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The Canadian Journal of Career Development was established by its late founding editor, Dr. Robert Shea, in 1999, with the inaugural issue being published in 2002. The objective of this peer-reviewed and open-access journal is to present articles on areas of career research and practice that are of interest to career development researchers and practitioners in Canada and internationally. The Journal is multi-sectoral, and includes a range of methodological, theoretical, and best practices articles.

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La Revue canadienne de développement de carrière a été créée par son rédacteur en chef fondateur, le Dr Robert Shea, en 1999, et le premier numéro a été publié en 2002. L'objectif de cette revue à comité de lecture et à accès libre est de présenter des articles sur les domaines de la recherche et de la pratique en développement de carrière qui intéressent les chercheurs et les praticiens en développement de carrière au Canada et à l'étranger. La revue est multisectorielle et comprend un éventail d'articles méthodologiques, théoriques et sur les meilleures pratiques.

La revue est publiée à l'Université Memorial de Terre-Neuve, avec le soutien du CERIC grâce à une subvention de la Counselling Foundation of Canada. Les opinions exprimées sont celles des auteurs et ne reflètent pas nécessairement celles de la Revue canadienne de développement de carrière, de l'Université Memorial de Terre-Neuve ou des dirigeants, administrateurs ou employés du CERIC.

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Canadian Journal of Career Development
Revue canadienne de développement de carrière

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CANADIAN JOURNAL OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT | REVUE CANADIENNE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE CARRIÈRE

ARTICLES- CANADIAN | CANADIENNE

ARTICLES- INTERNATIONAL

Graduate Student Research Briefs | Résumés de recherche d'étudiants aux cycles supérieurs

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK | DU BUREAU DE LA RÉDACTRICE EN CHEF

Dr. Jennifer Browne Editor/ Rédactrice en chef

As the leaves turn and the season shifts, we're pleased to present the Fall edition of the Canadian Journal of Career Development, featuring seven compelling articles that reflect the evolving landscape of career development across diverse populations and contexts. This issue includes two articles in French, underscoring our commitment to bilingual scholarship and inclusive dialogue.

Navigating Careers in Uncertainty The theme of navigating complexity emerges strongly in our first article, which explores how expatriates and repatriates construct their careers amid chaos. Whether climbing the traditional career ladder or weaving through the more flexible career lattice, this research highlights the adaptive strategies professionals employ in globalized, unpredictable environments.

Organizational Justice and Talent Identification Another standout contribution applies self-determination theory to examine how talent identification practices influence employees' perceptions of fairness and their psychological needs. This work deepens our understanding of how organizational processes can either support or hinder motivation and engagement.

Career Readiness in Nigeria From Ibadan, Nigeria, we gain insight into the career readiness trends among final-year undergraduates. This article sheds light on the challenges and aspirations of students preparing to enter the workforce, offering a valuable international perspective on employability and transition.

Credentialing and Capacity in Nova Scotia Closer to home, a rigorous review of career development training and certification in Nova Scotia provides an evidence-based look at professional standards. This piece contributes to the ongoing conversation about capacity-building and the importance of credentialing in our field.

Experiential Learning and Student Development In another university setting, researchers demonstrate how an experientially-mediated career development group can significantly enhance students' core competencies and readiness for the world of work. The findings affirm the power of hands-on, reflective learning in shaping career trajectories.

Francophone Contributions Our two French-language articles offer rich insights: one presents a redesign of the Quebec version of the Entrepreneur Scale within the typological inventory of personal characteristics, while the other explores the school-to-work transition for individuals with specific

Alors que les feuilles tournent et que la saison change, nous avons le plaisir de vous présenter le numéro d'automne de la Revue canadienne de développement de carrière, qui contient sept articles passionnants reflétant l'évolution du paysage du développement de carrière dans des populations et des contextes divers. Ce numéro comprend deux articles en français, ce qui souligne notre engagement en faveur d'une recherche bilingue et d'un dialogue inclusif.

Naviguer dans l'incertitude Le thème de la navigation dans la complexité émerge fortement dans notre premier article, qui explore la manière dont les expatriés et les rapatriés construisent leur carrière dans le chaos. Qu'il s'agisse de gravir l'échelle traditionnelle des carrières ou d'évoluer au sein d'unréseau professionnel plus flexible , cette recherche met en lumière les stratégies d'adaptation que les professionnels emploient dans des environnements mondialisés et imprévisibles.

Justice organisationnelle et identification des talents Une autre contribution remarquable applique la théorie de l'autodétermination pour examiner comment les pratiques d'identification des talents influencent les perceptions d'équité des employés et leurs besoins psychologiques. Ce travail permet d'approfondir notre compréhension de la manière dont les processus organisationnels peuvent soutenir ou entraver la motivation et l'engagement.

La préparation à la carrière au Nigéria Depuis Ibadan, au Nigéria, nous avons un aperçu des tendances en matière de préparation à la carrière parmi les étudiants en dernière année de licence. Cet article met en lumière les défis et les aspirations des étudiants qui se préparent à entrer sur le marché du travail, offrant ainsi une perspective internationale précieuse sur l'employabilité et la transition.

Attestation et capacité en Nouvelle-Écosse Plus près de nous, un examen rigoureux de la formation et de l'attestation en matière de développement de carrière en Nouvelle-Écosse fournit un aperçu des normes professionnelles fondé sur des données probantes. Cet article contribue à la conversation en cours sur le renforcement des capacités et l'importance de la délivrance de titres et de certificats dans notre domaine.

Apprentissage expérientiel et développement des étudiants Dans un autre contexte universitaire, les chercheurs démontrent comment un groupe de développement de carrière basé sur l'expérience peut améliorer de manière significative les compétences de base des étudiants et learning disabilities. Both pieces underscore the importance of culturally and contextually responsive tools and supports in career development.

Diana and I extend our heartfelt thanks to our readers, authors, and reviewers for your continued support and engagement. Your contributions make this journal a vibrant platform for impactful research, thoughtful dialogue, and meaningful progress in the field of career development. We sincerely thank CERIC and Memorial University for their continued support of the Canadian Journal of Career Development. In our commitment to sustaining and growing the journal's impact, we have again applied to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Aid for Scholarly Journals program to support ongoing innovation and advancement.

We invite you to explore these articles, reflect on their implications, and continue the conversation. Here's to another season of learning, growth, and connection.

Wishing you all a productive and joyful fall.

Dr. Jennifer Browne
Chief Editor

leur préparation au monde du travail. Les résultats confirment le pouvoir de l'apprentissage pratique et réfléchi dans l'élaboration des trajectoires professionnelles.

Contributions francophones Nos deux articles en français offrent de riches perspectives : l'un présente une refonte de la version québécoise de l'Échelle de l'entrepreneur dans le cadre de l'inventaire typologique des caractéristiques personnelles, tandis que l'autre explore la transition de l'école au travail pour les personnes ayant des troubles d'apprentissage spécifiques. Les deux articles soulignent l'importance d'outils et de soutiens adaptés à la culture et au contexte dans le développement de carrière.

Diana et moi-même remercions chaleureusement nos lecteurs, auteurs et évaluateurs pour leur soutien et leur engagement continus. Vos contributions font de cette revue une plateforme dynamique pour la recherche d'impact, le dialogue réfléchi et les progrès significatifs dans le domaine du développement de carrière. Nous remercions sincèrement le CERIC et l'Université Memorial pour leur soutien continu à la Revue canadienne de développement de carrière. Dans le cadre de notre engagement à maintenir et à accroître l'impact de la revue, nous avons de nouveau fait appel au programme d'aide aux revues savantes du Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines pour soutenir l'innovation et l'avancement continus.

Nous vous invitons à explorer ces articles, à réfléchir à leurs implications et à poursuivre la conversation. Nous vous souhaitons une nouvelle saison d'apprentissage, de croissance et de connexion.

Nous vous souhaitons à tous un automne productif et joyeux.

Jennifer
Dr. Jennifer Browne

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How Talent Identification Influences Perceptions of Organizational Justice and Basic Psychological Needs: A Self-Determination Theory Approach

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the impact of talent identification practices on employees' psychological needs and to examine the mediating role of distributive justice/injustice between talent identification and psychological needs. Additionally, it investigates procedural justice/injustice as a moderating variable in this mediation. A cross-sectional sample (n=124) with clinical vignettes was used to test the hypotheses through moderated mediation analysis. The findings reveal three key insights. First, talent identification significantly correlates with psychological needs. High-potential individuals reported greater satisfaction of their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness compared to non-high potential employees employees, who reported higher frustration levels. Second, high potentials perceived greater distributive justice, correlating with increased psychological need satisfaction. Conversely, non-high potential employees perceived higher distributive injustice, leading to greater psychological need frustration. Third, procedural justice/injustice did not significantly moderate the mediation. However, procedural justice/injustice was significantly related to psychological needs, independent of distributive justice/injustice. Our research makes a vital addition to the human resource management (HRM) field by providing quantitative empirical analysis of talent identification where prior work has been largely conceptual or qualitative. Given the current labor market's supply-demand imbalance, understanding these dynamics is increasingly critical.

Keywords: Talent management, talent philosophies, talent identification, organizational justice, self-determination theory,

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The strategic role of talent management in enhancing organizational effectiveness is well-recognized (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Iles et al., 2010; O'Toole & Lawler, 2008). Despite a shift towards hiring employees with less experience, the emphasis on talent management programs remains strong, especially within the private sector that often adopts an exclusive approach, favoring employees deemed as high potential (Cappelli, 2008). While the organizational advantages of such programs are documented (Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014), the individual-level outcomes, particularly for those not identified as high potential, are less understood.

This gap in understanding is particularly significant given the evolving nature of work in the 21st century. The rise of the gig economy (a labor market characterized by short-term contracts, freelance work, and temporary positions, as opposed to permanent jobs), remote work, and the increasing importance of soft skills have transformed traditional notions of talent and potential (Schwab, 2017; Deloitte, 2020). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated these trends, forcing organizations to rethink their talent management strategies in the context of unprecedented uncertainty and rapid change (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). This new landscape demands a more nuanced and adaptable understanding of talent identification and development.

Grounded in organizational justice theory (Adams, 1963, 1965) and self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000), this study aims to investigate the varying responses to talent identification between high potential and non-high potential employees. Our research makes an addition to the human resource management (HRM) field by providing quantitative empirical analysis where prior work has been largely conceptual or qualitative (Huselid & Becker, 2011; Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). Furthermore, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on inclusive talent management practices (Swailes et al., 2014; Meyers, 2020). By examining the effects of talent identification on both high potential and non-high potential employees, we shed light on the potential unintended consequences of exclusive talent management approaches and offer insights into more equitable and effective practices. Given the current labor market's supply-demand imbalance (Martel, 2019) and the increasing focus on employee well-being and engagement (Gallup, 2021), understanding these dynamics is increasingly critical. Our findings have implications not only for HR practitioners but also for organizational leaders seeking to create more inclusive and motivating work environments in an era of talent scarcity and heightened competition. The following section will discuss the relevant literature and the interplay between the constructs of interest, including organizational justice perceptions, intrinsic motivation, and the psychological effects of talent identification in the workplace.

What is Talent?

Talent is a term used in a variety of disciplines like sports, education, and business. In human resource management literature, talent is often defined as: "The innate abilities of individuals to perform excellently in one or more domains of human functioning, operationalized as performing better than other individuals of the same age or experience, or as performing consistently at their personal best" (Nijs et al., 2014, p. 182). In this regard, talent management aims to make strategic resource allocations at every step of the talent management lifecycle (identification, selection, planning, development, retention). In other words, the primary goal of talent management is to support decision-making that will provide value to the organization, which translates into competencies, skills, abilities, and strengths nurtured in the selected talent (Nijs et al., 2014). Although the importance of talent management in organizations is widely recognized, the conceptualization of its nature varies across different talent management philosophies (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013).

Meyers et al. (2020, p. 564) discuss talent management philosophies, drawing on the definition provided by Meyers and Van Woerkom (2014). These philosophies are described as "the core assumptions and beliefs about the nature, significance, and functionality of talent held by a firm's principal decision-makers." According to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013), these philosophies primarily fall into two categories: inclusive and exclusive approaches.The inclusive philosophy of talent management posits that every employee harbor unique strengths that can, with the right focus, contribute significant value to an organization (Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001; Meyers et al., 2020). It upholds the principle that the collective capabilities of employees constitute the most substantial competitive edge, and that leveraging the strengths of everyone is essential for organizational success (Tulgan, 2002). However, this non-discriminatory approach closely mirrors strategic human resource management, which primarily aims to align employee management with the broader objectives of the organization (Gelens et al., 2013). Additionally, such an approach could lead to substantial development costs, given its expansive scope (Lin, 2006). This, in part, explains why organizations may favor an exclusive talent management philosophy.

The premise of an exclusive talent management philosophy is that it allocates resources differently among employees through differentiation or segmentation practices. This segmentation is often based on the estimated value that specific employees could provide to the organization if their potential were honed and developed (Tansley et al., 2013). Employees who are high performers or have the potential to perform above average are therefore considered the elite ("A *Players*") (Anlesinya et al., 2019; Cappelli, 2008b; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Thunnissen et al., 2013b). These employees are identified as having high market value given their unique skills and abilities that are difficult to replace (Lepak & Snell, 1999). Employee segmentation is therefore a fundamental aspect to exclusive talent management practices (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Ledford & Kochanski, 2004).

Various studies indicate that workforce differentiation positively impacts organizational performance (Becker & Huselid, 2006; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Gelens et al., 2013; Lepak & Snell, 1999). However, exclusive talent management approaches—those that segregate employees into categories like "high potential" and " non-high potential employee"—face scrutiny. Critics argue that such stratification may undermine group cohesion and morale, especially among non-selected employees (Cappelli, 2017; Delong & Vijayaraghavan, 2003; Marescaux et al., 2013).

Therefore, organizational justice theory becomes a pertinent framework to examine the effects of talent management philosophies on employee perceptions. Research suggests a correlation between talent identification processes and employees' perceptions of fairness or lack thereof within an organization (De Boeck et al., 2018; Gelens et al., 2013, 2014; Peterson et al., 2022).

How Talent Management Philosophies Affect Perceived Organizational Justice?

Colquitt and Greenberg (2003) define organizational justice as "the extent to which individuals perceive organizational events to be just" (p.159). Perceived justice is positively related to job satisfaction, commitment, performance, trust in the organization and prosocial behaviors (Collings et al., 2011). Perceptions of injustice, however, are linked to many individual outcomes such as intention to leave (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001), poor job performance (Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991) and job dissatisfaction (Colquitt et al., 2001). Organizational justice theory includes distributive justice (is the distribution of resources fair?), procedural justice (are the procedures that justify the distribution of resources fair?) and interactional justice (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001), which is comprised of two subcategories, informational justice (is the access to information fair?) and interpersonal justice (is the treatment of employees fair?) (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Talent management philosophies are about allocation of resources. In an exclusive talent management philosophy, resource allocation is asymmetric, which can be perceived as unfair. De Boeck et al.'s (2018) systematic review indicates that employees' perceptions of distributive justice—how benefits and rewards are allocated—play a pivotal mediating role between their status (as high potential or non-high potential employees) and their reactions, whether cognitive, emotional, or behavioral. Gelens et al. (2014) further demonstrate that employees' perception of procedural justice moderates the link between distributive justice and work effort. This underscores the importance of fair processes in talent management, as fair procedures positively influence the employee responses to talent segmentation (De Boeck et al., 2018; Van Prooijen, 2009). In sum, the direct influence of talent identification on perceived justice of resource distribution affects work outcomes, while the perceived justice of the identification process itself can strengthen or weaken this effect.

Self-determination theory (SDT), as developed by Ryan & Deci (2000), provides a valuable lens for understanding how perceptions of organizational justice can influence the satisfaction of employees' basic psychological needs. In the context of talent identification, SDT suggests that the effectiveness of human resource interventions can be evaluated based on their ability to satisfy these intrinsic needs while minimizing frustration (Aldama et al., 2021; Marescaux et al., 2013; Van Prooijen, 2009).

How Talent Identification Influences Employees' Basic Psychological Needs?

Self-Determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) is a macro theory of motivation and, has been validated and supported across a broad spectrum of fields such as sports, education, psychotherapy, health, parenting and work (Deci et al., 2017). One of the foundational postulates of SDT is that it suggests human beings are inherently proactive organisms in constant search for opportunities to improve their circumstances (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004). This desire to seek greater personal and social integrity requires certain "vitamins" to achieve it. Under SDT, those vitamins correspond to the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013).

There are three psychological needs: autonomy (e.g., the ability to act with volition), competence (e.g., to be adequately equipped to perform one`s duties) and relatedness (e.g., the degree to which one feels they belong) (Deci et al., 2017). Fulfilling basic psychological needs is linked to enhanced job satisfaction, lower turnover intentions (Lian et al., 2012), and reduced burnout (Van den Broeck et al., 2008). Additionally, satisfying these needs contributes to more self-determined forms of motivation, serving as independent predictors of intrinsic motivation and overall psychological well-being (De Cooman et al., 2013; Van den Broeck et al., 2016). Research indicates that distributive justice precedes the satisfaction of basic psychological needs (Aldama et al., 2021; Van Prooijen, 2009), and that talent identification directly affects perceptions of distributive justice (De Boeck et al., 2018).

This study posits that distributive justice indirectly influences the connection between talent identification and the satisfaction of psychological needs.

Hypothesis 1: Distributive justice mediates the relationship between talent identification and basic need satisfaction, such that participants identified as high potentials will perceive greater distributive justice, which will lead to greater need satisfaction than participants not identified as high potentials.

On the other hand, need frustration can result in detrimental effects on both employee well-being and organizational performance (Forest et al., 2022). For example, Vander Elst et al. (2012) observed that Finnish employees experiencing need frustration reported lower job performance, decreased well-being, and increased burnout. This suggests that human resource management (HRM) practices should aim to simultaneously enhance need satisfaction and reduce need frustration (Marescaux et al, 2013). Consequently, we suggest that talent identification impacts need frustration through its influence on perceptions of distributive injustice.

Hypothesis 2: Distributive injustice mediates the relationship between talent identification and basic need frustration, such that participants identified as high potential will perceive less distributive injustice, which will lead to lower need frustration than participants not identified as high potentials.

In light of the literature, it is evident that employees' views on procedural justice play a crucial role in the relationship between distributive justice and work outcomes. This highlights the significance of equitable processes in talent management. Specifically, fair procedures can enhance how employees react to talent segmentation. In more concrete terms, the direct impact of talent identification on the perceived justice of resource distribution influences work outcomes (De Boeck et al., 2018; Van Prooijen, 2009). Moreover, how fair the identification process is perceived can either amplify or diminish this impact. Therefore, in this study, we posit that procedural justice will moderate the mediating role of distributive justice, both in its just and unjust forms, in the link between talent identification and the satisfaction or frustration of needs.

Hypothesis 3: Procedural justice moderates the mediation, such that when procedural justice is high, it increases perceptions of distributive justice and therefore increase all the more the satisfaction of basic psychological needs.

Hypothesis 4: Procedural injustice moderates the mediation, such that when procedural injustice is high, it increases perceptions of distributive injustice and therefore increase all the more the frustration of basic psychological needs.

Method

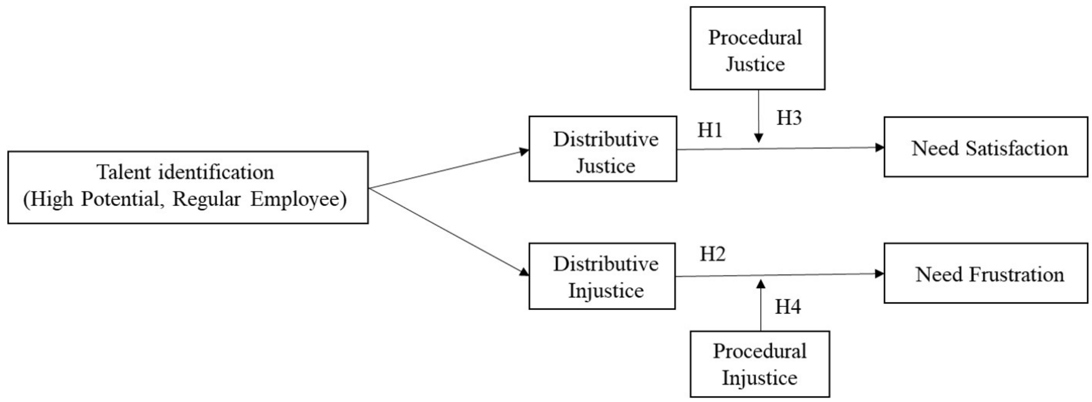
Study Design

For this cross-sectional study, we used vignettes and quantitative questionnaires to explore the research objectives and hypotheses. Figure 1 illustrates all the proposed hypotheses. It is through the use of vignettes that we were able to manipulate our main variable of interest: talent identification. Both vignettes and their respective questionnaires were offered both in French and English. In order to perform the two moderated mediations required to explore our four hypotheses, we used the software R version 4.2.2 (Team, 2021).

Participants

Our initial sample of 146 participants was collected using two methods: snowball sampling and a professional recruitment platform. Snowball sampling, a technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances, was used to recruit participants (n=79) within the researcher's academic and professional networks. The remaining participants (n=67) were recruited through the Prolific Academic platform, a specialized online service for recruiting research participants. This dual-strategy approach was chosen to balance the benefits and limitations of each method. Snowball sampling allowed for

Figure 1
Theoretical Model



cost-effective recruitment within relevant professional networks, while the use of Prolific Academic provided access to a diverse pool of participants, potentially reducing bias and increasing generalizability. We performed a listwise deletion of 22 participants who had answered less than 30% of the questionnaire, resulting in a final sample size of 124 participants. The only inclusion criterion was being at least 18 years of age.The final sample comprised 124 participants with the following age distribution: 5.64% were 18-20 years old, 39.52% were 21-29, 20.16% were 30-39, 11.29% were 40-49, 8.87% were 50-59, 2.42% were over 60, and 12.1% did not disclose their age. Regarding gender, 34.68% identified as male, 51.61% as female, and 13.71% did not disclose their gender. Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of these descriptive statistics.

Table 1
Sample Descriptive Statistics

	n	%
Gender		
Male	6	39%
Female	96	60%
Prefer not to answer	2	1%
Age Group		
18-20	7	4%
21-29	60	38%
30-39	44	28%
40-49	28	18%
50-59	17	11%
60+	4	2%
Racial Group		
Black	2	1%
East Asian	11	7%
Latino	8	5%
Middle Eastern	3	2%

Procedure

After obtaining consent, each participant was randomly assigned a talent status, either as a high potential or a non-high potential employee. Participants were asked to embody this status when reading the vignettes as well as answering the questionnaires. Following the talent status assignment, participants read a short context which introduced the reader to the concept of exclusive talent management philosophies as well as the kind of treatment that employees identified as high potential or non-high potential employees are expected to receive.

Each participant was asked to read two vignettes, one vignette describing an exclusive talent management context adopting a transparent approach, and one vignette describing an exclusive talent management context adopting an ambiguous approach. The two vignettes were set to alternate from one participant to another to avoid habituation. At the

	n	%
South Asian	7	4%
Southeast Asian	3	2%
Caucasian	121	76%
Other	4	3%
Activity Sector		
Commerce	7	4%
Fabrication	3	2%
Primary Sector	1	1%
Public Services	17	11%
Teaching, Health, & Social Sciences	33	21%
Professional & Administrative Services	16	10%
Construction	3	2%
Culture, Information, Lodging	11	7%
Public Administration	11	7%
Transportation & Storage	5	3%
Other	52	33%
Education		
High School	15	9%
CEGEP	2	1%
Diploma of Collegiate Studies	12	8%
Undergraduate	76	48%
Masters	50	31%
Phd, Post Doctorate	4	3%
Work Position		
Employee	119	75%
Manager	22	14%
Middle Manager	13	8%
Top Management	4	3%

Note. N= 123

end of each vignette, participants had to complete a questionnaire measuring their perceptions of justice and injustice as well as their basic psychological needs. The same questionnaire was therefore completed twice, Why did you do this? hence doubling the number of observations from 124 to 248.

A short debrief at the very end of the questionnaire revealed the details of the random assignment and its objective, given participants were not aware of the random assignment of talent status. Participants were asked to renew their consent before submitting.

Vignettes

Vignettes were developed through a structured process led by the first author. Clear theoretical anchors were first identified based on the literature review and study's conceptual framework. The vignettes then underwent several rounds of review by team members who possess complementary expertise in employee development, work motivation, and experimental research design, ensuring their theoretical alignment and practical relevance (see Appendix for the complete vignettes). The first vignette described a portrait of a branch within a large organization adopting a transparent approach to their talent identification practices, while the second vignette described another branch within that same large organization adopting an ambiguous (i.e., opaque) approach to their talent identification process. The vignettes are of the "Paper-People Studies" type, a method that aims to obtain explicit responses from respondents based on fictitious scenarios (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). We adopted a mixed-design approach in the conceptualization, meaning all respondents read both vignettes. This design enables both between- and within-subject comparisons (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). The purpose of this doubling (having all participants read both vignettes) was twofold. Firstly, it allowed for within-subject comparisons, providing insights into how individual participants' responses differ between transparent and opaque talent identification practices. Secondly, it increased statistical power and reduced the impact of individual differences by having each participant serve as their own control. This approach enhances the robustness of our findings by allowing us to examine both individual-level changes and group-level differences in responses to different talent identification practices.

Scales

Perception of Distributive and Procedural Justice and Injustice

We chose Hansen et al. (2013) shortened version of Colquitt et al. (2015; 2001) perception of organizational justice scale due to its established validity and specific focus on distributive and procedural justice. For the French version of the questionnaires, items were translated in French using the back-translation method as recommended by Hambleton et Kanjee (1993). Furthermore, following Chan's (1998) compositional approach commonly used in organizational research, we adapted specific items from the original scale to align with our study context. For instance, the original item "*Are those outcomes justified, given your performance*?" was modified to "*Is the status assignment justified, given your performance?*" This adaptation maintained the validated structure of the scale while addressing status assignment beliefs rather than general outcomes. Following Chan's (1998) guidelines, we only modified the referent terms while preserving the core properties of the validated scale. Distributive justice subscale contains 3 items (α = .92; e.g. *Is the status assignment consistent with the effort employees put into their work*?) and the distributive injustice subscale also contains 3 items (α= .76; e.g. *Is the status assignment inconsistent with the efforts employees put into their work?*). Procedural justice is measured with 6 items (α = .72; e.g. *Do you feel that these procedures are consistent over time?*), and procedural injustice is measured with 6 items (α = .52; e.g. *Do you feel these processes are unevenly applied?*). The procedural injustice items fall within the recommended limit of .50 for emerging constructs (Ahire & Devaraj, 2001; Nunnally, 1978). Each item is measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very Strongly).

Basic Need Satisfaction and Frustration

The satisfaction and frustration of basic psychological needs are measured with the Basic Psychological Needs at Work Scale (BPNW-S) developed by Huyghebaert-Zouaghi et al. (2020). The questionnaire, available both in English and French, is comprised of 25 items measuring the satisfaction and frustration of the basic psychological needs, respectively 3 items for autonomy satisfaction (α = .86; e.g. *I feel free to make choices with regards to the way I work*), 3 items measure for competence satisfaction (α = .90; e.g. *I feel skilled*), and 6 items measuring relatedness (α = .96; e.g. *I feel included*). As for the frustration of basic psychological needs, 4 items measure autonomy frustration (α = .85; e.g. *I feel forced to follow decisions about my work*), 4 items for competence frustration (α = .94; e.g. *I feel useless*), and five items measure relatedness frustration (α = .93; e.g. *I feel disliked*).

Socio-Demographic Variables

In addition to the validated items from the justice/injustice scale, the questionnaire incorporated a consent form as well as socio-demographic questions. As recommended by Cohen-Charash & Spector (2001) in their meta-analysis on perception of organizational justice, we collected information on participant's age, gender, education level, race and current position within their organization.

Results

We used the statistical language R version 4.2.2 (Team, 2021) to perform the moderated mediation analysis, based on an initial sample of 124 participants. The "process" function developed by Hayes (2017) was used to perform the moderated mediation. Furthermore, we mean centered all variables of interest for the analysis . In an analysis involving an interaction between variables like a moderated mediation, calculations from M to Y considers W as equal to 0. Given our moderator variable W (Procedural Justice/Injustice) ranges from 1 to 7, it would not have made statistical sense to consider it as equal to 0. Therefore, mean centering would make the variable coefficients implicated in the interaction interpretable.

Descriptive Statistics

An initial sample of 146 participants was collected. A listwise deletion was performed of participants who completed less than 30% of the questionnaire, removing 22 participants. The final sample size was therefore 124 participants. A summary of means, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables of interest is available in Table 2.

Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviations and Correlations

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Distributive Justice	124	4.11	1.46	_					
2. Distributive Injustice	124	3.54	1.20	-0.61**	_				
3. Procedural Justice	121	3.55	1.01	0.58**	-0.23*	_			
4. Procedural Injustice	121	3.76	0.86	-0.39*	0.46**	-0.39**	_		
5. Need Satisfaction	119	4.54	1.24	0.69**	-0.51**	0.42**	-0.36**	_	
6. Need Frustration	110	3.44	1.17	-0.56**	0.56**	-0.36**	0.49**	-0.84**	_

Note: *p<.05 **p<.001

Preliminary Analysis

First, we performed a chi-square analysis between the socio-demographic variables to verify there were no significant differences between the snowball method sample and the Prolific sample. Results revealed that neither Age (p = .09), Gender (p = .09), Race (p = .19), Activity Sector (p = .062) nor Level of Education (p = .11) had a significant difference between samples. There was however a significant difference for the Position within the organization, with 18% Prolific participants identifying as being managers and 17% non-prolific participants identifying as being part of middle-management. Given the similarities between the two categories and potential overlap in definition, no further statistical manipulations were made.

Second, we conducted a non-parametric test of homoscedasticity in order to examine which type of missing data our dataset was comprised of using the R package "MissMech" (Jamshidian et al., 2014). The non-parametric test of homoscedasticity was non-significant for both the distributive justice and distributive injustice subscales, therefore showing that missing data was Missing Completely at Random (MCAR), hence rejecting the null hypothesis of normality. To minimize data manipulation, we computed variables using average item scores. Given the MCAR nature of missing data, we decided to retain the missing values without imputation and proceed with our preliminary analysis..

Third, in examining outliers within our sample, no univariate outliers were found for most variables, except for procedural injustice, which presented four outliers due to a leptokurtic distribution. These were retained. For multivariate outliers, we used Mahalanobis distance, a statistical measure that identifies cases with unusual combinations of scores across multiple variables by calculating the distance of each observation from the mean center of all observations. We selected this method because it accounts for the covariance structure of the data and is particularly effective for detecting outliers in multivariate normal distributions. Using a critical threshold of 22.46 for six degrees of freedom, corresponding to our six variables, one observation exceeded this threshold (D^2 = 27.4). However, given it was a single instance, it was not excluded. The analyses utilized "car" and "psych" packages in R.

Finally, we examine the normality of our variables of interest, both univariate and multivariate. The Mardia Test, applied using the "MVN" R package, confirmed that procedural justice, distributive injustice, and need frustration adhered to normality. Distributive justice, procedural injustice, and need satisfaction, however, did not. Despite this, all variables displayed skewness and kurtosis within the acceptable range of |1|, suggesting the deviations from normality in our data are not significant enough to require adjustments.

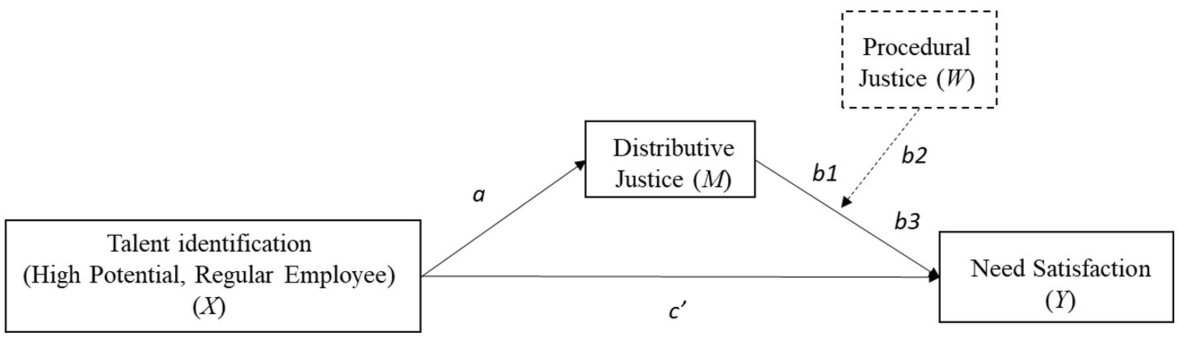
Primary Analysis

Moderated Mediation 1

For *H1* and *H2*, we used Process' function Model 14 (Hayes, 2017) to perform a moderated mediation with needs satisfaction as dependent variable (Y), status as independent variable (X), distributive justice as mediator (M) and procedural justice as moderator (W) of the relationship between M and Y (see Figure 2). Results revealed significant direct effects between status and need satisfaction ($B = 1.17$, $SE = 0.19$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.7991, 1.5426]), status and distributive justice ($B = 1.77$, $SE = 0.22$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.35, 2.20]) as well as distributive justice and need satisfaction ($B = 0.19$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.008,0.37]).

Figure 2

Moderated Mediation 1



Next, we examined the indirect effect of distributive justice on the relationship between status and need satisfaction (H1), and to examine whether procedural justice acts as a moderator in the mediation of distributive justice on the relationship between status and needs satisfaction (H2). Bootstrap 95% confidence intervals were computed from 5000 bootstrap samples. Results revealed a significant indirect effect of status through distributive justice on need satisfaction ($B = 0.47$, Boot$SE = 0.17$, 95% CI [0.14,0.82]), supporting H1. Additionally, the moderated mediation revealed to be non-significant ($B = 0.003$, $SE = 0.056$, $p = .95$, 95% CI [-0.11,0.11]), hence rejecting H2. A table summarizing the results of the moderated mediation can be found in Table 3.

In other words, participants identified as high potential scored on average 1.78 points higher in their perception of distributive justice than participants identified as non-high potential employees. Furthermore, while controlling for perceptions of procedural and distributive justice, participants identified as high potential scored on average 1.17 more on their scores of need satisfaction than their non-high potential employee counterparts. Additionally, when distributive justice is held at zero (otherwise understood as the average given, we mean-centered the variables), procedural justice is significantly related to need satisfaction. The interaction between distributive justice and procedural justice was non-significant, thus suggesting there is a relationship between procedural justice and need satisfaction regardless of the score of distributive justice. Lastly, the model explains 61% of the total variability of need satisfaction, $F(4,114) = 44.78$, $p < .001$.

Table 3

Results From Moderated Mediation 1

			Consequent										
			M (DJ)						Y (NEEDSAT)				
	Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	*t*	*p*	CI		Coeff.	SE	*t*	*p*	CI
X	Status	*a*	1.78	0.22	8.29	0.00	[1.35, 2.20]	*c'*	1.17	0.19	6.24	0.00	[1.35, 2.20]
M	Distributive Justice		—	—	—	—	—	*b1*	0.26	0.08	3.41	0.00	[0.11, 0.42]
W	Procedural Justice		—	—	—	—	—	*b2*	0.19	0.09	2.07	0.04	[-0.01, 0.37]
	M*W		—	—	—	—	—	*b3*	0.003	0.06	0.06	0.95	[-0.11. 0.11]
	Constant		-0.84	0.15	-5.58	0.00	[-1.14, -0.54]		-0.59	0.12	-4.81	0.00	[-0.84, -0.35]
			R^2= 0.37						R^2= 0.61				
			F(1,117) = 68.69, *p*<.001						F(4,114) = 44.78, *p*<.001				

Moderated Mediation 2

The second moderated mediation exploring *H3* and *H4* was also performed using Process' Model 14 (Hayes, 2017), with this time need frustration as dependent variable (Y), status as independent variable (X), distributive injustice as mediator (M) and procedural injustice as moderator (W) of the relationship between M and Y (see Figure 3). Results revealed significant direct effects between status and need frustration (B = -0.84, SE = 0.17, p < .001, 95% CI [-1.18, -0.49]), status on distributive injustice (B = -1.03, SE = 1.99, p < .001, 95% CI [-1.43, -0.63]) as well as distributive injustice and needs frustration (B = 0.26, SE = 0.08, p < .005, 95% CI [0.09, 0.42]).

