. Pathway policies have included directions towards increasing retention rates for years 11 and 12, directing young people into post-secondary education (Australian Council of Social Service, 1996), along with attending to the young people who are "work bound". These policies aim to help young people secure an income, whether this be through increasing their skills level ("Enterprise Education," 1998) or offering opportunities to obtain on-the-job work skills through such programs as apprenticeships or traineeships (Office of Youth Affairs, 1997). However, Jamrozik (1998b) claimed that the "good intentions" of the government policies often resulted in failure since they ignored the conspicuous problems associated with youth unemployment. Students need to be equipped, in the best manner possible, to compete in a declining employment market, or to commence their own business.

Families

Way and Rossman (1996) identified the family as being able to exert influence on the development of work readiness before, during, and following, the efforts of educators. Parents are viewed as important motivators in helping students find and retain employment (Gow, 1995a), providing emotional and material support, finding out about opportunities and contacts, as well as assisting in job applications and interview preparation (Hannan, Ferguson, Pollock & Reeders, 1995).

Senior Students

Gow (1995a) found senior students believed that their success in preparing to work depends primarily on the 'school leaver's own self'. Pascoe (1996) examined young people's thoughts on future career options and Australia's economic future through a focus group study, and found that self employment or owning a business was recognized as an ideal solution to the instability and uncertainty of the employment market. Given the established high unemployment statistics for youth in many countries across the world, young people now tend to

believe that achievement in the workplace results from individual resourcefulness, knowledge and skills, and tend to rely less on the natural and economic resources of the nation. However this does not mean that youth do not regard personal factors, such as developing their abilities to the fullest and the achievement of a position of influence within a secure and well-paid job, as unimportant for their future employment (see Dwyer, 1991).

Senior students are often neglected as a resource, and are often regarded simply as passive recipients of the services provided by education. Whilst they have been involved in research such as exploring their career options (e.g. Dwyer, 1991; Pascoe, 1996), they have generally been denied any involvement in the consultation processes relating to the way in which they might effectively attain the competencies required in the workplace (Gow, 1995b; Sweet, 1995).

Employers

For a graduating senior student to be successful at obtaining employment, they need to transfer the skills acquired at school to the workplace; therefore these skills need to equate with the standards required by employers. However, this balance has not yet transpired, as employers view that those entering the labour market are not equipped with the competencies required within the workforce (Australian Council of Social Service, 1995; Wills, 1995). Such workplace competencies have emerged as a direct reflection of the demands and pressures that have been produced from changes in the world of work (Thomson, 1995). The first hand knowledge and experience that employers have of the competencies required in the workplace make them influential stakeholders who are able to assist senior students in becoming mindful of job seeking and job retention skills, knowledge of job prerequisites, and the realities of the world of work (Dusseldorp Skills Forum and Career Education Association of Victoria, 1997).

Employers have a responsibility towards, as well as a vested interest in, ensuring that senior students who enter the workplace directly from school

have acquired competencies that match employer expectations (Mael, Morath, & McLellan, 1997). Any involvement employers have in undertaking this responsibility will provide them with an early stake in preparing the future workforce. Moreover, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (1993) assert that the input that employers have in competency development and standards, and the subsequent curriculum development, is critical.

School Guidance Officers

Employment preparation begins long before the graduating senior student embarks upon entry into the workplace. A school guidance officer's responsibilities are fundamental to the senior student's employment preparation through providing advice on available employment, counselling those who are experiencing difficulties in making employment decisions, and coordinating the school's careers programs (Gati, Houminer, Fassa, 1997; Pemberton, 1998). Having knowledge of the changes that have occurred within the workplace is mandatory for the school guidance officer, as the information that they provide has a significant influence on the career decisions that senior students make (Cotterell, 1997; Pascoe, 1996).

School guidance officers are also responsible for making clear the relationship between the skills students are acquiring through school and the demands of the workplace (Hannan, Ferguson, Pollock & Reeders, 1995). Thus the stake that school guidance officers have in the success of the graduating senior student in generating an income is dependent on up-to-date knowledge and information on employment opportunities and the skills required in the workplace. However, some propose that such up-to-date employment information that school guidance officers provided to many students is limited to tertiary prerequisites (Dixon, 1993; Gati, Houminer, & Fassa, 1997).

Current Research Project

The study sought to determine, from a sample of stakeholders (senior students, employers and school guid-

ance officers), which attributes would be important for graduating senior students to generate an income in the 21st century. This article reports on one aspect of those findings in relation to the "Core Skills".

