CANADIAN JOURNAL OF **CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

REVUE CANADIENNE DE **DÉVELOPPEMENT DE CARRIÈRE**

24

VOL 23/ NO 1

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Canadian Journal of Career Development/Revue canadienne de développement de carrière
Robert Shea, Founding Editor/fondateur et rédacteur en chef
Diana Boyd, Associate Editor/rédactrice en chef adjointe

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

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Robert Shea, Founding Editor/fondateur et rédacteur en chef
Faculty of Education/ Faculté d'éducation
Memorial University of Newfoundland/ Université Memorial de Terre-Neuve
St. John's, NL
Email/courriel: rshea@mun.ca

Diana Boyd, Associate Editor/rédactrice en chef adjointe
Faculty of Education/ Faculté d'éducation
Memorial University of Newfoundland/ Université Memorial de Terre-Neuve
St. John's, NL
Email/courriel: diana.boyd@mun.ca

ISSN 1499-1845 (Print)/ISSN 1499-1853 (Online) Printed in Canada/Imprimé au Canada

CANADIAN JOURNAL OF **CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

REVUE CANADIENNE DE **DÉVELOPPEMENT DE CARRIÈRE**

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK / DU BUREAU DE RÉDACTEUR

Editor/ Rédacteur Dr. Robert Shea

ARTICLES

Practitioner and Community Best Practices/ Pratiques exemplaires pour les intervenants et la communauté

Volume 23, Issue 1 2024

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK | DU BUREAU DU RÉDACTEUR EN CHEF

Dr. Robert Shea, Founding Editor

Welcome to the first issue of 2024 of the Canadian Journal of Career Development. This year marks the 22nd anniversary of our Journal, and we are thrilled to announce that we have reached a milestone with our largest issue to date. Contained within these 140+ pages are eight articles that focus on a different aspect of career development. The articles in this compilation explore various areas of expertise, offering valuable insights and effective strategies for professionals at any point in their careers. Whether you are aiming to progress in your job, dealing with specific workplace obstacles, or looking to expand your understanding of career development, this diverse collection provides a wealth of knowledge and practical guidance.

2024 will see the continuation of upgrades to our website. This includes updating every issue and article to current PDF standards, remaking blurry images and tables, and working to make each issue and article accessible for disability software. Associate Editor Diana Boyd has taken on this significantly large task of over 260 articles and issues, demonstrating her dedication and remarkable ability to multitask and learn new skills.

With the website upgrade and changes in SSHRC funding requirements for publishing requirements in Open Access Journals, we have seen a large increase in article submissions. Due to this, we are looking out for new reviewers, in both English and French submissions, for our Journal. If you are interested in acting as a reviewer, please reach out to AE Diana Boyd at diana.boyd@mun.ca for further details. Without the critical aid and dedication of our reviewers, our Journal would not be able to operate or provide quality articles.

In closing, we hope you enjoy this issue and discover some new things for thought. Our next issue will be published in September of this year and will contain even more tantalizing articles.

Rob Shea

Editor-in-Chief

Diana Boyd

Associate Editor

Bienvenue au premier numéro de 2024 de la Revue canadienne de développement de carrière. Cette année marque le 22e anniversaire de notre revue et nous sommes ravis d'annoncer que nous avons franchi une étape importante en publiant notre plus gros numéro à ce jour. Ces 140+ pages contiennent huit articles qui se concentrent sur un aspect différent du développement de carrière. Les articles de cette compilation explorent divers domaines d'expertise, offrant des idées précieuses et des stratégies efficaces pour les professionnels à tous les stades de leur carrière. Que vous souhaitiez progresser dans votre travail, faire face à des obstacles spécifiques sur le lieu de travail ou que vous cherchiez à approfondir votre compréhension de l'évolution de carrière, cette collection variée fournit une mine de connaissances et de conseils pratiques.

2024 verra la poursuite des mises à jour de notre site web. Il s'agit notamment de mettre à jour chaque numéro et chaque article en fonction des normes PDF actuelles, de corriger les images et les tableaux flous et de rendre chaque numéro et chaque article accessible pour les logiciels d'aide aux personnes handicapées. La rédactrice en chef adjointe, Diana Boyd, s'est attelée à cette tâche considérable de plus de 260 articles et numéros, démontrant ainsi son dévouement et sa remarquable capacité à mener plusieurs tâches de front et à acquérir de nouvelles compétences.

Avec la mise à jour du site web et les changements dans les exigences de financement du CRSH pour la publication dans des revues en libre accès, nous avons constaté une forte augmentation des soumissions d'articles. C'est pourquoi nous recherchons de nouveaux évaluateurs pour notre revue, tant pour les soumissions en anglais qu'en français. Si vous souhaitez devenir réviseur, veuillez contacter AE Diana Boyd à l'adresse diana.boyd@mun.ca pour plus d'informations. Sans l'aide critique et le dévouement de nos réviseurs, notre journal ne pourrait pas fonctionner ni fournir des articles de qualité.

Pour conclure, nous espérons que vous apprécierez ce numéro et que vous y découvrirez de nouvelles pistes de réflexion. Notre prochain numéro sera publié en septembre de cette année et contiendra des articles encore plus alléchants.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

Submissions are open to articles that are Canadian and international in scope. The Journal is multi-sectoral and welcomes articles that deal with career development in its broadest sense.

Authors are encouraged to submit articles dealing with career development in the corporate, non-profit, secondary education, post-secondary education and government sectors.

Journal Topic Areas:

- Application of career theories
- New approaches, techniques and theories
- Career development in various populations
- Career and family interactions
- Workplace and workforce issues
- Career issues in K-12 and post-secondary
- Career counselling techniques, interventions and approaches
- Career transitions (school/work, school/university, career change, career/retirement, etc)
- Career education
- Qualitative and quantitative methodologies
- Cross-cultural research
- Intervention and counselling evaluations
- Career development policy development

Instructions to Contributors for Submission & Publication Categories

Submissions are done online. For submission instructions and the online submission go to 'About' and then select 'Submissions' from our website.

CONSIGNES AUX AUTEUR(E)S

Un(e) auteur(e) peut soumettre un article qui a une portée canadienne ou mondiale. La Revue a une dimension multisectorielle et accepte les articles sur le développement de carrière au sens large.

Les auteur(e)s sont invités à soumettre des articles portant sur le développement de carrière dans les secteurs des entreprises, des organismes sans but lucratif, de l'enseignement secondaire, de l'enseignement postsecondaire et de l'administration publique.

Thèmes de la revue :

- Application des théories sur les carrières
- Nouveautés en matière d'approches, de techniques et de théories
- Développement de carrière dans diverses populations
- Carrière et famille
- Enjeux liés au lieu de travail et à l'effectif
- Enjeux de carrière aux niveaux primaire, secondaire et postsecondaire
- Approches, interventions et techniques d'orientation de carrière
- Transitions de carrière (école/travail, école/université, changement de carrière, carrière/retraite, etc.)
- Éducation au choix de carrière
- Méthodes qualitatives et quantitatives
- Recherche interculturelle
- Évaluations d'intervention et d'orientation
- Élaboration de stratégies de développement de carrière

Instructions à l'intention des collaborateurs concernant une soumission et Catégories de publication

Les soumissions se font en ligne. Pour les instructions de soumission et la soumission en ligne, allez à "À propos" et sélectionnez "Soumissions" sur notre site Web.

The Relationship Between Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence, Career Optimism, Locus of Control and Proactive Personality: A Meta-Analysis Study

Hazel Duru
Bursa Uludag University,Turkey
Osman Söner
Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Turkey

Abstract

Although there are studies on career decision-making self-efficacy and emotional intelligence, career optimism, locus of control, and proactive personality, no study addresses these four variables together. Therefore, this meta-analysis study examined the correlational findings between career decision-making self-efficacy and four different variables (emotional intelligence, career optimism, locus of control, and proactive personality). In this study, studies published between 1993-2022 examining the relationship between the variables determined from 10 scientific databases (Eric, JSTOR, Sage Journal, Google Academic, Scopus, Springer Ling, Taylor, and Francis ULAKBİM, Proquest, EBSCO) and career decision-making self-efficacy were used. As a result of the research, career decision-making self-efficacy and optimism (r = 0.46; 95% CI [0.33, 0.57]), locus of control (r = 0.36; 95% CI [0.02, 0.62]), proactive personality (r = 0.47; %) 95 CI [0.37, 0.57]) and emotional intelligence (r = 0.45; 95% CI [0.35, 0.54]) were found to be significantly correlated. These critical results point to promising aspects for researchers and practitioners working in career counseling.

Keywords: Career decision-making self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, optimism, proactive personality, locus of control, meta-analysis

Today, adapting to new technologies, information, competitors and business opportunities and keeping up with the new world order has gained importance for many people. While the career paths that have existed since the beginning of the 21st century have diversified, many alternative career paths have begun to emerge. Because of this diversity and rapid global changes, making career decisions for individuals becomes more problematic. It can be said that it is important to know the self-efficacy perceptions of individuals and the factors affecting these self-efficacy perceptions in making these career decisions. Emotions that can guide people's actions in career decisions; It can be said that proactive personality traits that can affect the people around them with the desire not to lose control while making decisions and the choices they will make can affect their self-efficacy perceptions. The fact that people's self-efficacy perceptions in career decision-making are affected by different characteristics and situations is important in terms of generalizing the studies conducted at this point. Individuals' economic and social situations, lifestyles and well-being, psychological and physical well-being, social acceptance and social adaptation are affected by career decisions and play an important role in making career decisions (Gati & Tal, 2008; Savickas, Briddick , & Watkins, 2002). It can be said that personal self-efficacy is effective in this process, as the individual evaluates many situations together in career choice. According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is the ability of individuals to organize and take action to achieve desired results. This concept, which has an important place in the career decision-making process (Taylor & Betz, 1983), expresses the confidence of the individual in the career tasks that he/she should perform (Özden, 2014). Career thoughts of people with low self-efficacy are an obstacle to their career development (Hackett & Betz, 1981). Low self-efficacy belief causes people to be limited in their job fields and offers them limited career options (Koyuncu, 2015).

Emotions influence career decision-making mainly

because they direct and regulate actions and affect the formation of emotions (Valach, Young, & Lynam, 1996). Emotions are, therefore, essential for the career decision-making process, and therefore the concept of emotional intelligence has emerged as an essential variable in the career decision-making literature (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2011; Di Fabio, 2012). Emotional intelligence is a sub-dimension of social intelligence, which includes the ability to monitor one's and others' emotions, distinguish between them, and use this information to direct the individual's thoughts and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Researchers' conceptualizations of emotional intelligence can be grouped under two basic models: ability and mixed models. The ability model refers to the cognitive-emotional ability, in which an individual's ability to process, recognize and use emotional information is emphasized (Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004). The mixed model includes empathy, impulsiveness, assertiveness, optimism, well-being, motivation, etc. It includes mental abilities and personality traits such as (Petrides et al., 2004; Bracket, Mayer, & Warner, 2004).

Another structure that has attracted attention recently in the career development literature is career optimism. Career optimism is the ability to expect positive results from future professional developments and feel comfortable in the planning process (Rottinghaus, Day, & Borgen, 2005). The career optimism literature defines career optimism as a predictor for various career outcomes (Rottinghaus et al., 2005; Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja, & Schneider., 2012; Spurk & Volmer, 2013). Career optimism can be expressed as the general expectation that good things will happen to their careers while emphasizing the best possible outcomes or the most positive aspects of their future careers. These expectations can lead to career results and affect individuals' goal-setting behaviors (Kalafat, 2012).