Next, we examined the indirect effects of distributive injustice on the relationship between status and needs frustration (H3), and to examine whether procedural injustice acts as a moderator in the mediation of distributive injustice on the relationship between status and need frustration (H4). Bootstrap 95% confidence intervals were computed from 5000 bootstrap samples. Results revealed a significant indirect effect of status through distributive injustice on need frustration (B = -0.27, BootSE = 0.11, 95% CI [-0.48, -0.07]), supporting H3. Additionally, the moderated mediation revealed to be non-significant (B = 0.02, SE = 0.07, p = .76, 95% CI [-0.11,0.15]), hence rejecting H4. A table summarizing the results of the mediated moderation can be found in Table 4.

Figure 3

Moderated Mediation 2

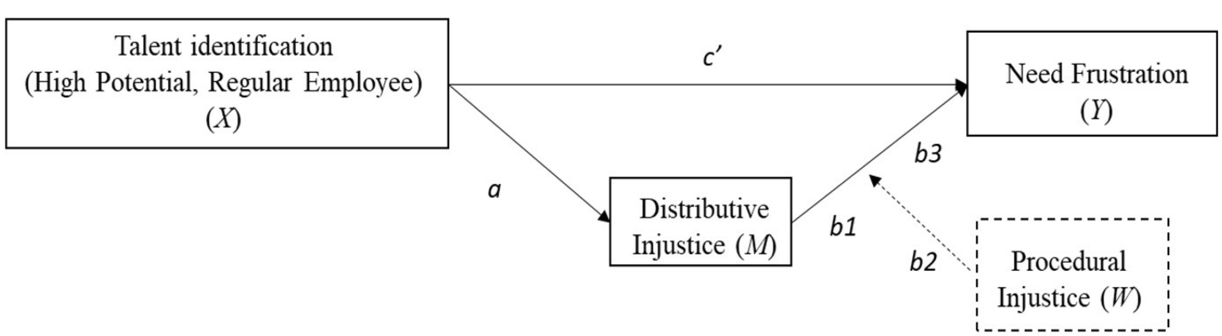


Table 4

Results From Moderated Mediation 2

			Consequent											
			M (DInj)						Y (NEEDFRU)					
	Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	*t*	*p*	CI		Coeff.	SE	*t*	*p*	CI
X	Status	*a*	-1.03	0.20	-5.15	0.00	[-1.43, -0.63]	*c'*	-0.84	0.17	-4.82	0.00	[-1.18, -0.49]
M	Distributive Justice		—	—	—	—	—	*b1*	0.26	0.08	3.22	0.00	[0.10, 0.42]
W	Procedural Justice		—	—	—	—	—	*b2*	0.41	0.10	3.92	0.00	[0.20, 0.61]
	M*W		—	—	—	—	—	*b3*	0.02	0.07	0.30	0.76	[-0.11. 0.15]
	Constant		0.47	0.14	3.37	0.00	[0.20, 0.75]		0.42	0.12	3.45	0.00	[0.18, 0.66]
			R^2= 0.19						R^2= 0.49				
			F(1,117) = 26.56, p<.001						F(4,114) = 26.94, p<.001				

In other words, participants identified as high potential scored on average 1.03 points lower in their perception of distributive injustice than participants not identified as high potentials. Furthermore, while controlling for perceptions of procedural and distributive injustice, participants identified as high potential scored on average 0.83 points less on their scores of need frustration than their non-high potential employee counterparts. Additionally, when distributive injustice is held at zero (otherwise understood as the average, given we mean-centered the variables), procedural injustice is significantly related to need satisfaction. The interaction between distributive injustice and procedural injustice was non-significant, thus suggesting there is a relationship between procedural injustice and need frustration regardless of the score of distributive injustice. Lastly, the model explains 49% of the total variability of need frustration, F(4,114) = 26.94, p < .001.

Discussion

There were two aims of this study: first, to explore the mediating role of distributive justice/injustice in the relationship between talent identification and basic psychological needs, and second, to explore the role of procedural justice/injustice as moderator in the mediation described above. While organizational justice theory was often studied in the context of talent management, it is (to our knowledge) the first time that Self-Determination Theory is empirically studied in the context of talent management, specifically talent identification and how it influences employees` basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Moreover, this study contributes significantly to the talent management literature by providing empirical data for the examination of talent identification, which was an aspect where quantitative evidence had been notably scarce in HRM literature (Huselid & Becker, 2011; Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019).

Theoretical Implications

We found that talent identification is significantly related to basic psychological needs, such that participants who were identified as high potential reported higher levels of need satisfaction and lower levels of need frustration compared to those not identified as high potentials. This provides interesting and rare empirical insights into the lived experience of employees when they are assigned a status. Participants identified as high potential report greater satisfaction of their autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs. Literature on the consequences of need satisfaction suggest that people who have high need satisfaction will report more autonomous forms of motivation and well-being (Van den Broeck et al., 2016), and will experience higher personal and professional growth.

On the other hand, results suggest that participants not identified as high potentials will report greater frustration levels for their autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs. Consequences of need frustration has been studied in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) literature, suggesting that employees who report high scores of need frustration will also report less wellbeing, lower job performance, and more exhaustion (Vander Elst et al., 2012).

We found that distributive justice acted as a mediator in the relationship between talent identification and need satisfaction. Distributive injustice also acted as a mediator in the relationship between talent identification and need frustration. In their study on reactions to talent identification and perceived organizational justice, Gelens et al. (2014) had found that the relationship between talent identification and job satisfaction was fully mediated by distributive justice, such that employees identified as high potentials also reported significantly higher on perceived distributive justice than non-high potentials, and perceived distributive justice was significantly related to job satisfaction. Given job satisfaction is reported as a consequence of the satisfaction or frustration of basic psychological needs, our results are coherent with Gelens et al. (2014) and adds further quantitative empirical evidence that talent identification significantly influences employees` reactions and lived experience within the work environment.

In the De Boeck et al. (2018) systematic review of employee reactions to talent management, the authors theorized that perceived distributive justice would mediate the relationship between talent identification and employee reactions (cognitive, affective, behavioral). Our findings empirically support the author`s theory with distributive justice mediating the relationship between talent identification and need satisfaction, and additionally distributive injustice mediating the relationship between talent identification and need frustration.

While it is understood that interactions are often more difficult to detect than individual effects (McClelland & Judd, 1993), results suggest that neither procedural justice nor procedural injustice were significant moderators on the mediation between talent identification, distributive justice/injustice and need satisfaction/frustration. This finding contradicts previous research, including both conceptual articles (e.g., De Boeck et al., 2018) and empirical studies (e.g., Gelens et al., 2014), which suggested that procedural justice might act as moderator in the mediation between talent identification, distributive justice, and employee reactions. While the interactions were non-significant, results from the moderated mediation did however reveal that the simple effect of procedural justice on need satisfaction (and same for procedural injustice on need frustration) was significant, regardless of the score of distributive justice/injustice. Hence, when perceptions of procedural justice increase, so does need satisfaction. Similarly, when perceptions of procedural injustice increase, so does need frustration. Therefore, while acting independently from one another, distributive and procedural justice/injustice significantly influence basic psychological needs.

The magnitude of these moderated mediations' effects on our dependent variables warrants attention. Results indicate that the moderated mediation with distributive and procedural justice (H3) explained 61% of the variance in need satisfaction, representing a substantial effect size. Similarly, the moderated mediation model with distributive and procedural injustice (H4) accounted for 49% of the variance in need frustration.

In sum, the results from this study present two main contributions. First, exclusive talent management practices influence employee`s basic psychological needs, such that employees identified as high potential report greater satisfaction and less frustration of their basic psychological needs than non-high potential employees. Second, while the practice of talent identification influences employees` basic psychological needs, the total model of talent identification, perceived distributive and procedural justice/injustice is responsible for respectively 61% of need satisfaction's variance, and 49% of need frustration`s variance.

Limitations and Future Research

This study contains several limitations and avenues for future research. First, the use of vignettes contained both advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage is that it facilitated the manipulation of the variable of talent status, which would have been logistically and ethically challenging in a real-world context. It also allowed us to explore our research questions in a contained environment. Vignettes offer strong internal validity at the expense of external validity (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). The generalizability of results is therefore not assured. Future studies should validate the proposed model in this study also using longitudinal and quasi-experimental research designs.

Second, while the Colquitt et al. (2001) justice scale was validated (Colquitt, 2001), the updated justice scale proposed by Colquitt et al. (2015) including injustice as the opposite side of the spectrum has, on the other hand, not yet been validated. If the Cronbach's alpha for procedural injustice (α = .53) fell just above the threshold of .50 as recommended by Ahire et Devaraj (2001) for emerging constructs, this raises the need for a validated version of the full-range justice scale. Therefore, it would be valuable for future research to validate the Colquitt et al. (2015) full-range injustice scale in order to further solidify measures that account for both rule adherence and rule violation.

Third, it is important to note that this study's focus on exclusive management practices offers only a partial view of talent management, which is broader than the exclusive approach alone. To develop a more complete understanding of the impact of talent management practices on individual workplace perceptions and reactions, future research should aim to construct a methodology that examines both inclusive and exclusive talent management practices, particularly in relation to employee perceptions of justice and the fulfillment of basic psychological needs.

Fourth, while our mixed-design approach using vignettes offered methodological advantages, including increased statistical power and within-subject comparisons (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014), it also presents limitations. Having participants read both vignettes may have introduced order effects or created artificial contrasts between the two talent identification practices. Although this design allowed us to control for individual differences and examine how the same individual responds to different practices, it might have heightened participants' awareness of the differences between transparent and opaque approaches, potentially influencing their responses. Future research might consider employing between-subject designs to complement our findings.

Finally, this study relied solely on self-report measures. Thus, common method bias might have confounded the findings. Future studies would benefit from using a combination of both subjective and objective measures like absenteeism rates or turnover rates.

Conclusion and Practical Implications

The present study`s purpose was to explore the mediating role of distributive justice and injustice in the relationship between talent identification and basic psychological needs. Another objective was to explore the role of procedural justice and injustice as a moderator in the mediation. Our study responds to Thunnissen and Gallardo-Gallardo's (2019) call for greater quantitative empirical studies in the field of talent management philosophies. Current literature has also been heavily oriented towards the United States (Thunnissen et al., 2013a), and the present research offers added cultural and linguistic variety to the talent management philosophies research field. The present research also offers a rare overview of employees reactions to exclusive talent management practices, as such programs consequences and benefits have mostly been studied from an organizational perspective (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). In short, this study suggests that organizations should strive for transparency and fairness in their talent identification processes to ensure the fulfillment of employees' psychological needs.

The results reveal that talent identification as an exclusive talent management practice plays an unequal and significant role in employees` basic psychological needs. Employees identified as high potentials report greater satisfaction of their psychological needs, while non-high potential employees report greater frustration of their psychological needs. This suggests that differentiating employees has the potential to instigate both upward and downward spirals, as research on basic needs is consistent in reporting that satisfying basic needs leads to positive outcomes, while frustrating needs leads to a variety of negative outcomes (Deci et al., 2017). In other words, the findings highlight the need for balanced talent management strategies that also support the needs of employees not identified as high potentials.

While only a small fraction of employees will be identified as high potentials, most employees score greater need frustration through labelling reminding them that they aren`t part of the elite. Given the competitive labor market (Martel, 2019), organizations may need to reevaluate their talent management practices to mitigate feelings of exclusion among the majority of employees, ensuring a more inclusive approach that contributes to overall business efficacy.

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Refonte de la version québécoise de l'Échelle Entrepreneure de l'inventaire typologique de caractéristiques personnelles (EE-ITCP-72-R)

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Résumé

Afin de faciliter l'évaluation de l'orientation professionnelle, John L. Holland a développé la théorie vocationnelle selon un modèle hexagonal postulant que la personnalité professionnelle et les environnements de travail se subdivisent selon six types distincts dans les sociétés occidentales. En plus de ses intérêts, la personnalité de l'individu, c'est-à-dire ses caractéristiques personnelles, contribue à une meilleure compréhension du choix vocationnel. L'objectif principal de cette étude porte sur la refonte la version québécoise de l'Échelle Entrepreneure de l'Inventaire Typologique de Caractéristiques Personnelles (EE-ITCP-72-R). Pour cette étude, 308 participants franco-québécois ont été recrutés. L'EE-ITCP-72-R comprend 12 caractéristiques personnelles. L'analyse factorielle exploratoire supporte également que l'Échelle Entrepreneure du modèle RIASEC de Holland n'est pas unidimensionnelle et qu'elle peut être sous-divisée en trois dimensions. Les indices de consistance interne de chaque dimension sont également adéquats. Pour conclure, étant basé sur la théorie vocationnelle de Holland, l'EE-ITCP-72-R permet de déterminer le profil vocationnel en lien avec la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure. De plus, la présence de dimensions permet de peaufiner le profil afin d'illustrer l'individualité du répondant avec davantage de précisions et de s'assurer de la plus grande adéquation avec le domaine d'emploi recherché.

Mots-clés: EE-ITCP-72-R, Orientation professionnelle, Personnalité, théorie vocationnelle, RIASEC, Entrepreneure

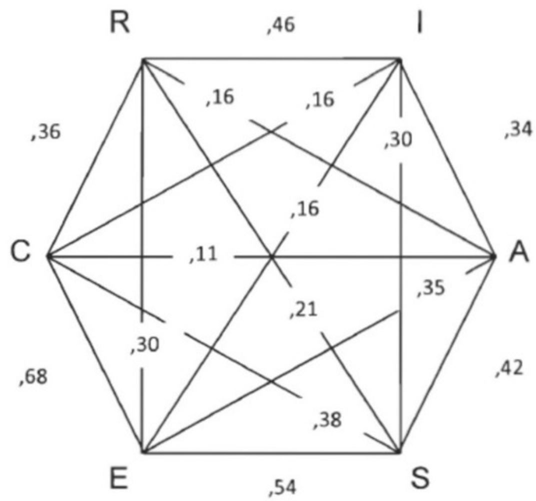
Se développant à la suite de l'interaction de l'hérédité et de l'environnement dans laquelle l'individu a grandi, les intérêts se construisent et s'intègrent progressivement au niveau cérébral à la suite de l'association d'une émotion avec une activité. Cette association se construit notamment par la satisfaction éprouvée par les renforcements de l'environnement et par la satisfaction suscitée par les comportements de l'individu lors de certaines activités (Briddick, 2009; Holland, 1997; Strong, 1958; Su et al., 2015). En ce sens, les apprentissages passés déterminent l'alignement des comportements et les choix d'un individu (Briddick, 2009). Par conséquent, le choix d'une profession transcende les intérêts professionnels d'un individu et constitue l'expression de sa personnalité (Holland, 1997).

Théorie vocationnelle d'Holland

Souhaitant créer un modèle théorique (Figure 1) pouvant être simple et aisément compris par les conseillers en orientation ainsi que les répondants eux-mêmes, John Holland (1959) postule que la personnalité des individus et les environnements de travail se divisent selon six types distincts dans les sociétés occidentales (Réaliste, Investigateur, Artistique, Social, Entrepreneur et Conventionnel). À cet égard, ces six types de personnalité professionnelle se situent à une distance équivalente l'une de l'autre à l'aide d'une représentation spatiale de forme hexagonale où les types les plus proches partagent ensemble certaines caractéristiques (Holland, 1997; Savickas & Savickas, 2016; Tétreau, 2005). Selon cette théorie, les comportements sont la résultante de l'interaction entre la personnalité et l'environnement. Ainsi, l'environnement moule ses acteurs et à son tour, l'environnement change sous l'influence de ses acteurs (Holland, 1997; Savickas & Savickas, 2017; Tétreau, 2005). En outre, comme postulé par l'étude d'Alarie-Mercier, Pelletier, & Balbinotti (soumis) ainsi que celle de Pelletier (2018), il semble possible de soulever que chaque type de personnalité professionnelle puisse être sous-divisée en trois dimensions. À cet effet, les caractéristiques personnelles peuvent entrecouper en partie les dimensions conjointes.

Figure 1

*Modèle hexagonal de Holland et les corrélations entre les six types RIASEC (*Holland, 1973*)*



La personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure

Plus spécifiquement, la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure issu de la théorie hexagonale de Holland est davantage orientée vers l'influence social à travers une vision entrepreneuriale. D'ailleurs, l'individu ayant ce type de personnalité est combatif, bon orateur, peut faire preuve d'audace pour vendre ses idées et possède de bonnes aptitudes pour la gestion d'une équipe. Par conséquent, il aime prendre des décisions et partager son enthousiasme tout en démontrant de l'initiative face à divers projets. Finalement, il peut ressentir de la frustration lorsqu'il a peu d'influence dans un système. D'ailleurs, il rebute les activités routinières ou demandant d'être un observateur au lieu d'un acteur (Holland, 1997).

Développement de l'Inventaire Typologique de Caractéristiques Personnelles (ITCP)

Pour l'évaluation de l'orientation professionnelle chez une clientèle canadienne francophone, le Questionnaire d'intérêts professionnels (Larcebeau, 1971) et l'Inventaire d'intérêts de Rothwell-Miller révisé (Bernaud & Priou, 1994; Rothwell & Miller, 2011) évaluent les intérêts professionnels, mais ont été élaborés selon le modèle des intérêts de Kuder (Donnay, 1997; Kuder, 1938a). Par ailleurs, bien que l'instrument vise à évaluer les intérêts du participant et de les comparer avec ceux des individus occupant des professions de la vie moderne (Donnay, 1997; Donnay et al., 2004; Grutter & Hammer, 2005; Tétreau, 2005), les versions récentes de l'inventaire des intérêts professionnels STRONG évaluent également les six thèmes de la théorie vocationnelle d'Holland (Case & Blackwell, 2008; Donnay et al., 2005; Donnay & Borgen, 1996; Hannon et al., 1994; Harmon et al., 1994; Psychometrics Canada, 2012). Finalement, les inventaires existants et construits sous l'angle de la théorie vocationnelle d'Holland présentent des items en lien avec les intérêts professionnels, les activités professionnelles ou les noms de professions en incluant des qualités (adjectifs), des verbes ou un amalgame (Vrignaud & Bernaud, 2005). D'ailleurs, une traduction canadienne-française du Self Directed Interest d'Holland qui évalue les intérêts professionnels selon la théorie vocationnelle fut effectuée par Poitras et al., (2012), mais qui n'est plus à jour et qui semble progressivement délaissée par les professionnels. Cependant, malgré divers instruments qui évaluent les intérêts professionnels et qui sont construits selon la théorie vocationnelle d'Holland, aucun inventaire se basant uniquement sur les caractéristiques personnelles n'avait vu le jour. Pour combler ce besoin, Balbinotti a élaboré en 2002 la première version de l'ITCP (Inventaire Typologique de Caractéristiques Personnelles), l'ITCP-280, un inventaire qui comprend 280 caractéristiques personnelles en portugais visant à expliquer chacune des six dimensions de la théorie vocationnelle. Une deuxième version a aussi été élaborée, soit l'ITCP-156 (Balbinotti, 2004). Par ailleurs, une adaptation française qui s'inspire de l'ITCP-280 et de l'ITCP-156 est construite et validée au Québec par Pelletier (2018). À cet égard, les caractéristiques personnelles de cet inventaire ont été adaptées du portugais au français à partir d'une banque de caractéristiques personnelles provenant de l'ITCP-280, et un total de 90 caractéristiques ont été retenues afin de créer l'ITCP-90. En outre, une révision de la version québécoise de l'ITCP-90 est effectuée par Alarie-Mercier et al., (non publié) dans l'objectif d'améliorer les qualités psychométriques de l'instrument et de corriger certains problèmes méthodologiques qui tendaient à limiter la qualité des évidences de validité. Ainsi, l'ITCP permet d'évaluer les caractéristiques personnelles d'un individu afin de trouver son profil RIASEC (Réaliste, Investigateur, Artistique, Social, Entrepreneur et Conventionnel) et d'apporter un apport supplémentaire de connaissances en lien avec les intérêts professionnels et la personnalité (Hogan & Blake, 1999; Hogan & Holland, 2003; Holland, 1997; Larson et al., 2002; Sullivan & Hansen, 2004; Tracey et al., 2014; Vrignaud & Bernaud, 2005).

Toutefois, malgré les évidences de validité de cette version, l'examen approfondi des données ainsi que des résultats peut soulever certaines problématiques. En premier lieu, l'incompréhension de certains items chez les participants illustrée par la réponse « Je ne comprends pas l'item » soulève que cet instrument tend à présenter des lacunes au niveau de l'intelligibilité des items. À cet égard, les analyses ont permis de constater que 60% à 70% des répondants n'avaient pas compris certains items. Ainsi, ces résultats pourraient suggérer que non seulement les items sont trop spécifiques, mais ont un niveau de langage trop élevé pour être intelligible par la population en générale. Ce qui peut affaiblir les qualités psychométriques obtenues lors de l'étude de validation de Alarie-Mercier et al. (non publié). D'ailleurs, cet inventaire s'adresse principalement à une population préuniversitaire et par conséquent, le choix de la population à qui convient cet instrument doit être pris en considération pour ainsi, être intelligible par des individus de niveau secondaire et collégial. En deuxième lieu, l'échantillon était composé uniquement d'étudiants universitaires alors que la majorité des emplois manuels et artistiques ne nécessitent pas un diplôme universitaire. D'ailleurs, les formations dans les domaines manuels et artistiques au Québec sont enseignées au niveau collégial avec des techniques (DEC) ou bien au niveau des études professionnelles (DEP) et donc, les caractéristiques personnelles en lien avec ces environnements de travail semblent avoir été sous-représentées. En dernier lieu, certains items représentent modérément le type de personnalité professionnelle auquel ils sont rattachés et viennent même impacter négativement l'unidimensionnalité de la dimension à laquelle ils sont rattachés.

Objectifs et questions de recherche

Par conséquent, une refonte de la version québécoise de l'ITCP est essentielle et notamment, de l'Échelle mesurant la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure pour pallier les problèmes traités précédemment, et particulièrement au niveau de l'intelligibilité des items par la population cible, afin d'augmenter les évidences de validité de l'instrument (Clark & Watson, 1995; DeVellis, 2016).

Ainsi, l'objectif général de cette étude est de présenter les premières évidences de validité basées sur la structure interne et la précision de la refonte de la version québécoise de l'Échelle évaluant la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) et ses trois dimensions, telles que proposées par Alarie-Mercier et al., (non publié) et Pelletier (2018). Trois objectifs spécifiques aideront à répondre à cet objectif général à l'aide des données disponibles: (1) estimer l'adéquation entre la structure factorielle de la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) et la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure avec ses trois dimensions; (2) estimer la réplicabilité du modèle testé via l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R); et, (3) estimer le niveau de précision (fidélité) du modèle testé ainsi que de chaque facteur de premier ordre inhérent à la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R). Pour atteindre ces objectifs, les procédures méthodologiques, présentées ci-dessous, seront utilisées.

Méthodologie

Participants

Pour cette étude, l'échantillon était composé de 308 participants âgés entre 17 et 64 ans (*M* = 25,83 ans; *É.T.*= 7,99 années) dont 75,6% sont des femmes (233 répondantes) et 24,4% des hommes (75 répondants). Cet échantillon était composé d'étudiants et de professionnels de divers domaines. Au total, 32 programmes d'étude ont été couverts: psychologie (47,7%), enseignement (13,9%), biologie médicale (6,5%), chiropractie (4,2 %), enseignement de l'éducation physique (3,9%), technique policière (3,6%), administration (2,9%), sciences comptables (2,3%), la psychoéducation (2,3%), génie mécanique (1,9%), loisir, culture et tourisme (1,6%), kinésiologie (1,3%), sciences infirmières (1,3%), construction (1%) et les dernières disciplines couvrent moins de 5,6% de la totalité des répondants. Cet échantillon a été choisi en fonction de la disponibilité des individus et de l'accessibilité aux institutions. Il s'agit d'un échantillon non aléatoire, recommandé pour les études dans le domaine de l'éducation ainsi que de la psychologie (Maguire & Rogers, 1989) et considéré comme une source d'information adéquate (Corbière & Larivière, 2014).

Instruments

Les participants ont répondu à deux instruments: 1) un Questionnaire bio-sociodémographique où ils étaient invités à inscrire leur âge, sexe, programme d'étude et emploi; 2) une refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) qui comprend 12 caractéristiques personnelles (Avide, Convaincante, Déterminée, Rusée, Argumentatrice, Vigoureuse, Exigeante, Leader, Ambitieuse, Critique, Combative et Entreprenante) qui théoriquement s'associent à la personnalité de type Entrepreneure de la théorie des personnalités vocationnelles et des environnements de travail (Holland, 1959, 1997; Vrignaud & Bernaud, 2005). D'ailleurs, cette Échelle s'intègrera à la nouvelle version québécoise de l'Inventaire Typologique des Caractéristiques Personnelles (ITCP-72-R) et élaborée originalement par Balbinotti (2002). Les participants doivent répondre à la question « Dans un milieu de travail, je me vois comme une personne ___ » pour chacune des 12 caractéristiques personnelles se référant à des traits de personnalité via une échelle de type Likert à 5 points et indiquer à quel point l'item le décrit: (1) Me décrit très faiblement, (2) Me décrit peu, (3) Me décrit moyennement, (4) Me décrit bien et (5) Me décrit très fortement (Laberon & Trahan, 2005; Likert, 1931; Vrignaud & Bernaud, 2005). La présentation de chacun des 12 items se répartie sur deux lignes. Sur la première ligne, le nom de la caractéristique personnelle apparaît à gauche en gras et l'échelle de réponse de type Likert à 5 points apparaît à droite en gras. Sur la deuxième ligne, une définition de la caractéristique personnelle apparaît en italique. Le temps de passation variait entre 6 et 12 minutes. De plus, à partir des résultats obtenus à chacun des items, la somme est calculée sous la forme d'un score total. À cet effet, un résultat élevé indique un fort intérêt pour les professions de type Entrepreneure et à l'inverse, un faible résultat indique un faible intérêt pour les professions de type Entrepreneure.

Procédures d'administration

L'approbation éthique supportant la procédure d'administration de la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) fut obtenue par le Comité d'Éthique de la Recherche - Psychologie et Psychoéducation (CERPPE) de l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (numéro de certificat: CERPPE-21-01-07-04). Des étudiants et des professionnelles ont été recrutés. D'une part, concernant les étudiants, les institutions d'enseignement (Écoles de formation professionnelle, CÉGEP et Université) ont été contactées. Après approbation par les responsables de ces institutions, les étudiants ont été invités à participer à l'étude. D'autre part, concernant les professionnels, les organisations ont été contactées et après approbation par les responsables, les professionnels qui désiraient participer à l'étude ont répondu aux questionnaires. Des explications détaillées concernant le fonctionnement de l'étude ont été communiquées aux participants et un formulaire de consentement devait être signé par les participants avant le début de l'étude. Par ailleurs, les participants étaient invités à demander des explications supplémentaires s'ils en éprouvaient le besoin.

Les procédures statistiques

Étant composées de variables de types ordinales, l'ensemble des procédures statistiques furent effectuées à l'aide du logiciel Factor 12.04.02 puisqu'il permet d'exécuter des modelages par équations structurelles exploratoires avec des matrices de corrélations polychoriques (Bryant & Yarnold, 1995; Choi et al., 2011; Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2006, 2013; Pohlmann, 2004).

Afin de pouvoir répondre au premier objectif de cette étude, un modelage par équation structurelle exploratoire (ESEM) fut réalisé (Ferrando & Lorenzo-Seva, 2018). L'ESEM peut être comprise comme une version actualisée des analyses factorielles exploratoires lorsqu'on inclut des résultats confirmatoires. De plus et selon Ferrando et Lorenzo-Seva (2016, 2018), l'ESEM permet de prévenir certains problèmes présentés par l'analyse factorielle confirmatoire traditionnelle, c'est-à-dire, il permet que chacun des items puisse quand même expliquer une petite partie de la variance de toutes les variables latentes de premier ordre. Avant de pouvoir procéder à l'ESEM, la factorabilité des matrices de corrélation ainsi que l'adéquation de l'échantillon ont été vérifiées à l'aide des trois indices suivants: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO ≥ 0,80) (Cureton et d'Agostino, 2013; Kaiser & Rice, 1974), le déterminant des matrices de corrélation ($|R| \neq 0$; mais > 0,000001) (Balbinotti, 2005; Kline, 2016, 2023) et le test de sphéricité de Bartlett ($p < 0{,}05$) (Bartlett, 1937; Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2021; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). Les indices ESEM explorés en accord avec les recommandations se retrouvant dans la littérature sont (Brown, 2015; Kline, 2016, 2023): (1) analyse parallèle (Field, 2018; Hayton et al., 2004; Horn, 1965; Timmerman & Lorenzo-Seva, 2011; Zwick & Velicer, 1986) (les pourcentages de variances réels doivent être plus grands que les pourcentages de variances moyennes randomisées ou des percentiles 95 randomisés, avec 5000 matrices) (Buja & Eyuboglu, 1992; Hayton et al., 2004); (2) mesure de l'unidimensionnalité: Congruence Unidimensionnelle (UniCo ≥ 0,95), Variance Commune Expliquée (ECV ≥ 0,85) et Moyenne de la saturation Absolue Résiduelle des Items (MIREAL ≤ 0,300) (Ferrando & Lorenzo-Seva, 2018); (3) indices de communauté basés sur une matrice n'étant pas rotationnée ($h^2 \geq 0{,}400$); (4) pourcentage de variance total expliqué (50% et plus) et par facteur (les pourcentages dépendent du nombre de facteurs retenus) (Ferrando & Lorenzo-Seva, 2018); (5) saturation factorielle rotationnée ($Sat_f \geq 0{,}300$) (Bentler, 1977; Ferrando & Lorenzo-Seva, 2018; Lorenzo-Seva, 2003); (6) statistique robuste d'ajustement: pour les indices d'ajustement absolu, il y a le Khi carré normalisé ($\chi^2/dl \leq 2$) (Kline, 2016, 2023; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) et l'indice d'ajustement corrigé (AGFI ≥ 0,90) (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000); pour les indices d'ajustement comparatifs, il y a l'indice d'ajustement comparatif (CFI ≥ 0,90) (Kline, 2016, 2023) et l'indice d'ajustement non normalisé (TLI ≥ 0,90) (Tucker et Lewis, 1973); pour l'indice d'ajustement parcimonieux, il y a l'erreur quadratique moyenne d'approximation (RMSEA ≤ 0,05) (Byrne, 2010; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996); et, finalement, pour les indices d'ajustement résiduels, il y a la racine carrée quadratique des résidus (RMSR < 0,0571) (Bentler, 1995; Kelley, 1935; Pavlov et al., 2021) et la moyenne quadratique pondérée des résidus (WRMR ≤ 0,90) (DiStefano et al., 2018; Muthén & Muthén, 2017; Yu & Muthén, 2002).

Afin de pouvoir répondre au deuxième objectif de cette étude, des indices généralisés *H* (Ferrando & Lorenzo-Seva, 2018) furent calculés. L'indice *H* évalue dans quelle mesure un ensemble d'éléments représente un facteur commun. Il est compris entre 0 et 1 et se rapproche de l'unité lorsque l'importance des charges factorielles augmente. Des indices *H* élevés ($H_{L\text{-}O} \geq 0{,}80$) suggèrent une variable latente bien définie, indiquant une stabilité d'une étude à l'autre. D'une part, *H*-Latent évalue dans quelle mesure le facteur de premier ordre est reproductible et apparaît ainsi comme un indice de validité de la mesure. D'autre part, *H*-Observé évalue dans quelle mesure les items mesurés directement sont reproductibles et apparaît ainsi comme un indice de précision de la mesure (Ferrando & Lorenzo-Seva, 2018; Hancock, 2001; Hancock & Mueller, 2000; Rodriguez et al., 2016b).

Afin de pouvoir répondre au troisième objectif de cette étude, le niveau de précision (fidélité) du modèle inhérent à l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-12-R) fut examiné par les statistiques suivantes: (1) Alpha de Cronbach ordinal standardisé ($\alpha_o \geq 0{,}70$) (Cho, 2021; Cronbach, 1971); (2) Oméga de McDonald ($\Omega \geq 0{,}70$) (McDonald, 1970); (3) Fidélité de composites (CR ≥ 0,70) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2021; Haji-Othman & Yusuff, 2022; Revelle & Zinbarg, 2009; Ten Berge et al., 1981). Les indices Alpha et Omega sont ordinaux puisque les données sont de natures ordinales. Il est essentiel de souligner l'importance des indices Omega et Fidélité de composite, car il s'agit de mesures congénériques (Deng & Chan, 2017; Dunn et al., 2014) et le prérequis « équivalence *tau* » (Cronbach, 1951) n’est pas exigé (Padilla & Divers, 2016; Trizano-Hermosilla & Alvarado, 2016).

Résultats

Afin d’atteindre le premier objectif spécifique de cette étude, celui relatif à l’adéquation entre la structure factorielle de la refonte de l’Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) et la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure avec ses trois dimensions, il a été nécessaire d’estimer, dans un premier temps, le coefficient Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin ($KMO \geq 0{,}80$) qui atteint le seuil d’une bonne adéquation (Kaiser, 1974), le déterminant de la matrice de corrélation ($|R| > 0{,}00001$) (Balbinotti, 2005), et le Test de Sphéricité de Bartlett (*TSB* significativement différente d’une matrice d’identité; $p < 0{,}05$) (Bartlett, 1951), afin d’assurer une adéquate interprétation des résultats de la structure factorielle. Comme démontré dans le tableau 1, les résultats respectifs soulèvent que les corrélations entre les items sont adéquates pour procéder aux interprétations des résultats des analyses factorielles (Balbinotti, 2005; Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004; Muthén & Kaplan, 1985). En outre, il est démontré que les résultats de la mesure de la redondance de l’information sont différents de zéro ($|R| \neq 0$) et plus grand que 0,00001, ce qui indique l’absence de tout type de répétition ou de linéarité (absence de colinéarité) entre les éléments. Ainsi, l’ensemble de ses résultats assurent la pertinence des calculs factoriels (Balbinotti, 2005; Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2006; Rochette & Balbinotti, 2016).

Tableau 1

Indices préalables d’adéquation de la solution pour l’analyse factorielles exploratoires

		BARTLETT	
KMO	|R|	Statistique	*p*-value
0,81	0,021	1167,9	*p*<0.01

Note. KMO: Index d’adéquation de l’échantillon Kaiser Meyer-Olkin; |R| : Déterminant de la matrice de corrélation

Analyse factorielle exploratoire - Rotation des facteurs

Dans un deuxième temps, la structure factorielle de la refonte de l’Échelle Entrepreneure a été testée à l’aide de la matrice de corrélation polychorique (considérant la nature ordinale des données disponibles) (Choi et al., 2011; Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2020), de l’analyse parallèle avec calculs de permutation de 9999 matrices de corrélation randomisées (comme procédure pour déterminer le nombre de facteurs à être retenus) (Buja & Eyuboglu, 1992; Ferrando & Lorenzo-Seva, 2018; Timmerman & Lorenzo-Seva, 2011), de la méthode des moindres carrés robuste à pondération diagonale (Robust Diagonally Weighted Least Squares – RDWLS) (Ferrando & Lorenzo-Seva, 2017), et de la méthode de rotation de facteurs Robuste Direct Oblimin (particulièrement approprié au contexte des modelages par équations structurelles exploratoires et reconnue actuellement comme la méthode la plus adéquate pour des données qui n’adhèrent pas à la normalité de la distribution) (Lorenzo-Seva, 1999; Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2019). Par ailleurs, il est important de souligner que ces types d’estimations sont purement statistiques, c’est-à-dire qu’ils ne tiennent compte que des données d’analyse et de leurs limites, négligeant ainsi les théories qui pourraient expliquer le phénomène de manière plus complète. Cette étude prend en compte les conceptions théoriques utilisées pour la conception des instruments, avec le choix de définir apriori le nombre de facteurs extraits (Balbinotti, 2005). Ainsi, on peut constater que les résultats des analyses factorielles exploratoires réalisées viennent expliquer 58,98% de la variance total lorsque la refonte de l’Échelle Entrepreneure est expliquée par trois facteurs (voir tableau 2). Ce premier résultat est très satisfaisant puisqu’il est possible d’affirmer que seulement 12 items (Furr, 2021) sont suffisants pour expliquer une bonne partie du construit analysé. Pour la solution factorielle, seuls les items avec des saturations significatives ($Sat_f \geq 0{,}300$) sont conservés. Celles-ci sont présentées dans leur forme pure sans aucune double saturation significative ($Sat_f \geq 0{,}300$) et tous les items saturent adéquatement ($Sat_f \geq 0{,}349$)

dans leurs facteurs respectifs. Par conséquent, il semble qu'un modèle à trois dimensions est parfaitement satisfaisant.