Using the data from all participants, Core Skills rating of importance were assessed against other attribute areas (Generic Competencies, Virtual Competencies and Entrepreneurial Attributes). Ratings of importance were examined between employers and guidance officers on Core Skills, Generic Competencies, Virtual Competencies and Entrepreneurial Attributes. Using the combined employer and school guidance officer groups, items were reduced to a more parsimonious solution of the attributes and the resulting factors were examined for differences of rated importance, along with differences in rated importance for each stakeholder group.

Hypotheses

The common curriculum elements that underpin the QCS test appear to reflect an academic imperative, and seem to contain a mathematical and analytical undertone.

(H1): Given that the current study is directed towards employment attributes, the ratings of importance that all stakeholders groups assign to the Core Skills would be expected to be lower than the ratings given to the other attributed areas (Generic Competencies, Virtual Competencies and Entrepreneurial Attributes).

Both employers and school guidance officers have been recognised as stakeholders who possess up-to-date knowledge and information about the workplace. Thus it was expected that (H2) there would be no difference in the ratings of importance that these two stakeholder groups allocate to the Core Skills, Generic Competencies, Virtual Competencies and Entrepreneurial Attributes.

Method

Participants

The 242 participants included 122 Year 11 and 12 students (60 males; 62 females), 50 school guidance officers (18 males; 31 females; 1 unspecified) and 70 employers (43 males; 27

females). Senior students and school guidance officers were accessed from both private and state secondary schools. The employers were selected from various industries, including automotive, fitness, service, human resource, consultancy, banking, computer/technology, retail and training.

The ranges of ages for the groups were as follows: senior students 15 to 18 years ($M = 16.25$ yrs; $SD = .77$ yrs); school guidance officers 29 to 65 years ($M = 46.97$; $SD = 7.5$); employers 25 to 65 years ($M = 44.80$ yrs; $SD = 10.3$). More than half of the senior students (55%) were employed.

Questionnaire

A 100 item questionnaire was developed to determine the extent to which the stakeholders perceived the nominated attributes as being important for graduating senior students to generate an income in the 21st century. Demographic information such as age, gender, employment status, type of occupation and parent(s)' occupation type was included on the final page of the questionnaire.

The 100 items contained within this questionnaire were accessed from four areas: Core Skills; Generic Competencies; Virtual Competencies; and Entrepreneurial Attributes. Nine of the 49 common curriculum elements of the Core Skills (Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, 1997) were included in this questionnaire.

Thirty two Generic Competencies items were accessed from Gow's (1993) QUT Graduates Survey, selected on the basis of items that were sourced from the Mayer Committee's (1992) Key Competencies and items that Gow (1993) had sourced as being required by senior students. The 26 Virtual Competency items were selected from Gow and McDonald's (2000) Future of Work Questionnaire. The Virtual Competency items selected pertained to those that had been found from the research and literature to be important for graduates to generate an income. The selection of the 33 Entrepreneurial Attributes was based on the authors' search of the literature in respect of the knowledge, skills and abilities that described entrepreneurial behaviour.

Participants were requested to respond to the focus question – "To what extent are the following attributes (knowledge, skills and abilities) important for graduating senior secondary students to generate an income in the 21st century" – rating each attribute along a seven point rating scale with poles anchored at 1 – (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

Procedure

All necessary permissions from the Department, principals, parents and students were obtained and ethics clearance was given. Twenty two schools were contacted and five consented to participate. Questionnaire's were administered, during class time, in three schools by the researcher and in the remaining two schools by a teacher or a school guidance officer. Each administration session began with an overview of the instrument and, upon completion, students were provided with a career information package, compiled by the researcher, which consisted of publications from the Career Reference Centre (QLD) and Centerlink (an Australian Government employment assistance agency).

One hundred questionnaires, with covering letters, were posted to school guidance officers from both State and Private Schools within the Brisbane, Logan and Ipswich areas. School guidance officers were selected from a list of South-East Queensland Secondary Schools provided by the QUT Promotions and External Relations Admissions Department. An additional 160 questionnaires, including personal hand signed letters, were sent to employers within the Brisbane, Logan and Ipswich area. To ensure this sample was representative of the employers of senior students, a broad array of private, government, self-employed and not-for-profit organisations were selected from Business Queensland's Book of Lists (1996) and the 1997 telephone directory.

The response rates for school guidance officers (50%) and employers (43.75%) were superior to other studies that used five page questionnaires (Adams & Gale, 1982).

Results

Overview of Analyses

A series of analyses were performed to ensure an adequate exploration of the hypotheses. Firstly, the importance that all participants allocated to the Core Skills were compared to the importance assigned to Generic Competencies, Virtual Competencies, and Entrepreneurial Attributes, separately (H1 refers). As only a small number of Core Skills were included, their means were compared, pairwise, with the means of the other three areas. Secondly, the employers and school guidance officers were compared on the perceived importance that they assigned to the four areas (Core Skills; Generic Competencies; Virtual Competencies; and Entrepreneurial Attributes) separately (H2 refers). This ascertained whether the school guidance officers' perception of the attributes required in the future corresponded with the employers' views. This finding provided the basis for their use in the following analysis.