The other variable whose relationship with career decision-making self-efficacy is examined locus of control. This concept was introduced to the literature by Rotter (1966). According to Rotter (1966), locus of control is the individual's perception of all situations affecting him due to his behavior or as a result of factors outside himself. Locus of control is also defined as people's generalized expectations about the world (Carver & Scheier, 1996). In short, locus of control is concerned with who or what the causes and consequences of events are attributed to (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2006; Durna & Şentürk, 2012). Locus of control belief is also related to what people attribute to the reinforcers they encounter, that is, the results obtained. These references can be attributed to factors such as luck and fate, as well as to the result of the behaviors of individuals (Solmuş, 2004). Locus of control is divided into internal and external.

A final concept examined in relation to career decision self-efficacy is proactive personality. Proactive personality traits have emerged from the interactional framework, which argues that individuals can influence those around them with their behavior and be affected by their environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993). A proactive personality, due to conditions, discovers opportunities, evaluates them by filtering them, takes responsibility, and waits patiently until there is a meaningful change (Crant, 2000). According to Bateman and Crant (1993), a proactive personality; The need to achieve success is associated with behaviors that include participating in extra-learning activities, personal achievements that mirror change, and leadership skills. Proactive individuals; show surprising performance in being open to new activities, enabling change, and going beyond expectations. As with motivation, the behaviors of proactive individuals are thought to come from within (Turner, 1997). Proactive people prefer jobs where they can bring about change. Their ever-increasing and stronger energies also increase their sphere of influence (Covey, 1998). According to Bateman and Crant (1993), the proactive person is; he/she is an entrepreneur and a person who does not stop in order to reach the goal he has set, continues in the face of difficulties, and makes the change.

Studies often examine

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the relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and emotional intelligence, career optimism, locus of control, and proactive personality. However, no meta-analysis studies examine the relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and these concepts. Because when the studies in the literature are examined, it has been seen that the meta-analysis studies are limited and the researchers do not show enough inclination on this subject. However, it is thought that determining the generalizability of the relationships between career decision-making self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, career optimism, locus of control and proactive personality will support new research and projects. In addition, it is thought that this study is important because determining the general results about the personal characteristics that may have an impact on the career choice in the field will ensure that studies on the development of personality traits are included in the training programs of the experts working in the field. For this reason, we conducted a meta-analysis study dealing with the concepts related to career decision-making self-efficacy of individuals at different developmental stages. Theories on the subject (Bandura, 2001; Bateman & Crant, 1993; Brown, 2002; Goleman, 1996; Peterson & Seligman, 1984; Rotter, 1966) provide limited information about the development of career decision-making self-efficacy. Our meta-analysis is a research aiming at exploratory determination of the limited relationship between career decision making self-efficacy and other variables. In this exploratory meta-analysis study, we aimed to examine the relationship between four variables related to individuals' career decision-making self-efficacy. In this exploratory study: (a) Is there a significant relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and proactive personality? (b) Is there a significant relationship between career decision making self-efficacy and emotional intelligence? (c) Is there a significant relationship between career decision making self-efficacy and locus of control? (d) Is there a significant relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and career optimism? We sought answers to these questions.

Method

Search Strategy and Study Identification

In this meta-analysis study, study identification, screening, and selection were performed per the Systematic Reviews and Preferred Reporting Items for the Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) procedure (Moher et al., 2009). Data were collected between 25 May 2022 and 25 June 2022. Eric, JSTOR, Sage Journal, Google Academic, Scopus, Springer Link, Taylor and Francis, ULAKBİM, Proquest, and EBSCO databases were used to find studies suitable for the research. In these search engines, the conjunctions "and" and "or" were used as search terms "career decision-making self-efficacy," "emotional intelligence," "locus of control," "optimism," and "proactive personality". Studies published between 1993 and 2022 are included.

Inclusion Criteria

As a result of the searches (including theses and articles), a total of 60 studies were found. Inclusion criteria were (i) the language of the studies was Turkish or English, (ii) the correlation coefficient and sample size (N) values were reported for the relevant variables, (iv) valid and reliable measurement tools were used to measure the relevant variables, and (v) the studies were fully accurate. In the searches made in the above-mentioned indexes, the concepts were written separately, and the studies in which the relationship between the indexes and career decision-making self-efficacy were examined by the researchers in accordance with the purpose of the research. The studies found were reviewed and coded in accordance with the inclusion criteria. As a result of the coding, 6 articles/thesis were not included in the meta-analysis study because there was a lack of correlation coefficient in 6 articles/thesis, 2 career decision self-efficacy sub-dimensions did not have a total score correlation, 3 were not in English and Turkish languages, and 4 were experimental studies.

The process of the studies included in the meta-analysis is shown in Figure 1.

Data Extraction and Reliability

The two researchers who conducted the research searched the databases to find the studies per the purpose of the research. The author coded all available outcome variables examined in the studies, including the year of publication, sample size, mean age, country, sample group, variables, and scales used. Both researchers independently coded all the studies found, and the coding consistency between the researchers was found to be over 95%. When disagreement arose over whether a study met the inclusion criteria, the two researchers debated their differences until they reached a consensus. The meta-analysis included the correlation coefficients (r) for each sample. When a study included more than one independent sample (eg, Sovet & Metz, 2014), we classified each sample as a single unit and separately coded the correlation coefficients within the sample.

Data Analysis

For the meta-analysis, we followed the procedures of Lipsey and Wilson (2001) for all calculations. We used correlation coefficients (Pearson's r) to calculate effect sizes in this meta-analysis. We applied Fisher's r-to-z transform to calculate unweighted effect sizes, following the computational method proposed by Lipsey and Wilson (2001) to synthesize r-effect sizes. Because the sample sizes of studies differed significantly, we also calculated the standard error and inverse variance weights to assess the effect of sample sizes on effect size:

Effect Size Statistic: ESr =r, ESZr =.5loge[1+ESr/1-ESr]
Standart Error: SEZr=1/√¯n-3
Inverse Variance Weight: WZr=n-3

Then, after weighting studies using sampling variances, we performed both Q and I2 tests to assess the heterogeneity of effect sizes (Huedo-Medina et al., 2006). The Q statistic reports the statistical significance of true heterogeneity, and I2 measures its extent. For example, I2 = 50% indicates that fifty percent of the total variability between effect sizes is due to true heterogeneity between studies. In general, a fixed effects model is adopted in a meta-analysis when both $p > 0.1$ (Q statistic) and $I2 \leq 50\%$ are provided; otherwise, the random effects model is adopted. Any I value exceeding 75% indicated significant heterogeneity, hence the appropriateness of using a random effects model for meta-analysis. Finally, a known risk to the validity of a meta-analysis is publication bias; this is because studies with statistically significant results are more likely to be published than those with non-significant results. Therefore, we visually inspected the data using a funnel plot to assess the risk of publication bias. In addition, the Egger test was applied to detect the asymmetry in the Funnel plot. (Peters et al, 2006).

Results

Sample Characteristics

The 45 studies included in the meta-analysis had a total of 45 independent samples and 22,194 participants in samples ranging in size from 80 to 1,540 (Table 1). Most studies were conducted in China (n=8) and Indonesia (n=9). Other studies Turkey (n= 5), South Korea (n=4), America (n=4), Malaysia (n=1), India (n=1), Taiwan (n=1), Pakistan (n=2)), Germany (n=1), Greece (n=1), United Kingdom (n=1), Philippines (n=1), Nigeria (n=1), Belgium (n=1) and Oman (n=1) made in their countries. The mean age in the samples ranged from 14 to 34.72. Studies were conducted with secondary school students (n=3), high school students (n=15), university students (22), graduate students (n=1), companies (n=1), employees (n=1), professional professionals (n= 1) was done with athletes (n=1).

Measurement and Outcome Characteristics

Studies in the sample were used to measure CDMSE: Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Short-Form (n=26), Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale(n=11), Career Decision Self-

Efficacy (n=4), Major Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale (n=1), Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (n=1), Middle School Self-Efficacy Scale (n=1), Career and Talent Development Self-Efficacy Scale (n=1) they used. Career Futures Inventory (n=7), Life Orientation Test (n=2), and Optimism Scale (n=1) scales were used to measure optimism. Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form Scale (n=4), Emotional Intelligence Scale (n=4), Emotional Intelligence Inventory (n=1), and Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (n=1) scales were used to measure emotional intelligence. The Proactive Personality Scale (n=13) and the Chinese version of the Proactive Personality Scale (n=2) scales were used to measure proactive personality traits. Finally, Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (n=5), Locus of Control Scale (n=2), Internal Locus of Control Scale (n=1), and Career Locus of Control Scale (n=1) scales were used to measure the locus of control (see table 1).

The number of studies for each variable used in the meta-analysis, the sum of sample sizes, correlation values and Fisher's z-transform values of correlation values, confidence intervals, heterogeneity test values of variables (Q, p; I2) and Tau2, z and p values Table 2' has also been given. (See table 2)

Effect Sizes Relating to Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

Optimism

The test for heterogeneity ($Q = 149.35$, $p < 0.001$; $I2 = 93.974$) revealed that the data in 10 independent samples were heterogeneous, thus confirming the appropriateness of using a random effects model in the meta-analysis (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). The fact that the obtained Q value exceeds the 9 degrees of freedom and .05 confidence level (sd=9, $\chi2(.05)=16.91$) specified in the chi-square table indicates that the data are heterogeneous (Borenstein et al., 2014). Patsopoulos et al. (2008) state that an I2 value above 50% indicates heterogeneity. Finding the I2 value as 93.97% indicates that the study is heterogeneous. Based on Pearson's guidelines for correlation sizes (small: $0< r \leq 0.30$, medium: $0.30< r \leq 0.70$, large: $.70< r \leq 1.00$), the random effects model optimism and career decision self-efficacy are moderate showed a correlation ($r= 0.46$), 95% CI [0.33, 0.57], $z = 6.37$, $p< 0.001$ (Table 2). The information from 10 studies on optimism and the forest graph is given in Figure 2.

Publication Bias.

Publication bias occurs by focusing only on a specific result or by including only studies obtained with one particular narrow search in the meta-analysis (Dinçer, 2014). We found no evidence of publication bias, as indicated by the symmetrical distribution of studies in the funnel plot (Figure 3). The Egger test also showed that the estimates of these included studies might not be affected by publication bias with a p-value greater than 0.05, $t =0.92$, $P = 0.38$, 95% CI [-5.86-13.67]. As no publication bias was detected, it was unnecessary to run Duval and Tweedie's crop-fill analysis to assess such bias in the meta-analysis further.

Proactive Personality

The heterogeneity test ($Q = 605.51$, $p < 0.001$; $I2 = 97.68$) revealed that the data in 15 independent samples were heterogeneous, thus confirming the appropriateness of using a random effects model in the meta-analysis (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). The fact that the Q value obtained exceeds the 14 degrees of freedom specified in the chi-square table and the .05 confidence level (sd=14, $\chi2(.05)=23.68$) indicates that the data are heterogeneous (Borenstein et al., 2014). Patsopoulos et al. (2008) state that an I2 value above 50% indicates heterogeneity. Finding the I2 value as 97.68% indicates that the study is heterogeneous. Based on Pearson's guidelines for correlation sizes (small: $0< r \leq 0.30$, medium: $0.30< r \leq 0.70$, large: $.70< r \leq 1.00$), the random effects model proactive personality and career decision self-efficacy moderate showed a high level of correlation ($r= 0.47$),

95% CI [0.37, 0.57], z = 7.85, p< 0.001 (Table 2). The information and forest plot of 15 studies on proactive personality is given in Figure 4.