Dans un troisième temps, afin de vérifier si l'ensemble des items de la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) tendent à représenter la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure, deux indices statistiques furent analysés. D'une part, comme présenté dans le tableau 2, la qualité des représentations (h^2) des items fut vérifiée pour l'Échelle évaluant la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure. À cet égard, l'ensemble des items présentent une qualité de représentation adéquate ($h^2 \geq 0{,}400$). D'autre part, l'unidimensionnalité de l'instrument fut vérifiée. Ainsi, comme présenté dans le tableau 2, les résultats des indices mesurant l'unidimensionnalité, qui évaluent dans quelle mesure un ensemble d'items représente adéquatement une seule dimension, révèlent que la valeur de l'UniCo (Congruence Unidimensionnelle) n'a pas atteint le seuil de 0,95, que la valeur de l'ECV (Variance Commune Expliquée) se situe entre 0,70 et 0,85 et que la valeur du MlREAL (Moyenne de la saturation Absolue Résiduelle des Items) se situe en-dessous du seuil de 0,300.

Tableau 2

Résultats de l'analyse factorielle exploratoire

Sous-Dimensions	Items	Caractéristiques personnelles	h^2	Matrice factorielle OVD1	OVC	OVD2
OVD1	1	Avide	0,478	0,595		
	4	Rusée	0,749	0,592		
	7	Exigeante	0,578	0,506		
	10	Critique	0,461	0,471		
OVC	2	Convaincante	0,804		0,847	
	5	Argumentatrice	0,555		0,648	
	8	Leader	0,623		0,533	
	11	Combative	0,740		0,349	
OVD2	3	Déterminée	0,749			0,792
	6	Vigoureuse	0,705			0,715
	9	Ambitieuse	0,664			0,643
	12	Entreprenante	0,537			0,578
			Échelle	OVD1	OVC	OVD2
Pourcentage de variance			58,98	35,68	12,88	10,42
UniCo (Unidimensional Congruence)			0,89	0,90	0,97	0,98
ECV (Explained Common Variance)			0,77	0,72	0,82	0,86
MlREAL (Mean of Item Residual Absolute Loadings)			0,27	0,34	0,28	0,25

Note. Méthode d'extraction : Robust Diagonally weighted Least Squares (RDWLS) ; h^2 : Qualité de représentation ; Corrélations entre les sous-facteurs : $0{,}31 < r < 0{,}49$; OVD1 : Orientation Vers la Dominance ; OVC : Orientation Vers le Charisme ; OVD2 : Orientation Vers la Détermination ; Saturation ≤ 0,30 ne sont pas présentées dans le tableau

Dans un quatrième temps et comme présenté dans le tableau 3, afin de vérifier l'ajustement de cet instrument avec le construit théorique, les résultats des indices d'ajustement de la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) évaluant la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure révèlent que les valeurs sont bonnes à excellentes. D'ailleurs, le résultat au test du khi carré normalisé ($\chi 2/dl \leq 2{,}0$) révèle un ajustement satisfaisant. En outre, la valeur obtenue à l'indice AGFI ($AGFI \geq 0{,}95$) indique donc un excellent ajustement. De plus, la valeur obtenue à l'indice d'ajustement RMSEA qui évalue la parcimonie du modèle ($RMSEA \leq 0{,}08$) soutient un ajustement acceptable du modèle (Byrne, 2010; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). Par ailleurs, les indices d'ajustement comparatifs démontrent que les données s'ajustent adéquatement avec le modèle hypothétique du construit. En premier lieu, la valeur de l'indice CFI ($CFI \geq 0{,}95$) soutient ainsi un très bon ajustement. En second lieu, la valeur de l'indice d'ajustement NNFI ($NNFI \geq 0{,}95$) soutient également un bon ajustement du modèle. Finalement, les indices d'ajustement résiduels démontrent que les données s'ajustent adéquatement avec le modèle hypothétique du construit. D'une part, en étant inférieure au critère de Kelley (Kelley, 1935), la valeur de l'indice RMSR ($RMSR < 0{,}057$) soutient un bon ajustement des données sur le modèle. D'autre part, la valeur de l'indice WRMR ($WRMR \leq 0{,}90$) représente également un bon ajustement du modèle.

Tableau 3

Indices d'ajustement

Absolue				Parcimonieuse	Comparative		Résiduelle	
X²	*p*	X²/dl	AGFI	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI	RMSR	WRMR
25,328	0,593	0,768	0,982	0,060	0,982	0,963	0,041	0,039

Note. χ2 = Test du khi-deux ; ddl = degrés de liberté ; AGFI : Indice Adjusted Goodness of fit ; RMSEA : Indice Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ; CFI : Indice d'ajustement comparatif ; NNFI : Indice d'ajustement non normé / Indice Tucker-Lewis ; RMSR : Indice Root Mean square of Residual ; WRMR : Indice Weighted Root Mean Square Residual

Afin d'atteindre le deuxième objectif spécifique de cette étude, celui relatif à l'estimation de la réplicabilité du modèle testé via la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R), la reproductibilité du construit fut analysée à l'aide de l'indice H_L. Tel que présenté dans le tableau 4, les résultats à cet indice révèlent une bonne reproductibilité ($H_L \geq 0{,}80$) du construit représentant la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure et une bonne reproductibilité ($H_L \geq 0{,}80$) du construit (Rodriguez et al., 2016b) au niveau des dimensions de la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R). Plus spécifiquement, les résultats à l'indice H_L révèlent une bonne reproductibilité ($H_L \geq 0{,}80$) du construit pour la dimension OVD2 et la dimension OVC mais une reproductibilité du construit qui tend à être acceptable pour la dimension OVD1. Par ailleurs, les résultats à l'indice H_O révèlent que les items mesurés directement de la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) sont reproductibles ($H_O \geq 0{,}80$). En outre, les résultats à l'indice H_O révèlent également que les items mesurés de la dimension OVC et de la dimension OVD2 sont passablement reproductible ($H_O \geq 0{,}70$) mais que les items mesurés de la dimension OVD1 n'atteignent pas le seuil pouvant statistiquement supporter que les items mesurés directement sont réplicables ($H_O < 0{,}70$).

Précision ou consistance interne

Afin d'atteindre le troisième objectif spécifique de cette étude, la mesure de la précision de la refonte de l'Échelle de la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) et de ses trois dimensions respectives fut effectuée par le biais de quatre indices qui mesurent la consistance interne. Comme présenté dans le tableau 5, les résultats aux différents indices démontrent globalement que cet instrument possède une bonne cohérence interne. Plus spécifiquement, les résultats obtenus à l'évaluation de la fidélité de composite, au GLB de Woodhouse & Jackson's, à l'alpha de Cronbach ordinal standardisé et à l'Omega de

Tableau 4

Indice de reproductibilité du construit

	H-Latent	H-Observé
Échelle Entrepreneure	0,860	0,858
Dimensions		
Dimension 1: OVD1	0,694	0,770
Dimension 2: OVC	0,823	0,781
Dimension 3: OVD2	0,829	0,777

Note. H : Reproductibilité du construit ; OVD1 : Orientation Vers la Dominance ; OVC : Orientation Vers le Charisme ; OVD2 : Orientation Vers la Détermination

McDonald révèlent que l'instrument possède une bonne (≥ 0,80) cohérence interne (Béland et al., 2017; DeVellis, 1991; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2021; Haji-Othman & Yusuff, 2022; McDonald, 1999; Nunnally, 1978; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Par ailleurs, l'analyse des résultats obtenus pour chacune des dimensions révèle une bonne cohérence interne pour la dimension OVD2, une cohérence interne adéquate pour la dimension OVC et une cohérence interne passable pour la dimension OVD1. D'ailleurs, les résultats de la dimension OVD1 soulèvent que l'indice GLB se retrouve au-dessus du seuil de 0,70 mais que l'indice alpha, l'indice Omega et l'indice de la fidélité de composite se retrouvent sous le seuil d'acceptabilité de 0,70 mais sont au-dessus du seuil minimum de 0,60 (Béland et al., 2017; DeVellis, 1991; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2021; Haji-Othman & Yusuff, 2022; McDonald, 1999; Nunnally, 1978; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Tableau 5

Indices de fidélité

	α	*w*	CR	GLB
Échelle Entrepreneure	0,83	0,83	0,877	0,98
Dimensions				
Dimension 1: OVD1	0,64	0,65	0,624	0,77
Dimension 2: OVC	0,78	0,78	0,697	0,87
Dimension 3: OVD2	0,79	0,79	0,779	0,84

Note. α : Alpha de Cronbach ; *w* : Oméga de McDonald ; CR : Composite Reliability ; GLB : Greatest Lower Bound to Reliability ; OVD1 : Orientation Vers la Dominance ; OVC : Orientation Vers le Charisme ; OVD2 : Orientation Vers la Détermination

Discussion

Afin d'améliorer la recherche et la pratique clinique en orientation professionnelle, l'objectif de cette étude portait sur la refonte et la validation de la version québécoise d'une Échelle évaluant la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure à partir de caractéristiques personnelles selon la théorie vocationnelle d'Holland (1997). Plus spécifiquement, cette étude examinait les évidences de la structure interne et la précision de la refonte de l'échelle mesurant la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure et ses sous-facteurs intrinsèques.

Adéquation structurelle de la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure

Le premier objectif de cette étude fut d'estimer l'adéquation entre la structure factorielle de la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) et la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure avec ses trois dimensions. À cet effet, les résultats de l'analyse factorielle exploratoire effectuée dans le cadre de cette étude sur la validation de la refonte de la version québécoise de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) permettent de supporter la présence d'une adéquation entre la structure factorielle de cet instrument et la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure telle que définie par la théorie vocationnelle d'Holland (1997).

Saturation factorielle et tri-dimensionalité

En premier lieu, les résultats de l'analyse factorielle exploratoire révèlent que l'ensemble des items de l'instrument à l'étude saturent comme attendu et représentent adéquatement les trois dimensions de la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure. D'ailleurs, les critères de Cattell ainsi que l'analyse de la dimensionalité à l'aide de l'analyse parallèle démontrent la présence de trois dimensions communes au niveau de la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure. En outre, l'analyse des indices liés à l'unidimensionnalité permettent de soulever que l'ensemble des items de cet instrument tendent vers l'unidimensionnalité tout en étant compatible avec la présence de dimensions. En sommes, la structure de l'instrument rejoint la théorie vocationnelle d'Holland (1997), l'étude de Pelletier (2018) et l'étude d'Alarie-Mercier, Pelletier, & Balbinotti (2025) qui démontrent que la personnalité Entrepreneure peut être sous-divisée en trois dimensions au niveau des caractéristiques personnelles telle que subséquemment présentée. Par conséquent et en accord avec les résultats de l'analyse factorielle exploratoire, la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure de la théorie vocationnelle d'Holland (1997) peut se sous-diviser en trois dimensions (1) Orientation Vers la Dominance (OVD1); (2) Orientation Vers le Charisme (OVC); et (3) Orientation Vers la Détermination (OVD2).

Ajustement de l'Échelle Entrepreneure avec le construit théorique

En deuxième lieu, les résultats aux différents indices d'ajustement soulèvent que la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) s'ajuste adéquatement avec le construit théorique en lien avec la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure. D'ailleurs, l'instrument à l'étude évalue parcimonieusement la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure et tend vers un bon ajustement avec le modèle hypothétique du construit. À cet égard, les indices d'ajustements permettent de constater que le modèle à l'étude s'ajuste adéquatement pour l'ensemble des indices et qu'il est ainsi possible d'affirmer que les 12 caractéristiques personnelles incluses dans la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure semblent aller dans le même sens et qu'elles évaluent plus ou moins un aspect de la même dimension.

Reproductibilité de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R)

Le deuxième objectif de cette étude fut d'estimer la réplicabilité du modèle évalué via la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R). À cet effet, les résultats des analyses de la présente étude démontrent que l'instrument ainsi que les items qui le composent sont stables, reproductibles et représentent bien la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure. Par ailleurs, les résultats à l'indice H_L révèlent que le construit sous-jacent à la dimension OVC et à la dimension OVD2 est pleinement reproductible et par conséquent, que le construit de ces deux dimensions est bien défini. Toutefois, bien qu'elle tende à être acceptable, la reproductibilité du construit sous-jacent à la dimension OVD1 pourrait présenter certaines lacunes. De plus, l'indice H_O révèle que les items étant reliés à la dimension OVC ainsi qu'à la dimension OVD2 et mesurés directement sont reproductibles. Toutefois, les résultats de cette étude à l'indice H_O révèlent également que les items de la dimension OVD1 manquent légèrement de stabilité et par conséquent, leur reproductibilité pourrait présenter certaines lacunes (Ferrando & Lorenzo-Seva, 2018; Hancock, 2001; Hancock & Mueller, 2000; Rodriguez et al., 2016b).

Précision de l'Échelle Entrepreneure

Le dernier objectif de cette étude fut de vérifier si la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) est adéquatement précise pour permettre une interprétation appropriée des résultats en considérant la population cible. À cet effet, les analyses démontrent que la refonte de l'Échelle évaluant la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) manifeste une bonne précision. En effet, la totalité des indices obtenus pour l'Échelle à l'étude, incluant l'alpha de Cronbach ordinal standardisé, l'oméga de McDonald, la fidélité de composite et l'indice GLB selon la méthode de Woodhouse & Jackson's démontrent une bonne cohérence interne. Par ailleurs, la dimension intrinsèque OVC ainsi que la dimension intrinsèque OVD2 démontrent à tendre vers une bonne cohérence interne mais la dimension intrinsèque OVD1 démontre une cohérence interne acceptable mais qui peut tout de même être questionnable.

Forces et avantages de l'Échelle Entrepreneure

La refonte de la version québécoise de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R) est plus courte que les anciennes versions avec trois items en moins tout en représentant davantage la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure. Plus spécifiquement, la version de cette étude représente près de 58,98% de la variance du construit plutôt que 53,61% pour la version de Pelletier (2018) et 58,09% pour la version d'Alarie-Mercier, Pelletier et Balbinotti (2025).

Applications pratiques de l'Échelle Entrepreneure

La rapidité d'administration ainsi que la simplicité de ses instructions d'administration et de cotation constituent un atout de taille pour son utilisation en contexte scolaire par des enseignants, et ainsi, à venir encourager les individus les plus indécis face à leur avenir professionnel à demander de l'aide auprès de conseillers en orientation. Par ailleurs, en complémentarité aux autres instruments existants, le professionnel utilisant l'Échelle Entrepreneure peut évaluer la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure et, ainsi, venir étayer le niveau d'affinité des caractéristiques personnelles d'un individu avec les diverses professions appartenant au domaine entrepreneurial. De plus, la qualité des propriétés psychométriques soulevée par les évidences de validité obtenues par cette étude permet son utilisation pratique dans un contexte scientifique et académique en recherche.

Positionnement de l'Échelle Entrepreneure vis-à-vis des instruments existants

Contrairement aux autres familles d'instrument qui évaluent les intérêts professionnels et tout comme l'ITCP-90 et la version révisée de l'ITCP-90, la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure se base sur le principe que le choix d'une profession constitue l'expression de sa personnalité. Par ailleurs, comparativement à la section mesurant la personnalité professionnelle de type Entrepreneure de l'ITCP-90 ou de la version révisée de l'ITCP-90, la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure comporte des changements qui contribuent à l'amélioration de ses qualités psychométriques. En premier lieu, la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure intègre des caractéristiques personnelles qui sont davantage intelligibles chez des individus fréquentant une institution d'enseignement de niveau secondaire ou collégiale. En deuxième lieu, la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure intègre une définition de la caractéristique personnelle en dessous de chacun des items dans l'objectif de favoriser leur compréhension. En troisième lieu, l'Échelle de type Likert de la refonte de l'Échelle Entrepreneure fut revue afin de permettre une mesure qui est davantage graduelle et parcimonieuse du niveau d'attribution auto rapporté d'une caractéristique personnelle.

Faiblesses et limites de l'Échelle Entrepreneure

Malgré les évidences de validité de la refonte de la version québécoise de l'Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R), certaines limites peuvent être identifiées. D'ailleurs, n'étant pas appuyée par une analyse factorielle confirmatoire, l'application pratique de cet instrument comporte certaines limites au niveau de son utilisation autonome dans le cadre d'une évaluation clinique par un professionnel et, ainsi, son utilisation dans ce cadre est déconseillée. De plus, le déséquilibre de la proportion hommes-femmes à 75,6% en faveur des femmes pourrait venir affaiblir la représentativité des caractéristiques personnelles et, ultimement, les évidences de validité de l'instrument chez les hommes. Finalement, il est possible que le choix d'un échantillon non aléatoire puisse venir négativement impacter la généralisabilité des résultats de l'étude à la population franco-québécoise. Cependant, deux éléments peuvent venir atténuer cet impact sur la généralisation des résultats. D'une part, une publication sur le site de l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières et sur le groupe Facebook de certains CÉGEP permettait de rejoindre une plus grande proportion de la population qui pouvait être intéressée de participer à l'étude. D'autre part, les milieux de travail et les cours dans lesquelles le recrutement fut effectué proviennent de l'ensemble des niveaux de scolarité pouvant se retrouver au Québec et couvrent l'ensemble des domaines professionnels.

Conclusion

En sommes, les résultats de cette étude soulèvent la présence d'évidences de validité de la structure interne de la refonte de la version québécoise de l'Échelle Entrepreneure de l'Inventaire Typologique de Caractéristiques Personnelles (EE-ITCP-72-R). À cet effet, cette dernière présente un potentiel dans le domaine de la psychologie de l'orientation. Finalement, les évidences de validité soulevées durant la présente étude ouvrent la voie à son intégration dans une nouvelle étude sur l'analyse factorielle confirmatoire de la refonte de la version québécoise de l'ITCP-72-R. Par ailleurs, le recrutement d'un échantillon avec l'inclusion d'une plus grande variété de professions dans les futures recherches pourrait venir enrichir la robustesse de la généralisation des évidences de validité de l'instrument.

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Annexe A

Échelle Entrepreneure (EE-ITCP-72-R)

Cet inventaire contient diverses caractéristiques personnelles. Quelques caractéristiques peuvent mieux vous décrire que d'autres. Choisissez lesquelles des caractéristiques personnelles présentées sont les plus importantes pour vous dans un milieu de travail. Encerclez, en accord avec l'échelle ci-dessous, à quel niveau chacune des caractéristiques personnelles présentées vous représente selon la question: « Dans un milieu de travail, je me vois comme une personne...? ». Notez que si vous accordez une valeur plus grande à la caractéristique, cela signifie que cette caractéristique personnelle vous représente davantage.

Niveaux à indiquer pour chacune des caractéristiques présentées:

1 = Me décrit très faiblement
2 = Me décrit peu
3 = Me décrit moyennement
4 = Me décrit bien
5 = Me décrit très fortement

Exemple

Dans un milieu de travail, je me vois comme une personne...

	Me décrit très faiblement 1	Me décrit peu 2	Me décrit moyennement 3	Me décrit bien 4	Me décrit très fortement 5
1. **Cohérente** Qui est conséquente dans ses actes, dans ses propos et fidèle à soi-même.	1	2	3	4	5
2. **Équilibré** Qui jouit d'un bon équilibre mental.	1	2	3	4	5
3. **Chaotique** Qui est désordonnée et qui ne range pas ses affaires.	1	2	3	4	5

Lisez chacune des caractéristiques ci-dessous et répondez en encerclant le numéro qui vous convient. Sachez qu’il n’existe pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses et que chacune des réponses doit simplement vous décrire le plus adéquatement possible.

Dans un milieu de travail, je me vois comme une personne...

	Me décrit très faiblement 1	Me décrit peu 2	Me décrit moyennement 3	Me décrit bien 4	Me décrit très fortement 5
1. **Avide** Qui manifeste de la cupidité en désirant de l’argent, des biens ou quelque chose avec voracité.	1	2	3	4	5
2. **Convaincante** Qui est éloquente, persuasive et qui possède de la facilité à convaincre les autres avec la parole.	1	2	3	4	5
3. **Déterminée** Qui est convaincu du bien fondée des activités qu’elle entreprend et qui manifeste ainsi de la détermination dans l’accomplissement de ces dernières.	1	2	3	4	5
4. **Rusée** Qui influence autrui de manière sournoise pour arriver à ses fins ou obtenir des gains.	1	2	3	4	5
5. **Argumentatrice** Qui se plaît à débattre, à plaider et à argumenter.	1	2	3	4	5
6. **Vigoureuse** Qui démontre de la détermination et de la fermeté.	1	2	3	4	5
7. **Exigeante** Qui est difficile à contenter et qui possède de grandes exigences et attentes envers autrui.	1	2	3	4	5
8. **Leader** Qui est charismatique et qui aime être le dirigeant d’une équipe pour l’emmener à réaliser un objectif commun.	1	2	3	4	5
9. **Ambitieuse** Qui vise l’accomplissement d’objectifs professionnels élevés.	1	2	3	4	5
10. **Critique** Qui est encline à critiquer et qui cherche à relever les défauts et les qualités d’une œuvre ou des travaux d’autrui.	1	2	3	4	5
11. **Combative** Qui est compétitive et qui fait preuve d’ardeur dans une lutte.	1	2	3	4	5
12. **Entreprenante** Qui aime entreprendre quelque chose après en avoir décidée.	1	2	3	4	5

Capacity and Credentialing: The Evidence Base for Career Development Training and Certification in Nova Scotia

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Abstract

It has been well identified in the literature that having a professional designation attached to one's name has many benefits to a practitioner's self-perception as a professional, as well as identifying the individual as having a certain standard of knowledge and practice. What is less clear is whether there is a direct co-relation between improved practice and the process undertaken to achieve the designation. This paper reports on the findings of the research project, *Capacity and Credentialing: The Evidence Base for Career Development Training and Certification in Nova Scotia* and examines what impacts, if any, participating in a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)-based credentialling process and achieving the designation has on an individual's career development practice over time. The findings reveal that overall, participants felt that the certification process had a positive impact on CCDPs' self-perception, day-to-day practice, and the career development profession more broadly. While participants identified some challenges or clarity needed around aspects of the process, there was consensus around the value of certification, with several participants advocating for similar credentials to be developed for the other career services positions, such as job developers, employer engagement specialists, and employment support practitioners.

Acknowledgements: We are deeply grateful to all the participants of our study for sharing their insights and experiences with us. We also want to thank Employment Nova Scotia for supporting this research through the CEI Special Initiatives funding.

It has been well identified in the literature that having a professional designation attached to one's name has many benefits to a practitioner's self-perception as a professional, as well as identifying the individual as having a certain standard of knowledge and practice (Adams et al., 2004; Briggs et al., 2006; Farashah & Blomquist, 2019; Flynn, 2014; Gates, 2003; Hickey et al., 2014; Lysaght & Altschuld, 2000; Sha, 2010; Sutherland & Leatherman, 2006; Valente, 2010). This is especially true for those professions (usually regulated) where holding a designation is a requirement to practice at a certain level, such as PEng for engineers, CPA for accountants, and various designations within the medical professions (Cumberland et al., 2018; Gershuni et al., 2023). Although there has been some recent work in this area (Aslam & Bilal, 2021; CERIC, 2019; Godden & Borgen, 2024; Gough & Albert, 2019; Neault et al., 2016) what is less clear is whether there is a direct co-relation between improved practice and the process of working towards and achieving the designation, especially when that process is grounded within a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) model.

This lack of clarity is particularly noted within unregulated professions where a designation is a nice-to-have, not a have-to-have, achievement. Professionals working within such fields as public relations, human resources, and employment services fit under this category, and it is this group, specifically career development practitioners, that is considered here.

This paper reports on the findings of the research project, *Capacity and Credentialing: The Evidence Base for Career Development Training and Certification in Nova Scotia*. The Nova Scotia Career Development Association (NSCDA), which offers the Certified Career Development Practitioners (CCDP) program, is the body representing career development practitioners within the province. It is part of the provincial government's Employment Nova Scotia (ENS) ecosystem, which also includes the Nova Scotia Works (NSW) network of employment services centres, and the Centre for Employment Innovation (CEI). The CEI, sited within the Coady Institute of St. Francis Xavier University, works alongside the NSW centres and the NSCDA to strengthen the development and delivery of employment services in Nova Scotia through various activities, partnerships, and projects.

While Nova Scotian career development practitioners (CDPs) have shared anecdotally that the process they undertake in achieving their Certified Career Development Practitioner (CCDP) designation has a beneficial impact on their practice, the NSCDA and the CEI wanted to gather qualitative data around these impacts, to determine whether the anecdotal evidence was, in fact, a true perception. Specifically, we wanted to examine what impacts, if any, participating in the NSCDA's CCDP process, as well as achieving the designation, has on CDP / CCDP practice over time. We sought funding[1], and in 2020, the *Capacity & Credentialing: The Evidence Base for Career Development Training and Certification in Nova Scotia* project began under the direction of co-principal investigators Dr. Paula Romanow[2] and Teresa Francis[3].

The NSCDA's CCDP Program

The roots of the NSCDA's CCDP program go back to 2006, when the NSCDA surveyed its membership to determine interest in a voluntary certification process. The results were overwhelmingly positive, with 97% of respondents in support of the development of such a program. Over the next four years, various models were explored, and the shape of the provincial program began to emerge[4].

The program developed by the NSCDA was based on the *Canadian Standards & Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners* (S&Gs)[5], which, at that time, was the national standard for career services in Canada. There is no required direct educational pathway into the career services field in Canada; in the Nova Scotian context, individuals enter the field from a variety of backgrounds with differing levels of formal education and related experience. After careful consideration, to best respond to the Nova Scotian reality, a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) model was chosen for the certification program. For any RPL-based program to work, there need to be measurable competencies in place in which to ground the assessment methods for the individual candidates. While providing the broad standards that guide and support career development practice, the S&Gs do not include measurable outcomes. To address this, a separate Nova Scotia Core Competency Profile[6] (commonly referred to as The NS Profile) was adapted from the S&Gs, making the S&Gs more quantifiable while also rearranging them into six core competency areas. Using this operationalized version of the S&Gs to support an RPL-based certification model is unique in the career services field in Canada; indeed, as far as we can tell from our literature review, this use of an RPL-based model for professional credentialing is very rare across professions within the Canadian context.

Unlike the other provincial certification programs in Canada that require a certain level of post-secondary education as a prerequisite, in addition to a specified number of years of work within the field, the Nova Scotian model is unique in that it is based solely upon the demonstration of competence, wherever the learning was acquired. The only prerequisite for entry into the NSCDA's CCDP Certification program is the accumulation of 5400 hours (roughly the equivalent of three years) of full-time work experience within the career services sector over a five-year period (to allow for circumstances such as maternity or other types of personal leave). The assessment components of the process evaluate the knowledge and skills of a 'competent' (not expert) practitioner. When a candidate meets the pre-requisite and feels they are ready for assessment, there is a three-part process:

1. A Work Experience Assessment (WEA) in which a candidate demonstrates how they've acquired the required competencies through their previous experience and learning. An evaluation of the candidate's WEA helps to determine any potential gaps that need to be filled.

1 This research was funded through the CEI's Special Initiatives internal funding stream.

2 Manager Research and Evaluation, Centre for Employment Innovation (CEI)

3 Director, Learning and Professional Practice, Nova Scotia Career Development Association (NSCDA)

4 The development of the NSCDA's certification program was supported with funding provided through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) funding stream of the Adult Learning Division, Skills Development Branch of the (then) Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) (which became the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI) following the provincial election in August 2021, and a change in the governing party). The project activities were led by the NSCDA and deeply informed by experts in the field of career services, working with Emerit, an organization specializing in the development of professional credentialing program, in particular its president Phil Mondor.

5 In 2021, the S&Gs were replaced with the Pan-Canadian Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals, following significant pan-Canadian consultation.

6 See Appendix A for the core competencies summary chart.

2. A multiple-choice exam.
3. A structured interview.

The latter two assessment tools are based on situations a CDP would encounter in their day-to-day practice within the Nova Scotian context, and thus it is truly a competence model. No specific courses nor texts are required for candidates, although, if needed, a variety of professional development activities are available for addressing any gaps in skills or knowledge. Candidates are encouraged to be thoroughly familiar with the NS profile, and to draw from their own individual practice to see how their learning and experience aligns with the NS profile's six core competency areas and sub-competencies. Candidates must successfully complete each part of the assessment process in the order above, before moving onto the next; this allows for any skills gaps to be identified and addressed through further training / professional development as the candidate goes through the process, optimizing the potential for success. Upon successful completion of both the exam and the structured interview, candidates achieve their CCDP designation and are then entitled to use it as part of their professional signature.

In 2013, the NSCDA's program was piloted with 75 practitioners. After a few adjustments based on the pilot results, the program was launched officially in 2014 and continued into 2015 as a voluntary program for CDPs in Nova Scotia. However, in November of that year, the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) announced a transformation process for the delivery of government-funded employment services in Nova Scotia through the Nova Scotia Works (NSW) system, working towards a more consistent standardization of services across the province. As part of this, LAE made it mandatory for all client-facing staff (e.g., case managers) working within the NSW Career Services centres to hold the CCDP designation. There was initially an expectation that current case managers would successfully achieve this by July 1, 2016. However, NSW leadership pointed out that many staff would not be able to meet the 5400-hour prerequisite by that date, especially new hires. The NSCDA was asked to come up with a solution, and so the *Career Pathways to Certification* (Career Pathways) stream was created.[7]

One of the unique aspects of this stream is that it is built on a mentorship model. As in the assessment stream, the candidate in Career Pathways completes a self-assessment process. This process allows for existing knowledge and skills to be identified, as well as any gaps that might need filling; one of the core tenets of RPL is that individuals should not be forced to repeat training for knowledge and skills they already hold. Once the self-assessment is completed, the candidate then meets with an NSCDA program advisor. If the advisor identifies Career Pathways as the candidate's recommended route to certification, a mentor is sought. The mentors must already hold the CCDP designation and be working within the career services sector, although not necessarily within the candidate's organization. Once a mentor is found, the NSCDA advisor, the mentor, and the candidate work together to develop a learning contract; this contract will guide the candidate, supported by the mentor, toward filling any skills / knowledge gaps as well as meeting the required hours prior to completing the assessment components of the certification process. The identified gaps are outlined in the learning contract and can be addressed through various means, including on-the-job work experience, courses and/or workshops, and self-study.

Candidates report quarterly on their progress, which is monitored by both the mentor and the NSCDA Registrar's office. Upon reaching the required 5400 hours, the Career Pathways candidates – if they feel ready – enter the assessment stream, where they complete first the exam and then the structured interview.

Method

The Study

As noted above, the CCDP certification process in Nova Scotia is unique within Canada, because it uses an RPL model, as well as a mentorship model for the Career Pathways program. It is within the context of this unique approach that this research study was initiated in 2018.

7 When Career Pathways was created in 2016, the original Certification process was renamed "the Standard Stream." It was renamed again in 2021 and became the "Assessment Stream."

In preparation for the research study, a preliminary literature review was conducted, which focused on any existing studies on the effects on practice of applying for and/or achieving professional certification in any field. At that time, we found very little in the literature among professions where achieving a credential is a requirement to practice (the regulated professions, e.g., health, financial services, real estate, etc.), and what we found concentrated on the importance of providing a recognized standard for practice. We could not find literature specific to certification in career services. The findings outlined in this report thus not only provide an evidence base for assessing the NSCDA's CCDP program but also addresses the gap in the literature on the impacts of certification on practice in career services, as well as in other professions.

In addition to examining impacts on day-to-day practice, practitioners' self-perception, and the profession more broadly, the study also allowed us to find out how CDPs felt about the certification process in general. Our primary research objectives were:

- to determine if, and how, the process CDPs engage in to achieve certification has an impact on and improves practice over time, and
- to determine the effectiveness of a Recognition of Prior Learning assessment process for individuals who are new to the field.

Our secondary research objectives were:
- to begin to create a body of evidence for funders and policy makers concerning the value of certification to the delivery of career services in Nova Scotia,
- to determine attitudes towards achieving certification among CDPs in Nova Scotia, and
- to determine what helps and what hinders achieving certification among CDPs in Nova Scotia.

Measures

While our original research design comprised a longer timeline and a mixed methods approach to data gathering (i.e., semi-structured interviews and focus groups), circumstances – namely, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lock-downs – necessitated flexibility and had an impact on our data collection. However, we were able to maintain the two main study components from the original design. For the first component, we conducted a series of one-time, semi-structured interviews with a variety of stakeholders and key informants to:

- get a better understanding of the core elements and considerations that are needed to shape the program,
- gather reflections on the on-going process of the certification program, and
- identify successes, challenges, and key issues that need to be addressed.

Key informant interview participants included:

- Executive directors (EDs) and operations managers (OMs) from the Nova Scotia Works (NSW) system (as the CCDP designation is mandatory for all NSW case managers)
- Career Pathways Mentors
- Structured Interview Assessors
- CCDPs who had gone through the pilot program, the assessment stream, or Career Pathways/assessment

To explore the second component of the study, we followed a cohort of CDPs currently going through the process, either in the assessment stream or in Career Pathways. We had planned to interview cohort members at the beginning and the end of the process, and then again six months after achieving their CCDP designation. However, timing challenges, mostly due to the shutdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic, meant that we ran up against the end of our funding on March 31, 2023, resulting in some required adjustments to this longitudinal approach. Instead, we interviewed current cohort members whenever they expressed interest in participating in the study (not always at the beginning of their time in the process), and then approximately a year to a year and a half later to determine how they were progressing. Upon completion, each audio- or video-recorded interview was transcribed. Using these transcripts, we then conducted a thematic analysis, i.e., analyzing data to identify and present recurring patterns and themes.

The findings explored in this report are drawn from data collected from 46 individuals interviewed by the CEI research team between March 2021 and October 2022; this is a large sample for a qualitative study, and we reached data saturation within this number. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the categories of participants interviewed and the number of participants that identify within each category; some participants are counted more than once because they were asked the questions that pertain to each of their roles. For example, some EDs are also CCDPs who went through the certification process and therefore answered both ED interview questions and those for CCDPs.

Table 1

Participant Types and Numbers

Type of Participant	Number of Participants
Executive directors and operations managers of Nova Scotia Works Centres	19
CCDPs from the pilot program	7
CCDPs who went through the assessment certification process	14
CCDPs who went through the Career Pathways to Certification process	3
CDPs who are currently going through either the Career Pathways to Certification or assessment processes	6
Participants who are/were mentors in the Career Pathways process	3
Structured Interview Assessors	2

Results

Two main categories of themes emerged from the thematic analysis: 1) impacts on the practitioners and the career development profession, and 2) feedback on the certification process. While this paper focuses mostly on the first category, we will begin by outlining some of the impacts and feedback on two process pieces: the use of RPL, and the mentorship component of Career Pathways, as the process itself informs, to some extent, the impact on practitioners. We will then turn to the impacts on the CDPs themselves, and on their self-perception. Next, we will examine impacts on CDPs' day-to-day practice, exploring how the process reinforced existing knowledge and provided an opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge, how it improved interpersonal skills and communication, and how it cultivated collaborative and ongoing learning. Finally, we will end with a discussion of impacts on the career development profession more broadly.