Preliminary Analysis

Examination of the data was undertaken, separately, for each stakeholder group due to the following analyses being assessed on a group basis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). There was no systematic pattern to the missing values, therefore, these were replaced with the mean for each analysis. This strategy also enabled the sample sizes to be retained without overfitting the data. Examining the skewness and kurtosis values revealed that most

values were less than 1 and did not exceed 3. It has been suggested that skewness and kurtosis do not sufficiently effect the analysis when all variables are skewed to approximately the same degree (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

Examining the Importance of the Core Skills

As can be seen in Table 1, t-tests for paired samples determined that the relative importance all participants assigned to the Core Skills was significantly lower than that assigned to Entrepreneurial Attributes, Generic Competencies, and Virtual Competencies (H1 refers). Examining the means of attributes indicated the importance participants assigned to the four attribute areas. On a scale of 1 to 7, the importance assigned to the four attribute areas were ranked with Core Skills ($M = 4.95$, $SD = .69$) as the lowest, Entrepreneurial Attributes ($M = 5.42$, $SD = .57$) slightly higher, Virtual Competencies ($M = 5.44$, $SD = .62$) the next highest and Generic Competencies ($M = 5.55$, $SD = .55$) the highest overall. The Core Skills ($M = 4.95$) were rated between "moderately important" and "quite important". The Entrepreneurial Attributes ($M = 5.42$), Virtual Competencies ($M = 5.44$) and Generic Competencies ($M = 5.55$) ranged between "quite important" and "very important" on the questionnaire labels.

Employers and School Guidance Officers Differences

Ratings of importance were examined between the 70 employers and 50 school guidance officers on Core Skills,

Table 1

Core Skills Comparison against Attribute Areas

Variable pairs	Means	df	t-value
Core Skills Generic Competencies	4.95 5.55	241	-19.41***
Core Skills Virtual Competencies	4.95 5.44	241	-14.53***
Core Skills Entrepreneurial Attributes	4.95 5.42	241	-14.53***

Notes. The rating scale used in this study had poles anchored at 1: not important to 7: extremely important.

Bonferroni adjustment $p < .001/3$ i.e., *** $p < .0003$

Generic Competencies, Virtual Competencies, and Entrepreneurial Attributes using One Way Analysis of Variance. As can be seen in Table 2, no significant differences were found between the ratings of importance that employers and school guidance officers allocated to these skills (H2 refers). This established that these two stakeholder groups were cognate in their perceived importance of the attribute areas.

Discussion

This research project aimed to explore with a sample of senior students, employers and school guidance

confirmation for Brynner's (1997) previously noted assertion that the skills acquired through education are central to any employment activity.

Similarities between employers and school guidance officers. The finding that no differences existed in the ratings of importance that the employer and school guidance officer groups assigned to all attribute areas (Core Skills, Generic Competencies, Virtual Competencies and Entrepreneurial Attributes) (H2 refers) indicates that this sample of guidance officers possess similar knowledge to employers, of the attributes that senior students need to generate an income in the future.

Table 2

Analysis of Variance for Employers and School Guidance Officers

Variable	Employers	School Guidance Officers	F (1, 118)	P
Core Skills	4.96	5.03	0.41	.52
Generic Competencies	5.63	5.61	0.05	.81
Virtual Competencies	5.49	5.61	1.23	.26
Entrepreneurial Attributes	5.48	5.37	1.28	.25

Notes. The rating scale used in this study had poles anchored at 1: not important to 7: extremely important.

officers which attributes would be important for graduating senior students to generate an income in the 21st century.

Relative importance of the Core Skills. As was expected (H1), the Core Skills were rated significantly lower on importance compared to the ratings that the stakeholder groups (senior students, employers and school guidance officers) assigned to Generic Competencies, Virtual Competencies and Entrepreneurial Attributes (H1). Bearing in mind the warning of Tilley (1994) about large sample sizes contributing to a significant outcome, the Core Skills were still rated as important by this sample (i.e., $M = 4.95$ was .05 below the rating of quite important).

Although this study utilised only nine of the 49 Core Skills, this finding suggests that these skills are important for the graduating senior students to generate an income; it also found some

This finding suggests that this school guidance officer group had up-to-date knowledge and information on the attributes required by senior students, thus enabling them to impart information about the direct relationship between the skills students are acquiring through school and the demands of the workplace (see Hannan, Ferguson, Pollock & Reeders, 1995).

Implications for Future Research. Future research comparing all 49 Core Skills against the other three attribute areas may determine their relative importance for graduating senior students to generate an income in the 21st century.