Publication Bias. We found no evidence of publication bias, as indicated by the symmetrical distribution of studies in the funnel plot (Figure 5). The Egger test also showed that the estimates of these included studies might not be affected by publication bias with a p-value greater than 0.05, t = 3.35, p = 0.005, 95% CI [-26.49--5.70]. As no publication bias was detected, it was unnecessary to run Duval and Tweedie's crop-fill analysis to assess such bias in the meta-analysis further.

Emotional Intelligence

The heterogeneity test (Q = 134.14, p < 0.001; I2 =92.54) revealed that the data in 10 independent samples were heterogeneous, thus confirming the appropriateness of using a random effects model in the meta-analysis (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). The fact that the obtained Q value exceeds the 9 degrees of freedom and .05 confidence level (sd=9, $\chi 2(.05)=16.91$) specified in the chi-square table indicates that the data are heterogeneous (Borenstein et al., 2014). Patsopoulos et al. (2008) state that an I2 value above 50% indicates heterogeneity. The I2 value was 92.54%, indicating that the study was heterogeneous. The model showed a moderate correlation between emotional intelligence and career decision-making self-efficacy (r= 0.45), 95% CI [0.35, 0.54], z = 7.80, p< 0.001 (Table 2). The information and forest plot of 11 studies on emotional intelligence is given in Figure 6.

Publication Bias. We found no evidence of publication bias, as indicated by the symmetrical distribution of studies in the funnel plot (Figure 7). The Egger test also showed that the estimates of these included studies might not be affected by publication bias with a p-value greater than 0.05, t =1.08, P = 0.31, 95% CI [-3.88-11.02]. As no publication bias was detected, it was unnecessary to run Duval and Tweedie's crop-fill analysis to assess such bias in the meta-analysis further.

Locus of Control

The heterogeneity test (Q = 1133.15, p < 0.001; I2 =99.29) revealed that the data in nine independent samples were heterogeneous, thus confirming the appropriateness of using a random effects model in the meta-analysis (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). The fact that the Q value obtained exceeds the 8 degrees of freedom specified in the chi-square table and the .05 confidence level (sd=9, $\chi 2(.05)=15.50$) indicates that the data are heterogeneous (Borenstein et al., 2014). Patsopoulos et al. (2008) state that an I2 value above 50% indicates heterogeneity. The I2 value being 99.29% indicates that the study is heterogeneous. Based on Pearson's guidelines for correlation sizes (small: $0< r \leq 0.30$, medium: $0.30< r \leq 0.70$, large: $.70< r \leq 1.00$), the random effects model optimism and career decision self-efficacy are moderate showed a correlation (r = 0.36), 95% CI [0.02, 0.62], z = 2.09, p < 0.001 (Table 2). The information from nine studies on the locus of control and the forest plot is given in Figure 8.

Publication Bias. We found no evidence of publication bias, as indicated by the symmetrical distribution of studies in the funnel plot (Figure 9). The Egger test also showed that the estimates of these included studies might not be affected by publication bias with a p-value greater than 0.05, t =1.02, P =0.34, 95% CI [-28.08-11.10]. As no publication bias was detected, it was unnecessary to run Duval and Tweedie's crop-fill analysis to assess such bias in the meta-analysis further.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this meta-analysis study, we examined the findings of previous studies on the relationships between the variables of optimism, proactive personality, emotional intelligence, and locus of control and the CDMSE of individuals in different sample groups. Our results revealed significant relationships between each of the variables and CDMSE. All four variables had a moderate

Table 1.

Selected Characteristics of the Included Studies/Samples

Authors	Year	N	Mean Age	Country	Samples	Variables	Scale
Zhou et al.	2021	743	22.5	China	University Graduates	• Proactive personality • Career decision-making self-efficacy • Employment stress	• Proactive Personality Scale • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale • Career Success Criteria Scale
Xin et al.	2020	220	21.82	China	Undergraduates	• Proactive personality • Career Success Criteria Clarity Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy	• Proactive Personality Scale • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale • Career Success Criteria Scale
Tanau & Salim	2020	140	14	Indonesia	Junior High School	• Career Decision Self-Efficacy • Planned Happenstance • Career Decision Self-Efficacy	• Career Decision Self-Efficacy Short Form • Planned Happenstance Career Inventory • The Proactive Personality Scale
Srikanth	2012	186	34.72	India	Manufacuring Companies	• Self Efficacy • Career Self Management • Proactive Personality	• Career Self Efficacy Scale • Proactive Personality Scale • Career Self Management Scale
Ramadhani & Suharso	2021	758	Between 16-19 ages	Indonesia	High School	• Proactive Personality • Parental Involvement • Career Decision Self-Efficacy	• Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form • Parent Career Behavior Checklist • Proactive Personality Scale
Ramadhani & Susharso	2020	758	/	Indonesia	High School	• Proactive Personality • Parental Involvement • Career Decision Self-Efficacy	• Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form • Parent Career Behavior Checklist • Proactive Personality Scale

Table 1. continued

Authors	Year	N	Mean Age	Country	Sample	Variables	Scales
Preston & Salim	2019	949	16	Indonesia	Senior High School	• Parenting style • Proactive personality • Career decision self-efficacy	• Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form • Parental Authority Questionnaire • Proactive Personality Scale
Mujiati & Salim	2021	858	17.7	Indonesia	12th-grade vocational school students	• Career Decision Self-Efficacy • Proactive Personality • Attributions	• Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale – Short Form • Proactive Personality Scale • Assessment of Attributions for Career Decision Making
Li	2021	514	/	China	High schools	• Family Function • Proactive Personality • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy	• Major Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale • Proactive Personality Scale • Family Assessment Device
Kim & Park	2017	296	21.74	South Korea	University students	• Proactive Personality • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy • Career Search Self-Efficacy	• Proactive Personality Scale • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale Career Search Self-Efficacy Scale
Hsieh & Huang	2014	336	21.03	Taiwan	College students	• Career decision self-efficacy • Proactive Personality • Socioeconomic Status	• Socioeconomic Status • Proactive Personality Scale • Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale–Short Form
Hou et al.	2014	810	22.90	China	Graduate students	• Proactive personality • Decision-making self-efficacy • Career adaptability	• Chinese version of the Proactive Personality Scale • Career Adapt-Abilities Scale-International Form • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale

Table 1. continued

Authors	Year	N	Mean Age	Country	Sample	Variables	Scales
He et al.	2021	1540	19.58	China	College students	• Proactive personality • Perceived social support • Interaction item	• Chinese version of the Proactive Personality Scale • Perceived Social Support Scale • Career Decision Making Self Efficacy Questionnaire • Career Decision Making Difculties Questionnaire
Fatin & Salim	2020	833	16-20	Indonesia	12th grade vocational school students	• Emotional intelligence, • Career Decision Self-Efficacy, Proactive Personality:	• Proactive Personality Scale • Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form • Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form
Darmayanti & Salim	2020	840	16.39	Indonesia	Senior high schools	• Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy • Emotional Intelligence • Proactive Personality	• Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale–Short Form. • Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire–Short Form • Proactive Personality Scale
Ahmad & Nasir	2022	211	-	Pakistan	* Electronic media employees	• Boundaryless Career Orientation • Career Optimism • Career Decision-making Self-efficacy • Consideration of Future Consequences	• Career Decision Self Efficacy Scale • Consideration of Future Consequences Form • Career Orientation Scale • The Career Futures Inventory

Table 1. continued

Authors	Year	N	Mean Age	Country	Sample	Variables	Scales
Ahmad &Nasir	2021	192	/	Pakistan	Professionals of electronic media industry	• Positive career shocks • Carere decision making self efficacy • Career optimism • Consideration of future consequence immediate	• Career Decision Self Efficacy • Consideration of Future Immediate Form • Career Shock Scale • The Career Futures Inventory
Aymans et al.	2019	307	28	Germany	University students	• Perceived lecturer support • Perceived career optimism • Perceived career barriers • Self-efficacy	• Career Optimism subscale of the Career Futures Inventory • Career Self-Efficacy Scale • Perceived Lecturer Support • Perceived Career Barriers Scale
Charokopaki & Argyropoulou,	2019	153	16-17	Greece	High school	• Optimism, • Career Decision Self-Efficacy • Career Indecision	• Middle School Self-Efficacy Scale • Career Decision Scale • Life Orientation Test-Revised
Chui et al.	2022	170	/	China	Undergraduate students	• Protean Career Orientation • Career Optimism • Career Adaptability • Career Decision Self-Efficacy	• Career Adapt-Abilities Scale– Short Form • Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale • The Career Futures Inventory • Protean Career Orientation
Coon	2009	325	19.93	America	College students		• Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form • Career Futures Inventory-Revised • The Brief COPE scale

Table 1. continued

Authors	Year	N	Mean Age	Country	Sample	Variables	Scales
Garcia et al.	2015	235	17.34	Philippines	Undergraduate students	• Parental support • Teacher support • Career decision-making self efficacy • Career optimism	• Career-Related Parent Support Scale • Teacher Support Scale • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form • Career Futures Inventory
Kanten et al.	2017	311	/	Turkey	Undergraduate students	• Mentoring Functions, • Career Adaptabilities, • Career Self-Efficacy, • Career Optimism	• Mentoring Functions Scale • Career Futures Inventory • Career Self-Efficacy Scale • Career Adaptabilities Scale
Moon	2005	177	24.57	America	Undergraduate students	• Career self-efficacy • Attachment styles • Optimism	• The Life Orientation Test-Revised • The Experiences in Close Relationships • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form
Şener & Kocaoğlu	2016	967	/	Turkey	University students	• Optimism, • Career Decision Efficacy Expection, Professional Results Expect	• Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale – Short Form Professional Outcome Expectancy Scale • Optimism Scale
Darmayanti & Salim	2020	840	16.39	Indonesia	Senior high school	• Career decision-making self-efficacy • Emotional intelligence • Proactive personality	• Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale–Short Form. • Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire–Short Form • Proactive Personality Scale

Table 1. continued

Authors	Year	N	Mean Age	Country	Sample	Variables	Scales
Salim & Safitri	2020	165	16.20	/	*High school students	• Career decision-making attribution Career decision making self-efficacy Emotional intelligence	• Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form • Assessment of Attribution for Career Decision Making • Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form
Song & Shin	2016	223	/	South Korea	* Nursing students	• Emotional Intelligence • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy • Career Decision Levels	• Emotional Intelligence Scale • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale •
Santos et al.	2018	472	25	United Kingdom	University students	• Emotional Intelligence • Career Decision-Making Difficulties: Career Decision Self-Efficacy	• Career Decision-Making Difficulties Revised Form • Emotional Intelligence Scale • Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form
Sidek & Bakar	2020	80	/	/	High school students	• Career decision • Emotional intelligence • Self-efficacy	• Emotional Intelligence Inventory • Career Decision Making Self – Efficacy- Short-Form
Fatin& Salim	2020	833	16-20	Indonesia	12th-grade vocational school students	• Emotional Intelligence • Proactive Personality • Career Decision Self-Efficacy	• Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form • Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form • Proactive Personality Scale
Fajobi &Bankole	2019	200	/	Nigeria	Senior secondary schools	• Emotional Intelligence • Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy	• Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Short Form Scale • Emotional Intelligence Scale