The Impacts of the Use of RPL & The Mentorship Model

We started by asking what the impacts of the program's unique elements were on CDP practice, i.e., the use of an RPL competency-based certification model, and the mentorship component of Career Pathways.

RPL Approach

Many participants expressed that RPL was very valuable as it recognizes the competencies practitioners have developed through their work that tie directly to the career development core competencies. By assessing their prior learning and experiences, candidates can identify which competencies they have already met, and where they need to build more knowledge/skill. As one interviewee stated:

> The prior learning assessment is really, really, valuable.... we get new staff who have the experience, but then not the education piece, not the exact experience. We keep thinking, how can we use their previous experience to what they are currently doing? So, the prior learning assessment bridges this piece.

Additionally, one participant explained that RPL is beneficial for career practitioners who are newcomers to Canada, as they may have the necessary experience despite not completing their education at an accredited Canadian institution. By using an RPL approach, value is placed on the skills, knowledge, and behaviours individuals have acquired through their work and life experiences.

Despite the benefits of the RPL approach, a few participants did identify some disadvantages associated with the RPL process, particularly around eligibility. For example, some CDPs who had come from other fields, but had experience that fit the descriptions of certain competencies, felt those experiences were not recognized. One such participant explained that despite completing ethics courses from Nova Scotia's Department of Education, they were unable to be credited with that experience in the ethics core competency. One manager also described that some staff members have a lot of education and training that they thought would be recognized, but they were not. There seemed to be confusion around when experience is and is not counted in the eligibility phase, pointing to the need for clarity around this step in the process.

Inconsistencies and misunderstandings around this aspect of the program were reported to have negative impacts on several participants, such as discouragement from participation in the program when they felt their experience was not recognized and they did not understand why. The NSCDA is using this feedback to clarify what previous learning may or may not be eligible, and why.

Career Pathways Mentorship Model

Overall, participants reported that the mentorship model for the Career Pathways process had a positive impact on both the candidates going through the certification process as well as their mentors. Mentors were seen as role models for mentees, providing guidance around how to handle complex situations and how to deal with clients in a respectful and effective manner. One manager explained that "having a mentor, someone that can guide them, someone that can provide feedback, bounce ideas off of, brainstorm, provide clarity, provide direction… I think would be incredibly important." Another participant stated that mentorship brought about a sense of community as mentees found support from their mentors: "the more mentorship, the more collaboration, the more CCDPs within your organization who can help new people who come along, the easier that process seems to be."

In addition to having a beneficial impact on candidates, mentors also reported positive experiences with the mentorship, expressing that they felt their own learning was enhanced and strengthened. As one mentor explained, "if anything, it was probably a good reminder for me and it was a good process to mentor and train others." Mentorship provides mentors with the opportunity to revisit and reflect on their own practice, as well as learn from their mentee. As one participant explained, this partnership is "a two-way street. Obviously, the mentee is the one learning a lot right now, but it's a relationship where you would constantly learn from each other."

Having these positive experiences with mentorship has also impacted the sustainability of the mentorship component and leadership within centres. Some CDPs indicated that when they were going through the program, they gained invaluable information from their mentors, and that when they became mentors themselves, they utilized that knowledge to help others. Executive directors also noticed a boost in confidence among staff members who are mentors in the profession. The increase in confidence coupled with the attainment of new skills (as a result of being certified) makes mentors better leaders and provides them with the opportunity to form stronger connections with mentees. Having strong leaders also helps the organization; as one director explained, "there is a level of confidence that says, I am certified, I can do this, I can mentor, I can be a leader within the Centre, I can provide leadership within the organization." Thus, the mentorship component has not only equipped future mentors with the necessary skills and information to train and mentor others but has also helped cultivate leadership among the staff.

Overall, participants saw both the use of RPL and the mentorship component of Career Pathways as positive components of the certification process. As expected, the feedback also identifies areas for improvement. Integrating the participant feedback will be essential to strengthen the program and ensure further positive impacts on practitioners and the profession more broadly.

For instance, despite these benefits to mentorship, a few interviewees stated that because CCDPs are busy, it can be difficult for candidates to find a mentor. One interviewee also explained that mentors can sometimes feel overwhelmed as they have heavy workloads, and they also need to be available to mentees to answer the many questions they sometimes have. According to one participant, “sometimes [mentees] end up overwhelming the mentor, because of proximity, and they’re down the hall every day asking them... they should recognize that the person still needs to do their job.” Additionally, a few individuals expressed a breakdown in communication with some mentors, when candidates felt they were not receiving enough feedback on whether they were meeting the necessary requirements. For example, one participant noted that “I think what I would’ve liked to hear was confirmation that what I was doing ... [that] I was on the right track.”

Participants had a few suggestions to mitigate the overwhelming or misaligned expectations felt by some mentors and mentees. Some expressed the need for more guidance and regular check-ins with the NSCDA. One participant suggested that before individuals sign up to become mentors, the NSCDA should hold an introductory session for mentors where they are given an overview of what their role is and how to handle the types of questions that mentees might have. There was also consensus among many mentor participants that formal mentor training would be helpful. Although mentors are knowledgeable, they are not always able to adequately support other practitioners in a mentorship relationship. The lack of formal training for mentors can make the boundaries or expectations between mentors and mentees less clear. Finally, several participants expressed interest in creating a community of learning or practice for mentors to allow them to share ideas and experiences. As one mentor stated, “I would like more of a guide for the mentors, more check in and connection.”

One final aspect of the mentorship program that has impacted Career Pathways candidates is the location of their mentor, i.e., either at the same or at a different organization. On the one hand, some participants felt that having a mentor in a different centre provides mentees with a unique and new perspective. On the other hand, some participants indicated that having mentors in the same centre is essential to the candidate’s success for a number of reasons: 1) some mentees felt that having an in-house mentor who can give immediate feedback and advice makes the process of getting certified less stressful; 2) they argued that mentors in the same centre as mentees are already aware of the centre’s internal processes, such as how employees are trained and how the centre operates, which helped with clarity as they went through the process; and finally, 3) as one ED explained, mentors and candidates not being at the same centre can have several drawbacks:

> I think people do not feel as comfortable dealing with somebody that they do not know and don’t necessarily develop that relationship with. They might be a little bit more hesitant to open up about challenges that they might be experiencing or if they’re feeling overwhelmed. My experience from my own staff is that they have felt disconnected from their mentors [who were at different centres] and even though the mentors volunteered to be a mentor, they really were not accessible.

However, this sentiment was not shared across the board. One participant who has mentored multiple people in different centres explained that her mentees were happy that she was at a different centre because she was removed from the dynamics and politics in which the mentees were operating, meaning they could vent or ask for advice without the risk of someone from their own centre knowing. While there doesn’t seem to be consensus around the best approach to a mentor’s location – whether in the same centre or a different one – mentorship relationships, when done well, appear to have a positive impact for both mentors and mentees.

Impacts on Practitioners' Self and Self-Perception

This section will provide an overview of the impacts of the certification program on the practitioners themselves as well as on their self-perception, beginning with their feelings of credibility, recognition, and validation, and then focusing on the main impact emerging from the research – an increased self-confidence experienced by most of the study's participants. The overwhelming majority of the feedback on self-perception was positive, although there were some concerns around how practitioners – especially those with years of experience – would be perceived by others if they did not attain the designation on their first attempt or took longer than expected.

External Recognition of Knowledge and Skills

During the interviews, when asked about any impacts of the certification process on their self-perception, many participants discussed recognition of their expertise as one of the major impacts of attaining the designation. Both practitioners and their managers or centre EDs felt that the designation of CCDP offered them the opportunity for recognition by peers, employers, stakeholders, and recruiters as competent professionals in the broad field of career and employment services; they also felt that it provided a competitive edge when applying for positions. Similarly, when working with clients, practitioners felt an increased sense of credibility. Even if they were already practicing all the core competencies prior to applying for certification, going through the process validated their experience, ensuring that they truly were following best practice and had all the competencies required for the position. Moreover, participants expressed feeling a sense of satisfaction and pride upon receiving the designation as the program offered them a level of professionalism that evokes credibility and reliability. An executive director explained that staff members "are quite proud to have their certification" and that "it does kind of put them in a group with other professionals."

While proud to hold the designation, several participants – both those in management and the practitioners themselves – suggested that salaries should increase following the attainment of the designation. According to one executive director, "they'd be just as proud but more excited if there was a wage scale that came with that certification once they completed it."[8] As one participant explained, "my hope is that, at the end, it legitimizes, puts more value on the industry to the point where we get paid more." Executive directors explained that a salary increase is justifiable and necessary since the possibility of attaining the CCDP designation raises the bar for the field, demonstrating to employers, funders, policy makers, and the public that the work of CCDPs is grounded in professional excellence. Executive directors also identified how the designation provides practitioners with credentials that position them for employment outside of the NSW system, sometimes in jobs that provide a higher salary; they fear this could lead to a loss of experienced practitioners within the sector in Nova Scotia. Therefore, for the long-term sustainability of career development services in the province, many executive directors advocate for wage scale increases.

Increased Self-Confidence

The recognition, credibility, and validation discussed all contributed to the major impact on CCDPs' self-perception expressed by most participants: increased self-confidence. Their confidence seemed to stem from both the building of their skills and knowledge of best practices in the field, and the pride in perceived professionalism. In terms of skills and knowledge, their confidence could be seen in the way they work with clients. As one participant stated, "the CCDP certification challenges what you know, and as you work toward that you acquire more skills, best practices, and I think, overall, it increases confidence in the job that you're doing." This increase in confidence among CCDPs was also observed by management. As one director stated, "I see a confidence build... I feel that just understanding more of the process and how they're helping their clients increases confidence."

8 While the Province sets salary ranges for those CDPs working within the NSW system (which represents a benchmark for pay across the profession within Nova Scotia), it is at the discretion of the EDs where an individual practitioner falls within that pay scale. It is possible that some EDs do recognize and reward CDPs who achieve their CCDP designation, but this was not identified by any EDs participating in the study.

Additionally, many interviewees indicated a sense of pride and accomplishment as their skills and qualifications were made more recognizable through the professional designation. According to one participant, "having this certification does show others your qualifications. And I'm proud of it. I am very proud." This professionalization of the field has been a common thread through discussions around impacts on self-perception, daily practice, and the profession more broadly.

Value of CCDP Designation Beside One's Name

In terms of whether having the credentials displayed next to a CCDP's name has an impact on the practitioners, participants had differing opinions. Some participants acknowledged the value of the extra "C"; as explained by one manager, "I know the initials beside our names gives a lot of pride to a lot of the staff that have worked in this field for a long time and giving that recognition, I think that's also key to it." One practitioner explained that the designation provides the industry with an acknowledgement of the range of competencies required of a CCDP, demonstrating the professionalism of the field as a whole. For many practitioners, having the designation gives them the credibility when working with clients or applying for positions – having the title means they went through the process and have met the standards for the profession.

Conversely, some participants noted that in some cases, having the letters next to a practitioner's name may create a barrier between them and their clients. According to one CCDP: "I think the challenge is that it doesn't fit the population groups we serve. So, if I'm looking at the DCS [Department of Community Services] client, they don't care about those initials; actually, if anything, it is a barrier." Additionally, there were practitioners who felt indifferent about having the letters "CCDP" beside their name: "I learn best by doing, and by working with my clients and seeing what works and what doesn't and learning from my mistakes… and that's where I hold a lot of the value in my practice rather than the letters after my name."

Impacts of Going Through the Certification Process

Finally, while most of the feedback regarding impacts on the practitioners themselves was very positive, there were some participants who expressed that they or other staff members experienced stress and anxiety that accompanied the process, negatively impacting their self- perception at times[9]. For some, anxiety was caused by a concern over whether they would pass the structured interview and exam, and how they would be perceived by others if they did not pass during their first try. Similarly, there was anxiety and stress that accompanied the process for those who felt it was taking them longer than expected to attain the designation, again, worrying about what others might think of them if the process took them a long time. In both situations, it was particularly stressful for seasoned practitioners, who felt a sense of shame for taking longer than expected to complete the certification process. Managers also noticed the fear and shame experienced by some around having a lot of experience but not being able to do well on the exam or the interview. As one manager explained, "we had one staff person [who] took forever to go through the process. And it was this fear, even though she was a skilled practitioner, the anxiety of it not going well made that person really delay each next step." These observations led to important feedback around considerations of modifying the timeframe for candidates who may be struggling to complete the program in a timely manner. To further mitigate these impacts of stress, anxiety, and shame, some participants suggested that it would be helpful if candidates could privately and confidentially request accommodations so that they would not have to disclose to their executive directors or managers how and/or why they are struggling with the process.

Despite those experiences of stress and anxiety over the process, the data showed that the most significant impact on practitioners' self-perception has been an increase in confidence due to validation, recognition, and further building of skills, as well as a perceived professionalism and credibility from peers,

9 It should be noted that this is not uncommon with adult learners, especially those who have been out of the education system for some time. We suspect that these feelings were exacerbated by the mandatory requirement to hold the CCDP designation among NSW case workers as they saw their jobs as potentially being on the line if they were not successful.

managers, and the public. The result of these self-perceptions, as explored in the next section, also informed participants' feelings concerning the impacts of the certification process on their day-to-day practice.

Impacts on Career Development Practice

There have been many positive impacts of the CCDP certification program on practitioners' day-to-day practice. These impacts emerged as three categories within the data: 1) reinforcing knowledge and learning new skills through the core competencies, 2) improved interpersonal skills and communication, and 3) collaborative and ongoing learning. Although we have divided this section into these three discrete themes for clarity, it must be noted that analysis revealed a more complex situation: there are a variety of interwoven threads that inform each theme, but also apply to other themes, and which in turn link back to the impacts on practitioners' self-perception discussed above.

Reinforcing Knowledge and Learning New Skills through the Core Competencies

In discussing the certification process's impacts on their day-to-day practice, a common response from practitioners concerned the usefulness of the core competencies as a way to frame and guide the development of new skills while acquiring new knowledge, as well as the reinforcement and validation of practitioners' existing approaches and competencies. One participant stated that having a breakdown of each competency was helpful as it provided practitioners with a detailed description of what they should aim to achieve. According to the interviewee: "It wasn't just 'here are the competencies' – there was a breakdown. I really enjoyed that there was something you could look at and say, okay, I get that, I know, and it's giving me the description of that."

Confidentiality and ethics were specifically named as areas that needed to be reinforced. Although many participants had learned ethical practice in previous roles, they said it is a competency that requires a lot of guidance and reinforcement. Several participants highlighted the importance of the clarity provided by the competency on how to adhere to ethical principles and inclusionary practices, given that CDPs provide services to a diversity of people. The emphasis on confidentiality was recurrent throughout the interviews, as participants expressed how the core competencies made them more aware of confidentiality-related legislations and procedures. One participant explained, "we're starting at the very beginning of a client appointment and being clear to speak to the confidentiality factors or our role and responsibility for client's safety." Overall, they explained that certification contributes to public protection, setting a standard for excellence and providing a potential mechanism for visible accountability that they feel the public can trust.

Additionally, several participants mentioned how they were able to connect the language of career theories to their practice. While a few individuals stated that they did not find that certification impacted their day-to-day interactions with the clients, those same interviewees also explained that the certification has made them more familiar with the core competencies as well as the various career theories. As one participant stated, "I think there was more knowledge behind the theories ... supporting why we're doing what we're doing." Participants also expressed feeling that their knowledge of career theories made them more credible when working with clients.

Given that many of the participants in the study have been practitioners for several years, they explained how they were already practicing a lot of what was described in the competencies, but that the program helped them connect previous knowledge to new knowledge. The competencies also enhanced individuals' clarity on their roles as CDPs. According to one participant:

> I think a lot of people come into [our work] before being certified and have a lot of the understanding in place, but the certification process helps them solidify that and gain more clarity and structure that they didn't have before. It creates less risk of people going outside the ethical boundaries and staying within our lane.

Furthermore, several interviewees explained that the competencies allowed them to reflect on their own practices and the ways in which they can improve certain competency areas. As one interviewee explained, "It was neat to reflect on your own practice and have that structure to look at and see, ok, these are the things that I should be demonstrating… and just even a reinforcement for what you're doing."

Ultimately, the distinction between the impact on practitioners of acquiring new skills and knowledge versus reinforcement and validation of current practice was mostly based on level of experience. Those who were very new to the field – mostly those going through Career Pathways – found the competencies very helpful in guiding their learning. Those who had years of experience in career development and employment services still found value in the breakdown of the competencies, as it both validated and reinforced their knowledge and skills and identified where they required refreshers and further skill building.

Improved Interpersonal Skills and Communication

Many participants in this study discussed how the certification program further developed CDPs' communication and interpersonal skills when working with clients. For example, one participant felt that certification facilitated an "understanding of where [the clients] are coming from a little bit more." Another CCDP candidate identified that being more aware of the different career theories through certification helped them know how to apply certain terminology with clients. One executive director stated that certification provided practitioners with certain skills and tools to use when working with clients and another explained that it is essential for staff members to attain the designation as it helps them with delivering information and instructions to clients.

Interestingly, participants expressed how certification was a useful tool in CDPs' toolbox for developing a great connection with clients through their ability to build a strong rapport. As one practitioner stated, "[certification] has absolutely strengthened our ability to advocate for our clients. I think that would be the biggest component." Additionally, one participant explained that clients need practitioners who genuinely understand and relate to them:

> Because they come in, they're vulnerable, they don't have a job. And one thing that all of us can say at Nova Scotia Works is, 'we've all been in your shoes'. Every one of us, for whatever reason, we moved, we lost our job or whatever. And I think that really plays an important part. Because they know that we understand, we've been there. And we're employed, and then they laugh. So, I think providing hope is really important.

This connection to their clients also positively affected participants' work ethic. As one participant explained, "It's an honor … my relationship with clients, I would say that it upscaled the level of my work ethic, the level of the way I do my job."

While connection and relationship building are crucial in this profession, communicating boundaries, both with clients and managers, was something participants discovered through this process. Several participants explained that reviewing the competencies furthered their own development as they were able to honour their time, set boundaries, and self-advocate when necessary. As one participant explained:

> If I am trying to do that with a client, I know that I should also be advocating for that for myself and for the work that I do. It works both ways. It makes me become a better practitioner. It also makes me become a better me all around.

Collaborative and Ongoing Learning

In addition to these impacts on individual CDPs' skills, the program has also created a learning community where peers and co-workers learn from one another. One participant explained that they retain learnings by having staff supporting and challenging each other to maintain the practice: "We challenge each other here daily, basically to do better than we did earlier." Participants mentioned how peer-learning happened between staff who went through certification at the same time, offering candidates the opportunity to share their expertise and knowledge with one another as they worked through their learning plans. Having staff who were going through the process also generated conversations about practices and the core competencies across all staff in some centres:

> I think people, when they're going through it, their knowledge increases and one of the things that we saw is that it creates space for conversations. So, you know, when you're studying or you're preparing, or you're wondering about career theories, or about ethical practice, or whatever it might be, you start generating, thinking, and you have questions, and you'll start talking to other people about it. Maybe [with those] who are already certified or who haven't been certified. And it creates a space for discussion and growth and sharing, that kind of community learning.

Although most candidates were already adhering to ethical principles, values, and codes, staff would discuss the competencies; discussion around certification helped CDPs to become more conscious about using these things. Additionally, participants mentioned that the program allowed them to connect with other case managers across the career services system and this in turn helped them to solidify their learning. According to one individual:

> It's nice to have that [connection] with case managers from other organizations – there may be ways that they're using or doing things a little differently that you could benefit from hearing. Everyone has new ideas all the time. … I think it's good to be able to have that opportunity.

Impact of the Recertification Requirement

In order to maintain the CCDP designation, practitioners are required to participate in 60 hours of professional development aligning with any four of the six core competency areas within the next three-year period. Participants explained that this recertification process also has an impact on CCDPs' practice as it offers them the opportunity to revise already acquired knowledge while also gaining new information, staying current on the profession's best practices. Ongoing learning ensures that practitioners are progressing in their profession. Several participants indicated that recertification had a positive impact on their daily practice, as it enhanced their knowledge and served as a refresher, creating an opportunity to review the core competencies.

Participants also expressed how the best way to retain learnings was by using them in daily practice. One mentor stated that, while refreshers can be helpful in revisiting information on the competencies, in most cases, candidates retain learnings as they practice what they learned through their work. Therefore, while regular refreshers in the form of seminars and workshops for individuals working in career services are a useful practice to encourage ongoing learning and retention, in order for them to become entrenched in their work, they need to be used in their day-to-day practice.

Impacts on the Profession

On a broader level, there was consensus among participants around the beneficial impacts of certification on the career development profession. For example, in the NSW system, where the CCDP designation is mandatory for all practitioners in a case management role, participants reported that certification provides a level of consistency or uniformity to certain practices and services in NSW centres province wide. Practitioners find this consistency reassuring as they are equipped with the knowledge and training needed to effectively work with diverse groups of people.

Standardization of Service Across the Province

Similarly, one NSW executive director explained that because candidates going through the process have worked in different fields, there tends to be a lot of inconsistency in the training and knowledge that they have acquired. As well, training in the centres across the province varies, so prior to the 2015 Transformation process, clients entering an NSW centre at one end of the province might have been receiving very different service than someone in another region. Once the CCDP designation became mandatory for case managers, participants from management roles have noted that certification provides standards and ensures that practitioners are delivering consistent service to clients. As one manager stated:

> I did see a lot of inconsistencies in foundational knowledge, based on having seen training be inconsistent and sporadic depending on the region you lived in … So, I think that the certification brought all those pieces together and addressed all those issues.

Use of the NS Profile as Hiring Guide

The impact of certification on consistency in the field also applies to hiring. Participants in management roles indicated that they used the core competencies as a guide when interviewing, and onboarding, as well as in writing job descriptions. According to one manager, “when we conduct interviews, [the competencies are] part of our interview guide. It’s built into our performance review process. So that it’s where we’re utilizing those skill sets on an ongoing basis, it becomes part of their educational work plan.”

Professionalization of the Field

In addition to providing consistency, certification has had a positive impact on the professionalization of career development, which, in turn, brings value to the industry. Both consistency and professionalism provide clients with greater levels of comfort as they are being helped by CCDPs who have the necessary resources and information to deliver services. As one participant stated, the “level of consistency, professionalism [and] accreditation is just sought after, and it provides a level of comfort for the clients that they are in good hands.”

Several in management also stated that seeing the CCDP designation provides the general population with reassurance as they are being helped by competent professionals who have the skills and knowledge needed to deliver exceptional services. As one manager explained, “when people see there is a certification attached to it, they know there’s more value placed on it.” Similarly, an executive director noted the value of certification on the industry, because “overall, [it] contributes to public awareness of career development as a defined field of practice with core competencies and areas of specialization.”

Conclusion

As this article has demonstrated, participants felt that the certification process has, overall, had a positive impact on CCDPs’ self-perception, day-to-day practice, and the career development profession more broadly. Despite some challenges or clarity needed around certain aspects of the process, there was consensus from participants around the value of certification, with several participants advocating for the development of similar credentials for the other career services positions, such as job developers, employer engagement specialists, and employment/support practitioners. The NSCDA is using the findings of this research to improve their certification process, and we hope the experiences collected through this research, which point to the value of certification for career development, will help to support and inform the development of credentials across the industry[10].

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10 In 2024, the five provincial certification programs were integrated into a single national Certified Career Development Practitioner program. Launched December 10, 2024, the new national program is administered by the NSCDA via careercertification.ca.

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Appendix A

Nova Scotia Career Development Practitoner Core Competencies Summary Chart

1.0 Ethics	**1.1**	**1.2**				
	Follow Code of Ethics	Follow ethical decision-making model				
2.0 Diversity & Inclusion	**2.1**	**2.2**				
	Carry out inclusionary practices	Create and maintain an inclusive and welcoming work environment				
3.0 Administration	**3.1**	**3.2**	**3.3**	**3.4**	**3.5**	
	Maintain client records	Use time management techniques	Collect, analyze, and use information or basic research techniques	Develop information materials	Access and use information and communications technology	
4.0 Interpersonal & Foundational Skills	**4.1**	**4.2**	**4.3**	**4.4**	**4.5**	
	Establish a working alliance	Work with knowledge of career development theories	Use listening skills	Use speaking skills	Use writing skills	
5.0 Career Development Services	**5.1**	**5.2**	**5.3**	**5.4**	**5.5**	
	Conduct needs assessment	Determine intervention	Implement intervention	Monitor and evaluate programs and interventions	Follow up and provide ongoing support or client services	
6.0 Professional Development/Career Self-Management	**6.1**	**6.2**	**6.3**	**6.4**	**6.5**	**6.6**
	Demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional development	Develop productive and working relationships with colleagues	Develop productive and working relationships with stakeholders and other service organizations	Respond to disruptive or threatening behaviours	Be familiar with labour market information	Apply labour market information

Image from: NSCDA (2013). *Nova Scotia Core Competecies Profile* (Unpublished report). https://nscda.ca

An Experientially-Mediated Career Development Group Increases Core Competencies and Career Readiness in University Students

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Abstract

University students (n = 26; M = 24.7 years) attended an experientially-mediated career development intervention in small groups. Programming was psychoeducational and process-oriented (i.e., presentation of career-related information, individual career-related assessment and interpretation, hands-on learning activities). Twice during the intervention, attendees completed measures of career-related dysfunctional thinking, hope, and self-awareness. The control group (n = 22; M = 22.3 years) twice completed the same measures approximately six weeks apart. Analyses of pre- to post-scores indicated that more attendees reported increased hope-action competency for career self-management, increased career-related self-awareness, and less career confusion relative to the control group (ps < .05). Our findings underscore the value of experiential learning (EL) as a career development tool as well as the cost-effectiveness of providing a limited number of small group career sessions. Moreover, our findings help validate our conceptual model of how experiential learning can support undergraduate students to develop the core competencies necessary for workplace success (Bowering et al., 2020).

Keywords: Career development group, experiential learning, model of core competency development, university student

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In recognition of the ever-increasing demands of today's workplace, we developed a theoretical model that argues that universities need to support the development of three core competencies in students: Self-awareness and regulation, cognitive and metacognitive processing, and social awareness and responsible citizenship (Bowering et al., 2020). Moreover, we recommended experiential learning (EL) as a pedagogical approach by which universities might effectively do so. As conceptualized by David Kolb (1984, p. 38), experiential learning is a pedagogical approach "whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience", thus helping students "develop skills, clarify values, and develop … capacity to contribute to their communities" (Association for Experiential Education, n.d.). Here, learners engage in a cyclical process of concrete experience, reflective observation (What happened?), abstract conceptualization (What does it mean?), and active experimentation (i.e., testing/applying their understanding to make decisions).

The literature has shown that university students who participate in EL activities (e.g., work-integrated learning, service learning, internship, co-operative education, study abroad) benefit not only academically and socially but also gain soft skills (e.g., time management, communication, teamwork) that promote career success (e.g., de Villiers Scheepers et al., 2018; Yorio & Ye, 2012). As discussed in our previous paper (Bowering et al., 2020), most theories of career development recognize the influence of environmental factors (e.g., significant others, culture) in shaping career selection, pathways, and outcomes. For example, Happenstance Learning Theory claims that "human behaviour is the product of countless numbers of learning experiences made available by both planned and unplanned situations in which individuals find themselves. The learning outcomes include skills, interests, knowledge, beliefs, preferences, sensitivities, emotions and future actions" (Krumboltz, 2009, p. 135). Critical reflection helps individuals process and better understand how their experiences impact their career development (Kolb, 1984).

In the research study described here, we examine the process by which an educational intervention *situated within an EL framework* shaped career-related development in university students. Specifically, our multi-session, process-oriented career development support group experience included hands-on learning activities and critical reflection (i.e., an EL framework) and was intended to increase career-related self-awareness and hope while decreasing negative career thoughts (i.e., dysfunctional thinking). We conceptualized self-awareness as one's understanding of their personal values, beliefs, goals, thoughts, and feelings and hope as "the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways" (Synder, 2002, p. 249). We agree with Synder that hope is "primarily a way of thinking, with feelings playing an important, albeit contributory role" (Synder, 2002, p. 249). As hypothesized, the university students who attended the psychoeducational career development group exhibited increased career-related self-awareness, hope, and positive career thoughts in comparison to a control group. Our results provide support for our theoretical model that advocates for "hands-on" experience combined with critical reflection in shaping the core competencies that are required for career development.

Career Development Theories

Post-secondary students have faced many pressures over the past few years including the rising cost of education as well as a shifting labour market that included remote learning and work resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These pressures have complicated student career planning and readiness to enter the labour market. Career Services professionals in post-secondary settings therefore have needed to find effective ways to support students experiencing uncertainty, anxiety, and doubt. Our career development intervention consisted of career education including self-assessment, EL activities, and critical reflection and utilized the career theories described below.

Cognitive Information Processing Theory posits that career development involves self and occupational knowledge, metacognitive processes (how individuals think about careers), affect (e.g., anxiety), as well as the ability to make decisions and take action (Peterson et al., 1996). The theory has lent itself to considerable research, as well as development of the Career Thoughts Inventory (Sampson et al, 2013) which was used in our study. Through career courses, participants have been shown to overcome negative career thoughts and career indecisiveness (Austin et al., 2004; Freeman et al., 2017; Reed et al., 2001; Osborn et al., 2007; Osborn et al., 2020; Prescod et al., 2019; Thrift et al., 2012). Our intervention drew upon Cognitive Information Processing Theory as we required participants to self-assess and critically reflect, identify their negative career thoughts and learn strategies to reframe these thoughts, and prepare to take goal-directed actions. We extended previous research in that participation in EL activities combined with critical reflection were woven throughout our sessions.

Hope Action Theory speaks to the essential competencies (i.e., hope, self-reflection, self-clarity, visioning, goal setting and planning, implementing, and adapting) necessary to create career-related hope (Niles et al., 2019) and to maintain hope despite an ever-changing work environment and world (Niles, 2011; Niles et al., 2010). In fact, Hope Action Theory has contributed to research with diverse populations that include retired military officers (Wood, 2022) and individuals with substance use challenges (Currie & Bedi, 2023; Currie et al., 2024) and provided the foundation for the creation of a career development framework for employees dealing with the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic (Yoon et al., 2021). Research has also shown that both online and in-person groups using hope-centered career interventions increased employment center clients' hope and understanding of their career situation (Amundson et al., 2018). Moreover, undergraduate students who are hopeful participate in meaningful activities that support self and career knowledge (vocational identity) and academic grades (Yoon et al., 2015). In the current study, we used a Hope Action Theory framework to construct a hope-centered intervention. We targeted the hope competencies through exercises and group discussions. We held the intervention online during the COVID-19 pandemic and then face-to-face when learning returned to in-person settings.

Our intervention also drew on Happenstance Learning Theory (Krumboltz, 2009) in that university students were required to critically reflect on their past academic, work, and/or co-curricular experiences and what they learned from them. They also were asked to set new goals and participate in EL activities (i.e., mock interview, networking at a career fair) that could create additional learning and opportunities.

Finally, Holland's Theory of Career Choice (Holland, 1959) is an established career theory that helps people make career decisions based on their interest patterns. The Strong Interest Inventory (Donnay et al., 2005) was developed based on this theory and is widely used to help post-secondary students discover and take action toward their career goals. As described by Niles et al. (2010), while career assessments can be helpful, self-reflection activities prompt people to derive deeper meaning and foster self-clarity. In our study, after participants had completed self-assessment and other activities, the Strong Interest Inventory was offered as an optional activity.

Methods

Participants

The Experimental Group was drawn from students who attended the Professional Career Development Group (PCDG) offered at the university at which the second author was employed. The sample (*M* age = 24.7 years, *SD* = 3.4, *R* = 21-32) was composed of 26 students (24 females, 2 males) who were primarily full-time (88.5%) and either in their fourth or fifth years of undergraduate study (53.8%) or at the graduate level (42.3%). Most were Asian (42.3%) or Caucasian (38.5%) although some identified as Black (11.5%), multiracial (3.9%), or "Other" (3.9%). Their motivations to attend the PCDG included to get a job after graduation (23.1%), to increase their confidence (23.1%), to address anxiety about the future (19.2%), to learn new things (15.4%), and to be prepared for the future (11.5%).

In contrast, the Control Group was composed of students who did not attend the PCDG. The Control Group (*M* age = 22.3 years, *SD* = 2.4, *R* = 19-29) consisted of 22 students (17 females, 5 males) who primarily were full-time (90.9%) and either in their fourth year of undergraduate study (54.6%) or at the graduate level (27.3%). Most were Caucasian (45.5%), while some identified as Asian (9.1%), Black (4.6%), multiracial (4.6%), "Other" (31.8%), or declined to disclose their ethnicity (4.6%). While most participants attended the same university as the Experimental Group, we also recruited at a second university in the same city in order to secure a Control Group of adequate size.

Procedure

In keeping with its mandate, Career Services at a local university offered a multi-session Professional Career Development Group (free of charge) to their students. The opportunity was advertised via their MyCareer site, social media blasts, campus-based digital TV screens, and via notices to departments and student societies. Interested students pre-registered online and later engaged in a pre-screening intake (via emails and/or telephone calls) with the career counsellor who described the program, gathered information relevant to program preparation, and confirmed that the student was in their graduating year. Eligible students were admitted to the PCDG on a first come, first served basis.

Once the PCDG began, and as part of the programming, the students completed the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI), Hope Action Inventory (HAI), and the Self-Awareness Questionnaire (SAQ) at the first session (i.e., Time 1) and after the fourth session (i.e., Time 2), which occurred approximately 4.5 weeks apart. The career counsellor subsequently shared her interpretation of the responses with the attendees. Students provided feedback on the group experience after the fourth session.

The first author (who was the primary researcher (PI) and not involved in facilitating the PCDG) briefly attended two sessions to describe the research study, emphasizing that students were under no obligation to take part. Once the researcher left the session, willing students provided written informed consent which allowed the career counsellor to release their anonymized questionnaire data (i.e., CTI, HAI, and SAQ) to the first author.

To recruit a Control Group, the research study was advertised via social media at two universities in the same city. Students who had attended the PCDG were not eligible to participate. After providing informed consent, the participants twice completed (at a six week interval) and emailed their CTI, HAI, and SAQ questionnaires to the first author, and then received compensation of $25. This study received ethics approval from the Research Ethics Board, Mount St Vincent University, with Dalhousie University acknowledged as the Board of Record.

Description of the Professional Career Development Group

The Professional Career Development Group (PCDG) is a psycho-educational group that was created and facilitated by an experienced career counsellor to help graduating university students build self-awareness and hope and to manage career-related anxiety and dysfunctional thinking in setting and achieving career goals. Students met face-to-face or online once a week (for 90 minutes) for five weeks in small groups of less than 10. The group ran in an online format for four rounds in the 2020/21 academic year, two rounds during the 2021/22 academic year, and in-person for two rounds during the 2022/23 academic year. Students who attended all five sessions were eligible to receive recognition for professional development on their University Co-Curricular Record.

Sessions included a variety of Career Services offerings including experiential opportunities: Presentation of career-related information, including a presentation by a career advisor guest speaker, as well as hands-on learning activities that included questioning, peer-to-peer discussion, writing, and other reflective methods (see Table 1). A unique aspect of the group was the inclusion of individual career-related assessment (i.e., CTI, HAI, and SAQ) followed by interpretation by the career counsellor and the small group peer discussions.