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The Advancement of Career Counsellor Education in Canada

Sharon Kalbfleisch & Rebecca Burwell

Introduction to new research project

What skills and knowledge does a person need to practice in the field of career development? What type and extent of education or training best prepares someone to work in the field? These are questions that most professions can answer. The development of national and international documents outlining competencies required for work in the field have made inroads in answering the first question. But the question of how one is best educated to work in the field in Canada is less easily answered. Except in Québec, there is no clear educational pathway to enter or advance within the field of career development. There exists a wide array of options, from college diplomas to university certificates to Masters degrees in counselling psychology. More than fifteen career development programs have been developed over the last two decades. However, there remains little clarity of how or if these programs fit together or how one best enters or advances within the field.

It is for this reason that we partnered with CERIC, the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling, to initiate a research project, "The Advancement of Career Counsellor Education in Canada". This research project was conceived to begin a process to articulate the educational background that the profession sees as necessary for entry into or advancement within the field. Specifically, the purposes of this research are:

1) To gain an in-depth understanding, and to produce a detailed directory, of the current program offerings that are available for aspiring or practicing career counsellors.

The Directory of Career Counselling/Career Development Education Programs in Canada was produced as Phase I of this research

project and is available online at Contact Point at http://www.contact-point.ca/resources/Directory_ofEducation_Programs_2006.pdf. It profiles 37 programs at 28 institutions across Canada. Our criteria for inclusion in the Directory was: (a) any program, at any level, whose main focus is career counselling/career development; or (b) any program that offers students a minimum of two career development courses within a department where at least one faculty member is conducting research in the area of career development.

While the primary objective for this phase of our research project was to compile this Directory, we felt that it would be worthwhile to make additional inquiries regarding the history of each institution's program. One of the most interesting points revealed from these conversations is that it was the efforts of individuals and not educational/ governmental systems that have had the greatest impact on the development to date of career counselling/career development courses and programs in Canada. Within the university system, the evolution of courses often appears to depend on the teaching and research interests of just one or two professors. As a consequence, when a key faculty member leaves or retires, the courses in career counselling/development are at risk of disappearing. Similarly, within the college system, the development and maintenance of career counselling/career development programs has also been dependent on just one or two individuals. This is significant because it means it will be crucial to determine how to embed these courses and programs into the fabric of the academic institutions in which they exist so that they are not dependent strictly on individuals.

2) To better understand the career paths and educational backgrounds of those currently working in the field.

To do this, we conducted a nationwide web-based survey of career development practitioners in April and May of 2006, with the assistance of the Survey Research Centre at the University of Waterloo. Over 1,100 practitioners responded to the survey. An initial analysis of the data has revealed several noteworthy facts. Among them, the findings that 70% of respondents have worked in another field prior to entering the field of career development, that there are more than 25 different job titles being used by people working in the field, and that less than 50% of those working in the field identify primarily with the field of career development. Further results from this survey will be shared in an upcoming edition of the Canadian Journal of Career Development.

3) To begin a process to form a collective vision of Canadian career counselling education programs for the future.

To enable this, a think tank session involving career counsellor educators from across the country will be held later this year to enable an in-depth exploration of career counsellor education in Canada. This think tank session will involve discussions related to curriculum, educational pathways, and the professional identity of the field.

The field of career counselling is still young, and so it is no surprise that our educational pathways to and within the field remain unclear. While the programs that have been developed have certainly moved the field forward in Canada and have contributed to Canada's reputation as a world leader in the area of career development, we believe that this research project will support the development of a collective vision leading to an exemplary model of career development education in Canada.

This research project is funded by CERIC, the new Canadian Education

and Research Institute for Counselling. CERIC's mission is to encourage and provide education and research programs related to the development, analysis, and assessment of the current counselling and career development theories and practices in Canada.

About the researchers:

Sharon Kalbfleisch has worked as a career counsellor, social worker, educator, and trainer. As a Dean at Conestoga College in Kitchener, Ontario, she collaborated with a team to establish the post-degree/diploma Career Development Practitioner (CDP) certificate program. This program became the first online program in career development in Canada. She was also the architect of the joint programs formed between the Conestoga CDP program and the University of Waterloo, the University of Guelph, and Wilfrid Laurier University. She has worked in Canada, Singapore, New Zealand, England, and the United States.

Rebecca Burwell has an extensive background in career counselling that includes work in individual counselling, group facilitation, teaching, and writing within several different sectors, including private practice, community agencies, post-secondary institutions, and private companies. She is a lead instructor in the Career Development Practitioner Program at Conestoga College, and recently wrote the curriculum for two new courses at Conestoga College, titled "Career Development for Adolescents" and "Electronic Tools and Techniques in the Field of Career Development".

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