Table 1. continued

Authors	Year	N	Mean Age	Country	Sample	Variables	Scales
Jiang	2016	3185	19.88	China	Undergraduate students	• Emotional intelligence, • Career decision-making self-efficacy • Goal commitment • Professional commitment	• Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Short Form Scale • Emotional Intelligence Scale • Professional commitment • Gaol commitment
Murphy	2021	305	/	/	College students	• Career decision-making self-efficacy, • Emotional Intelligence	• Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form Scale, • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Short Form scale
Parmentier et al.	2021	307	22.33	Belgium	University students	• Career adaptability, • Emotional intelligence, • Anticipatory emotions • Career decision-making self-efficacy	• Career Adapt-Abilities Scale • Emotional Intelligence Scale, *Anticipatory Emotions Scale • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Short Form
Hamzah et al.	2021	205	23	Malaysia	University students	• Career adaptability • Career Decision • Emotional intelligence; • Self-efficacy • Self-esteem	• Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test • Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale • Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale–Short Form • Career Adapt-Abilities Scale
Ulaş & Yıldırım	2019	729	21.68	Turkey	University students	• Locus of control • Perceived career barriers • Hopelessness • Career decision-making self-efficacy	• Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale • Perceived Career Barriers Scale • Locus of Control Scale • Beck Hopelessness Scale • Positive and Negative Affect Scale

Table 1. continued

Authors	Year	N	Mean Age	Country	Sample	Variables	Scales
Turan	2021	354	14.3	Turkey	Middle schools	• Locus of control, • Hope, • Career and talent development self-efficacy	• Locus of Control Scale • Children's Hope Scale • Career and Talent Development Self-Efficacy Scale
Meyle	1993	88	18-43	America	College students	• Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy • Locus of Control, • Decision-Making Style, • Coping Style	• The Importance of Others' Expectations for Career Questionnaire • The Assessment of Career Decision Making Scale • The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale • The Internal-External Scale • The Coping Scale • The Bern Sex Role Inventory • The Bern Sex Role Inventory • The Traditionality of Significant Others Questionnaire
Taylor & Popma	1990	407	18.9	America	College students	• Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy, • Career Salience • Locus of Control • Vocational Indecision	• The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale • The Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale • Rotter Internal-External (I-E) Scale • Career Salience Questionnaire • Career Decision Scale
Kim & Lee	2018	310	23.91	South Korea	College students	• Career adaptability, • Career decision-making self-efficacy, Occupational engagement, • Internal locus of control	• Career Adaptability Scale • Internal Locus of Control Scale • Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale • Occupational Engagement Scale

Table 1. continued

Authors	Year	N	Mean Age	Country	Sample	Variables	Scales
Lee	2007	502	15.4	China	Secondary students	• Career Maturity • Career Decision-making Self-efficacy, Interdependent Self -construal, • Locus of Control and Gender	• Career Maturity Inventory • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale – Short Form • Attitudes Toward Women Scale • Interdependent Subscale of Self-Construal Scale Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale
Bahrani et al.	2021	2700	16.01	Oman	High school students	• Career decision self-efficacy • Career locus of control • Career aspiration	• Career Aspirations Scale • Career Locus of Control Scale • The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Short Form
Burns et al.	2013	158	20.10	/	Athletes	• Career decision-making self-efficacy • Academic support service	• Rotter's Locus of Control Scale • Generalized Self Efficacy Scale • Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale • Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire
Sarı & Şahin	2013	302	17.21	Turkey	High school students	• Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy • Hope • Locus of Control	• Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale • Hope Scale • Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale

Table 2

Homogeneity findings regarding the career decision-making self-efficacy of the variables

						Homogeneity Test			Tau Squared	Test of ES	
Variables	*K*	*N*	*r*	*Fisher Z*	*%95-CI*	*Q (r)*	*p*	I^2	*Tau2*	*z*	*p*
Optimism	10	2979	0,46	0.49	0.33-0.57	149.35	0,000	93.97	0.057	6.37	0.000
Proactive Personality	15	10381	0.47	0.51	0.37-0.57	605.51	0.000	97.68	0.062	7.85	0.000
Emotional Intelligence	11	3770	0.45	0.49	0.35-0.54	134.14	0.000	92.54	0.039	7.80	0.000
Locus of Control	9	5551	0.35	0.36	0.02-0.62	1133.15	0.000	99.29	0.283	2.09	0.036

Figure 2.

Forest Plot of the Relationships Between Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy and Optimism

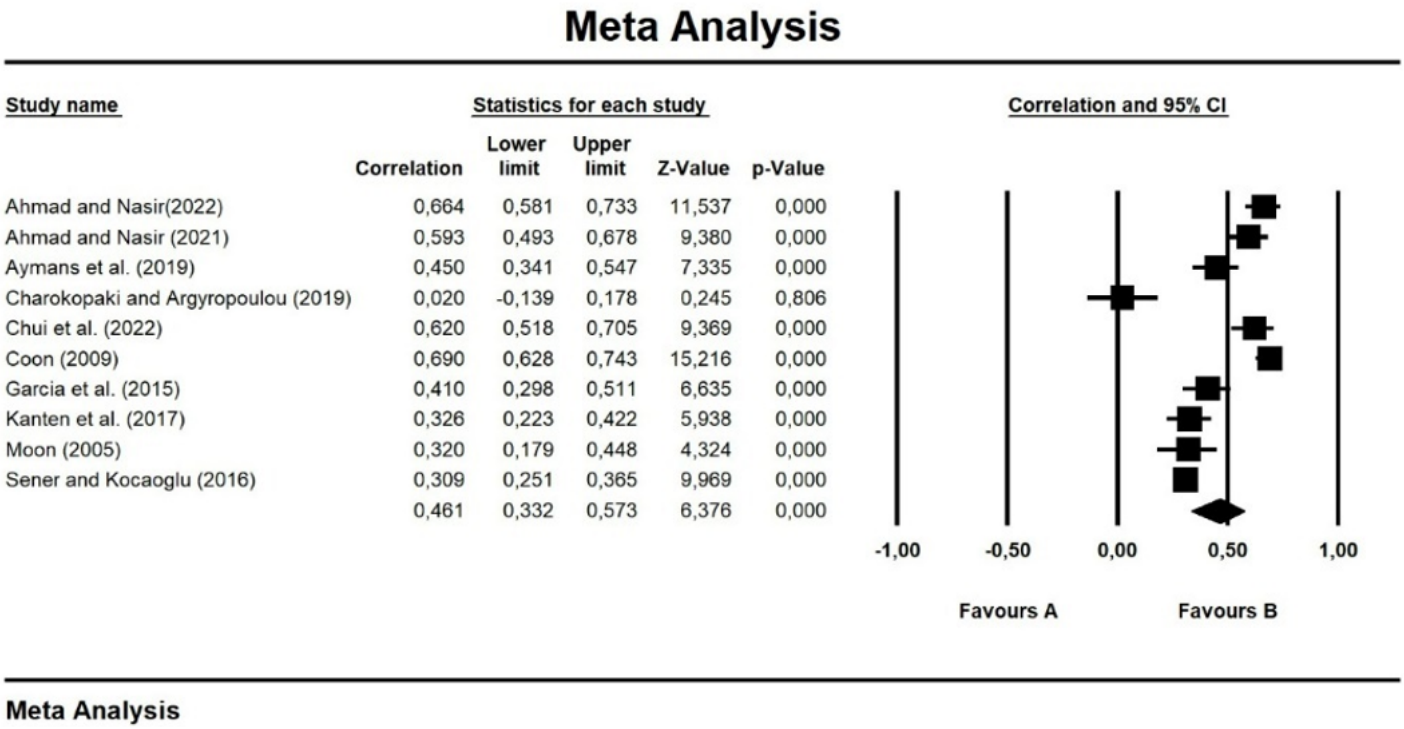
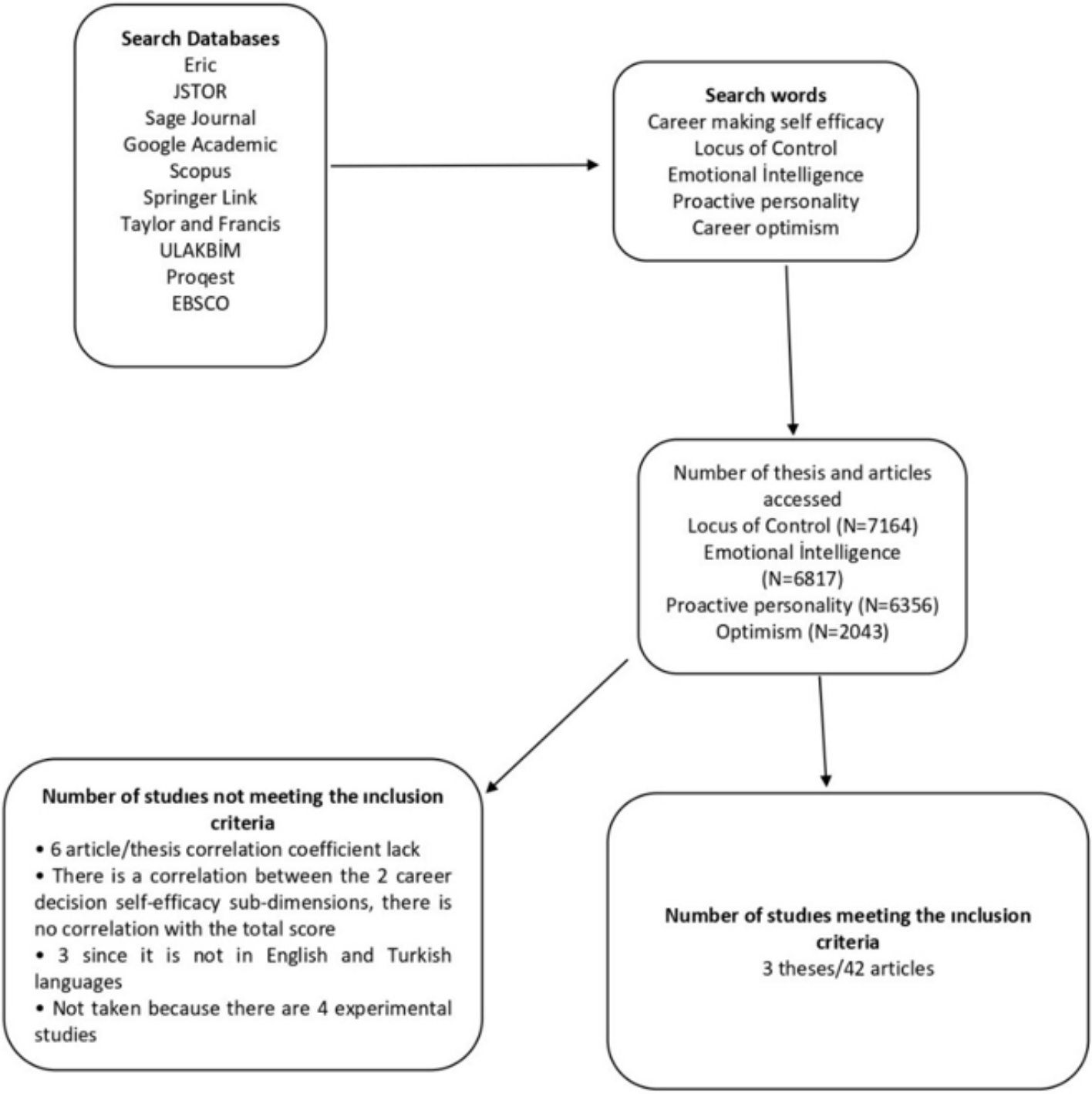