Table 1

Description of the Professional Career Development Group

	Session Outcomes	Learning Activities
Session 1:	• Introduction to the group	• Introduction to the facilitator and to other group participants, pair share activity
	• Build participant connections	• Career inventories administered (Time 1): Hope Action Inventory, Career Thoughts Inventory, and the Self-Awareness Questionnaire
	• Understand how career theories and self-assessment connect to career goal setting	• Self-assessment: Values identification activity
	• Completion of career inventories	
	• Visit by PI	
Session 2:	• Recognize skills developed from experiences	• Continued self-assessment: Self-reflection and identification of learning and skills from experience exercise; consider rating of skills on Self-Awareness Questionnaire and set goals for learning/improving skills
	• Develop skills in visioning/imagining possibilities for the future	• Visioning the future: Your ideal work day activity (Sicoli & Steele Walters, 1997)
	• Learn strategies for overcoming career-related and networking anxiety in a changing labour market	• Homework: Attend career fair
	• Learn about the visible and hidden job market, how to prepare for career fair and employment programs for new graduates, mock interview process (Career Advisor guest speaker)	

	Session Outcomes	Learning Activities
Session 3:	• Learn strategies for overcoming negative career thoughts and managing interview anxiety	• Interpretation of Career Thoughts Inventory scores
		• Thinking more helpful thoughts activity (adapted from Carr, et al., 2004)
		• Practice responding to behavioural interview questions in small groups with feedback
		• Mock interview (held separately outside of sessions)
Session 4:	• Learn strategies to overcome decision making and other barriers	• Interpretation of Hope Action Inventory scores
	• Learn how to set effective goals	• Viewed and reflected on Amundson's 'Walking the problem' activity via video (Amundson & Goddard, 2017)
	• Deal more effectively with rejection and build resilience during the career/job search	• Goal setting activity: Write out long-term goal and sub-goals/steps
	• Learn about Holland's themes and optional Strong Interest Inventory (Donnay et al., 2005).	• Staying afloat (adapted from Amundson, 2010; CERIC, 2018)
		• Description of Holland's themes and party activity (adapted from Bolles, 2014)
Session 5:	• Understand changes between Time 1 and Time 2 career inventory results	• Career inventories re-administered (prior to session) and interpreted (Time 2): Hope Action Inventory, Career Thoughts Inventory, and the Self-Awareness Questionnaire
	• Understand Strong Interest Inventory results	• Interpretation of the Strong Interest Inventory
	• Learn how to build support networks, self-care plan, other available resources and set goals for next steps	• Build a self-care plan
	• Visit by PI	• Set goals for next steps
		• Evaluation and wrap-up

Measures

Career Thoughts Inventory

The Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI) (Sampson et al., 2013) measures negative career thoughts that interfere with career decision-making. The respondent answers 48 items using a 4-point Likert scale (i.e., Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree). The Total Score is a global indicator of dysfunctional career decision-making thinking. The three subscales include Decision-Making Confusion (e.g., I'm so confused, I'll never be able to choose a field of study or occupation.), Commitment Anxiety (e.g., I worry a great deal about choosing the right field of study or occupation.), and External Conflict (e.g., Whenever I've become interested in something, important people in my life disapprove.).

Hope Action Inventory

The Hope Action Inventory (HAI) (Niles et al., 2010) measures hope-related career competencies. The respondent answers 28 items using a 4-point Likert scale (i.e., Definitely false, Somewhat false, Somewhat true, Definitely true). The Total Score is a global indicator of hope-related career competencies. The seven subscales include Hope (e.g., I am hopeful when I think about my future.), Self-Reflection (e.g., I think about things that have happened to me.), Self-Clarity (e.g., I can describe who I am.), Visioning (e.g., I often dream about my future.), Goal Setting and Planning (e.g., I set deadlines to complete my goals.), Implementing (e.g., I keep myself focused so that I can complete my plans.), and Adapting (e.g., I am willing to try new experiences that might help me to achieve my goals.).

Self-Awareness Questionnaire

The Self-Awareness Questionnaire (SAQ) was developed by the authors to measure self-awareness (knowing how interests and values affect career choices), skill, and confidence in setting career goals and taking actions toward a career, as well as the skills needed in the working world (e.g., ability to apply skills, organization, social self-confidence, ability to work with others, communication, problem-solving,). The respondent answers nine items using a 7-point Likert score (i.e., ranging from Not at all to Very much so). The Total Score is a global indicator of career-related self-awareness.

The SAQ at Time 2 requested feedback on the PCDG. The respondent rated the PCDG quality on a 4-point Likert scale and answered open-ended questions about the intervention's impact on their career goals and future employment plans.

Data Analysis

1. The feedback from the participants who attended the PCDG was summarized as percentage scores.
2. As each participant twice completed the HAI, SAQ, and CTI, we counted the number of participants who demonstrated an improved performance from Time 1 to Time 2, with a difference greater than 0 indicating improvement. (The CTI scores were reverse coded.) We then used a chi-square test to analyze a series of 2 X 2 contingency tables, with the variables being "improvement" versus "no improvement" for the Experimental Group versus the Control Group. We report the analyses for the HAI and the seven subscales, CTI and the three subscales, and the SAQ and the nine items.

Results

Participant Feedback on the PCDG

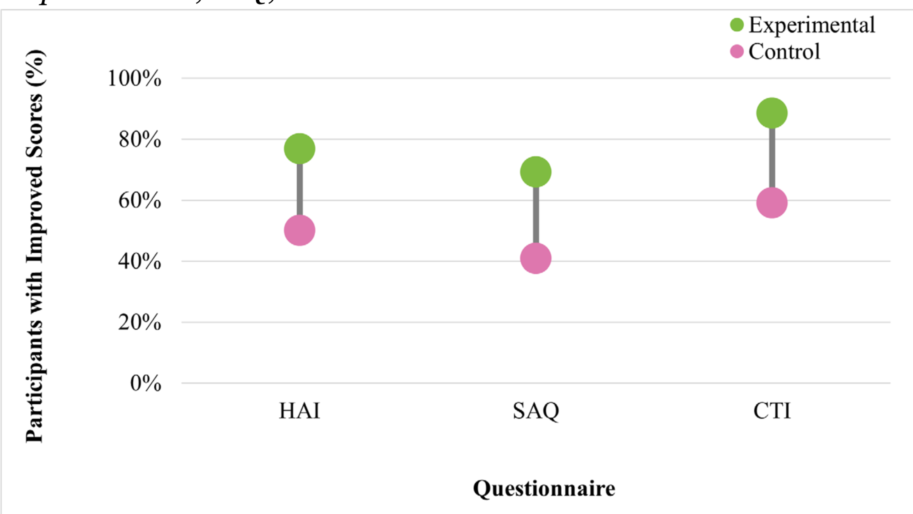
The Experimental Group provided overwhelmingly positive feedback on the PCDG at Session 5, rating the intervention as either excellent (73.1%) or good (26.9%) but not fair (0%) or poor (0%). Additionally, 92.3% (n = 24) of the Experimental Group reported that the career group changed the way that they saw themself. Specifically, respondents indicated that the PCDG helped them to increase their confidence for entering the workforce (46.2%), to self-reflect so as to understand themselves better (34.6%), to work on identifying their career goals (11.5%), to face challenges entering their desired work field (3.9%), and to feel less stressed for their future (3.9%). Additionally, 73.1% (n = 19) of the Experimental Group reported that the PCDG impacted their career goals and plans. Specifically, the PCDG helped the students to develop clearer career goals (38.5%), change their career goals (15.4%), consider other career options (7.7%), encouraged them to put in more work and effort to achieving their career goals (7.7%), increase confidence (7.7%), and allowed them to network with others (7.7%). Finally, the PCDG helped students to plan ahead/organize their future employment (7.7%), and to be more confident (34.6%), including being better prepared for interviews (11.5%).

Impact of Career Intervention on Hope-Action Competency (HAI)

A Chi-square test revealed a statistically significant association between participating in the intervention and the HAI Total score (χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 3.78, p = .052) and the HAI Self-Clarity score (χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 4.48, p = .034). Approximately 76.9% of the Experimental Group demonstrated improved hope-action competency and 57.6% demonstrated improved self-clarity compared to 50.0% and 27.3% respectively for the Control Group (see Figure 1). In contrast, there were non-significant associations for the Hope, Self-Reflection, Goal Setting and Planning, Implementing, and Adapting subscale scores (respectively, χ^2 (1, N = 48) = .80, p = .37; χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 2.57, p = .11; χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 2.03, p = .15; χ^2 (1, N = 48) = .13, p = .72; χ^2 (1, N = 48) = .40, p = .53), with a trend observed for the Visioning subscale score (χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 2.86, p = .09).

Figure 1

Percentages of the Experimental Group and Control Group with improved HAI, SAQ, and CTI Total scores



Impact of Career Intervention on Self-Awareness (SAQ)

A Chi-square test revealed a statistically significant association between participating in the intervention and the SAQ Total score (χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 3.88, p = .049), Self-awareness item score (i.e., knowing my interests, values, strengths and how they affect my career choices; χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 23.03, p < .001), and Applying skills in the work world item score (χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 12.31, p <.001). Approximately 69.2% of the Experimental Group demonstrated improved overall self-awareness, 73.1% demonstrated improved self-awareness in knowing their interests, and 57.7% demonstrated improved application of skills compared to 40.9%, 4.5%, and 9.1% respectively of the Control Group (see Figure 1).

In contrast, there were non-significant associations for Skill in setting goals and taking action toward my career (χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 2.71, p = .10) and Confidence in setting goals and taking action toward my career (χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 2.35, p = .13). Similarly, non-significant associations were observed for working world organizational skills, social self-confidence, ability to work with others, communication skills, and problem solving skills (respectively, χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 1.01, p = .32; χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 1.61, p = .21; χ^2 (1, N = 48) = .44, p = .51; χ^2 (1, N = 48) = .56, p = .45; χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 1.86 p = .17).

Impact of Career Intervention on Career Confusion (CTI)

A Chi-square test revealed a statistically significant association between participating in the intervention and the CTI Total score (χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 5.48, p = .019), Decision-Making Confusion subscale score (χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 3.93, p = .047), and the Commitment Anxiety subscale score (χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 9.95, p = .002) but not the External Conflict subscale score (χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 1.18, p = .28). Approximately 88.5% of the Experimental Group demonstrated less career confusion, 84.6% less decision-making confusion, and 84.6% decreased commitment anxiety compared to 59.1%, 59.1%, and 40.9% respectively of the Control Group (see Figure 1).

Discussion

The current study was a collaborative partnership across two universities between a Psychology faculty member and a career counsellor that resulted in the creation, implementation, and research evaluation of an experientially-mediated career support group for university students. Created within the context of an EL framework, the PCDG emphasized hands-on learning experiences combined with critical reflection (e.g., participation in Career Services offerings). Completion of standardized questionnaires combined with their interpretation by the career counsellor offered further opportunity to gain self-knowledge, which is central to career development.

In 2020, we published a theoretical model of core competencies that undergraduate students can develop as a result of experiential learning (EL) opportunities (Bowering et al., 2020). These competencies include self-awareness and regulation, cognitive and metacognitive processing, and social awareness and responsible citizenship. In keeping with our theoretical model, we predicted that our experientially-mediated career group would support core competency development, and specifically measured the PCDG's impact on self-awareness, hope, and career-related anxiety, which fall within the domains of self-awareness and cognitive and metacognitive processing. One strength of the PCDG was that completion of the questionnaires provided participants with concrete self-knowledge of their career thoughts, hope action competencies, and skill level, thereby highlighting potential areas that would benefit from reflection and growth. Through small and broader group discussions, participants examined their ways of thinking and past experiences, thus enabling peers to support each other's career development. This process of critical reflection combined with feedback supports the development of self-awareness and hope, without which meaningful career planning and identification of suitable options for oneself cannot come about. As the intervention was not designed to strengthen the competencies of responsible citizenship and social awareness, we did not assess these areas in our study.

Analysis of the pre- and post-questionnaires of attendees compared to a control group supported the effectiveness of the group in increasing career-related development in university students. Specifically, the group increased hope-action competency (including self-clarity), increased career-related self-awareness (including knowing your own values and interests and being able to apply your skills in the working world), and decreased dysfunctional career decision-making (including career decision-making confusion and commitment anxiety). We were gratified to see these improvements given that the participants were motivated to attend the group to increase their confidence and to address anxiety about the future. These research findings help validate our theoretical model of the role that experiential learning can play in facilitating these core competencies in university students.

While we saw significant improvements in self-clarity, perhaps because the group intervention heavily emphasized gaining insight into the self, the PCDG intervention did not increase some aspects of hope competency (e.g., implementing, adapting) and self-awareness (e.g., organization, problem-solving). We were not surprised by this. As pointed out by Castillo-Cifuentes et al. (2024), since 2020, young people are less likely to take part in work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities (and we did not directly question our participants about WIL experiences). Our time-limited intervention was not designed to practice and test out certain skill sets (e.g., organization, teamwork). Perhaps students need to begin their post-graduation careers and take part in the work world before they have confidence in new self-awareness skills. In other words, the specific nature of the experiential opportunity may bring about some skill sets more than others.

As predicted, we also observed decreased decision-making confusion and commitment anxiety (as measured by the CTI), which fall within the domain of cognitive and metacognitive processing. As is well known, students report that their primary motivation to attend university is to identify a career and commit tremendous financial resources to their degree program. Perhaps not surprisingly, many post-secondary students fear making mistakes and are looking for the "perfect" career choice. Consequently, these types of career-related worries were specifically targeted in the group intervention. Participants engaged in exercises with peers to analyze and re-frame negative career thoughts to more positive and hopeful ways of thinking. Finally, and not surprisingly, participants did not report changes in External Conflict on the CTI (which measures whether external factors, including others, affect your career decisions). Our group intervention was psychoeducational in nature and did not counsel participants about individual concerns such as family and peer relations and cultural influences. All students were made aware, however, of the availability of personal counselling if they wished to process specific concerns. Counsellors need to remain aware that family members can be heavily influential in career planning, perhaps especially for international students from collectivist cultures (Arthur & Popadiuk, 2010; Shen & Herr, 2004; Singaravelu et al., 2005).

Study Design and Future Research

Evaluation of career support groups often rely on methods that speak more to student satisfaction with their experience than with the effectiveness of the program per se. A strength of our study is that it was quasi-experimental in nature, used a pre- and post-test design to measure program effectiveness, and included a control group. Additionally, the treatment was theoretically robust as it utilized evidence-based career development and experiential learning theoretical orientations. Because of practical constraints, however, the treatment group was self-selected and non-randomized.

Future research could consider a longitudinal-experimental design that follows treatment participants over time as they begin their careers, examining factors such as time taken to find employment in their chosen field and career satisfaction. Additionally, as our treatment included online and in-person options, future research should consider evaluating whether there is a differential impact of session type.

Related to that, different types of experiential activities (e.g., work-integrated learning, service learning, internship, cooperative learning, study abroad) and settings (e.g., classroom, workplace, community) are likely to bring about distinct learning outcomes, core competencies, and benefits. Research must continue to study how educators and employers can harness the experiential learning pedagogy to realize learner-employee potential.

Conclusion

Our findings underscore the usefulness of experiential learning as a career development tool and the cost-effectiveness of providing a limited number of small group career development sessions to post-secondary students. More broadly, our findings provide evidence to support our theoretical model of how experiential learning can contribute to career-related core competency development. Our observation that the greatest impact lay in the domains of self-awareness and regulation as well as cognitive and metacognitive processing likely reflects our specific EL format and intervention components (i.e., a career support group). We suspect that social awareness and responsible citizenship are more likely to be strengthened in a service learning or WIL placement. This is an area for future research. Given today's emphasis on implementing EL in post-secondary education as well as interest by employers in attracting candidates with appropriate career-related competencies, our findings are significant and timely.

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RETRACTED: Constructing Careers 'in chaos'. Exploring Career Progress of Expatriates and Repatriates on Career Ladder or Career Lattice Pathways

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Abstract

This article has been retracted, and the online PDF has been watermarked "RETRACTED". A retraction notice is availabl at https://doi.org/10.82396/cjcd.v25i1.3369 or https://cjcd-rcdc.ceric.ca/index.php/cjcd/article/view/3369

Organizations largely rely on expatriates for building international capabilities across multiple geographical boundaries, for transferability of knowledge and filling competency gaps, for control and coordination, for business expansion and success and for increasing global competitive advantage (Baruch et al., 2016; Chiang et al., 2018). These expatriates are called 'Company Assigned Expatriates' (CAE) - individuals who engage in international geographical mobility and reside temporarily in a country where they do not hold citizenship, and who are legally employed by an organization to complete an international assignment (IA) to accomplish organizational goals (Baruch et al., 2016; Andresen et al., 2014; Mello et al., 2023a, 2023b; Kallane & Brewster, 2017). Once expatriates have returned to their country of origin, they are called 'repatriates'. These are international assignees who were sent overseas by their employing organizations on a prolonged international assignment (IA), typically more than six months and less than five years, who return home to their parent or initiating organization and country of origin (Chiang et al., 2018; Kraimer et al., 2016).

The existing evidence on career outcomes associated with working abroad and the career impact of IAs is still limited (Suutari et al., 2018; Mello et al., 2023b). One such outcome is career progress, which can be viewed as an evaluative statement about the condition of an individual's career and the accomplishment of desirable work-related outcomes in a person's career trajectory over time (Pryor & Bright, 2012). Empirical evidence on career progress during expatriation and upon repatriation remains limited and less conclusive (Andresen et al., 2021; Bucker et al., 2016; Chiang et al., 2018; Suutari et al., 2018). Yet, there is continued interest in career progress of expatriates and repatriates that stems from the increased complexity of international work as well as the nature, purpose, context and demands of work and careers that have changed substantively and irrevocably from older paradigms (Andresen et al., 2021; Ghosh et al., 2023; Pryor & Bright, 2012; Selmer et al., 2018). The nature, demands and complexity of work epitomizes the peculiarities of the contemporary career landscape in which new diversified broadened career paths have emerged, including lateral and diagonal directions along which people can grow (Benko et al., 2011). Acknowledging these contemporary career landscapes when exploring career progress entails a shift in focus. It moves away from external, organization-defined career progress towards internal, individual-centric means of career progress. This transition underlines the importance of personal values, desires, goals and career fulfilment in evaluating career progress. The socially constructed phenomenological and subjective nature of career progress has been overlooked in the contemporary global careers literature, which presents no consensus and conceptual clarity on what career progress means. The objective conception of career progress on the hierarchical organizational ladder is insufficient to capture the multidimensionality of career progress. Therefore, a more comprehensive conceptualization of career progress that considers its multidimensionality and subjectivity is needed to understand what career progress means in the views of expatriates and repatriates. Hence, the rationale for this paper is to enrich the understanding of the socially constructed meaning of career progress, incorporating expatriates' and repatriates' perspective on career progress and exploring what constitutes career progress according to them. In so doing, this paper provides a better understanding of career progress in an expatriation and repatriation context. This is relevant, as it has important implications for how organizations design career paths along which expatriates and repatriates can progress in their careers.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate how expatriates and repatriates construct their careers on diversified, multidirectional pathways and the meaning they attach to career progress. The research question driving this empirical inquiry is: RQ1. How do expatriates and repatriates progress in their careers on diversified, multidirectional career pathways and what meanings do they ascribe to career progress?

This paper contributes to the literature by providing insight into the different meanings of expatriate and repatriate career progress on diversified, multidirectional, dynamic career paths that continually evolve across the lifespan. In so doing, it highlights the construct's multidimensional and socially constructed nature of career pathways and captures the richness and diversity of meanings ascribed to career progress of expatriates and repatriates.

The following section reviews the literature and presents career theories and models. It then introduces the methodology. Next, it presents the findings of the empirical investigation followed by a discussion of the findings, limitations and suggestions for future research. Finally, it discusses the implications for future research and career development practice.

Career Pathways and Progress: Contemporary Career Theories and Frameworks

The present research on careers of expatriates and repatriates is grounded in Career Construction theory (CCT) (Savickas, 1997, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2012, 2013) and Chaos Theory of Careers (CTC) (Pryor & Bright, 2007; Pryor, 2010) as well as the Corporate Ladder versus the Corporate Lattice model (Benko et al., 2011). These theories and model have not been utilized in expatriation and repatriation research. Therefore, the current study draws upon CT, CTC and the Corporate Ladder versus the Corporate Lattice model to augment insights of what career progress means in the context of expatriation and repatriation.

The premise of CCT is curiosity in thinking about oneself in various situations and different roles, taking control in shaping oneself and one's environment, and confidence in being able to actualize choices and design one's life (Savickas, 2002, 2005). Career construction entails how individuals build their own career that best fits their life (Savickas, 2013). Individuals will proactively engage in career construction activities, which entail aligning oneself with the work role for enhancing value, perceived marketability and employability in the job market to achieve career progress (Savickas, 2002, 2005). Perceived marketability refers to the 'beliefs that one is valuable to current or to other employers' given their existing skills and experiences with a focus on unique core characteristics invaluable to employers (De Vos et al., 2011, p. 440; Mäkelä et al., 2016; Mello et al., 2023a; Park et al., 2022).

Employability refers to employees' capabilities and adaptive skills to maintain, nurture and further develop essential qualifications for continued employment, within (internal employability) or outside (external employability) the current organization (Baruch & Vardi, 2016; Bucker et al., 2016; Park et al., 2022). In the context of expatriation and repatriation, employability means that expatriates/repatriates are capable of being employable within or outside the organization that sent them on an IA, by proactively self-managing, navigating, constructing and crafting their careers in a foreign country or the home country, even under circumstances of chaos, unpredictability, uncertainty and instability to make career progress. In this context, career construction acts as a 'guiding compass' in times of uncertainties, such as non-availability of work, providing a clear sense of direction for how to progress in one's career. CCT underlines the importance of career adaptability, referring to the "attitudes, competencies, and behaviors that individuals use to ensure a good fit with their work to adapt to new work demands, diverse groups, and different environments" (Savickas, 2002, 2013., Savickas, 2005, p. 45). Indeed, research has found that individuals are required to exhibit a great deal of career adaptability, which acclimatizes them to present and future work demands in a dynamic global labour market environment characterized by job or career insecurities (Haibo, et al., 2018; Park et al., 2022. Career adaptability means taking up activities that buffer against uncertain employment scenarios and is an important factor for individual competitiveness in the labor market, enabling career progress (Ghosh et al., 2023; Haibo et al., 2018; Mello et al., 2023a).

CTC (Pryor and Bright, 2007; Pryor, 2010) addresses such times of job or career insecurities and considers individuals, their actions and thoughts in a perspective of unexpected events, chaos, and uncertainty. CTC proclaims that individuals' optimism, flexibility, efficacy, career resilience and coping skills help them to navigate their careers in a life filled with uncertainties and chaos (Pryor & Bright, 2007).

In both CCT and CTC, career resilience is a prominent concept, defined as "a developmental process of persisting, adapting, and/or flourishing in one's career despite challenges, changing events and disruptions over time" (Mishra et al., 2017, p. 216). Individuals exhibiting career resilience are successful at adapting to significant adversity, hardships, unexpected disruptions and unpredictable changes in the business world, have the capability to bounce back from external changes and adversity and overcome turbulent conditions in the career-related environment, cope with the changing nature of work, successfully handle career hurdles challenges, optimistically accept changes and show high job mobility preparedness (Mishra et al., 2017; Park et al., 2022). Exhibiting career resilience enables alternative career pathways for employees to progress on in their careers.

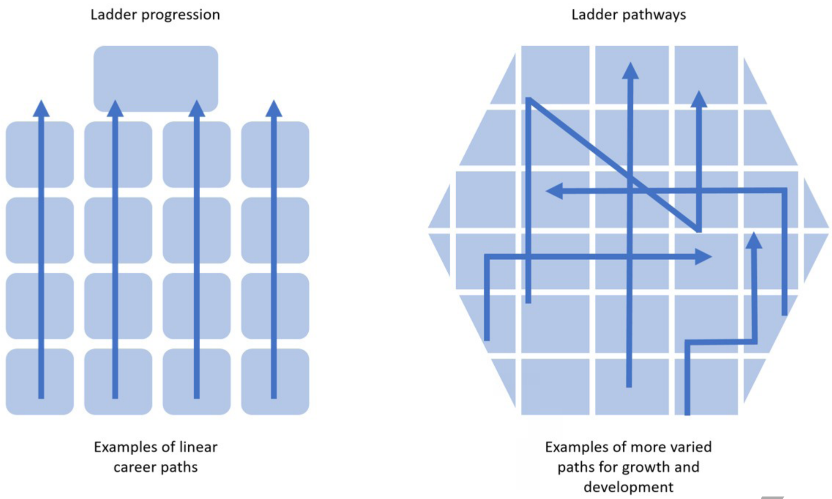
CCT and CTC posit that successful career agency, self-directed career management, individual's adaptive capabilities, career navigation, and crafting careers requires the following competencies, individual traits and behaviors that often must be acquired and utilized under stressful conditions: a) think, plan and act under circumstances of chaos, unpredictability and instability; b) utilizing, adapting to and recovering from unplanned events, economic and political crises and technology invasion, and changes in the organization and labor market as they impact lives and careers; c) having a willingness to learn (from failures); d) self-initiating, proactive form of adaptation to (future) or unpredictable, sudden changes in the labor market and employment demands to manage one's career; e) engage in career exploration and exploitation as constructive approaches to career progress (Baruch & Vardi, 2016; Bucker et al., 2016; Pryor, 2010; Pryor & Bright, 2012; Pryor & Bright, 2007; Pryor & Bright, 2014; Ramaci et al., 2021; Savickas, 2002, 2005).

Rudolph, Zacher, & Hirschi (2019) highlighted the need for further empirical elaboration on the application of CTC and CCT in specific groups. Hence, the present study explores the manifestation of CTC and CCT in an expatriation/repatriation context to show how expatriates and repatriates navigate and construct their global careers on diversified pathways. This is illustrated in the '*Corporate ladder versus Corporate lattice*' model (Benko et al., 2011) (see Figure 1).

The corporate lattice metaphor represents the multidirectional, flexible and expansive nature of how successful organizations work today and it marks an inflection point in the ways careers are built. Collectively, these changed ways of thinking and acting are called the "lattice ways". In mathematics, a lattice is a three-dimensional structure that extends infinitely in any direction. Lattice organizations comprise a complexity of 'multidirectional' career paths along which people can grow. Whereas linear careers are predictable on the basis of "inflexible ladders" and "cause-effect" relationships (Crowley-Henry, 2012, p. 130), non-linear careers are flexible, unpredictable, complex, opportunistic and even chaotic (Kallane & Vance, 2017). The *Corporate Lattice career model*, in contrast to the traditional *Corporate Ladder career model*, is more adaptive and therefore better suited to align with the changing needs, norms and expectations of today's workplace (Benko et al., 2011). The corporate ladder metaphor represents notions of career as traditional, upward trajectory single career for life, where the direction of career progress is linear, climbing to the top of the hierarchical ladder, usually in one organization/occupation with rewards that are visible to others and valued by society, e.g. promotions (any increase in level and/or any significant increase in job responsibilities or job scope" individuals receive throughout their careers (Mello et al., 2023a, 2023b), pay increases and high-status positions (Baruch & Vardi, 2016; Benko et al., 2011; Mello et al., 2023a, 2023b; Mooijman et al., 2018; Pryor & Bright, 2014; Savickas, 2002, 2005). By contrast, the corporate lattice metaphor epitomizes new career paths where the direction of career progress is multidirectional, usually inter-organizational as well as inter-occupational where people construct their own meaning of career progress. The lattice career path implies a re-evaluation of career progress where its meaning has shifted towards and perceived employability, meaningful work, authenticity- referring to the direction of one's career reflecting personal career and life needs, preferences and goals-, career satisfaction, inner feelings of achievement, self-actualization, and having a career that impacts life outside of work in a positive way with an emphasis on work-life balance and well-being (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Baruch et al., 2016; Biemann et al., 2012; Mello et al., 2023a, 2023b; Mooijman et al., 2018; Pryor & Bright, 2012; Pryor & Bright, 2014; Rudolp et al., 2019; Savickas, 2011, 2013).

Figure 1

Corporate Ladder Versus Corporate Lattice Career Model



Note: Adapted from: Benko et al., (2011)

We argue that the Corporate Ladder vs. Lattice career model is a valuable framework to explore in an international career context. Doing so would better capture the realities of global work and take account of the complex macro-, meso-, and micro-level influences that shape expatriate's and repatriates' career path and progress. Furthermore, academic literature has nearly exclusively measured career progress in terms of climbing the corporate hierarchical career ladder with concomitant extrinsic rewards. Although these are important indicators of career progress, they do not capture the nuance, richness and diversity of meanings expatriates and repatriates ascribe to career progress in different economic, cultural, and institutional contexts around the globe. Hence, this study entails a comprehensive analysis of career pathways of expatriates and repatriates and various meanings of career progress.

Methodology

The method in this study was an exploratory, qualitative study, which is a comprehensive research strategy suited to explore and conduct comprehensive in-depth analyses of a phenomenon in its context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). This method was considered most appropriate, as it focuses on the individual experience and understanding of a person's perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018), in this study the expatriate's/repatriate's perspective on his/her career progress on global, multidirectional career paths. The study takes an emic view, that is, a perspective and methodology whereby expatriates and repatriates from various cultural regions of the world express their views regarding their career pathways and progress in their own words without pre-formed categorizations.

Sample and Procedure

The first sampling technique was purposive sampling, a widely used technique that involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are: a) especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest; b) have the availability and willingness to participate; c) the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive and reflective manner to yield insights and in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2015). The principal investigator utilized LinkedIn to identify and select knowledgeable and experienced

expatriates and repatriates for participation in the study.
People met the eligibility requirements for participation in the study if they were working and residing abroad or had worked and resided abroad for at least 6 months.

The second sampling technique was snowball sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018), where other participants were identified through the participants in the purposive sampling frame. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information they would provide, and their identities were kept anonymous[1]. Table 1 presents the demographic data of the total of 78 respondents. They were globally mobile individuals who had moved from one assignment to the other or had alternated between assignments abroad and some periods in their home countries, those who had set off to work abroad again (re-expatriation) and hence had repeated expatriation career patterns, and those who had repatriated. All respondents had continued on global career paths with various international jobs and assignments in different locations, home or abroad, and were therefore all global careerists with holistic career journeys.

Table 1
Demographic Profile Sample Expatriates and Repatriates

Variable	Dimension	Numbers / Percentages
Type of Globally Mobile Employee	Expatriate	29 (37%)
	Repatriate	49 (63%)
Gender	Female	7 (9%)
	Male	71 (91%)
Nationality	American	2
	Australian	1
	Bahrain	1
	British	9
	Canadian	2
	Dutch	48 (61%)
	Egyptian	1
	Ecuadorian	1
	French	1
	German	1
	Indian	3
	Irish	1
	Lebanese	1
	Malaysian	1
	New Zealand	1
	Norwegian	1
	Scottish	1
	Swiss	1
	Turkish	1

Respondents originated from 19 countries across the globe (see Table 1). Respondents were sent on an IA to countries including China, Cyprus, Germany, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Oman, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Turkey, UAE, UK, USA for the following company purposes: a) control and coordination: start-up, manage or lead foreign business units or entire foreign organizational entities; b) project execution; c) fill technical or managerial expertise gaps, knowledge and technical skills transfer; d) to transfer corporate culture and train local people; e) management development.

Most respondents occupied senior leader, manager or director level positions. Other mostly occupied roles as consultants or engineers.

Data collection

Data collection took place through semi-structured interviews to explore and elicit in-depth understanding of respondents' experiences, perspectives and perceptions (Bucker et al., 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2016) regarding their career paths and progress.

Prior to the interviews, all participants received the interview protocol to give participants an understanding of the research concepts and corresponding questions. The semi-structured interview protocols encompassed open and closed-ended questions were based upon the

1 The names of respondents mentioned in the findings section are fictional to protect respondents' anonymity.

Variable	Dimension	Numbers / Percentages
Marital Status	Married	75%
	Not Married	25%
Parental Status	Childen	73%
	No Children	27%
Age	Range	28-63 years
Previous Expatriation Experience	3 IAs or more	67 (87%)
	1 previous IA	7 (8%)
	No previous IA	4 (5%)
Industry	Energy/oil & gas	49 (62%)
	Material handling & logistics automation	19
	FMCG	2
	Opticians	2
	Finance & banking	1
	Legal	1
	Automotive coatings & resins	1
	Mining & metals	1
	Real estate	1
	Goverment	1

relevant international careers literature (Mayrhofer et al., 2016; Pryor & Bright, 2007; Pryor, 2010; Savickas, 1997, 2002, 2012, 2013). We asked expatriates and repatriates about their self-perceived career progress, i.e., their evaluation and experience of achieving the type of career progress that is meaningful to them personally. The semi-structure allowed for capturing the richness of interviewees' narratives and for probing where information seemed to be leading to deeper or unusual insights (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2016). In the interviews expatriates and repatriates were asked to reflect upon how they constructed their global careers and what career progress means to them. Appendix 1 contains the interview protocol.

Data collection took place between April and October 2018 through face-to-face, WhatsApp call and Skype interviews that lasted between 45-60 minutes. The total of 78 interviews is comfortably above the norms for theorizing within qualitative research (Boddy, 2016). This higher number of interviews enabled the capturing of rich data on career pathways and career progress from a diversified sample of expatriates and repatriates from various origins and locations across the world.

All interviews were recorded and professionally transcribed in greater detail immediately after the interviews. Data collection continued until a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of career progress and a point of informational redundancy was reached where repetition of information occurred and when no new or relevant data seemed to emerge. This is called "category saturation", critical for qualitative studies (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Palinkas et al., 2015). An example was the mentioning of career plateaus at senior levels at a senior age.

Member-checks, a crucial process at the heart of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), were conducted by sending the interview transcripts to the interviewees to verify whether the transcription was correct and represented valid inferences drawn from the participants' original views and data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In cases of incorrect interpretations, the interviewee edited the transcript and the researcher rectified it. This allowed for making truthful statements about the objects of research and providing a valid representation of the phenomenon under study from the perceptions of the interviewees. This ensured accuracy and validity of the research data (Creswell & Poth, 2018), which added to the depth and quality of the data analysis.

Data analysis

Gathering and analyzing data was conducted concurrently, in line with descriptive qualitative approaches (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Inductive content analysis, a highly data-driven approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles et al., 2020; Vaismoradi et al., 2016) was performed, consisting of reading each transcribed interview, and applying holistic coding (Miles et al., 2020) of the interview data for content and valence of career paths and progress. First, open coding served to label the responses and break down data into manageable building blocks. Second, the axial coding step assigned these blocks to categories, such that each category contained a collection of related thematic blocks. Third, selective coding related to establishing main overarching themes that represented the categories (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). An example of a code was challenge in work, categorized to the category 'intrinsic value of a career', gathered under the theme of Career & Life Welfare. Through inductive thematic analysis of the interviews, we were able to identify different dimensions of career progress as first-order codes and classify them into categories. Subsequently, we used these first-order and second-order codes to analyze expatriate progress meanings based on the occurrence of these codes. The coding and categorization was an iterative process, i.e. conducting successive iterations between theory and data to refine codes, categories and themes (Locke et al., 2022) whilst staying open to discovering concepts that emerged through alternation between the data collection, analysis and sense-making process (Bucker et al., 2016; Miles et al., 2020; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Themes and categories derived represented the connection between the empirical material and the interpretation of the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Themes were refined through successive iterations between theory and data to provide conceptual clarity whilst remaining open to any additions or removals of themes as the analysis progressed (Farndale et al., 2014; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). This iterative process added to the depth and quality of data analysis and allowed for building plausible arguments and interpretations that are supported by the empirical data, thereby safeguarding the validity, trustworthiness, credibility and reliability of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). The categories and themes derived from the interview data are presented in the next section.

Results

Data analysis revealed four themes under which meanings of career progress that respondents regularly consider when they evaluate their careers, could be categorized. These were derived from the interview data and the a-priori template grounded in the theoretical framework. Themes, corresponding categories and meanings of career progress are presented in Table 2. Findings are illustrated by excerpts from the interviews[2] and discussed below.

Theme 1: Lifestyle Provision and Career Wealth

This theme is comprised of two categories. The first category is financial security, pertaining to a reliable supply of the material necessities for survival and living. Financial security resonated strongly with respondents' the notion of having enough money and being able to financially provide for their (extended) family. This meaning of career progress was particularly salient among respondents whose financial- and job security was threatened due to economic recession, industry downturns, organizational restructuring and downsizing. Evaluating one's career progress in terms of 'Getting secure', i.e. a sense of job security and financial security is illustrated by the following excerpts:

> Until 2010-2012, I made career progress. The last 5-6 years I worked on projects that were cancelled and in 2014 the oil price dropped and people were made redundant. Hence, you had to be glad to be left with a job still. The choice was either to go to Kuwait or to be made redundant. Remaining employed by [name company] meant survival and ensuring that you were not pushed into a position in which your job was in danger. (Sheldon, Dutch expatriate in Kuwait)

> In 2013, I was promoted to the position of senior principal. But within two years I was made redundant. Then, I had nearly two years of unemployment. I was not able to get a position in my original industry. I had to change careers entirely. It is quite different from my career plans. I basically had to retrain and I got into the real estate business and I found a position in an agency near where I live. It was really the only thing at the time that offered potential for long term employment. Now I am actually one of the

2 The names of interviewees are fictious to safeguard the anonymity of their identities.

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> leading agents in my particular area. So I really enjoy the move. I had not expected that I would have done this. There was a huge dip in salary so in that way the career move impacted in a negative way. Now, it starts to improve as I develop my own client base. I am able to thrive so far. (Niklaus, British expat in Australia)

Table 2

Overarching Themes and Meanings of Expatriate and Repatriate Career Progress

Theme	Category Meanings of Career Progress	Code
Theme 1: Lifestyle Provision & Career Wealth	Financial security, Abundance & affluence.	Material comfort, career growth & acceleration, increased access to high impact roles, promotions abroad, investment, value, appreciation, recognition & reward.
Theme 2: Career & Life Welfare	Intrinsic value of work, work-life balance, health & wellbeing.	Interesting & meaningful job & career, contribution to others, freedom, challenges, leisure time, personal sacrifice, strive higher & higher job level, seniority vs. forgoing a higher level, seniority for the sake of the family, satisfaction and fulfilment: sense of, inner feeling of, pround of career acheivements.
Theme 3: Learning & Development	Broad & multi-disciplinary professional development, personal development.	Competency development, challenging the self & adaptation ability, growth in a diverse field of expertise, personal & professional development/enrichment, steep learning curves.
Theme 4: Employability	Internal Marketability, External Marketability.	'Out-of-sight/out-of-mind,' marketability of the international position, labour market value, foreign experience valuable for CV, expatriation not good for your career, international experience prerequisites for career progression, expatriation enhanced lateral mobility & career ladder, marketable commodity, (no) company loyalty.

These excerpts highlight the career shocks respondents endured across their career lifespan and show that meanings of career progress may change over the years with new self-discoveries or personal events that trigger major conceptual-emotional shifts. When confronted with adversity, respondents needed proclivity to forge ahead under circumstances that were replete with chaos, unpredictability and uncertainty. The excerpts are illustrative of respondents' self-initiating, proactive and reactive forms of adaptation to handle the career challenges infused by unforeseen and uncontrollable changes in the labor market and industry in the current disruptive era. Respondents took control over their careers by actively searching for career opportunities on the internal and external labor market in either the same or a different industry, in either the home country or abroad. In so doing, they secured employment, thereby safeguarding a financially secure situation for themselves and their families.

Only when financial security was achieved, respondents' meaning of career progress evolved to *Abundance and Affluence*, the second category within this theme. This meaning became prominent when respondents experienced an accelerated rate of progress in financial terms, achieving material success, e.g. power, prestige, social prestige and status, wealth, property, earning capacity, high pay, incentives and perks, linked in part to promotions (extrinsic rewards). This was related to 'getting ahead', i.e. climbing the corporate ladder, upward mobility and promotion within the organizational hierarchy. As one respondent explained, "Both my international assignments have been good for my career. I climbed the hierarchical ladder, so this was a benefit" (Mannox, Dutch expatriate in the USA).

Respondents mentioned that the likelihood of a top-level job with large responsibility and concomitant abundance was higher abroad. By contrast, there were limited high/top level career opportunities in the home country resulting in less abundance. Hence, instead of repatriating, many respondents opted for sequential IAs to maintain their royal compensation and benefits packages and to continue career ladder paths.

Theme 2: Career and Life Welfare

This theme comprised of two categories, the first being *Intrinsic value* where respondents' meaning of career progress was in the realm of non-materialistic aspects of work, such as freedom, variety, challenges, meaningful work, satisfaction and fulfilment (intrinsic rewards). Their meaning of career progress was '*getting free*', i.e., acquiring job positions with more personal autonomy and space and '*getting high*', i.e., work that provides challenge and evokes excitement, with career paths characterized by lateral movement and transitions within the organization. Respondents in their late career stages and more senior in life expressed a sense of fulfilment from helping and mentoring younger colleagues. Hence, career progress meant making contributions to the world and making a positive impact on others.

The second category was *Work-life balance*. Many respondents considered career progress by the impact work has on the broader aspects of life. They were concerned with 'getting balanced', i.e., finding equilibrium between work and family, personal and professional life and sustaining health, and wellbeing across the lifespan. Some chose to forgo a senior/executive level position for the sake of the family. They expressed that striving for a top position would mean making sacrifices in their personal and family life. Instead of continuing to climb the traditional corporate career ladder to the top, these respondents chose a career path with lateral and diagonal directions along which they could still grow professionally and personally. Their kaleidoscope career paths, which incorporated their personal values and interests outside of the workplace, allowed them to spend more time with their families, more leisure time, travel and enjoy life. Individuals strived to find their personal optimum in work-life balance and rated their career progress by their ability to do so. The following expert captures this notion:

> I am quite happy with my seniority level in [name company] and with the job I am doing. There are still opportunities for one or two progressions. I have made sacrifices. I could have progressed quicker if I had moved faster. So, you sign your life away to some extent for the highest level. Even if I could go up one level higher from where I am now, it would have a serious impact on my private life. As long as the job is interesting and challenging, seniority is not important for me. (Seph, German expatriate in Iraq)

Interestingly, there were differences between respondents from developed Western countries and developing Asian countries, pertaining to work-life balance as a meaning of career progress. The following excerpt is illustrative:

> Opportunities for further progression and development by stepping into the role of senior management are tremendous. It is a path that will require personal sacrifice: holding higher management responsibilities is heavy and often requires personal sacrifice of your family time and space. It depends on work-life balance and the culture you have grown up in and are from. Coming from an Asian work background is also different. Typical Western culture is having more work life balance and typical of Asian cultures like in Japan and Singapore is that people work nonstop. Malaysian work life culture is better than Singapore or Japan for sure. Survival equates to hard work. (Kun, Malaysian repatriate)

This excerpt shows how institutional and national culture characteristics in the home and host country affect career pathways and meanings of career progress. That is, *work-life balance* as a meaning of career progress appears more prominent among respondents from Western 'developed' cultures than Asian 'developing' cultures.

Theme 3: Learning and Development

This theme emerged from respondents' meaning of career progress as 'getting ahead' by self-development and development of competencies. The first category was labeled 'Broad and multi-disciplinary professional development' pertaining to respondents' engagement in life-long learning, which coexisted with the second category 'Personal development'. It involved seeking opportunities for professional growth, expanding knowledge and experiences and developing professional skills through continuous informal learning and on-the-job learning, as well as via training and/or formal education and learning. Respondents emphasized that developing themselves broadly and multi-disciplinary was crucial to being multi-deployable in different divisions in different countries. They opined that their occupational expertise and career competencies obtained through the IA made them more productive and interesting to employers. This helped respondents to make career progress. The following quote is exemplary:

> I have made enormous career progress. I became responsible for the business in China. I did an executive MBA, so I invested in my business and commercial knowledge and skills, and after a few years I became responsible for the whole of Asia. I have made more career progress than I would have in the Netherlands. (Matteo, Dutch expatriate in Singapore)

This excerpt is exemplary of respondents taking the initiative to manage their own careers, in concordance with CTC and CCT. IAs enabled respondents to learn faster and more, and they described the IAs as steep learning curves. Especially at the start of their IAs when they were confronted with new job requirements, colleagues, the organization's foreign entity culture, policies, procedures and processes, external stakeholders, and contextual factors in a foreign country. One respondent explained:

> I think that going abroad is good at the start of your career, because your learning curve is steep. Later, the steepness diminishes, but then you get at a level where your network at different locations abroad becomes important. That is seen from a career point of view and linked to progress. (Alcot, Dutch repatriate)

When the steep learning curve had reached a tipping point and flattened out, learning experiences and personal development in the IA were incremental or halted. At that point, respondents reconsidered their career options and engaged in career exploration and a deliberation between Corporate Ladder and Corporate Lattice global career pathways. Overall, being in a learning mode throughout their careers, experiential learning processes and learning from change and failure as enriching life experiences, drove perceived marketability and employability, addressed in the next section.

Theme 4: Employability

Employability appeared as crucial meanings of career progress with two corresponding categories: Internal and External Labor Marketability. The meaning of career progress as *Internal Marketability* came to the fore when respondents spoke about the effect of the number of IAs and the period working abroad. Respondents expressed that too many IAs or being assigned abroad for very long periods, known as the '*out-of-sight, out-of-mind*' phenomenon, did more harm than good to their career progress. Being located abroad reduced expatriates' visibility within the headquarters where the corporate strategic, mission-critical decisions were made, It undermined the building, maintaining and expanding intra-organizational networks, which would help them to get a better understanding of the 'politics of progression' and to get access to people in positions of power, needed to obtain a position in a core business area central to the success of the organization. In this regard, respondents stressed the value of 'Being at the right place at the right time, meeting the right people', i.e. people who have authority and decision-making power over whom to place where. The following excerpt is illustrative of the role of visibility and networks in career progress on diversified career pathways:

> In the HQ, I would have been with corporate people, to grow a new network with people at higher level, have coffee with the VP. On my next assignment, I can take a position in the HQ and take a global role. For now, the way I have driven my career is more horizontal than vertical. It is about how you want to move forward, I guess. (Vicente, French expat in Malaysia)

Respondents who suffered from the 'out-of-sight, out-of-mind' phenomenon, pursued alternative career pathways elsewhere to achieve their desired career progress:

> In hindsight, going abroad for [name company] is not good for your career, it is bad. When you go abroad, people don't see you and in their perception you will stand still. So, expatriation is not good for your career. When I started working for [name company], I did not have clear career goals, but what I do now is in line with my expectations. I realize that progress up the career ladder is not necessarily what I want. I want to feel good about myself, which can happen in many different ways. (Matt, Dutch repatriate)

This excerpt illustrates the manifestation of multidirectional, diversified career path, shifting from the traditional corporate ladder career path based on their external marketability (second category within this theme). Respondents opined that the right international experience and the marketability of the international position determined the labor market value of an individual. Therefore, several respondents undertook just one IA for about 2-3 years to gain experience in a foreign country, to develop competencies and expertise that are sought after in the labor market to increase their marketability and employability upon repatriation. Respondents' career construction activities entailed networking and self-profiling that improved respondents' perceived external marketability and employability and aiding their career progress.

Respondents were active agents who sought out the best available opportunities for further career progress. Their value, goodwill and reputation in the job market as recognized 'authorities' in their fields of expertise established through their noteworthy global career accomplishments enabled them to make their desired career progress on multidirectional, diversified career pathways. The following excerpt is exemplary:

> In a way my career and my CV are peculiar. As a tax adviser it is much fancier to have worked in London or New York. I worked at a tea plantation in Africa, so I have seen other facets than just Tax Advisory. It has made my career broader rather than going faster or steeper. I can't say it has helped my career forward. Many of my colleagues who stayed in The Netherlands are now partners in a Tax business, so they were higher up in the organizational hierarchy than I was. I missed out on that, but I got much in return. People in organizations do not know very well how to assign value to my experiences in Africa in relation to taxes. I was lucky with my boss who saw the potential of my capabilities. (Annabel, Dutch repatriate)

In sum, the findings of this research show that respondents' global career pathways were highly idiosyncratic and often dynamic, unpredictable and unstable and continually evolved across the lifespan. In concordance with CCT and CTC, career adaptability enabled respondents to ensure employability and forge sustainable careers and progress throughout the lifespan. Respondents opined that progressing in one's career is not limited to moving upward on the traditional corporate, linear career ladder; multidirectional lattice career pathways, either intra- or extra-organizational, within or outside the home country, were viable and/or desirable to make career progress. The findings elucidate the multidimensional and socially constructed nature of the career progress construct. Indeed, findings show that in the contemporary career landscape, considerable diversity exists in meanings individuals give to career progress, which appeared to be a dynamic interplay between work, private life, quality of life, work-family balance issues, and self-development. As such, findings provide a holistic view of the complexity and unpredictability of contemporary global careers and enhance our understanding of the meanings of career progress on multidirectional career pathways.

Overall, the inference from the findings is that career progress can be conceived as a lifelong, continuous, and multidirectional process that is influenced by the interplay of personal desires and goals, contextual opportunities and constraints, leading to the accomplishment of desirable, positive psychological, work-related outcomes along the career trajectory.

Discussion

The purpose of this paper was to explore career pathways and meanings of career progress of expatriates and repatriates across the globe. Drawing on CTC and CCT, this study explored how expatriates and repatriates navigate and craft their careers on multidirectional, diversified careers paths to make career progress. The research question that guided this exploratory study was, "RQ. How do expatriates and repatriates progress in their careers on diversified, multidirectional career pathways and what meanings do they ascribe to career progress?"

In response to the research question, respondents considered their personal values, desires and preferences, life values and goals when envisioning and re-evaluating what progress means to them. Accordingly, respondents constructed their career ladder or lattice career paths in professions and industries where they could achieve a 'career-life fit', i.e., careers that align with their professional and personal goals and lifestyle, a phenomenon highlighted in previous research (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Benko et al., 2011; Biemann et al., 2012; Heslin et al., 2020; Kallene & Vance, 2017; Rudolph et al., 2019; Savickas, 2011, 2012) and make career progress. This paper has provided a comprehensive analysis of career pathways of expatriates and repatriates and has shown the multidimensionality and subjective and socially constructed nature of the career progress construct.

Lifestyle provision and *Career Wealth* where *financial security* as a meaning of career progress was salient in the reality of contemporary labour markets that reflect lurking threats and bleak opportunities under circumstances of chaos and adversity, such as ruffled economic conditions and industry downturns, rising job insecurity and redundancies (Baruch & Vardi, 2016; Pryor & Bright, 2007). This meaning was particularly salient in the context of transitions and challenges of careers in an evolving world of work (Ramaci et al., 2021; Mello et al., 2023b), characterised by uncertainty, instability and 'chaos', as posited by CCT and CTC (Pryor & Bright, 2007; Savickas, 2002, 2005). Our study thus lends support to previous research showing that career trajectories and career progress are strongly constrained by structural factors, such as unstable job market conditions (Park et al., 2022). Respondents proactively and positively managed job insecurity and unemployment by exhibiting career mastery (Mooijman et al., 2018), -mastering uncertain and unpredictable situations and adopting a proactive and courageous approach to successfully craft and navigate their global careers on diversified career paths and create positive career outcomes, in line with findings by Heslin et al. (2020) and Ramaci et al. (2021).

In concordance with CTC and CCT (Pryor & Bright, 2014; Savickas, 2002, 2005, 2013), respondents were career resilient and engaged in 'career exploration and exploitation', i.e., actively exploring and searching for career opportunities and employment beyond their specific field of expertise on the internal and external labour market as constructive approaches to career progress (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Baruch & Vardi, 2016; Bucker et al., 2016; Pryor, 2010; Pryor & Bright, 2012; Pryor & Bright, 2007; Pryor & Bright, 2014; Ramaci et al., 2021). This entailed career construction activities (Savickas, 2002), such as pursuing further education or changing professions to enhance the 'fit' with the labor market, leading to a more favorable position on the labor market, in line with findings by Lo Presti et al. (2018). This enhanced expatriates' and repatriates' possibility to what Ghosh et al. (2023) and Ramaci et al. (2021) call "re-employ themselves" in the chaotic labour market, searching for a job and pursuing reemployment. As a result, several respondents made career transitions into other professions and industries, which have become more frequent and more challenging in the face of uncertain employment prospects, as reported by Ramaci et al. (2021) and Mello et al., (2023b).

Overall, in synch with CCT and CTC, findings support the notion that unplanned events and an apparently minor change in one part of a complex, dynamic ecological system can concatenate out in a major impact within the system, the so-called 'butterfly effect'[3] (Pryor & Bright, 2014). To adequately respond to unexpected, unplanned events and changes, respondents exhibited flexibility, resilience, optimism, adjustment, adaptability, career agility and agency, career self-management and navigation, and proactive adaptation to changing labour markets to make career progress on diversified pathways. These findings are in concordance with CTC and CCT (Ghosh et al., 2023; Pryor & Bright, 2007; Pryor & Bright, 2014; Savickas, 2011, 2012, 2013) and findings by Baruch and Vardi (2016), Bucker et al. (2016), Haibo, et al. (2018), Mello et al. (2023b), Ramaci et al. (2021), Selmer et al. (2018).

The findings of the present study contradict the study by Mayrhofer et al. (2016) who contended that Abundance and Affluence, representing financial achievement and material wealth, are the most commonly valued meanings of career progress. The salience of this meaning of career progress became more or less prominent depending on the state of the economy and job security in particular industries in which respondents pursued their careers.

The second theme '*Career and Life Welfare*' represented the shift from a Corporate career Ladder to Latice path. Instead of climbing a traditional corporate career ladder to the top organizational echelons, several respondents sought engaging and meaningful work (*intrinsic value*) and a job in which they could achieve a satisfying balance between work and family life, and between work and non-work activities, for example, having sufficient leisure time, and pursuing hobbies. The tendency towards pursuing a career path characterized by meaningful work rather than climbing the corporate ladder has been established in previous research (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Baruch & Vardi, 2016; Crowley-Henry et al., 2019; Ghosh et al., 2023; Mayrhofer et al., 2016; Mello et al., 2023a, 2023b; Pryor & Bright, 2007, 2014; Savickas, 2012). Attaching value to work-life balance as meaning of career progress and pursuing career path accordingly is called the 'satisficing' approach (Shortland, 2021), whereby respondents attempted to achieve a satisfactory level of both career and family outcomes rather than attempting to maximize one of the two with substantial exclusion of the other, for example maximizing career goals at the expense of family.

The third theme was *Learning and Development*, which respondents viewed as an ongoing, sustainable and renewable meaning of career progress, leading to capabilities or the ability to apply skills and competences in new contexts, in line with findings by Mayrhofer et al. (2016). Their learning and development were beneficial to respondents' career progress, either in consecutive IAs (expatriates) or in suitable re-entry jobs (repatriates), corroborating findings by Andresen et al. (2021) Baruch & Vardi (2016), Bucker et al. (2016), Shortland (2021).

The fourth theme was *Employability*, encompassing Internal and External Marketability as prominent meanings of career progress. Perceived marketability reflected respondents' views on how easy or difficult it was to find new employment and the potential to find a new job, which respondents associated with perceptions of enhanced career progress, resonating previous research (Andresen et al., 2021; Bucker et al., 2016; Ghosh et al., 2023; Lo Presti et al., 2018; Suutari et al., 2018).

Expatriates and repatriates with a high number and length of IAs experienced the 'out of sight, out of mind' phenomenon, i.e. being forgotten and left adrift by organizations, resonating previous studies (Bucker et al., 2016; Shortland, 2021). Specifically, the longer expatriates stayed abroad, the weaker their networks in the home country and the more negative impact on perceived home-country marketability and employability, which was also observed by Mello et al. (2023a, 2023b). Nevertheless, despite repatriates' initial slower career progress, also observed by Chiang et al. (2018), they were optimistic about their market value. Hence, our findings contrast findings by Mello et al. (2023a) that repatriates' perceptions of their marketability decrease after repatriation. In response to diminished internal marketability, respondents' career construction activities involved "self-profiling" -presenting and communicating one's personal knowledge, abilities, and skills to the internal and external labor market (Akkermans & Tims, 2017). Career construction activities also involved establishing and expanding global networks, consisting of relationships that can be beneficial to one's work and career, corroborating findings by Bucker et al. (2016), Crowley-Henry et al., (2019), Park et al., (2022). These

3 The butterfly effect is clearly visible during the COVID-19 pandemic, but this research was conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic is not addressed in the presentation and discussion of the findings.

proactive career behaviors enhanced respondents' marketability.

Furthermore, findings revealed the 'rise until you reach the top or plateau' phenomenon among the senior respondents where increasing career maturity at a more advanced career stage diminished career progress. For some, plateauing meant a broken dream, a humiliating dead-end career path, with stagnating progress on career ladder pathways, in line with findings by Andresen et al. (2021), Baruch and Vardi (2016). In response to career plateauing, respondents took 'career control', which refers to setting career goals and planning how to reach them and exploring the environment for alternative career pathways to make career progress (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Ramaci et al., 2021). Overall, these findings thus touch upon and reveal the 'dark dynamics of international careers', i.e., negative impacts of IA on career progress, which most published work leaves almost untouched, as it addresses mostly positive aspects and career benefits of IAs (Andresen et al., 2021; Baruch & Vardi, 2016; Mello et al., 2023a).

Theoretical Contributions

This paper makes two contributions to advance research in the field of global mobility. First, this study expands the discourse of contemporary career theory by extending the application of Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2011, 2012, 2013), Chaos Theory of Careers (Pryor & Bright, 2007, 2014) and the Corporate Ladder versus the Corporate Lattice model (Benko et al., 2011) to an expatriation and repatriation context. Using the theoretical lens of CCT (Savickas, 2002, 2005, 2013) and CTC (Pryor & Bright, 2007, 2014), this paper showed how expatriates and repatriates constructed their careers on multi directional, diversified career pathways, and offers a deeper understanding of how individuals derived meanings of career progress on their career pathways. This paper advances CCT and CTC by showing that careers of expatriate and repatriates are increasingly shifting from traditional careers, where the direction of career progress is linear, climbing to the top of the hierarchical ladder, usually in one organization/occupation, to dynamic, flexible, non-linear, intuitive, spontaneous, chaotic, unpredictable, unstable, risky, hybrid and kaleidoscope, lattice career paths where the direction of career progress is multidirectional, usually in different organizations and different occupations, supporting findings by Baruch and Vardi (2016), Crowley-Henry (2012), Kallane and Vance (2017). Second, the present study is one of the first to provide a comprehensive analysis of meanings that expatriates and repatriates ascribe to career progress in diverse economic, cultural, and institutional contexts around the globe.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study has limitations that need to be addressed yet offering opportunities for future research in the burgeoning domain of global career development research. First, this study relied on self-reports of expatriates and repatriates regarding their career pathways and career progress. Future research should incorporate data triangulation by a multi-actors approach, including senior/line managers and Chief HR Officers from organizations across the world that deploy expatriate and by using a multi-source approach, e.g. surveys, interviews and focus groups to gather multi-actors' views on constructing customized global career paths to facilitate expatriate and repatriate career progress.

Second, women are proportionally underrepresented in the sample, which reflects the general representation of women in expatriate positions; women only hold 25% of all expatriate positions industry-wide and in particular sectors, such as oil and gas, their representation is only 7–15% (Shortland, 2021). This underrepresentation of women in the sample limits the generalizability of the findings to the female expatriate and repatriate population. The sample is also overrepresented by Dutch respondents. This restricts cultural transferability, meaning inferential generalization of the findings on the meanings of career progress from one cultural situation to another, specifically to expatriates and repatriates from other countries than the Netherlands. Hence, this study calls for more context-sensitive global careers research, drawing on a more equally distributed sample in terms of nationality and gender in order to identify meanings of career progress across cultures.

Third, the purposive sample of 78 expatriate and repatriates only permits theoretical generalization and not statistical generalization. Therefore, we can only generalize to theory and not to a broader population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A suggestion for future research therefore is to use both qualitative and quantitative research designs across a larger sample of expatriates and repatriates from different countries across the globe to establish the external validity and generalizability of the findings of the present study. Using a single-phase data conversion design, a mixed-method research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) enables the exploration of the diverse aspects of career progress of expatriates and repatriates in a qualitative manner on the one hand, and examination of the relationships between these aspects in quantitative manner on the other hand in order to triangulate the qualitative results with the quantitative results. Using a cohort control design, often referred to as a cross-sectional sequential design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) allows for examining career pathway transitions over a shorter period. It would involve studying diversified career pathways of multiple groups of expatriates and repatriates at different ages and life stages over a 5 to 10 year period, rather than one group over a 20-30 year period. CCT and CTC and the career ladder versus career lattice pathway model can be drawn upon to further enrich, ground and theorise the understanding of career progress of expatriates and repatriates on diversified career pathways across the international work-life span.

The current study supports the development of a future research agenda that entails the design of a more nuanced career ladder and lattice pathway framework to enrich insights into expatriates' and repatriates' career pathways and progress. Future research can build on our research to develop a more holistic understanding of why and under what conditions expatriates and repatriates pursue career ladder or lattice pathways to make career progress.

Practical Implications

The present research has several implications for expatriates, repatriates and organizations. The organizational implications of the multiple meanings of career progress involve integrating individual career construction and mastery with organizational career planning. Organizational career planning entails the design of personalized career development paths, enabling expatriates and repatriates to make career progress on diversified, multidirectional career pathways in internal or external labor markets. This dovetails with linking compensation and benefits to breadth and depth of expertise rather than hierarchical job level to appropriately and fairly reward, engage and retain expatriates and repatriates in career lattice pathways. If opportunities for career progress aligned to the most valued meanings of career progress of expatriates and repatriates are missing, they will disengage and may even leave the organization, which is a costly outcome for the organization in terms of lost human capital and reputation. Hence, organizations are recommended to construct more diversified career pathways with varying developmental career opportunities beyond organizational silos (e.g., job rotation and project-related, stretch assignments), as well as jobs that better enable a work-life balance and enhance wellbeing.

Implications for expatriates and repatriates are to ask themselves several career reflection questions:

- *What am I good at?*
- *What gives me joy in my career?*
- *What do I need to do to enhance my employability in the global labor market?*

Pondering these universal questions, as well as the process of finding answers to them, helps expatriates and repatriates to identify their meanings of career progress and discover their desired career pathways for achieving career progress -whatever progress means to each of them individually.

Conclusion

This paper explored career paths and progress of expatriates and repatriates from a 'Corporate Ladder versus Lattice career' perspective. Specifically, this paper has shown that careers of expatriates and repatriates are increasingly shifting from ladder careers to lattice career pathways along which they make progress. This paper has brought to the fore the multidimensionality and subjectivity of the concept of career progress, showing that expatriates and repatriates, throughout their career span, attach different meanings to career progress, which are influenced by personal desires and goals, contextual opportunities and constraints. Organizations that construct multidirectional, diversified career paths will nurture expatriates' and repatriates' career progress and will enable them to be agile and adaptive to unpredictable, rapid, unprecedented global changes to stay competitive in the global labor market.

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Appendix

Interview Protocol Expatriate/Repatriate Career Progress

Person Profile and Background

1. What is your current job role and could you describe the nature of your job, including tasks, responsibilities, and achievements?
2. What is your organisational tenure?
3. Have you worked in a similar or different role within the same or other multinational organisations?
4. What is your highest formal education and in which field did you obtain your degree(s)?
5. What is your nationality?
6. What is your age?
7. What is your gender? (male, female, transgender/gender neutral)
8. What is your civil status?
9. How many children do you have?
10. Could you describe your career as an expatriate and repatriate, including number of assignments, location, duration? ¥
11. Could you describe the impact of your international mobility on fulfilling your career aspirations and career progression [within the organisation]?
    Prompts: career enhancement, fulfilling family or personal goals, employability and external marketability to use career capital across a range of organizational boundaries; "vertical mobility" (i.e. promotion) to enhance career growth in only one firm versus "lateral mobility" across a range of jobs, functions, borders, and employers.
12. Could you describe your global career path and career progress?
13. Theorem:
    International experience is one of the most effective ways for people to increase their value on the internal and external labour market and value for the business. *¥
    What is your opinion on this theorem?

Career Readiness Trends Among Final-Year Undergraduates in a Public University in Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract

The transition from university to the professional world marks a crucial stage, and being well- prepared for one's career is essential for success. However, existing literature indicates a gap between skills obtained through tertiary education and the realities of the world of work. Hence, this research explored the potential differences in how final-year undergraduates in Ibadan perceive their preparedness for careers, examining the impact of age and gender on career readiness skills. Employing a descriptive cross-sectional design, the study involved a sample of 320 final-year students from a public University in Ibadan, randomly selected to respond to a 35- item questionnaire. The results revealed that male students exhibited a higher degree of career readiness compared to their female counterparts. Furthermore, the study showed that age did not significantly affect career readiness. Conversely, students rated themselves highly in teamwork, professionalism, and critical thinking skills, moderately in leadership, digital technology, and communication skills, while scoring lower in global and cultural fluency as well as career management skills. These findings underscore the need for enhanced career programmes and guidance within tertiary institutions across Nigeria. Moreover, the study can offer valuable insights to policymakers for crafting strategies aimed at bolstering students' readiness for their future careers.

Keywords: Career readiness competences, Age, Gender differences, Undergraduates

The transition from university education to the professional world is a critical phase in the lives of undergraduate students. As they approach the culmination of their academic journey, final- year undergraduates are expected to possess a set of career readiness competencies that will enable them to seamlessly integrate into the workforce. The concept of career readiness describes the process by which individuals are equipped to seek, obtain, maintain, and advance in a job or career (Hooker & Brand, 2013). It refers to the degree to which individuals demonstrate essential core competencies necessary for success in the workplace and effective life-long career management (Stebleton et al., 2020). Career readiness encompasses a range of skills, including communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability, which are vital for success in today's dynamic and competitive job market. Marciniak et al. (2022) defined career readiness as the attainment of maturity in comprehensive career decision-making, involving processes like career planning, exploration, and decision-making. It signifies an individual's preparedness for employment and establishment in their chosen career path (Mansoor & Tan, 2009). Studies suggest that career readiness is closely linked to career maturity, indicating individuals who have progressed through planning and exploration stages, achieving stability and growth in their chosen careers (Dodd et al., 2022; Marciniak et al., 2022)

Furthermore, career readiness comprises several characteristics or skill sets that individuals are expected to possess (Hendricson et al., 2006; Koyuncuolğlu, 2022; Layton et al., 2020). The National Association of Colleges and Employers [NACE] (2021) outlined the following skill sets as indicators of career readiness, including career management, communication, critical thinking/problem-solving, digital technology, global and cultural fluency, leadership, professionalism/work ethic, and team collaboration (Camara, 2013; Stebleton et al., 2020). According to Vaughan (2010), career management is depicted as reliant on three essential competencies crucial for navigating life, education, and work effectively. These competencies— self-information, exploration of opportunities, and decision-making and action—are highlighted as integral components of effective career management. Self-information entails understanding oneself to facilitate effective self-management and interpersonal relationships. Exploration of opportunities involves identifying and capitalizing on learning and work opportunities. Decision-making and action involve planning career paths, adjusting plans as needed, adapting to change, and responding appropriately to circumstances (Nasir & Zaki, 2021; Vaughan, 2010). Career management as a framework comprises core competencies such as awareness of a career, exploring career options, and career preparation. It entails a series of activities aimed at self- exploration, self-awareness, exploring job opportunities, evaluating work environments, setting career goals, and devising strategies to achieve them (Callanan et al., 2017; Layton et al., 2020).

The second dynamic skill in career readiness is communication, which is indispensable in the professional realm. It encompasses interactions, collaborations, relationships, and team leadership, all of which hinge on effective communication. Consequently, communication stands as a highly prized skill for career readiness (Çakır, 2021). It denotes the capability to convey information in a manner that fosters mutual understanding among all parties involved. Communication skills encompass both written and oral forms, comprising speaking, writing, reading, and listening (Azhar, et al., 2020). NACE (2021) reported that while various aspects of oral communication skills remain valuable in the dynamic labour market, the current shift towards trends such as social distancing, remote work, and increased virtual communication in place of face-to-face interactions necessitates heightened competence in written communication. According to NACE, communication competence is evident in individuals who exhibit satisfactory levels of public speaking, they can clearly and effectively convey thoughts and ideas within and beyond their organization, demonstrate clear self-expression, and possess the ability to write or edit professional documents. NACE (2021) further delineates communication competence into two categories: eloquence and technical proficiency. Eloquence in communication suggests that career-ready individuals can articulate their thoughts and ideas effectively and clearly to ensure understanding by others, while technical communication competence pertains to the ability to express ideas systematically based on the communication channel being utilized, such as technical reports or working documents. Furthermore, critical thinking and problem-solving, the third competency are pivotal indicators of career readiness. This involves the intellectual abilities of ideation, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information gleaned from personal experiences, observations, or interactions (Rodzalan & Saat, 2015; Snyder & Snyder, 2008). Reports assert that critical thinking skills are highly sought after in various work environments, representing high-level reasoning that necessitates active and skillful engagement, ultimately leading to effective problem-solving (Rodzalan & Saat, 2015). Snyder and Snyder (2008) underscored the significance of this competence, labelling it as “the process of thinking about thinking” (p.90) and asserting its role in enabling individuals to adeptly address challenges in social interactions, science, and practical scenarios. Critical thinking and problem-solving are intertwined concepts, with the achievement of one indicating the presence of the other, given that problem-solving inherently demands extensive critical thinking (Hendricson et al., 2006). Belecina & Ocampo (2018) defined a critical thinker as one who can pose questions, conceptualize problems, scrutinize evidence, analyze assumptions and biases, consider various perspectives, employ logical rather than emotional reasoning, and navigate ambiguity adeptly.

The fourth career competency has been highlighted as digital technology. In the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0, characterized by digitalization, digital transformation, and a significant reliance on technology across various industries, there is a pressing need for the development of competencies in digital technology (Mutohhari et al., 2021). The landscape of work in this era has shifted towards the widespread adoption of diverse technologies and digital methods to enhance efficiency and productivity. Consequently, the term “smart work” has become commonplace, denoting the utilization of various resources, including technology, to work effectively and efficiently (Hooley & Staunton, 2020). Considering this career trend of technological advancement and the profound influence of digitalization on today’s workforce, coupled with the rapidly evolving nature of digitalization, graduates must equip themselves with the essential competence in digital technology. In essence, a graduate who demonstrates readiness to enter the workforce in their chosen career can comprehend and ethically leverage technologies to enhance job efficiency and accomplish assigned tasks and goals (Hooley & Staunton, 2020; NACE, 2020; Olofsson et al., 2020). NACE (2020) further delineates six behavioural indicators of career readiness concerning competence in digital technology. Firstly, individuals must demonstrate the ability to navigate change and remain open to learning or updating their knowledge of technology, requiring commitment, effort, and perseverance to achieve skill competence (Koyuncuoğlu, 2022). Secondly, individuals should be capable of utilizing technology to efficiently and effectively accomplish job tasks. Another behavioural indicator of digital technology competence, as stated by NACE (2020), is the ability to identify the most suitable digital resources for specific tasks. A career-ready individual with digital competencies should also exhibit the skill of creatively managing technology to integrate data, supporting appropriate, effective, and timely decision-making (Mutohhari et al., 2021). Additionally, individuals should demonstrate quick adaptability to new technologies or those with which they are unfamiliar. Also, a career-ready individual should demonstrate the ability to utilize information, generate meaningful ideas, and leverage available technological resources to achieve strategic goals (Koyuncuoğlu, 2022; Mutohhari et al., 2021).