Figure 1

PRISMA Flow Chart of the Search Procedure



association with CDMSE. This result shows that optimism, proactive personality, emotional intelligence, and locus of control significantly contribute to CDMSE. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that individuals' career decision-making self-efficacy is related to the specified variables. The first result of our meta-analysis study is that optimism is significantly related to career decision-making self-efficacy and has a moderate effect size in all studies dealing with optimism. Optimism has a significant and positive relationship with an individual's career decision-making self-efficacy (Aymans, Kortsch, & Kauffeld., 2019; Chui, Li, & Ngo, 2022; Garcia, Restubog, Bordia, Bordia, & Roxas, 2015; Kanten et al. ., 2017). Optimism contains a positive-emotional element. Career optimism can be expressed as the tendency to expect the best possible outcome or to emphasize the positive aspects of an individual's future career development (Rottinghaus et al., 2005). Perera and McIlveen (2014) concluded in their study that they created a career-structuring model and that optimism is an essential indicator for better psychological adjustment in the transition to university. In addition, Tolentino, Garcia, Lu, Restubog, Bordia, and Plewa (2014) suggest that optimism can be crucial in adapting to changes after graduation (Tolentino et al., 2014). From this point of view, individuals with positive expectations about their careers may believe more in their competency in making career decisions because they focus on positive features and aspects of themselves.

Another result of our meta-analysis study is that proactive personality is significantly associated with career decision-making self-efficacy and has a moderate effect size in all studies dealing with proactive personality traits. Individuals' proactive personality traits have a significant and positive relationship with their career decision-making self-efficacy (Fatin & Salim, 2020; Kim & Park, 2017; Xin, Tang, Li, & Zhou, 2020). Career decision-making self-efficacy can be expressed as an essential indicator of individuals' professional attitudes and the results they achieve in line with these attitudes (Gadassi, Gati, & Wagman-Rolnick, 2013; Tian et al., 2014). Today, competition, adaptation, self-development,

Figure 3

Funnel Plot of Effect Sizes of Correlations Between Optimism and CDMSE

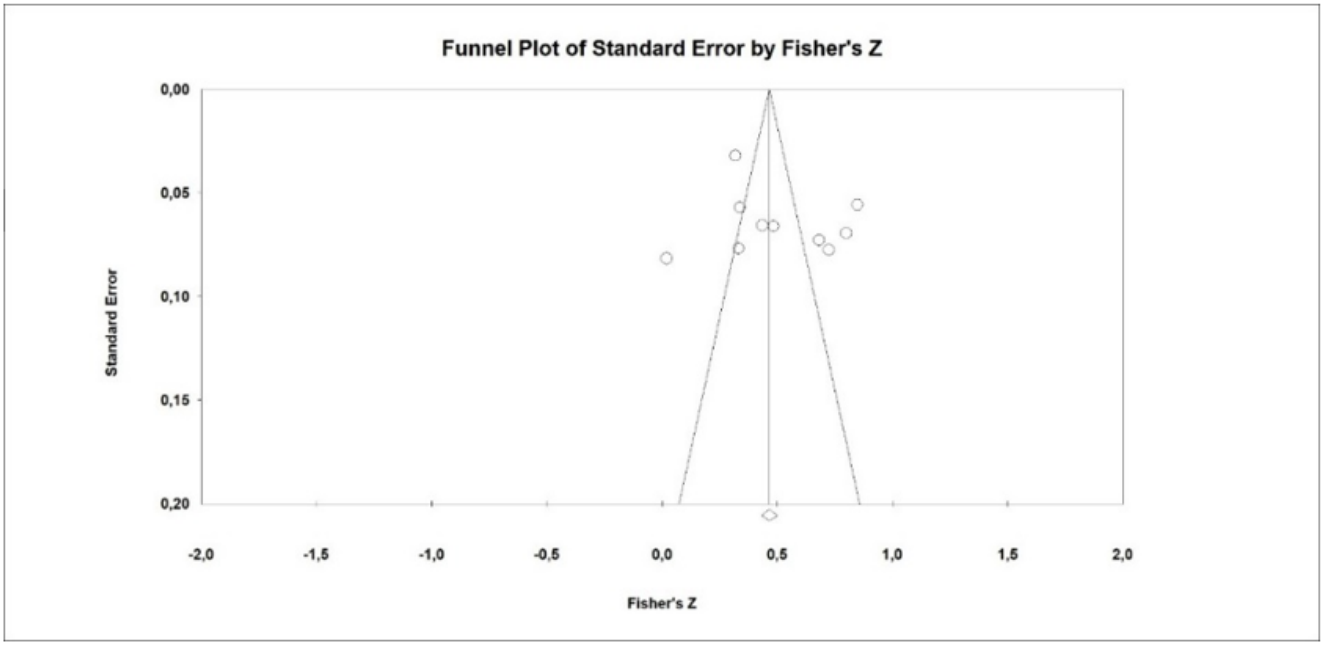


Figure 4

Forest Plot of the Relationships Between CDMSE and Proactive Personality

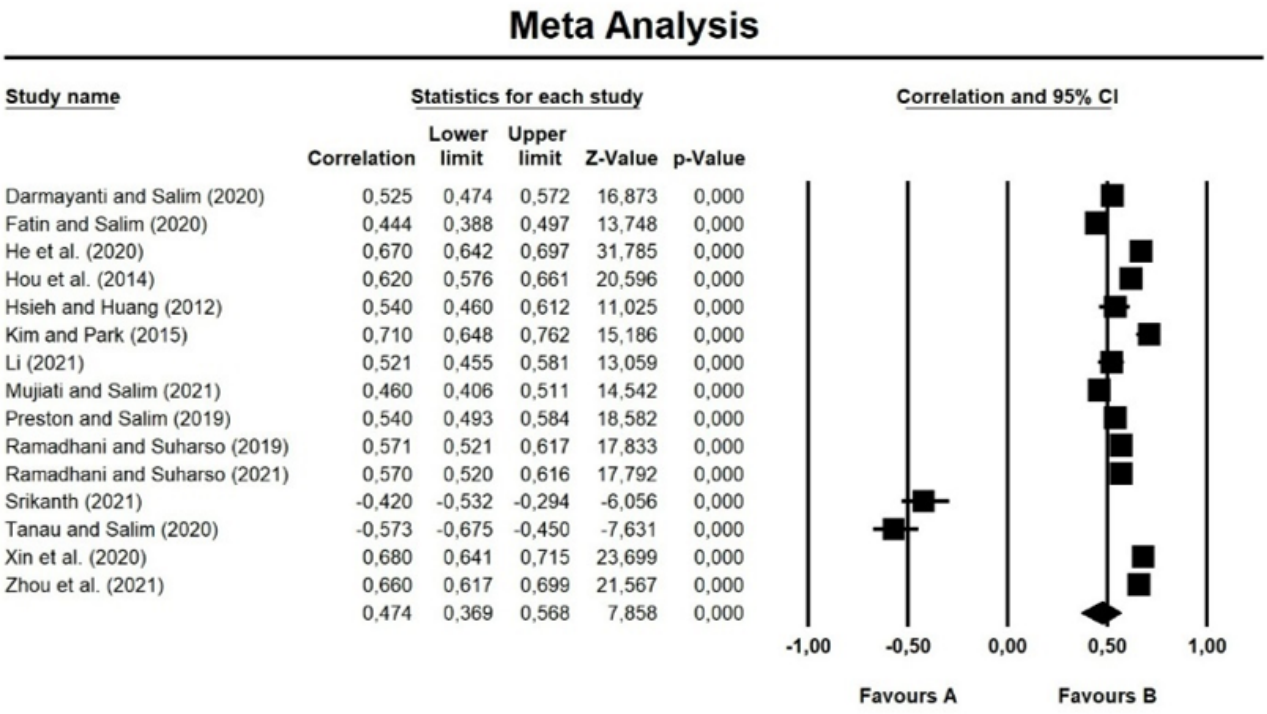
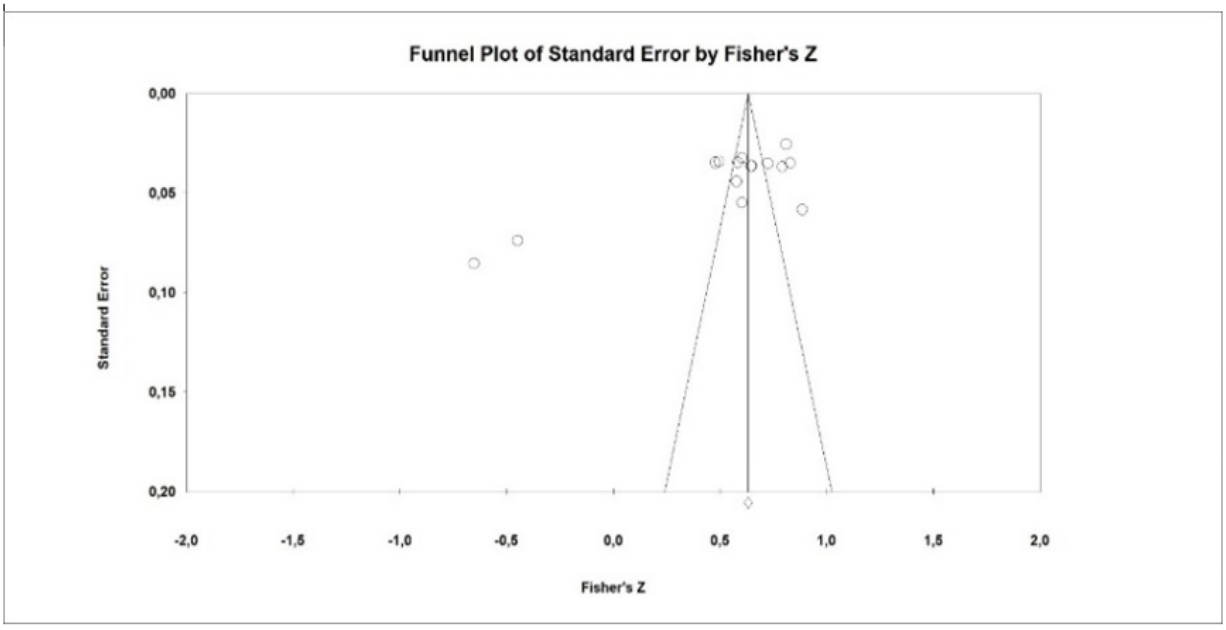


Figure 5

Funnel Plot of Effect Sizes of Correlations Between Proactive Personality and CDMSE



and continuous development have become essential features, especially considering the labor market and education levels. At this point, it may be useful to mention the proactive personality. Being proactive gives individuals an advantage in influencing their environment and others and taking the initiative in the face of events and situations (Bateman & Crant, 1993). In addition, Bergeron, Schroeder, and Martinez (2014) provide evidence that people with proactive characteristics can experience high levels of self-efficacy. Indeed, social cognitive career theory suggests that efficacy beliefs affect career development (Brown, Lent, Telander, & Tramayne., 2011). A proactive personality provides essential power to the individual to compete (Parker & Collins, 2010). Proactive personality traits contain positive features that will meet all these requirements, considering the rapidly changing education policies, the education-teaching processes that are constantly open to innovations, and the competitive labor market. From this point of view, individuals with proactive personality traits may feel more competent in making career decisions by being aware of these strengths. At the same time, these individuals may be able to determine jobs and occupations suitable for their characteristics and show flexibility according to the situation.