The fifth career readiness competence, global and cultural fluency, involves an individual's ability to respect and interact effectively with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. This proficiency is demonstrated through openness, inclusivity, sensitivity, and the capability to interact respectfully with individuals while recognizing and appreciating their differences (NACE, 2020). Such individuals also exhibit open, sensitive, flexible communication, and active listening as they interact with others around them. The aforementioned qualities empower them to work efficiently and effectively thereby yielding tangible results. According to the World Economic Forum (2017), it placed strong emphasis on the significance of global competence in adequately equipping present and future employees for the evolving landscape of work. The report recommended the integration of global competence into educational curricula. Likewise, a study conducted by Deloitte and the Global Business Coalition for Education (2018) highlighted that cultural fluency stands as a crucial employability skill for success in the future workplace. Similarly, leadership, the sixth career readiness competency, involves the action or skill of influencing a group of individuals within the same social circle to achieve specified goals and objectives. It entails the ability to harness the strengths of others to accomplish common goals. The responsibilities of a leader include: organizing and managing projects, training team members, and overseeing `activities until goals are accomplished.

The individual should be adept at assessing both personal and others' emotions, using empathic skills to guide and motivate; coaching and developing others, and organizing, prioritizing, and delegating work (NACE, 2020). A leader exhibits traits such as discipline, self- confidence, commitment, resilience, emotional intelligence, effective communication, and management skills. Diverse leadership approaches encompass the autocratic style, emphasizing efficiency; the transactional style, where incentives drive goal achievement; the transformational style, centred on attaining established objectives; the democratic style, engaging team members in goal-setting and attainment; and the coercive style, where leaders insist on immediate compliance with established rules governing organizational goals and objectives. Villarreal et al. (2018) further posited that leadership and its diverse styles have the capability of influencing career readiness among youths, equipping them with the necessary skills for the workplace. Northhouse (2010) analyzed that transformational leadership elicits changes in individuals by integrating charismatic and visionary leadership, enabling adolescents to evolve into better versions of themselves which is essential for career readiness. A study by Career Builder (2014) stated that new graduates often lack some skills essential for a successful career, including leadership skills. According to Tapp (2021), leadership skills can impact various aspects of an organization and establish the relationship between the organization and employee performance. Notably, 65% of employers rated leadership qualities as an indispensable skill in job seekers (NACE, 2022).

The seventh career readiness competency is work ethics. It encompasses a set of principles and guidelines an individual sets for themselves, serving as a framework for day-to-day activities within the organization. These principles include aspects such as time management, self- motivation, loyalty, discipline, accountability, and hard work, among others. Work ethic is described as a set of values associated with a person's character, often developed through family relationships and formal education, shaping and influencing an individual's actions and beliefs (Chașovschi, 2016). Huang and Cappelli (2007) underscored the importance of work ethic for workplace productivity noting that individuals with a higher level of work ethic tend to be generally productive. In addition, Miller et al. (2002) stated that the term "work ethic" is not a singular concept but a combination of attitudes and beliefs regarding work behaviour. Seven dimensions of work ethics were identified which include: the centrality of work- individuals perceive work as a crucial aspect of their lives, even if they had all they wanted and didn't need to work; self-reliance which emphasizes the ability to handle work independently for a successful work experience; hard work, which implies acknowledging that success in the workplace will not be achieved except by hard work and perseverance; leisure, which highlights the need for employees to maintain a balanced life by taking time to relax and enjoy life away from work pressures - this helps to maintain a healthy work-to-life ratio; morality / ethics, stating fairness and justice in dealings with others; delayed gratification, stressing the need for hard work over time to achieve career success; and wasted time, understanding that time should not be wasted at any point (Woehr et al., 2007).

Professionalism, part of work ethics, was described by Friedson (2001) as the ability of staff members within an organization to manage their responsibilities independently, rather than being solely directed by managers. This concept encompasses proficiency in time management, communication, and accountability, skills that can be acquired and honed through practical experiences such as internships and practicums before entering the workforce. Rollag (2015) statedthat a significant number of employees lack professionalism skills crucial for success in their respective fields and businesses. Specifically, they often lack training in areas such as social networking, proactivity, and self-presentation. Robles (2012) further emphasized the importance of soft skills such as communication, professionalism, teamwork, and work ethic in both employment and entrepreneurial settings. As a considerable portion of the upcoming generation transitions into the workforce, there should be increased emphasis on fostering the development of these soft skills (Tulgan, 2016). Finally, teamwork collaboration the last career readiness competence, involves the collective effort of individuals towards the accomplishment of a common goal. Each member of the team is assigned specific duties and responsibilities geared towards achieving a common goal (Mathieu et al., 2017). It is a crucial skill necessary for collaborating with others to bring about positive change (Brungardt, 2011). Collaboration, on the other hand, involves diverse individuals coming together to address a specific problem. It entails the ability to effectively interact with various teams, establish relationships, negotiate, and manage conflicts. According to Care et al. (2018), collaboration arises when achieving a goal requires more than one person's capabilities alone, necessitating the pooling of resources with others. Key collaboration skills include effective communication, emotional intelligence, and respect for diversity. Teamwork /collaboration demands individual efforts towards the achievement of common objectives. Engaging in volunteering and sports activities has been noted to enhance teamwork skills (Howell, 2013; Profiroiu & Pacesila, 2017), which are essential for success in both professional and personal life in the 21st century. The ability to work collaboratively with colleagues and individuals from various backgrounds, including various cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints, is a critical aspect of teamwork/collaboration skills. Individuals possessing this skill can function effectively within a team structure and adeptly handle conflict situations (NACE, 2020).

Additionally, studies have explored career readiness within the context of tertiary education, asserting that this sort of preparedness for the world of work is a milestone that is expected to be achieved during this phase of self-discovery (Arnett, 2000, 2007; Idiaka & Uzoechi, 2016; Shulman et al., 2009). Recent career trends among undergraduates have shown a great emphasis on acquiring training in preparation for adult work roles (Adegbite & Govender, 2021; Arnett, 2007). This trend is driven by significant changes in the labour market, which now demands diverse competencies, innovative products, services, and the ability to maintain competitiveness and remain relevant (Carnevale, 2013; Idiaka & Uzoechi, 2016; Terriquez & Gurantz, 2015). Consequently, it is anticipated that the career explorations typical of undergraduates, and enhanced by the knowledge, skills, and experiences achieved through tertiary education, will eventually lead to self-discovery and the establishment of more stable and permanent career goals and decisions. However, studies conducted in Nigeria becry the wide gap between skills obtained through tertiary education and the realities of the world of work (Ajao et al., 2022; Ezechukwu et al., 2021; Ukamaka et al., 2021), although it is anticipated that tertiary education should provide the necessary knowledge, experiences, skills, competencies, and training to equip final-year undergraduates towards a smooth transition into the world of work, fully prepared to make advancements in their chosen career paths. However, trends among undergraduates in Nigeria have indicated otherwise as studies have revealed that final-year students encounter unexpected difficulties in their transition from tertiary education to work life due to skills deficit (Ezechukwu et al., 2021; Koyenikan & Anozie, 2020).

Some researchers have blamed the curriculum, asserting that the outdated state of the Nigerian tertiary education curricula is failing to meet the needs of today's labour market (Ajao et al., 2022; Ezechukwu et al., 2021). Some others opine that there is a mismatch between students' preferred career aspirations and what they end up studying due to the complex challenges of securing admission into tertiary institutions (Ezechukwu et al., 2021; Ukamaka et al., 2021). Koyenikan and Anozie (2020), mentioned that the competencies employers in the Nigerian labour market emphasize for graduates to possess are beyond academic skills, and these competencies are just as valued as the academic certificate obtained. A combination of these competencies and certification according to Koyenikan and Anozie (2020), is what determines career readiness.

The aim of the current study therefore is to highlight the existing trend in career readiness among final-year undergraduates in a public university in Ibadan. Previous findings suggest that varied life experiences, exposure to diverse educational resources, and expectations, are key factors that could shape career readiness among undergraduates (Dodd et al., 2022; Ibok, 2013; Idiaka & Uzoechi, 2016). For instance, Idiaka and Uzoechi (2016) asserted that older students from the ages of 24 years and above, show higher levels of proficiency in employability skills than younger students due to more exposure to life's experiences. Some other studies suggest that there is no direct impact of age on the career competencies of undergraduates (Ferraro et al., 2018; Migunde et al., 2015). Meanwhile, some studies indicate that the level of impact of age on career readiness is determined by the perspective from which age is considered, be it chronological or functional (De Lange et al., 2021; Ng & Feldman, 2010). Additionally, studies suggest that gender roles and societal expectations contribute to variations in how male and female undergraduates perceive and prioritize certain competencies relevant to their chosen career paths (Ananthram et al., 2024; Uzoechi, 2015). Contrary to these findings, some other studies indicate no observable disparity in career readiness between male and female undergraduates (Dodd et al., 2022; Oyewole, 2023). Generally, there is a lack of consensus as to the contributions of these demographic factors on career readiness among undergraduates.

Moreover, the importance of career readiness competencies for achieving success in the labour market has been highlighted. However, a key concern of career readiness in the Nigerian context is the troubling gap between the anticipated preparedness of graduates entering the workforce each year and the realities they encounter. Existing literature indicates that graduates often lack the necessary skills to meet the demands of the workplace (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Sule et al. (2020) further emphasized this issue by highlighting the deficiency of essential employability skills, such as proficiency in digital technology, teamwork, and critical thinking, among Nigerian students, potentially hindering their prospects for employment. This study is therefore focused on investigating specific trends in career readiness among final-year undergraduates in Ibadan with the expectation that these trends will provide insight into students' perceptions of career readiness, patterns of strengths and deficiencies in career readiness competencies as well as the contribution of students' demographics towards their perception of career readiness. It is believed that such insights will allow for the development of effective, practicable, and sustainable career programmes and trainings that will foster career readiness among students in Nigerian Universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered:

1. How confident are final-year undergraduates about their readiness for their careers?
2. What is the extent of career readiness among final-year undergraduates?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in career readiness among male and female final-year undergraduates.
2. There is no significant influence of age on the career readiness of final-year undergraduates.

Method

Design

The study utilized a descriptive cross-sectional design. It is a study in which the researcher is primarily interested in describing relationships among variables without seeking to establish a causal connection. The rationale for this research design is that the study variable occurred before the commencement of the study.

Population and Participants

The population for this study comprised final-year undergraduates in a public University in Ibadan, Nigeria. The Student Affairs Division of the University provided a sample frame of final- year undergraduates across 10 faculties, from this sample frame, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 320 final-year undergraduates which made up the sample for this study. The age range of participants was delineated as follows: 21-24 years (179), 25-28 years (110), and 29 years and above (25).

Measure

Career Readiness Scale (Miller, 2019)

The instrument contained 35 items which measured eight distinct dimensions of career readiness including career management, communication, critical thinking/problem-solving, digital technology, global and cultural fluency, leadership, professionalism/work ethics, and teamwork collaboration. The questionnaire also included two (2) items which measured students' level of confidence in their preparedness towards their careers. The Career Readiness Scale was made up of structured questions measuring each facet of career readiness in a 5-point Likert scale format including - No experience, basic proficiency, limited proficiency, intermediate proficiency, and high proficiency. The career management facet, however, was measured on a 4-point Likert format ranging from "No experience, basic proficiency, limited proficiency, and intermediate proficiency." Some items contained in the questionnaire include: "I can research and explore job options," "I am able to articulate my thoughts clearly," "I have attended a diversity/inclusive training", "I am able to arrive at a meeting/work on time and prepared" etc. For this study, the reliability of this scale was determined using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for each of the eight dimensions of the career readiness scale are as follows: career management (α= .79); communication (α= .84); critical thinking/ problem-solving (α= .90); digital technology (α= .86); global and cultural fluency (α= .77); leadership (α= .87); professionalism/work ethics (α= .91); and team collaboration (α= .92).

Procedure of Administration

The researchers used the platform of a career day programme organized by the University for final-year undergraduates as an avenue for data collection. The questionnaire was administered to the students from the 10 faculties selected who attended the programme. The researchers obtained consent from the students for their participation in the study, assuring them of the privacy and confidentiality of any information shared, participants were further assured that their data would be strictly used for research purposes. Those students who agreed to participate were provided with the questionnaire. Additionally, the researchers guided the students through the questionnaire, addressing any areas of confusion or misunderstanding. The questionnaires were distributed and collected shortly before the commencement of the career day programme.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the research questions raised in this study. Independent t-test was used to analyze gender differences in career readiness among final-year undergraduates, while a one-way analysis of variance was used to establish the influence of age on student's career readiness.

Results

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

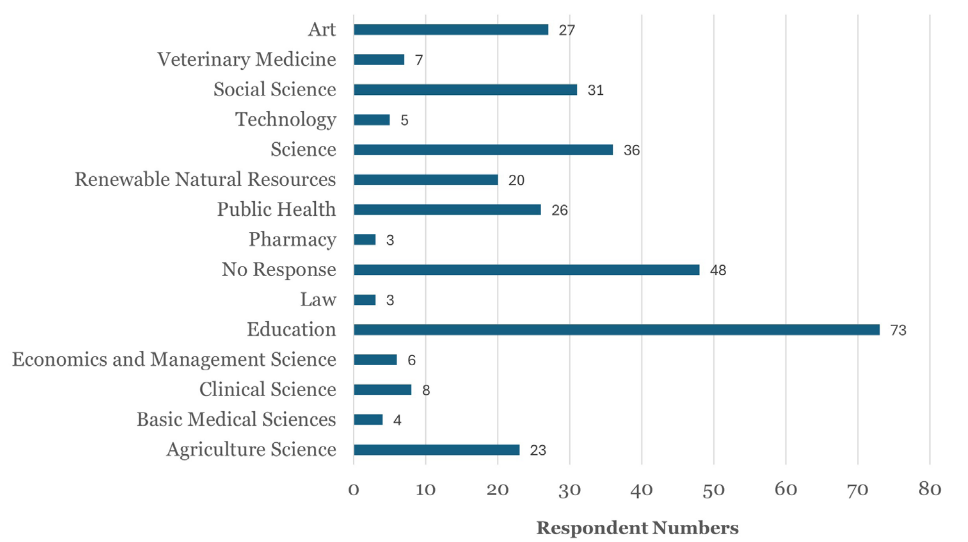
Variable	Categories	N (%)
Age	under 21 years	6 (1.9%)
	21-24 years	179 (55.9%)
	25-28 years	110 (34.4%)
	over 29 years	25 (7.8%)
Gender	Male	119 (37.2%)
	Female	201 (62.8%)

In Table 1, displays the statistics of the demographic characteristics of respondents. Respondents within the age bracket of 21 – 24 were mostly represented, 179 (55.9%) and followed by the age bracket of 25 – 28, 110 (34.4%). There were more female (62.8%) than male (37.2%) respondents for the study. Moreover, the study ensured that all faculties were represented.

Figure 1 displays the spread of respondents for the study. Education had the highest response rate (73), followed by Science, (36); Social Science, (31); Arts, (27); Public Health, (26), etc. To obtain the difference in males and females concerning career readiness, the study estimated the independent T-Test.

Figure 1

Respondents Based on Faculties



In Table 2, male students (M =30.19, SD =5.39) showed stronger readiness to attain career goals in university education than female students (M =28.37, SD =5.69). Although the mean difference of 1.823 can be considered a small difference. The null hypothesis was still rejected. Again, the researcher estimated Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to obtain the students' career readiness in relation to the age of the respondents.

Table 2

Independent Samples t-test for Student's Career Readiness by Gender

Career Readiness	N	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*
Male	119	30.19	5.39	2.857*	318
Female	201	28.37	5.69		

Note: *significant at the <.01 level.

Age of Respondents and Students' Career Readiness

The study examined career readiness competence based on the age of respondents. The ANOVA analysis and descriptive statistics are provided in Tables 3a and 3b.

In Table 3a, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics was performed on the effect of age and career readiness among respondents. We found no age (category) effect on career readiness on respondents, F (3,316) = 0.65, *p*= .583. This means that the null hypothesis was accepted. Table 3b further revealed the breakdown of students' career readiness by age group. Under 21 years (*M*=30.56); 21-24 years (*M*= 28.69); 25-28 years (*M*= 29.50); and Over 29 years (*M*= 29.37), which attest to insignificant career readiness differences among the age group.

Table 3a

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Career Readiness by Students' Age Group

Source	*df*	SS	MS	*F*	Sig
Between groups	3	61.99	20.66	.65	.583
Within groups	316	10041.93	31.78		
Total	319	10103.92			

Table 3b

Descriptive Statistics of Career Readiness by Students' Age-Group

Age of resp.	*N*	Mean	Std. Deviation
Under 21 years	6	30.56	7.49
21-24 years	179	28.69	5.49
25-28 years	110	29.50	5.64
Over 29 years	25	29.37	6.22
Total	320	29.06	5.63

In Table 4, we obtained the level of confidence to be successful among respondents' chosen careers, 27 respondents (8.4%) indicated that their academic field had not prepared them for success in their chosen career, 154 (48.1%) were somewhat confident/prepared, and 139 (43.4%) were strongly confident/ prepared for their chosen career. The second question sought to investigate how confident experiences outside the classroom had prepared the respondents for the world of work; 21 (6.6%) were unprepared, 131 (40.9%) were somewhat prepared, 162 (50.6%) were strongly prepared while 6 (1.9%) did not engage in any activity outside of the classroom to boost success in their chosen career field.

Table 4

Confidence Level of Emerging Adults Towards Career Readiness

Question	Confidence level	Number of respondents (%)
How confident do you feel that your academic field of study has prepared you to be succeessful in your chosen career?	I am unprepared	27 (8.4%)
	I am somewhat prepared	154 (48.1%)
	I am strongly prepared	139 (43.4%)
How confident do you feel that your activities outside of the classroom have prepared you for you to be successful in your chosen career or field?	I am unprepared	21 (6.6%)
	I am somewhat prepared	131 (40.9%)
	I am strongly prepared	162 (50.6%)
	Did not use	6 (1.9%)

Dimensions of Career Readiness Competencies

Table 5 depicts the skill set of students. These competencies (proficiency) are reflective of accumulated experiences and education training. Many respondents rated their proficiency high in teamwork collaboration (*M*=4.17; *SD* = .92), Professionalism (*M*=4.07; *SD* = .85), and critical thinking (*M*=3. 81; SD = .90). Skills such as digital technology (*M* = 3.65; *SD* = 1.01); Communication (*M* = 3.65; *SD* = .96) and leadership (M = 3.72; *SD*=1.12) were rated moderately However, some respondents rated themselves low in career management (*M*=2.62; *SD* = .73), Global and Cultural Fluency (*M* = 3.34; *SD* = .80). Figure 2 below displays trend analysis of skill set (proficiency) among respondents.

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Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Career Readiness Competency Sub-Scale Scores

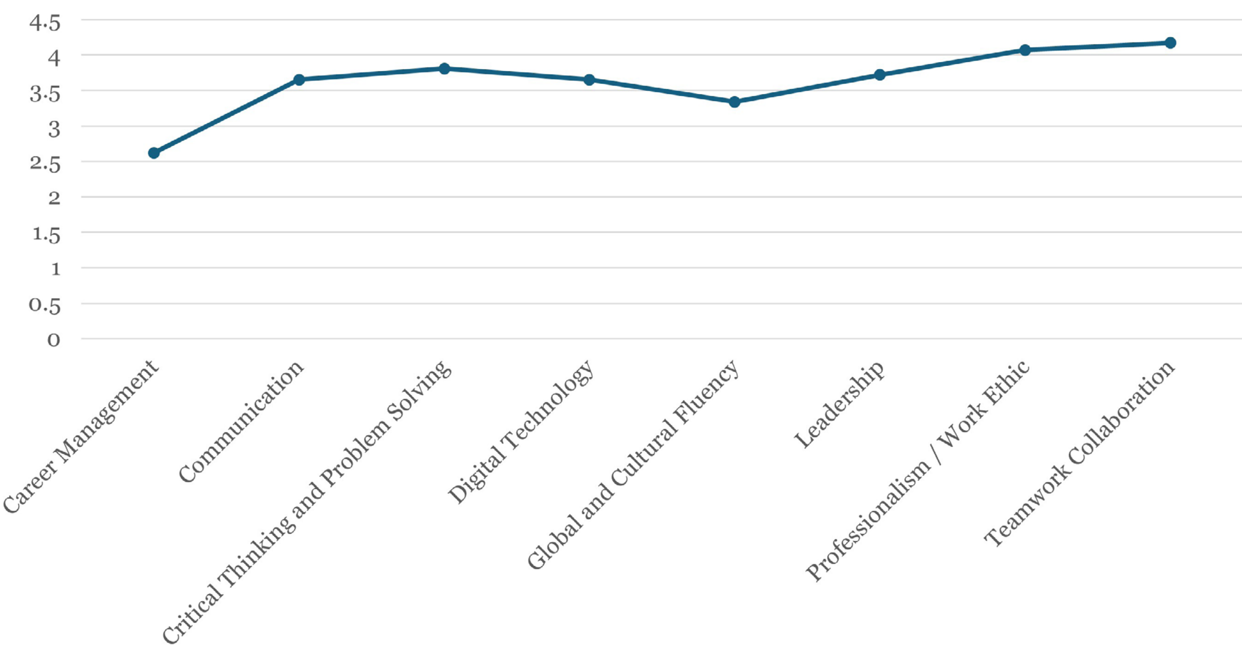
Subscale	Mean	*SD*
Career management	2.62	.73
Communication	3.65	.96
Critical thinking/problem solving	3.81	.90
Digital technology	3.65	1.01
Global and cultural fluency	3.34	.80
Leadership	3.72	1.12
Professionalism/ work ethic	4.07	.85
Teamwork collaboration	4.17	.92

Discussion

The research explored final-year undergraduates' confidence in their readiness for their chosen career path and whether their educational experiences sufficiently primed them for the workforce. According to the results, merely 43% of the final-year undergraduates expressed strong confidence in their academic training adequately preparing them for professional life, indicating a prevailing lack of assurance among the majority. This finding echoes previous studies such as McGraw-Hill (2018), which similarly revealed that less than half of students felt adequately prepared for their future careers. Furthermore, Casner-Lotto et al. (2009) noted that numerous employers had to provide additional training to recent graduates to assist them in adapting to workplace demands, emphasizing the disparity between academic readiness and real-world requirements.

Figure 2

Career Readiness Competency



Likewise, the study investigated whether involvement in activities outside of the classroom enhanced final-year students' readiness for their careers, with 50.6% indicating that such engagements did contribute to their career readiness. Interestingly, contrary to prior research, Andrew et al. (2015) discovered that work experience before and during studies (excluding internships) did not significantly influence students' perception of their readiness for employment. This variance might be attributed to the fact that most students acquired work experience through non-academic endeavours rather than study-related opportunities (Werquin, 2012). Overall, the findings suggest that a majority of students lack confidence in their readiness to enter the workforce, highlighting a potential disparity between academic training and the practical skills required in professional environments. The curriculum should address these gaps by offering experiential learning opportunities.

Moreover, employers have long emphasized the importance of specific skill sets required in the professional realm. As outlined by Ritter et al. (2018), soft skills like critical thinking, teamwork, communication, and leadership, among others, are indispensable in contemporary workplaces. Hence, it is vital to explore how respondents evaluated themselves across the eight dimensions of the career readiness scale and assess their perceived proficiency in these skills. From the study's findings, many respondents rated themselves highly in teamwork, professionalism, and critical thinking. They expressed possessing a significant level of teamwork skills vital for transitioning into the workforce, feeling confident in their ability to collaborate with others to achieve common objectives. This observation aligns with De Prada et al. (2022), which underscored the importance of teamwork skills in students' preparedness for employment. Abas and Imam (2016) also stressed that graduates with robust teamwork skills held a competitive edge.

Furthermore, respondents assessed themselves highly in professionalism and critical thinking skills. Professionalism is crucial as it enables recent graduates to adapt to their roles independently. This observation is consistent with previous research; for instance, Singh et al. (2013) reported that employers rated professionalism as one of the most critical skills required in the workplace. Black et al. (2021) developed a course focused on professionalism, including concepts, significance, relevant exercises, and end-of-semester evaluations. Results indicated that the professionalism course bolstered students' confidence in pursuing job opportunities successfully. Additionally, the participants rated themselves highly in critical thinking skills,feeling adept at problem-solving and offering solutions. This finding aligns with the findings of Yahya et al. (2011) on the critical thinking competence of final-year students.

Although students rated themselves highly in critical thinking skills, they still lagged in global and cultural fluency competence, indicating that the curriculum plays a pivotal role in equipping students with the requisite skills for the workforce. Rodzalan and Saat (2015) recommended that lecturers provide clear instructions, promote engaging activities, and offer training and camps to enhance learners' critical thinking skills. On the flip side, digital technology, communication, and leadership skills were perceived as moderate among the participants, indicating that final-year students believe they have acquired some proficiency in these areas but not enough to meet the demands of the workplace fully. This contrasts with the findings of Creo et al. (2020) and Ramisetty and Desai (2017), where students reported a high level of communication skills. To understand the skills sought by modern employers in graduate employees, Rahman et al. (2019) conducted a study revealing that employers prioritize communication skills above others. This underscores the importance of graduates possessing strong communication skills for employment and effective functioning in the workplace.

Similarly, leadership skills were identified as moderate among the participants. Final-year students did not perceive themselves as possessing or having acquired adequate leadership skills for the workplace. This suggests that participants did not believe they possessed sufficient leadership traits such as discipline, emotional intelligence, and resilience, among others. This contrasts with the results presented by Ramisetty and Desai (2017), where students demonstrated a high level of leadership skills, while Villarreal et al. (2018) emphasized leadership skills as a significant predictor of career readiness for fresh graduates to adapt to the workplace. Furthermore, concerning digital technology, students also rated themselves moderately. This aligns with Koyuncuoglu's (2022) findings, where students assessed their digital competence as moderate, suggesting a potential mismatch between the skills graduates possess and those required by various organizations. In the digital era of the 21st century, graduates must be well-versed in digital advancements to enhance workplace productivity. Strauss (2016) highlighted that 36% of employers reported a lack of digital competency among graduate employees. Regarding global and cultural fluency and career management, participants rated themselves low. The low rating on global and cultural fluency suggests that participants did not feel confident in their ability to interact and engage with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, genders, and religious beliefs, among others. In a country like Nigeria, with over 250 ethnic groups and diverse religions, this implies a lack of openness, inclusivity, and respectful interactions toward others from different backgrounds.

Career management, which encompasses awareness, exploration, and career preparation, was notably low among the final-year students. This indicates that students struggled to delineate their career goals, lacked awareness of available opportunities, and did not fully utilize opportunities such as internships to prepare for success. This contrasts with an intervention study conducted by Taylor and Hooley (2014), where those who participated in the training exhibited a higher level of career management competencies upon completing their studies compared to those who did not participate in the training. Jackson and Wilton (2016) assessed business undergraduate students' career management competencies. They rated themselves low on awareness compared to decision-making, expressing competency in decision-making in career paths, which is the ability to develop and adapt career plans.

Hypothesis one aimed to examine gender differences in career readiness among final-year students. The results indicated that male students exhibit higher levels of career readiness compared to female students. These findings challenge certain perspectives in the literature. For instance, the study by Marciniak et al. (2022) suggests that females tend to demonstrate greater levels of career readiness than males, while Dodd et al. (2022) found no significant difference in career readiness between male and female students. These disparities may arise from various factors such as differences in sample populations, cultural or environmental contexts, or methodological approaches. Notably, Marciniak et al. (2022) and Dodd et al. (2022) focused on career readiness among adolescents, whereas the current study examined career readiness among final-year undergraduates. Additionally, discrepancies in findings may also be attributed to variations in environmental and cultural factors across the study locations. Nevertheless, the findings of this study are consistent with those of Cone et al. (2021), Idiaka and Uzoechi (2016), Mansor and Tan (2009), and Parietti et al. (2016), which indicated higher levels of career readiness among males compared to females. Although this study reveals that the mean difference between male and female students' career readiness is not considerable, it is statistically significant.

Hypothesis two explored the impact of age on the career readiness of final-year students. The independent variable, age, was categorized into four main groups: under 21 years, 21-24, 25- 28, and 29 and above. The results indicated that there is no significant influence of students' age on their career readiness. This finding diverges from the perspectives of several researchers, including Adegbite and Govender (2021), Idiaka and Uzoechi (2016), and Marciniak et al. (2022), who argued that age is significantly associated with career readiness, suggesting that individuals become more prepared for their chosen careers as they grow older. However, the findings of this study differs from this perspective by suggesting that the age of final-year students does not significantly affect their career readiness. This deviation could be attributed to the possibility that individuals may acquire more exposure, information, and experience over time. These experiences may contribute to higher levels of career readiness rather than simply the change in chronological age. These findings align with that of Dodd et al. (2022) and Arnado and Posadas (2022), who argued that career guidance and experience gained from career programmes have a more substantial influence on career readiness compared to chronological age.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore career readiness among final-year undergraduates at a public University in Ibadan. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to direct the investigation. The findings revealed a noteworthy contrast in career readiness between male and female students, with males exhibiting a higher level of readiness compared to females, who displayed a lower level of preparedness. Additionally, the study uncovered that age does not exert a significant influence on career readiness among students. Moreover, the participants rated themselves highly in teamwork, professionalism, and critical thinking skills, moderately in leadership, digital technology, and communication skills, but lower in global and cultural fluency skills as well as career management.

Implications for Counselling

This study reveals a significant disparity in career readiness between male and female final- year students, with male students exhibiting higher levels of preparedness compared with their female counterparts. Given the increasing advocacy efforts by both local and international organizations for the empowerment of the girl child, these findings carry profound implications for all stakeholders. The study underscores the urgent need for enhanced career programmes and guidance at the level of tertiary education, with tailored interventions and strategies aimed at addressing the specific career needs of female students.

Furthermore, the findings emphasize the necessity of integrating career guidance and counselling programmes as a mandatory component of tertiary education. Encouraging exposure to diverse career competencies before graduation holds promise for boosting career readiness among graduates. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of addressing the identified areas of weakness among students and implementing relevant solutions, such as curriculum revisions, facilitating internship opportunities, and offering skill enhancement programmes.

Recommendations

There should be an improvement in career programmes to promote initiatives that empower female students to overcome career-related challenges and bridge the gender gap in career readiness. This could include mentorship programmes, networking opportunities, and leadership development initiatives tailored to suit the specific career needs of female students. The findings of this study further draw emphasis to the need for career guidance for students in tertiary institution as, career guidance initiatives would ensure that all students, regardless of gender, receive adequate support and preparation for their future careers. Institutions should encourage exposure of students, especially those in the final year, to a wide range of career competencies before graduation thus providing students with diverse experiences and opportunities geared towards increasing their overall career readiness.

The findings show that students' areas of career needs were majorly career management and global and cultural fluency. It is therefore recommended that students in tertiary institution should be exposed to longer periods of internships and industrial training within the academic session. Usually, industrial training and internships are carried out within a single semester or session, however, for undergraduate studies which usually span between 4-6 years, a single semester or session is barely sufficient to allow for students to develop career management competence. Industrial training and internships are opportunities that will expose students to certain realities of the job market, allowing them to learn on the job while applying the knowledge they have gained from the school in the industry. Additionally, student exchange programmes and other training opportunities which allow students to interact with professionals and colleagues from diverse backgrounds and cultures should be encouraged in tertiary education. There is a need to include such allowances in the curriculum to ensure that all students are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to improve their competence in global and cultural fluency.

The digital technology, communication, and leadership competencies of students can be further strengthened through career programmes, training, workshops, symposiums, and mentoring opportunities tailored to address these areas of need. The counselling unit at the tertiary education level should therefore design and organize programmes themed to meet these career needs.

There should be a collaborative effort between tertiary institutions and diverse stakeholders including, government agencies, and industry partners to create comprehensive and effective career development policies and initiatives tailored to meet the career needs of students at the tertiary education level.

Limitations of the Study

Some limitations of the study require attention. Firstly, the study adopted a survey approach, and the allocation of subjects was not randomized across groups. Consequently, the results lacked control for other variables between groups. Future research should consider employing longitudinal and experimental designs to facilitate group comparisons. Secondly, all constructs were measured solely through self-report methods. To enhance the reliability of the findings, it may be beneficial to replicate the questionnaire survey in different institutions. Additionally, the study did not account for other determinants such as duration of course, faculty, and socio-economic factors, which could influence the variables under examination. Finally, the study findings are confined to Ibadan, Nigeria, limiting generalizability. Exploring more diverse environments could provide valuable insights into the topic.

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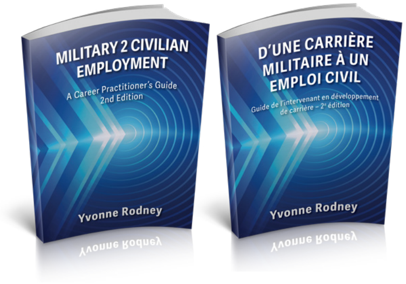

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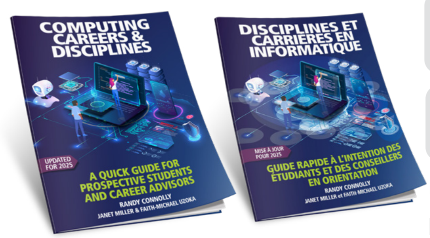

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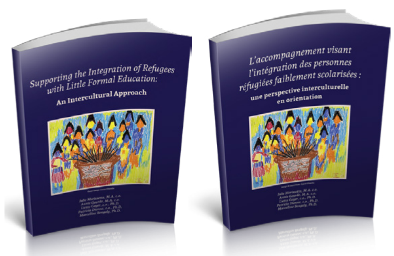

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Authors/Auteures : Marcelline Bengaly, Patricia Dionne, Liette Goyer, Julie Morissette & Annie Gourde

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L'accompagnement visant l'intégration des personnes réfugiées faiblement scolarisées : une perspective interculturelle en orientation

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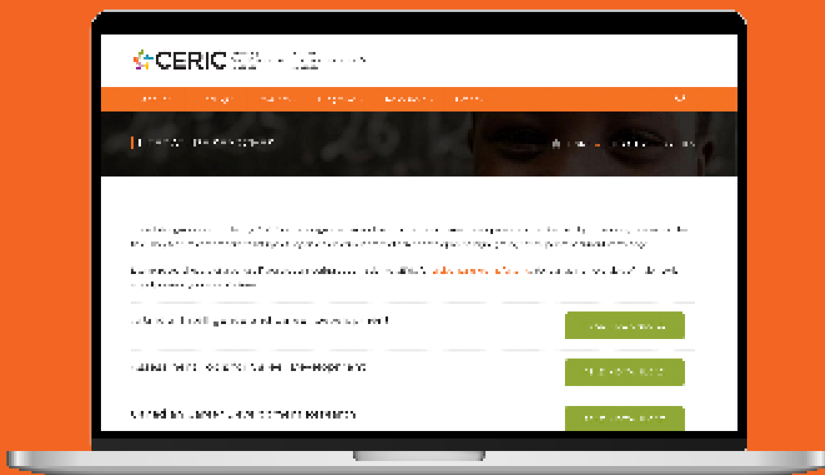

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Résumés de recherche d'étudiants aux cycles supérieurs

La transition école-études-travail chez les personnes ayant un trouble spécifique d'apprentissage : enjeux et réalités

Cynthia Roy. *Conseillère en orientation. Nouveau-Brunswick, Canada.*
Diane LeBreton. *Université de Moncton. Nouveau-Brunswick, Canada.*

Résumé

L'obtention du diplôme d'études secondaires constitue une balise importante qui conduit vers une première transition école-études-travail. Définies comme le passage entre deux périodes ou deux situations de vie et à leurs changements relatifs, les transitions soulèvent des enjeux (Lagabrielle et Croity-Belz, 2022; Masdonati et al., 2016). Chez les personnes ayant des besoins particuliers, dont les troubles spécifiques d'apprentissage, ces enjeux de transition peuvent être plus sérieux (Newman et al., 2019) en raison notamment des divers obstacles à surmonter au quotidien (Bizier et al., 2014; Statistique Canada, 2024a). Considérant la dimension subjective qu'impliquent les transitions, une période préparatoire et l'élaboration d'un plan de transition s'avèrent indispensables. Cet article s'inscrit dans le cadre d'une recherche de maitrise dont le but était de brosser un portrait de la situation des personnes ayant un trouble spécifique d'apprentissage sous l'angle de la transition école-études-travail. Quelques statistiques permettent d'abord de cerner des éléments descriptifs de cette population. Il est ensuite question de certains enjeux que comporte cette transition. Sont aussi formulées quelques pratiques gagnantes en matière d'accompagnement à cette transition, puis de certaines pistes de solution dans l'espoir de réduire les écarts entre enjeux et aspirations de carrière chez les personnes ayant un trouble spécifique d'apprentissage.