Another result of our meta-analysis study is that emotional intelligence is significantly related to career decision-making self-efficacy and has a moderate effect size in all studies dealing with emotional intelligence. As can be seen in various studies, individuals' emotional intelligence has a significant and positive relationship with their career decision-making self-efficacy (Hamzah et al., 2021; Jiang, 2016; Park, Lee, Kim, Kim, & Jahng., 2019; Santos, Wang, & Lewis., 2018). Individuals with high emotional intelligence are better at understanding their emotions. In addition, these individuals tend to integrate their emotional experiences with their thoughts and behaviors. From this point of view, it can be said that individuals with high emotional intelligence

Figure 6

Forest Plot of the Relationships Between CDMSE and Emotional Intelligence

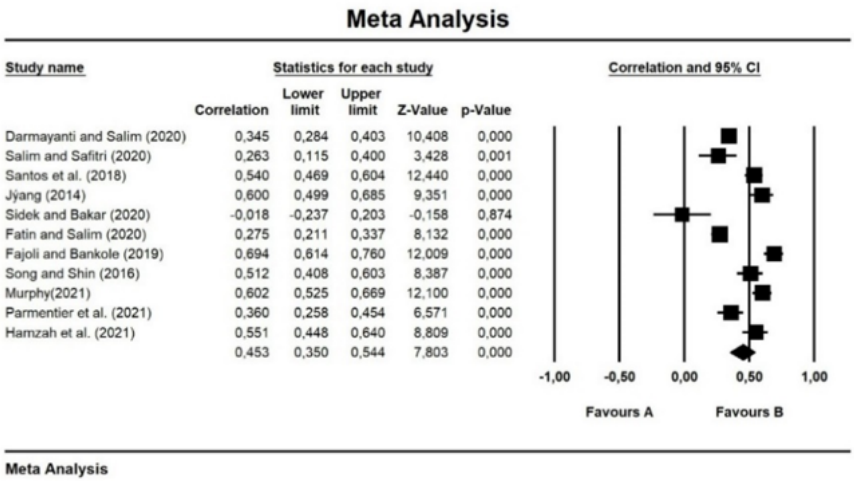
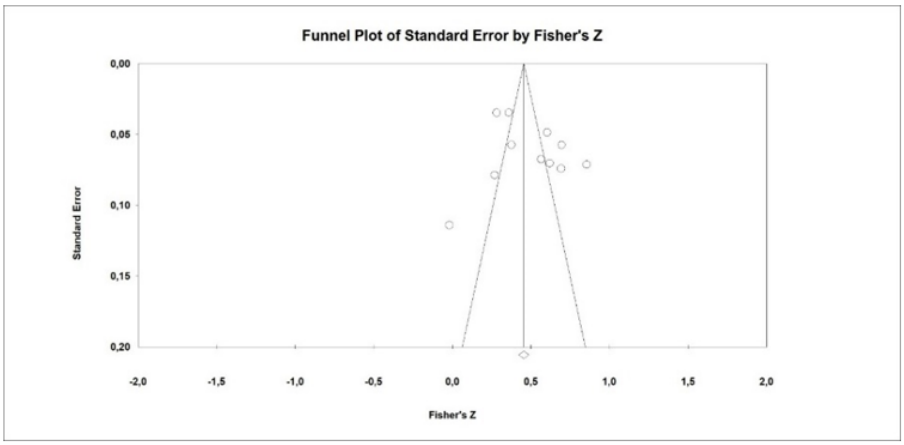


Figure 7

Funnel Plot of Effect Sizes of Correlations Between Emotional Intelligence and CDMSE



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are more self-confident when they make career decisions (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014). The process of choosing a profession and making a career decision is a process that includes both the cognitive and emotional experiences of individuals. In this context, emotional intelligence can have a more flexible stance in arranging and changing the thoughts of individuals. In this case, it may be that the individual can manage his thoughts more healthily, show a more flexible attitude about the opportunities he encounters, and believe in himself more when making a career decision.

Another result of our meta-analysis study is that locus of control is significantly related to career decision-making self-efficacy and has a moderate effect size in all studies dealing with the locus of control. As seen in previous studies, individuals' locus of control has a significant relationship with their career decision-making self-efficacy (Kim & Lee, 2018; Ulaş & Yıldırım, 2019). Locus of control refers to individuals' bipolar (internal and external) tendencies to be responsible for the outcome of behavior (Rotter, 1966). While the internal locus of control is based on features such as ability and effort, the external locus of control is based on issues that the individual cannot control, such as luck. The critical element here can be to consider the types of locus of control. Individuals with an internal locus of control may experience greater control over career decision-making, as they will base their beliefs on career decision-making competencies based on their abilities. In addition, individuals who realize that the result they have achieved differs in line with their efforts may think that their efforts will similarly affect the result in their career decisions. These individuals also tend to perform more effectively in unfamiliar contexts. On the contrary, individuals with an external locus of control may feel that they are not in control because they tend to use factors other than themselves in their decisions. They may be more passive or reluctant in their career decision processes.

Figure 8

Forest Plot of the Relationships Between CDMSE and Locus of Control

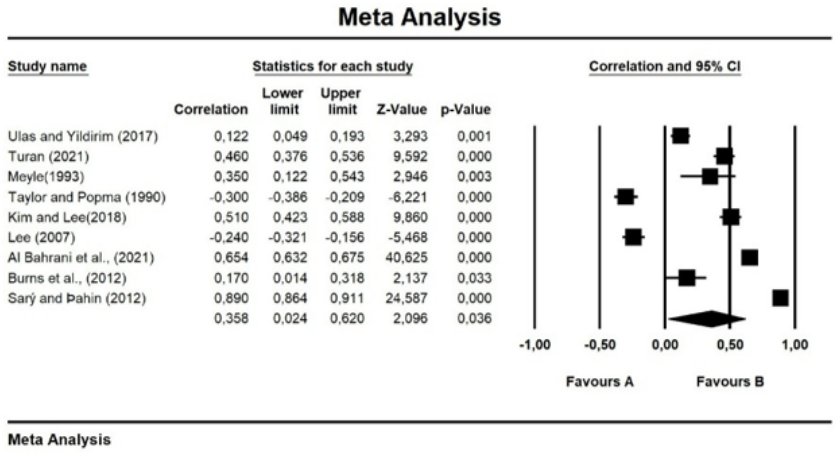
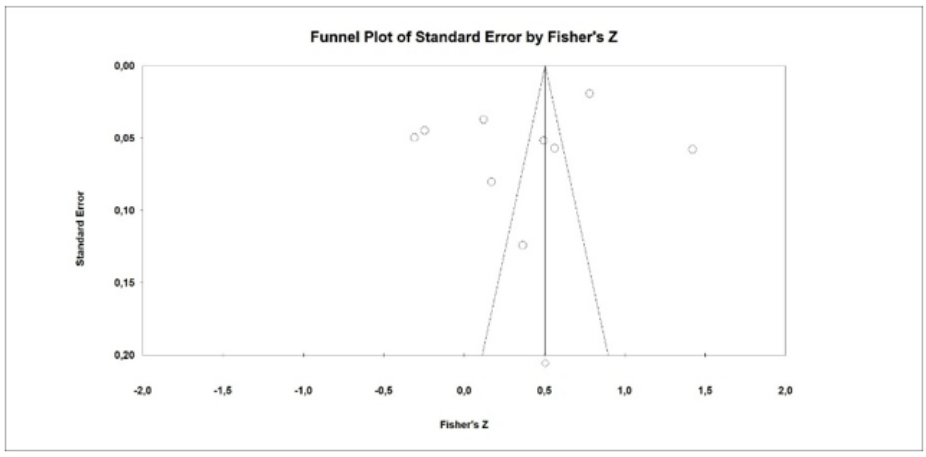


Figure 9

Funnel Plot of Effect Sizes of Correlations Between Locus of Control and CDMSE



Limitations and Future Directions

Although the results of our meta-analysis study are convincing, there are limitations to the generalizability of our findings. Our analysis mainly

considered cross-sectional studies. Also, the studies included in our meta-analysis were relatively limited, as our research only considered published articles and dissertations in specific databases. We also included studies published in English and Turkish in our study. This was another limitation. Finally, we did not reach all studies dealing with the relationships between the variables we identified in our research and career decision-making self-efficacy.

The findings of our meta-analysis study offer several implications for researchers and practitioners in career counseling. It also provides insight into the factors associated with CDMSE. A comparison between English and Turkish studies can be made to identify cultural differences in future studies.Since this study we have done identifies variables with solid relationships with CDMSE, it will contribute to the design of future research on CDMSE. In future studies, psychoeducational programs can be prepared to increase factors such as emotional intelligence, optimism, and proactive personality in experimental studies to increase career decision-making self-efficacy. In addition, considering the factors associated with CDMSE in our meta-analysis study may enable us to focus on optimism, proactive personality, emotional intelligence, and locus of control variables in future studies to improve CDMSE. In future studies, group guidance activities or psychoeducational studies can be carried out for individuals to have positive expectations for the future, to adapt to innovations and to educate themselves in different ways, to regulate and manage their emotions, and to feel more control and responsibility in order to increase their career decision-making self-efficacy. In addition, seminars can be given to school psychological counselors and field experts in this direction.

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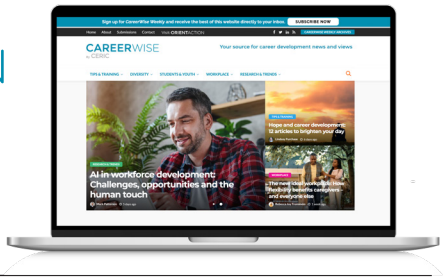

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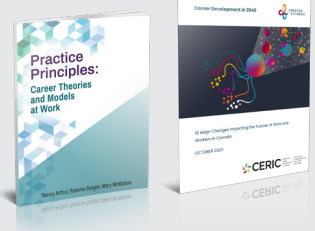

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Professionalizing the Canadian Career Development Sector: A Retrospective Analysis

Dr. Lorraine Godden. *Carleton University*
Dr. Roberta A. Borgen (Neault). *Life Strategies Ltd*

Abstract

The Canadian career development sector has worked for decades to enhance the professionalization of career development professionals, with such projects as the original standards and guidelines (S&Gs) launched in 2001. However, to reflect and guide current practice, extensive updates and a new approach were needed. Through research, consultation, development, and validation, the Pan-Canadian Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals, the National Competency Profile for Career Development Professionals, and the Code of Ethics for Career Development Professionals were created. In examining the process of this comprehensive project, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory offers a conceptual framework for understanding the complex interconnected systems impacting the sector. Kouzes and Posner's (2003, 2012) five exemplary practices of leadership are applied to explore the actions and behaviours that created purposeful spaces where practitioners, subject matter experts, and theorists could collectively and authentically work together to accomplish extraordinary tasks.