Mots clés : transition, trouble spécifique d'apprentissage, enjeux de carrière

À la fin de leur parcours d'études secondaires, les élèves sont incités à faire des choix qui les conduisent vers une transition pouvant mener à différentes voies possibles : la poursuite d'études postsecondaires[1], l'intégration au marché du travail ou encore la décision de prendre une année sabbatique. Cette transition réfère au passage entre le monde de l'école, qui inclut les diverses formes d'études (ex. : secondaires, postsecondaires, professionnelles), et celui du monde du travail, qui renvoie à l'insertion socioprofessionnelle (Hamilton et Hamilton, 2006; Masdonati et al., 2016). Chez la plupart des personnes, cette transition risque d'être jalonnée de défis (Bourdon et al., 2021; Cohen-Scali, 2021; Masdonati et al., 2016; van der Horst et al., 2021; Walsh et al., 2013). Cependant, lorsqu'il s'agit de personnes plus vulnérables, incluant celles ayant un trouble spécifique de l'apprentissage (TA[2]), les enjeux s'avèrent plus considérables (Gallagher-Mackay et de Britto, 2022; Janiga et Costenbader, 2002). La diplomation exige également des efforts et de la persévérance en raison des divers obstacles à surmonter au quotidien (Bizier et al., 2014; Statistique Canada, 2024a). Les groupes vulnérables sont aussi parmi ceux qui ont subi le plus de bouleversements dans le système d'éducation à la suite de la pandémie de Covid-19 et qui ont eu notamment à faire face à de plus grands défis alors qu'ils devaient accéder et participer à l'école à distance (Gallagher-Mackay et de Britto, 2022).

Par ailleurs, il existe un consensus affirmant que l'adolescence et la fin des études secondaires sont souvent synonymes de changements importants, de transitions et de découverte de soi (Cournoyer et Lachance, 2018; Faurie et Giacometti, 2017; Gati et Saka, 2001; Masdonati et al., 2016; Niles et Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017; Pouyaud et Vignoli, 2013; Savickas, 2002; van der Horst et al., 2021; Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2015). En effet, les jeunes âgés entre 16 et 25 ans se retrouvent entre deux grandes périodes de leur vie : celle de l'adolescence et celle de l'adulte (Masdonati et al., 2016). Au dire de plusieurs, l'intégration d'une image de soi conforme à

1 Les études postsecondaires se définissent par le plus haut niveau de scolarité atteint qui correspond à divers grades pouvant aller d'un certificat ou diplôme d'apprenti ou d'une école de métiers (incluant les centres de formation professionnelle) à un diplôme ou certificat d'études collégiales (incluant cégep et autres établissements non universitaires) à un grade universitaire (Statistique Canada, 2010).

2 De plus en plus, le terme « troubles spécifiques d'apprentissage » est retenu pour désigner les « troubles d'apprentissage ». Cependant, l'acronyme TA continue d'être utilisé pour référer aux troubles spécifiques d'apprentissage afin de ne pas confondre avec le TSA (trouble du spectre de l'autisme). Dans cette recherche, les TA renvoient à la définition proposée par le DSM-5 (manuel diagnostique utilisé en médecine) qui classifie ces troubles neurodéveloppementaux selon trois catégories : ceux portant atteinte à la lecture, à l'expression écrite et en mathématiques (APA, 2013).

ses caractéristiques personnelles (ex. : forces et défis, intérêts, habiletés, valeurs) s'avère fondamentale pour traverser les différentes périodes de transition (Cohen-Scali, 2021; Super, 1957, 1994; Savickas, 2002; Savickas et al., 2010; Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2015). D'autres écrits insistent pour rappeler que l'adolescence est aussi marquée par des périodes de questionnements identitaires et des moments d'indécision qui, bien souvent, peuvent engendrer à eux seuls un certain stress, voire de l'anxiété (Cournoyer et Lachance, 2018; Faurie et Giacometti, 2017). Sachant que les parcours atypiques caractérisent le monde du travail contemporain (Lagabrielle et Croity-Belz, 2022; Longo, 2021; Masdonati et al., 2016; Nota et Rossier, 2015), lequel est secoué par la mondialisation, les changements technologiques et la pénurie de main d'œuvre qualifiée, il semble crucial d'élargir cette problématique de transition aux groupes à besoins particuliers, dont les TA, afin de tirer parti d'interventions garantes de succès.

Cet article s'inscrit dans le cadre d'une recherche de maitrise qui avait pour but de brosser un portrait de la situation des personnes ayant un TA sous l'angle de leur spécificité en matière de transition école-études-travail. À cette fin, cet article présente quelques statistiques qui permettent de mieux décrire la population. Il traite ensuite de certains enjeux que comporte cette transition pour ces personnes, en plus d'identifier quelques pratiques gagnantes et pistes de solutions qui permettent de mieux les soutenir dans la poursuite de leur projet vie-carrière.

Portrait de la situation : quelques statistiques

D'après l'*Enquête canadienne sur l'incapacité*[3], 27 % de la population âgée de 15 ans et plus déclare avoir au moins une incapacité, ce qui représente 8 millions de personnes, soit une hausse de 4,7 % par rapport aux données de 2017 (Statistique Canada, 2023a). Cette enquête, qui brosse un portrait exhaustif de 10 différents types d'incapacité répertoriés selon le degré de sévérité[4], révèle que le taux d'incapacité liée plus spécifiquement à l'apprentissage représente 5,6 % de la population, soit une augmentation de 1,6 % depuis 2017 (Statistique Canada, 2023a). Chez les jeunes (15 à 24 ans), les incapacités liées à l'apprentissage constituent le deuxième type d'incapacité le plus élevé (avec un taux de 46 %), la santé mentale (68%) figurant au premier rang (Statistique Canada, 2023b). L'enquête soulève également que les femmes seraient plus susceptibles que les hommes d'avoir une incapacité plus sévère, et ce, tous groupes d'âges confondus. Enfin, parmi les jeunes qui déclarent avoir une incapacité, 43% sont susceptibles d'avoir deux ou trois types d'incapacité, ce qui risque d'entrainer des défis encore plus importants (Statistique Canada, 2024b). À titre d'exemple, des troubles de santé mentale, tels que des épisodes d'anxiété sévère, attaques de panique et autres, peuvent accompagner les TA (Klassen et al., 2013; Nag, 2014; Nelson et Harwood, 2011). Au vu de ces considérations, il y a lieu de s'interroger relativement à l'influence que pourrait exercer cette cooccurrence d'incapacités sur la transition école-études-travail de jeunes qui doivent composer au quotidien avec ces réalités.

Au Canada, l'article 15 de la *Charte canadienne des droits et libertés*[5] stipule que toutes les personnes citoyennes ont droit à l'égalité, ce qui inclut les personnes ayant une incapacité telle un TA. Pour sa part, le *Rapport mondial de suivi sur l'éducation 2020* (UNESCO, 2020) attribue au Gouvernement du Nouveau-Brunswick un rôle de pionnier, reconnaissant ainsi sa contribution à la promotion de l'éducation inclusive au cours des trois dernières décennies. Il souligne aussi l'importance de la politique adoptée par ce gouvernement qui interdit « l'établissement de classes et de programmes ségrégés » (traduction libre, p. 39). En effet, la

3 Cette enquête repose sur un modèle social de l'incapacité, qui se fonde « sur le principe selon lequel l'incapacité résulte de l'interaction entre les limitations fonctionnelles d'une personne et les obstacles auxquels elle fait face dans son environnement, y compris les obstacles sociaux et physiques qui compliquent la vie quotidienne » (Pianosi et al., 2023, p. 6). Seules les personnes qui déclarent avoir une limitation au niveau de leurs activités quotidiennes sont considérées comme ayant une incapacité.

4 Le questionnaire qui permet d'identifier les incapacités portent sur les dix types distincts suivants : la vision, l'ouïe, la mobilité, la flexibilité, la dextérité, la douleur, l'apprentissage, le développement, la santé mentale et la mémoire (Pianosi et al., 2023).

5 Charte canadienne des droits et libertés, de la Loi constitutionnelle de 1982. https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/pdf/charter-poster.pdf

Politique 322 Inclusion scolaire[6], adoptée par le ministère de l'Éducation et du Développement de la petite enfance (MEDPE) en vertu de la loi sur l'éducation, reconnait le principe selon lequel chaque élève peut apprendre. Par conséquent, les élèves ayant une incapacité ont droit à des actions pédagogiques essentielles, c'est-à-dire « une forme de soutien qui permet d'éliminer des obstacles à l'apprentissage et de faire en sorte que l'élève atteigne son niveau fonctionnel d'apprentissage » (MEDPE, 2015, p. 4). Autrement dit, cela signifie que ces élèves doivent avoir accès aux mêmes possibilités de réussite que les élèves n'ayant pas d'incapacité.

Cependant, il est possible que des élèves choisissent de ne pas divulguer leur diagnostic pour ne pas être étiquetés (Janiga et Costenbader, 2002; Shifrer, 2013). Dans ce cas, il devient plus difficile d'identifier et de comprendre leurs besoins puisque les TA ne sont pas visibles, à l'instar d'autres incapacités (Statistique Canada, 2024b). Par conséquent, prévenir les obstacles auxquels ces élèves pourraient se heurter devient un véritable enjeu à l'accompagnement offert lors de la transition école-études-travail (Janiga et Costenbader, 2002; Shaywitz et al., 2020; Statistique Canada, 2024b). Le *Consortium d'animation sur la persévérance et la réussite en enseignement supérieur* (CAPRES, 2021) fait d'ailleurs le constat que c'est la stigmatisation et non les accommodations qui représente l'obstacle premier à l'insertion professionnelle des personnes diplômées ayant une incapacité; d'où l'importance d'adopter une perspective inclusive en milieu de travail ainsi que dans les interventions en counseling de carrière (Ginevra et al., 2019).

Au-delà des chiffres, des enjeux de transition liés aux TA

Depuis les années 1990, les individus sont de plus en plus confrontés à un monde du travail complexe et les parcours professionnels sont sujets à des conditions plus précaires (Lagabrielle et Croity-Belz, 2022; Longo, 2021; Masdonati et al., 2016). Avec la mondialisation et les innovations technologiques, le monde du travail évolue très rapidement (Bowering et al., 2020) et il est aujourd'hui fortement empreint d'emplois atypiques en raison de nouvelles problématiques qui apparaissent, telles que l'instabilité, le faible salaire ou encore le déclassement (Longo, 2021). Cette réalité fait en sorte que les transitions sont plus nombreuses (ex. : école-travail, travail-école, emploi-chômage, mobilités verticales ascendantes ou descendantes) et qu'elles « [...] constituent rarement un simple et court passage d'une situation professionnelle à une autre » (Masdonati et al., 2016, p. 174). Dans un tel contexte, non seulement la personne doit faire face aux enjeux liés à la transition école-études-travail, mais encore faut-il qu'elle puisse faire preuve d'une compétence d'employabilité garante de son insertion socioprofessionnelle. Selon l'*Organisation internationale du Travail* (2000), le lien entre l'employabilité, les changements et les périodes de transition se décrit comme suit :

> Elle [l'employabilité] englobe les compétences, connaissances et qualifications qui renforcent l'aptitude des travailleurs à trouver et conserver un emploi, progresser au niveau professionnel et s'adapter au changement, trouver un autre emploi s'ils le souhaitent ou s'ils ont été licenciés et s'intégrer plus facilement au marché du travail à différentes périodes de leur vie. (p. 70)

Il importe donc de bien saisir les multiples facteurs déterminants de la transition école-études-travail et de l'employabilité chez les jeunes en général, et encore davantage chez ceux ayant certaines incapacités. Après tout, un emploi rémunéré, en plus d'être valorisant, ouvre la perspective d'une sécurité financière et est considéré comme un droit essentiel pour tous (Tompa et al., 2020).

De façon plus spécifique, les principaux enjeux de transition chez les personnes ayant un TA peuvent se résumer comme suit : a) la divulgation ou la déclaration volontaire, b) l'absence d'un réseau de soutien, c) l'écart entre le monde scolaire et postsecondaire et d) la perception des barrières. Le premier enjeu renvoie à la *divulgation ou à la déclaration volontaire* du TA. Il est tout à fait possible qu'une personne choisisse de ne pas divulguer son diagnostic pour éviter d'être étiquetée (Janiga et Costenbader, 2002; Shifrer, 2013), ou encore en raison d'une difficulté à s'affirmer et à faire valoir ses besoins (Nag, 2014). Sans accès à ses outils d'accommodation, la personne se voit cependant pénalisée. Cela peut s'avérer le cas, par exemple, lors d'une entrevue d'embauche ou d'admission à un programme postsecondaire (Goodfellow, 2014). Selon ce dernier,

6 Énoncé de la Politique 322 accessible au https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/policies-politiques/f/322F.pdf

elle est alors confrontée à deux choix : exiger les accommodations auxquelles elle a droit en risquant une stigmatisation ou être désavantagée en participant à l'entrevue sans les accommodations essentielles à sa réussite.

L'*absence d'un réseau de soutien* constitue un autre enjeu de transition chez les personnes ayant un TA (Janiga et Costenbader, 2002). De fait, plusieurs doivent quitter la maison familiale afin de poursuivre leurs études ou obtenir un emploi et cette distance peut entrainer des défis supplémentaires. Pour les personnes qui nécessitent un soutien, cette transition risque de soulever des enjeux plus sérieux. Par exemple, il est possible qu'elles aient à prendre la responsabilité de s'affirmer pour recevoir de l'aide additionnelle au travail ou une mise en place des actions pédagogiques essentielles, alors qu'elles auraient eu par le passé un soutien pour faire valoir cette aide. Pour sa part, *l'écart entre le monde scolaire et postsecondaire* représente aussi un enjeu auquel les personnes ayant un TA sont confrontés (Janiga et Costenbader, 2002). On peut penser, entre autres, à la taille des groupes qui sera forcément plus grande qu'à l'école ou aux tâches évaluatives qui risquent d'être plus exigeantes d'un point de vue académique. Ces facteurs peuvent influencer négativement le processus de transition si aucune forme de soutien n'est offert. Un dernier enjeu relève de la *perception des barrières* qui découlent de certaines croyances populaires ou encore de défis rencontrés qui peuvent se traduire par un certain manque de confiance ou par des attentes de performance moindres (Aravind et Arulmani, 2021; Dipeolu et al., 2019; Shifrer, 2013; Vuolo et al., 2013). Sachant qu'une personne ayant un TA risque d'être plus consciente des barrières qu'impliquent son TA selon ses aspirations professionnelles (Dipeolu et coll., 2019), elle pourrait croire qu'elle n'est pas en mesure de lire ou d'écrire des textes liés à son domaine d'études. Cette croyance pourrait entrainer des répercussions importantes sur son projet vie-carrière, au point de l'inciter à abandonner son projet d'études.

À ce propos, Shifrer (2013) met en garde les parents et le personnel enseignant contre les effets négatifs que peuvent avoir leur tendance à diminuer leurs attentes envers les élèves ayant un TA. D'autres écrits révèlent que les jeunes ayant un TA risquent d'être plus conscients des obstacles liés à leurs aspirations de carrière (Aravind et Arulmani, 2021; Dipeolu et al., 2019; Shaywitz et al., 2020; van der Horst et al., 2021). Par conséquent, ces jeunes peuvent croire qu'ils n'ont pas l'intelligence requise pour réussir des études postsecondaires (Aravind et Arulmani, 2021; Janiga et Costenbader, 2002; Shaywitz et al., 2020). Autrement dit, leur perception, qu'elle soit réelle ou non, de ne pas posséder les compétences en lecture, en écriture ou en mathématiques peut entrainer des répercussions importantes sur leur transition école-études-travail, voire sur la réalisation de leur projet vie-carrière.

Pour leur part, les parents s'inquiètent particulièrement de l'avenir de leur enfant et leurs inquiétudes sont souvent fondées sur des croyances populaires issues de certaines mentalités. Par exemple, il existe une croyance selon laquelle les enfants ayant une dyslexie seraient moins intelligents et auraient une pensée plus lente (« slow thinkers and not very bright »), selon Shaywitz et al. (2020, p. 189). Une autre croyance populaire soutient l'idée générale que les garçons seraient plus forts en mathématiques et en sciences que les filles (Aravind et Arulmani, 2021). En plus de parfois faire face au rejet de leurs pairs, ces personnes peuvent éprouver un sentiment d'infériorité, avoir une faible estime de soi et une image de soi négative (Zunker, 2016). Il s'agit là de défis importants si l'on considère que la perception d'un individu face à ses capacités de réussir une tâche influencera la façon dont il traversera ses périodes de transition (Bandura, 2009; Sovet et al., 2021). Au regard de ces considérations, les spécialistes en orientation se doivent de bien préparer et outiller les personnes ayant un TA en matière de transition école-études-travail afin que ces dernières soient en mesure d'explorer pleinement toutes les possibilités de carrière, en considérant une multitude de facteurs, et de s'affirmer au moment d'accéder aux services nécessaires à la réussite de leurs études postsecondaires ou de leur carrière (Aravind et Arulmani, 2021; Dipeolu et al., 2019; Janiga et Costenbader, 2002; Shaywitz et al., 2020). À ce propos, Masdonati et al. (2016) avancent que les interventions en orientation sont une occasion de travailler sur les représentations de la personne en ce qui a trait au métier ou à la profession qu'elle s'apprête à exercer tout en la préparant au passage entre le monde de l'école (statut d'élève) à celui du monde du travail (statut de travailleuse ou de travailleur).

En somme, les enjeux auxquels les personnes ayant un TA risquent d'être confrontées lors de leur transition école-études-travail sont sérieux et méritent qu'on s'y attarde car cette transition peut s'avérer difficile et stressante (Davis et Garfield, 2021). Selon ces derniers, bien que les personnes ayant un TA accèdent aux études postsecondaires, leurs résultats académiques sont généralement inférieurs aux personnes n'ayant pas de TA. Le choix d'un établissement postsecondaire, la recherche d'un emploi et la préparation à la vie indépendante font aussi partie des enjeux auxquels elles font face lors de leur transition école-études-travail. Il importe donc de cibler des pratiques gagnantes qui visent à restreindre, voire à éliminer, les obstacles chez cette population en matière de transition école-études-travail.

Prévenir les enjeux grâce aux pratiques gagnantes

Au fil des années, les recherches en orientation professionnelle ont commencé à s'attarder aux populations ayant des besoins particuliers tels les TA, car la plupart des théories existantes en développement de carrière n'avaient pas tenu compte de cette spécificité au moment où elles ont été formulées (Aravind et Arulmani, 2021; Dipeolu et al., 2019). Par conséquent, les écrits scientifiques récents portant plus particulièrement sur la transition école-études-travail auprès de personnes ayant un TA sont moins nombreux. La poursuite des travaux théoriques en ce sens permettra donc aux divers milieux de s'aligner sur des pratiques prometteuses pour prévenir les enjeux de transition auprès de cette population. Rappelons ici le fait, notamment, que les personnes étudiantes ayant un TA qui fréquentent des établissements postsecondaires font face à des défis additionnels en ce qui concerne leur transition école-études-travail (Janiga et Costenbader, 2002; Shaywitz et al., 2020). Par exemple, plusieurs personnes étudiantes transitionnent vers la formation postsecondaire alors qu'elles ont reçu peu d'accompagnement, ce qui fait en sorte que plusieurs d'entre elles ne sont pas prêtes pour ce passage vers le postsecondaire ou le marché du travail (Niles et Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017). Au vu de ces considérations, l'élaboration de pratiques gagnantes revêt une importance capitale pour bien les soutenir dans la réussite de leur projet d'avenir.

Par ailleurs, on ne peut plus nier que le développement de carrière commence dès l'enfance et qu'il doit être abordé en bas âge (Savickas et al., 2010; Trice et Greer, 2017; Watson et McMahon, 2017). Sous cet angle, l'école s'avère un lieu par excellence pour offrir des programmes d'activités qui mettent l'accent sur le développement vie-carrière des élèves, les incitant par la même occasion à définir leur projet d'avenir. De fait, certains programmes d'éducation à la carrière se fondent sur des principes pédagogiques d'apprentissage expérientiel qui préconisent de faire vivre des concepts plutôt que de les enseigner. C'est le cas notamment de l'activation du développement vocationnel et personnel - ADVP (Pelletier et al., 1974), modèle québécois ayant servi de fondements premiers à l'élaboration de l'approche orientante (Pelletier, 2004). Cette approche, qui permet de faire le pont entre l'orientation et la pédagogie au moyen d'activités expérientielles, est de bon augure pour préparer tous les jeunes, incluant ceux ayant un TA, à prendre des décisions éclairées en prévision de leur première transition école-études-travail. En plus de découvrir leurs intérêts, leurs habiletés et leurs aspirations, ce type d'activités favorise également le développement de la compétence d'adaptabilité (Savickas et al., 2010). Au primaire et à l'intermédiaire, on s'attarde surtout à l'exploration et aux stéréotypes professionnels alors qu'au secondaire, les thématiques peuvent davantage porter sur l'employabilité, les compétences d'adaptabilité ou encore sur des simulations d'entrevue d'embauche (Zunker, 2016). Pour les élèves du secondaire ayant un TA, il serait important d'entamer une discussion sur la déclaration volontaire, les bienfaits d'un plan de transition et l'affirmation de soi. Ce ne sont là que quelques exemples de thématiques qui peuvent être infusées dans les matières scolaires au moyen d'une approche orientante. Cependant, pour être en mesure de bénéficier pleinement de ses effets, les activités doivent être planifiées, appuyées sur des fondements théoriques, en plus d'être offertes de façon systématique et adaptée selon la population ciblée (Shepard et Mani, 2014; Savickas et Pouyaud, 2016). Bref, en utilisant de manière efficace des interventions groupales et préventives, on peut aider la personne ayant un TA à construire son identité professionnelle, ce qui pourrait se traduire par une résilience fort utile dans le contexte de son cheminement vie-carrière (Walsh et Galassi, 2002).

Dans son rapport final, la *Fondation canadienne pour le développement de carrière* (FCDC) recommande d'ailleurs l'intégration précoce de programmes d'éducation à la carrière et l'engagement de toutes les personnes intervenantes clés au sein des écoles (FCDC, 2015). D'autres corroborent ce propos en soulignant que de tels programmes favorisent le développement vie-carrière des élèves par le biais d'apprentissages signifiants et authentiques (Davis et al., 2021; Nag, 2014; Pelletier, 2004; Shepard et Mani, 2014). Pour leur part, les élèves interrogés dans le cadre de la recherche menée par la FCDC (2015) ont dit souhaiter que le personnel enseignant prenne davantage le temps d'établir les liens entre les programmes d'études et les compétences nécessaires pour s'intégrer au marché du travail. Leur désir de rencontrer de « vraies » personnes qui peuvent partager leur expérience relativement aux études postsecondaires ou au marché du travail est palpable. Dans cette même veine, l'apprentissage expérientiel en milieu de travail (ex. : stages d'observation, programmes d'éducation coopérative), lorsqu'il est accompagné d'un soutien approprié et des accommodations requises, permet également aux personnes ayant une incapacité d'améliorer leurs compétences et de gagner en confiance par rapport à des tâches données (Tompa et al., 2020).

Le counseling vie-carrière constitue une autre pratique gagnante pour prévenir certains enjeux liés à la transition école-études-travail chez les personnes ayant un TA. En effet, le paradigme « construire sa vie » ou « design de vie » (*life designing*) qui s'inscrit dans une perspective holistique, contextuelle et tout au long de la vie (Savickas et al., 2010) exige, à la base, des interventions dynamiques, interactives et à caractère préventif (Maree, 2021; Hirshi et Dauwalder, 2015). Pour ce faire, la narrativité ainsi que l'intentionnalité des expériences (Brott, 2021; Maree, 2021; Savickas et al., 2010) s'avèrent des stratégies importantes à intégrer au processus de counseling. La théorie de la construction de la carrière (Savickas, 2002, 2011), qui s'inscrit dans ce paradigme, s'inspire grandement de la théorie développementale espace-temps (*life-span, life-space*) de Super (1980, 1994) et des approches différentielles et psychodynamiques du counseling de carrière (Maree, 2021; Savickas, 2011). Cette théorie sous-tend l'idée qu'une carrière se construit et que chaque personne, à travers le travail, construit le sens qu'elle souhaite donner à sa vie. La subjectivité de la personne cliente joue donc un rôle central dans le processus de counseling. La personne conseillère en orientation intervient ainsi pour inciter la personne cliente à explorer plus en profondeur ses préoccupations et ses incertitudes afin de (co)construire un projet vie-carrière porteur de sens à la lumière de son histoire narrative (ou récits de vie) de laquelle émerge ses forces, ses défis, sa résilience ou encore ses ressources (Maree, 2021). Bref, une telle approche permet à chaque personne de construire son projet de vie, à sa manière, afin d'accéder à une vie harmonieuse et de maintenir son bien-être au moyen de stratégies de régulation et d'autorégulation. Cette approche s'avère particulièrement pertinente pour prévenir les enjeux de transition chez la population ciblée puisqu'elle amène la personne à évaluer l'écart entre ses aspirations professionnelles, ses forces et ses défis au regard de son TA, sans toutefois briser le lien de confiance et l'alliance de travail.

Les approches socioculturelles et contextuelles proposent aussi des modèles d'intervention porteurs de sens chez les populations plus vulnérables (Aravind et Arulmani, 2021; Arthur, 2021). Par exemple, le modèle de préparation culturelle élaboré par Aravind et Arulmani (2021) permet de s'intégrer facilement aux interventions en counseling vie-carrière menées auprès d'élèves ayant un TA. Ce modèle part du principe selon lequel la carrière ne relève pas uniquement de la détermination et de la volonté de la personne, mais elle peut aussi être influencée par son environnement, dont les constructions sociales et autres variables telles la discrimination et les inégalités sociales. Le travail de la personne conseillère en orientation s'avère ici crucial à deux niveaux : a) sensibiliser les personnes ayant un TA aux préjugés potentiels en milieu de travail, et b) intervenir auprès de l'employeur pour le prévenir des accommodations requises ou du soutien nécessaire pour assurer une transition réussie. Sachant que deux personnes ayant le même TA peuvent vivre différentes limitations, selon le contexte culturel et contextuel, ce modèle semble approprié puisqu'il traite des variables culturelles qui agissent sur le développement vie-carrière des individus. Les interventions servent donc à refléter l'unicité de la personne dans son contexte, c'est-à-dire avec sa réalité culturelle et sa vie au regard de son TA (Aravind et Arulmani, 2021). Cette approche s'avère prometteuse dans un contexte où de plus en plus de personnes issues de l'immigration intègrent le marché du travail pour, entre autres, contrer la pénurie de main d'œuvre. Cette approche s'avère encore plus pertinente dans l'accompagnement à la transition école-études-travail pour les élèves nouveaux arrivants ayant un TA. Pour ces derniers, on peut supposer que les enjeux en matière de transition seront plus prononcés et qu'ils pourraient, en plus, subir les effets d'une double stigmatisation.

L'élaboration d'un plan de transition s'avère une autre pratique garante de succès au regard de la transition école-études-travail auprès de personnes ayant des besoins spécifiques (Koivisto et al., 2010; Newman et al., 2019). De fait, les personnes ayant un TA qui font appel à des services de planification et de transition de carrière se trouvent plus souvent un emploi que celles n'ayant pas reçu d'appui (Koivisto et al., 2010). Pour ce faire, il est important que les personnes conseillères en orientation tiennent compte d'un large éventail de facteurs déterminants allant au-delà des résultats scolaires dans l'évaluation du potentiel de ces personnes afin de déterminer un plan de transition approprié (Shaywitz et al., 2020; Yeager et Deardorff, 2021). Dans le cas d'une transition école-études, les actions pédagogiques essentielles doivent être évaluées de près (Newman et al., 2019; Shaywitz et al., 2020). À ce propos, une étude menée auprès de personnes ayant une dyslexie, révèle que ces personnes peuvent connaitre du succès aux études postsecondaires et dans leur carrière lorsque des mesures compensatoires leur sont offertes (Shaywitz et al., 2020). C'est pourquoi il est important d'élaborer ce plan suffisamment tôt dans le cheminement scolaire des jeunes afin de favoriser le développement de compétences garantes de succès et une transition au postsecondaire réussie.

Enfin, la mise sur pied d'une équipe de transition ou d'une équipe stratégique au sein d'un établissement éducatif, comme une école secondaire, est souvent formulée à titre d'exemple de pratique gagnante permettant d'amener l'élève à reconnaitre ses forces, ses défis et ses besoins particuliers en matière d'accommodations (Janiga et Costenbader, 2002). En effet, en plus d'être conscients de leurs défis (Dipeolu et al., 2019), les élèves ont aussi besoin de connaitre les services et les programmes d'appui en matière d'apprentissage afin d'être prêts à y accéder (Newman et al., 2019). Face à cette réalité, la divulgation semble de mise si la personne souhaite se prévaloir des services et programmes donnant accès aux accommodations nécessaires (Roberts et al., 2016). Certains préconisent aussi une collaboration soutenue et constante entre les différentes personnes-ressources et la communauté (Davis et Garfield, 2021). Bref, les élèves doivent constituer la pierre angulaire de toutes formes d'intervention si on souhaite optimiser l'offre des accommodations requises pour améliorer leur employabilité et réaliser leur projet vie-carrière (Mazeau, 2020).

Lors de l'élaboration d'un plan de transition, il faut également se rappeler qu'une personne ayant un TA, à sévérité légère par exemple, pourrait possiblement ne pas avoir besoin d'appui supplémentaire au moment de sa transition, mais que certains enjeux ou difficultés pourraient se révéler plus tardivement et entrainer une modification au plan de transition (Davis et Garfield, 2021). Il est donc important pour les personnes conseillères en orientation de connaitre les différents services d'appui auxquels la personne ayant un TA a droit pour mieux l'informer et l'outiller dans sa transition école-études-travail.

À la lumière des écrits recensés, il est possible d'opter pour des pratiques bien adaptées à la réalité des personnes ayant un TA. Cependant, bien qu'il existe des interventions prometteuses, encore faut-il fournir des ressources financières et humaines suffisantes pour être en mesure d'offrir des services adéquats en matière de transition école-études-travail.

Quelques pistes de solutions

D'abord, l'idée d'inclure une personne conseillère en orientation au sein d'une équipe de transition ou d'une équipe stratégique dans divers milieux éducatifs mérite d'être sérieusement considérée en raison de ses compétences en counseling vie-carrière et de son expertise dans l'accompagnement à la transition école-études-travail. De fait, les spécialistes en orientation peuvent intervenir au moyen d'outils appropriés axés sur les forces des personnes ayant un TA pour les préparer aux enjeux spécifiques à leur réalité en matière d'employabilité et d'adaptabilité relative à la carrière. Il ne faut pas oublier que les personnes ayant un TA ont eu à surmonter des obstacles depuis leur tout jeune âge (Dipeolu et al., 2019) et que leur sentiment d'efficacité personnelle a pu en être affecté. D'où l'importance de les accompagner adéquatement pour améliorer l'ensemble de leurs compétences d'employabilité.

De plus, il a été souligné que les TA peuvent coexister avec d'autres troubles ou défis liés à la santé mentale (Klassen et al., 2013; Nag, 2014; Nelson et Harwood, 2011) et que ceux-ci ont connu la plus forte augmentation chez les jeunes ayant une incapacité (Statistique Canada, 2023b). Dans un tel contexte, les ressources affectées aux services d'orientation professionnelle dans les établissements éducatifs gagneraient à être revues à la hausse, considérant leur expertise en counseling vie-carrière. Souvent, ces ressources se voient assigner d'autres tâches, notamment en milieu scolaire, ce qui limite leur capacité à accompagner un plus grand nombre de jeunes aux prises avec des tensions identitaires, une faible estime de soi ou encore un faible sentiment d'efficacité personnelle. Le ratio d'élèves par personne conseillère en orientation gagnerait donc à être révisé à la baisse afin que chaque jeune qui nécessite un soutien puisse bénéficier d'une préparation adaptée pour réussir sa transition école-études-travail. Par ailleurs, certains avancent qu’il pourrait s’avérer avantageux que des services d’orientation indépendants du système scolaire soient offerts gratuitement aux élèves dans le souci de leur fournir de l’accompagnement continu tout au long de l’année (Masdonati et al., 2016).

L’apprentissage expérientiel en milieux éducatifs, suivi de périodes de réflexion, offre aussi des pistes de solutions en guise d’une bonne préparation à la transition école-études-travail. En effet, grâce à des occasions d’apprentissage expérientiel, la personne est susceptible de vivre des réussites au regard de ses compétences et, du coup, d’augmenter son sentiment d’efficacité personnelle. Puisque les personnes ayant un TA sont plus à risque d’échecs et d’abandon scolaire (Bizier et al., 2014; ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur, 2020), il y a lieu de privilégier des occasions d’apprentissage garantes de succès et susceptibles d’influencer positivement leur perception à l’égard des études et du monde du travail. Le counseling vie-carrière, en groupe et à l’individuel, s’avère ici une pratique gagnante.

En terminant, sachant que le soutien social joue un rôle important dans la transition école-études-travail, il va de soi que les personnes clés, telles que la famille ou des personnes intervenantes de divers secteurs professionnels, doivent être impliquées dans le plan de transition. La collaboration entre toutes les personnes intervenantes qui agissent comme soutien social s’avère indispensable à l’accompagnement des jeunes dans leur transition école-études-travail.

Conclusion

Cet article s’inscrivait dans une recherche de maitrise qui avait pour but de brosser un portrait de la situation des personnes ayant un trouble spécifique d’apprentissage en matière de transition école-études-travail. Qu’il s’agisse de développer des compétences liées à leur employabilité, de construire leur identité, de les aider à cibler leurs forces ou d’accroitre leur adaptabilité à la carrière, l’élaboration d’un plan de transition dans le cadre d’un processus de counseling vie-carrière se révèle d’une importance capitale. Les écrits recensés montrent aussi dans quelle mesure ces personnes se trouvent désavantagées, comparativement à leurs pairs sans incapacité, et ce, malgré les politiques ayant comme objectif de protéger leurs droits. Bref, les enjeux qui sous-tendent leur transition peuvent entraîner des conséquences sur plusieurs sphères de leur vie, incluant celle de la carrière. La poursuite des des travaux de recherche qui tiennent compte de cette réalité s’avère essentielle (Lagabrielle et Croity-Belz, 2022; McDiarmid, 2023; Shaywitz et al., 2020; van der Horst et al., 2021).

Tout compte fait, pour être garant de succès, l’accompagnement à la transition école-études-travail des personnes ayant un TA devrait inclure l’appui de spécialistes de l’orientation qui, à leur tour, peuvent devenir des agents de changement contribuant à réduire, voire à éliminer, certains obstacles. Considérant que plusieurs secteurs d’emploi sont confrontés à une pénurie de main d’œuvre dans un monde du travail diversifié et en profonde mutation, il semble avisé, comme point de départ, que l’ensemble des personnes intervenantes (ex. : orthophonistes, travailleurs sociaux, psychologues, personnel enseignant et de soutien à l’apprentissage, spécialistes de l’orientation) travaillent en étroite collaboration et en interdisciplinarité, selon leurs champs de compétences respectifs, de sorte à assurer une transition réussie à l’âge adulte chez cette population. Un fait demeure : les personnes ayant un TA ont véritablement besoin d’appui pour trouver leur juste place dans un monde du travail en perpétuel changement et, ainsi, construire et donner un sens à leur vie. La société de demain en dépend et il s’agit là d’une responsabilité partagée.

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25

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Dr. Robert Shea
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