Keywords: Professional, career development, competency frameword, ecological systems theory, leadership

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The Canadian career development field has benefitted immensely from the original set of standards and guidelines (S&Gs) that, after prolonged consultation, were originally launched in 2001 and later revised in 2012. However, over time, a comprehensive new competency framework, code of ethics, and approach to certification were needed to more accurately reflect the contemporary range of skills, knowledge, and actions that now frame effective career development professionals, career influencers, career educators, and thought leaders across the career development milieu in Canada. In September 2018, the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) embarked on a 36-month project with funding support from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), a department of the Government of Canada to ensure that the career service delivery ecosystem across Canada was equipped to meet this need.

Career Development Professionals (CDPs) help Canadians to effectively manage learning, work, and transitions from school to the workforce and into retirement. They achieve broad employability, educational, and labour market outcomes that are vital to the socio-economic and health/well-being outcomes of Canada. In this way, creating a new competency framework, code of ethics, and approach to certification not only strengthens the career development sector, but also directly benefits all sectors in the Canadian economy as career development professionals serve as the bridge between un/underemployed Canadians and the work they are seeking across varied industries.

In this paper, we provide the historical context of relevant foundational work over the past three decades and then outline how, with coordination and management from CCDF, hundreds of CDPs, educators, and professional association leaders from different provinces and time zones across Canada came together with subject matter experts and a national leader in competency and certification processes based on occupational

standards to respond to this challenge. Through a process of research, consultation, development, and validation, the project launched a new definition of a career development professional, the Pan-Canadian Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals, The National Competency Profile for Career Development Professionals, the Code of Ethics for Career Development Professionals, a piloted certification program, and three micro-credentials for career educators.

Importantly, we reveal that deeply collaborative approaches to highlighting contemporary career development practices were synthesized with empirical approaches to developing competency frameworks in order to fully consider practice and theory as the new standards and guidelines were co-constructed and developed. We apply Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory to examine the interconnections between the complex systems influencing CDPs and their clients. Then, utilizing Kouzes and Posner's (2003, 2012) five exemplary practices of leadership, we explore the series of actions and behaviours that guided the project participants to accomplish extraordinary tasks. These practices included *modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act,* and *encouraging the heart*. Notably, we pay particular attention to how project structure and management created a purposeful space where practitioners, subject matter experts, and theorists were not only empowered to collectively and authentically build the knowledge required for successful project completion, but also developed and shared an agentic commitment to the ongoing and sustainable project implementation.

Historical Context

Canada is the second largest country in the world by total area, and yet ranks 38th amongst countries for population (Worldometer, 2023); the entire population of Canada, at under 39 million people in 2023, is only about a million more than in the metropolitan area of Tokyo, the most populated city in the world (Macrotrends, 2023). Not surprisingly, this impacts Canada's ability to provide consistent and effective career and employment services across its vast geographic expanse. Canada's political structures also contribute to complexity in career service delivery. Funding for career and employment services comes from multiple sources; at one point most of the public services were funded federally and offered directly by federal public sector employees resulting in some consistency across most of the country. However, over the past few decades, much of the funding has devolved to the various provincial jurisdictions, resulting in considerable regional differences in service provision. Rural and remote regions of the country are particularly challenging to serve given that many are only accessible by air transportation or seasonal ice bridges and there is inconsistent Internet and mobile phone access (ASPECT, 2022).

Within the Canadian context, professional regulation occurs at the provincial or territorial level rather than federally. Employment within the career and employment services sector is unregulated, except for in Quebec. As a result, career development professionals come from diverse professional and academic backgrounds and there is no specified qualification to enter the field, nor is there a defined career path for growing within the sector (CERIC, 2019a). Much work has been done by provincial and national career development organizations and associations to professionalize the sector. In the following sections, we provide a historical overview[1] of some of the projects and activities that have contributed to strengthening the practice of career development professionals, and through them, enhanced the career development of diverse individuals over the past three decades in Canada.

1 The historical section that follows was populated based on the lived experience of the authors, personal communication with Sareena Hopkins, Executive Director of the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF), and an unpublished summary of the history of the Standards and Guidelines, available through CCDF.

Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners

To address the acknowledged need for national standards for career development in Canada, consultations began in 1996 at a National Assembly on Career Development Guidelines with key stakeholders from a cross-section of relevant sectors. As a result of this meeting, a National Steering Committee was elected to oversee development of a draft framework for standards and guidelines, along with a model for conceptualizing the scope of career development, and to identify potential uses, benefits, risks, and disadvantages of the standards and guidelines once they were in place. As Canada is officially a bilingual country (French and English), national consultations, surveys, and official documents need to be in both official languages. The process was consultative, involved practitioners in front-line service to clients, recognized existing exemplary practices, and included the breadth and diversity of the roles and competencies that existed at that time within the field of career development field. Using a stewardship model (rather than a representative model), the Steering Committee members presented their own unique perspectives rather than being seen as officially representing any specific organizations or associations. As the group was intentionally diverse, this resulted in multiple voices being heard (CCDF, n.d.).

A series of regional consultations were held in 1997, involving approximately 1,250 participants in 70 groups across eight of the Canadian provinces and in one of the territories. Feedback was overwhelmingly in favour of moving forward with developing standards and guidelines within a framework focusing on what practitioners actually did rather than their education or training. Participants also supported development of a code of ethics as a foundation to the framework.

The following year, in 1998, a second Assembly on Career Development Guidelines was held to debrief Phase 1findings, and to draft a plan for Phase 2. A new National Stakeholder Committee was selected, comprising 50% membership from the original committee and 50% new membership to provide fresh perspectives. A Stakeholder Liaison and Advisory Council was formed to ensure linkages to professional associations and relevant organizations. The specific work of developing and validating the standards was subcontracted to a Canadian firm with extensive relevant experience in preparing competency standards, and certification and assessment to specific industry standards. The contractor engaged in extensive regional consultation with focus groups to develop the standards, competencies for each standard, and specific performance indicators. Concurrently, the Steering Committee focused on developing the ethical principles, a glossary of key terms, and a communication strategy to ensure the entire sector felt invited and involved. By the end of 1999, a draft, in both English and French, was distributed for consultation across the country. Approximately 600 participants returned feedback forms, with 90% finding that the standards were accurate and comprehensive.

In 2000, revisions were made based on the consultations, followed by a "plain language" edit; by the end of that year the Standards and Guidelines (commonly referred to as the S&Gs) were distributed for endorsement to the regional focus group participants, others who had participated in the consultation process, and the organizations represented by the Stakeholder Liaison and Advisory Council. With overwhelming support, the S&Gs were declared ready for the public and shared widely on CDs at NATCON 2001, Canada's national career development conference.

A third Assembly on S&Gs was held shortly after that, along with a meeting of the Stakeholder Liaison and Advisory Council, where a new Steering Committee was selected for Phase 3 – implementation of the S&Gs. Regional field tests explored various uses of the standards, a self-assessment tool was developed and pilot-tested, the S&Gs were shared on a website to make them freely available to all, and a marketing kit was prepared for the use of associations as they

introduced the S&Gs to their members. At the end of Phase 3, the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) was elected as the voluntary "guardian" of the S&Gs.

Certification and Training

Once the S&Gs had been launched, several professional associations began certification programs for career development practitioners, aligned to the S&Gs and the embedded Code of Ethics; similarly, several training providers aligned their career development practitioner programs to the S&Gs. As one example of an alignment project, Life Strategies Ltd., based in British Columbia (one of the provinces with certification aligned to the S&Gs), voluntarily mapped each of the courses in its Career Management Professional Program, indicating in which course each of the competencies was being developed or strengthened and through which assignments and activities each of the competencies was being assessed. They created a matrix of courses and competencies and used this annually in course revisions to ensure that updates to the program didn't neglect the core competencies that map to the accepted national standards. This matrix was also useful for professional associations as they evaluated whether or not graduates of the program met their provincial certification requirements for training. Sector employers also found the matrix useful to identify training needs and to make professional development plans for their teams. Many other training providers took a similar approach to mapping their programs to the S&Gs.

Canadian Council of Career Development

By 2008, leaders of three provincial associations with certification programs began meeting to discuss their similarities and differences and to explore the possibilities of an alliance. In 2010, the Canadian Council of Career Development Associations (3CD) was launched, later dropping "Associations" from the title to be more welcoming and inclusive to stakeholders beyond provincial associations, including training organizations, academics, researchers, and other key stakeholders. By 2012, revisions were needed to the S&Gs, particularly to reflect changes in the use of technology and the diversity of the clients that career practitioners were seeing. The career counselling area of specialization also went through a significant revision at that time, using a Venn diagram to illustrate that career counsellors required the core competencies of both counsellors and career development practitioners. During this period, CCDF and 3CD continued to voluntarily serve as active champions and stewards of the S&Gs. Other countries subsequently modelled their own standards and guidelines after the Canadian S&Gs, most notably Australia and Saudi Arabia; the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) also used them as a foundation for their competency framework.

However, despite voluntary efforts across Canada to professionalize the career and employment services sector, Canadian career development professionals had no permanent national "home." The S&Gs once again needed substantial revision and some provincial associations had begun to make changes to their certification requirements that were inconsistent with the rest of the country. In a presentation to Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), a federal government ministry, the CCDF team was informed about a potential pocket of funding designed to support sectors wanting to develop national standards and guidelines. CCDF submitted a proposal entitled *Supporting Canadians to Navigate Learning and Work*, making a strong argument that strengthening the career development sector would actually benefit every other sector in the economy. Funding for a 3-year project was approved in 2018. The process and outcomes of that project will be the focus of the rest of this article.

Revitalizing the S&Gs – The Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals

Recognizing that the S&Gs needed a major overhaul to ensure

that the career service ecosystem in Canada was equipped for changing work trends and labour market needs, the revitalization project focused on lifelong career development, helping Canadians of all ages to manage learning and work transitions. As noted in the final report of the project (CCDF, 2021b):

> This project not only strengthened the career development sector, but also directly benefits all sectors in the Canadian economy as career development professionals serve as the bridge between un/underemployed youth and adults to work across all industries. Competent and qualified professionals in the career development field are an essential precursor to ensuring intentional learners, supporting successful transitions and fully addressing recruitment and retention issues in all other sectors of the labour market. (p. 5)

The 3-year project comprised four phases, with Phase 1 focused on engaging stakeholders, forming the project team, and conducting an environmental scan. Phase 2 involved extensive consultation across the country (similar to the approach taken with the initial S&Gs as previously described), under the leadership of a consulting firm that specialized in supporting sectors to develop ISO-approved standards. Phase 3 turned the focus to developing and testing a national certification process, and Phase 4 ensured that all components of the project were "finalized, validated, endorsed and mobilized across the Canadian career development service sector" (CCDF, 2021b, p. 5).

The project resulted in numerous outputs and outcomes, as summarized in the final report (CCDF, 2021b). These included the revised fully bilingual standards and guidelines, reimagined as the Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals (CCDF, 2021c); it contained measurable indicators of competency mastery and identified 100 competencies, organized into 26 themes. The competencies are arranged within a framework that includes foundational *Professional Practice* competencies, with recognition that they may be transferable from training or work experience in other sectors or roles. Other competencies were identified as CDP Characteristic (i.e., those that are distinct to CDPs). A group of CDP *Extended* competencies was also identified, those that were common to specialized services within the sector. Finally, *Outreach and Leadership* competencies were identified to reflect CDPs who were not providing front-line service directly to individual clients.

Other project outputs included a new definition of CDP; extensive consultation with front-line professionals, training providers, and other key stakeholders; an online competency self-assessment tool; a national certification standard and comprehensive examination; a new Code of Ethics; a pan-Canadian mobility agreement, signed by all provincial/territorial professional associations for CDPs; outreach to CD sector employers; a communication plan; a sustainability action plan; a performance measurement strategy; and comprehensive progress reports.

The outcomes of the project will be evaluated in both the short and longer term. It is anticipated that the project will result in more service providers assessed as meeting the agreed-upon professional standards and that this, in turn, will improve the training and employment outcomes of youth and other Canadians receiving career services at school, in their workplaces, or in community settings. Within the next few years, it is hoped that this project will stimulate more universities and colleges to offer specialized training in career development as there is currently a lack of advanced training for career development professionals within all but the French-speaking parts of Canada. It is also hoped that there will be more career development education within the K-12 educational system (i.e., for children and youth). There has already been interest expressed by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education to move that forward. Finally, as the professionalization

of CDPs continues, it is hoped that the career development sector will become more attractive to younger workers seeking a professional home. In all, over 6,000 hours of in-kind contributions illustrate the inclusiveness, engagement, and commitment of the entire career development sector which resulted in an ISO-compliant competency framework and certification approach for the career development sector that is unique in the world.

In the next two sections, this project will be retrospectively examined through two different theoretical frameworks. First, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory will be applied to look at the interconnections between the many systems influencing career development professionals and the individuals that they serve. Next, Kouzes and Posner's (2003, 2017) five exemplary leadership practices will be applied to illustrate the importance of effective leadership at each phase of the project to ensuring the project's overall success.

From Process to Praxis: Equipping Competent Career Development Professionals

It was interesting that the title of the project focused on individual clients – supporting them to "navigate learning and work" – and yet the project activities focused on strengthening the capacity of CDPs to consistently and effectively offer this support. In essence, at the project's core, was an understanding that to support individual change, activating and improving the entire, very complex, system would be necessary. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory offers a comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding the interactions of the disparate components of this system (i.e., micro, meso, exo, macro, and chrono).

An Individual Example

Publicly funded career and employment services in Canada are intended to support all Canadians, with a special emphasis on increasing employment access and equity for vulnerable members of society (ESDC, 2021). However, as noted, it's important and necessary for CDPs to recognize all the interconnected systems that impact their clients' access to career and educational opportunities. Applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model to a client example can illustrate this.

> Saffron (pseudonym) reached out to a local government-funded centre that offers free services to the unemployed; the CDP recognized that Saffron's microsystem comprised more than such personal characteristics as her unique combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Together, they discussed Saffron's immediate family (e.g., her 3-year-old daughter; her son in Grade 2; her spouse who travelled for work, often without advance notice), her community involvement (e.g., volunteering at church, belonging to a fitness centre), and her recent recovery from addiction to pain medications (which involved work with a medical doctor, naturopath, and psychologist).

Applying Bronfenbrenner's concept of the mesosystem, the CDP and Saffron were able to identify the interaction of several moving parts that would impact Saffron's career possibilities (e.g., due to her spouse's unpredictable travel and work schedule, Saffron needs to be available to drop children off and pick them up within specific timeframes and needs to have the flexibility to be home with the children on days when the school or daycare is closed). Other considerations within Saffron's mesosystem include recommendations from her medical team to help her avoid a relapse. Within the *exosystem* are more distant but influential forces that impact Saffron's possibilities for work (e.g., few daycare options, all with specific opening hours, limiting the shifts she is available for; her spouse's employer requiring unplanned overtime or travel; access to wage subsidies for individuals returning to the workforce). Saffron's culture and values are rooted in the *macrosystem*, as are the many political and economic systems

that influence her opportunities for education and/or work. Finally, all these interconnected systems are embedded within time, the *chronosystem*. This part of Bronfenbrenner's model accounts for changes across time and, in the context of career planning, helps to explain the need for lifelong career development rather than an approach to career decision-making. In Saffron's case, the age of her children and the immediacy of her addiction recovery are important considerations when planning next steps in her career.

A Career Development Sector Example

Equipping career development professionals to effectively support the very wide range of clients they serve is a challenging endeavour. Saffron's example illustrated the complexity of client's needs and the importance of examining culture, context, and interconnecting systems to increase the "stickiness" of career development interventions. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model can also provide a useful frame for conceptualizing how to more effectively equip CDPs to support their clients to navigate learning and work as they build their careers.

As previously described, Canada had an existing, globally respected, set of S&Gs for Career Development Practitioners (CCDF, 2001) and an accompanying Code of Ethics (CCDF, 2004). The career development sector had several professional associations and organizations and a number of individuals recognized as sector leaders. All of this could be considered as the professional *microsystem* for CDPs within Canada. The *mesosystem* within which these CDPs interacted included national conferences such as Cannexus; national organizations such as CCDF, CERIC, Career Professionals of Canada, and the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association's Career Counsellors chapter; and national umbrella associations such as 3CD.

However, sector leaders had long been aware, and surveys had confirmed (CCDF, 2009; Pickerell & Neault, 2012), that there were many folks doing "career work" across the country who would not see themselves as part of the career development sector, nor would they identify as career development practitioners or career development professionals. Within the sector's *exosystem*, some were involved with corporate career development; others were working within schools or postsecondary institutions; still others were working within the criminal justice system or social service settings. Although Canadian career development thought leaders preferred a "big tent" approach to welcoming anyone providing career or employment services under the same roof (CERIC, 2019b), many of those service providers would not have considered the existing S&Gs or Code of Ethics as applying to them.

This is where the *macrosystem* became an important consideration. First, in the previously described CCDF presentation to individuals within the federal government on the importance of career development to the national economy, a discussion arose about the need to update the sector's S&Gs and the lack of funding to tackle this important project. Someone within the *sectoral initiatives* group was aware of an impending pocket of funding that had a focus on developing standards and guidelines. CCDF responded to the Request for Proposals under this initiative, making a compelling argument that setting appropriate standards for career development professionals would strengthen all sectors of the Canadian economy. In an attempt to be as inclusive as possible, a National Stakeholder Committee was formed, including representation from a cross-section of the sector's *exosystem*. A Canadian organization with expertise in supporting sectors to develop ISO-compliant competency frameworks was contracted; as part of the comprehensive competency-writing process they led the project team through, significant efforts were made to ensure that the existing microsystem of the career development sector would be expanded so that those currently working adjacent to the sector within the *exosystem* would begin to feel welcome and included. The structure of the

resultant competency framework, with the foundational Professional Practice competencies, also acknowledged the transferability of many of the competencies across the exosystem, making a sense of belonging to the career development sector more possible for CDPs joining the sector from other professional backgrounds.

Looking at this from the *chronosystem* perspective, this project reflected a unique moment in time. Shifting from the existing S&Gs to a competency-based framework had recently occurred within one provincial association. Associations across the country had been working together to try to strengthen and standardize certification of CDPs within the sector. The CCDF team had an opportunity to make an important presentation to key decision-makers and, in doing that, learned of a funding pocket that would not otherwise have seemed relevant to revising the existing S&Gs. The project began in late 2018, allowing for over a year of travel that established trust and strengthened relationships amongst team members and engaged the sector in focus groups across the country – opportunities that abruptly ended when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, with both travel restrictions and lockdowns imposed – another example of an unanticipated *macrosystem* influence. With a solid foundation in place, however, the project continued throughout the pandemic, with virtual meetings replacing those requiring travel.

In the next section, we apply Kouzes and Posner's five exemplary leadership practices model to describe how the leadership process of this project exemplified those practices and to evaluate the outcomes of the project through Kouzes and Posner's (2003, 2017) lens.

Evaluating the Project Leadership Process Using Kouzes and Posner's Five Exemplary Leadership Practices

The specific objectives of the project included the engagement of key stakeholders with a mission to ensure that the initiative and final outcomes of the project would be enthusiastically endorsed and fully supported by the pan-Canadian career development sector (CCDF, 2021b). This was similar to the approach with the initial S&Gs project, previously described. To meet this goal, an extensive level of consultation and active engagement with CDPs, employers, relevant associations, and provincial/territorial governments was included throughout the project, culminating in ensuring that, as project deliverables were finalized, they were validated, endorsed, and implemented across the Canadian career development service sector. Such a task was ambitious, and the project leaders intentionally and purposefully created space for the momentum built in the initial stages of the project to deepen and extend sufficiently to sustain the project to a successful conclusion.

To support a retrospective reflection on this leadership process, Kouzes and Posner's (2003, 2017) five exemplary leadership practices offer a rich and nuanced framework to conceptualize how the leaders of the project were able to inspire and motivate hundreds of CDPs to come together and contribute over 6,000 volunteer hours of their time, expertise, and passion. Indeed, Kouzes and Posner (2003) defined their five exemplary leadership practices, developed through extensive research, as a series of actions and behaviours that serve as guidance for leaders to get extraordinary things accomplished. The practices include: *inspiring a shared vision, modelling the way, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart*.

Inspiring a Shared Vison

Kouzes and Posner (2017) understood that creating a common purpose can help inspire a collective of people to strive to implement a *shared vision*. At the outset of the project, the first step involved settling on a new and national consensus for the definition of a Career Development Professional to establish the foundation for the main deliverables of the CDP Competency Framework and National Certificate Program. Creating the new definition was fundamental in uniting CDPs in their common understanding of the scope of their practice

and its impact, as they worked to synthesize the diverse range of career development work undertaken across Canada into a shared definition that all felt was representative of the work they undertook and contributions they made to positive outcomes for Canadians.

With the new CDP definition as the guiding principle, the project moved through an extensive consultation to underpin the development of the CDP Competency Framework. With a focus on obtaining the full engagement of key stakeholders at the outset, a National Steering Committee (NSC) was formed to facilitate the reach into, and commitment of, a diverse range of associated professional associations and other organizations across Canada. At the outset, the project leaders planned a minimum of 30 provincial/territorial consultations in English and French with front-line professionals representative of a wide range of CDP settings and diverse client groups. Ultimately, this goal was significantly exceeded, with 380 CDPs participating in a series of 68 face-to-face and virtual consultations that were held in 40 different communities across Canada (CCDF, 2021b). In addition, the CDP Competency Framework was reviewed by 105 subject matter experts (SMEs) who reviewed components directly related to their areas of expertise, with several leaders of the career development field reviewing the entire CDP Competency Framework. This extended consultation helped ensure that the vision for the project was not only shared across the CDP sector, but that CDPs were energized by the project and deeply engaged in the process of seeing the project successfully meet its outcomes and deliverables.

The development, testing, and refinement of a new National Certification Program for CDPs was a main deliverable for the project (CCDF, 2021b), with project leaders determining that the new certification should be sustainable and pan-Canadian. Consequently, it was extremely important that the voices and perspectives of CDPs representing diverse identities were invited, actively involving individuals from all of the provinces and territories and securing their commitment to the common goal of creating the National Certification. *Inspiring a shared vision* continued with the formation of a National Certification Steering Committee (NCSC) comprising 25 consistent members from across Canada supplemented with a range of subject matter experts who, desirably, each had at least three years' experience in the career development profession, and included diverse identities, services offered, and clients served.

Modelling the Way

As previously described, Canada had built a reputation for *modelling the way* by being the first country to publish competency standards for the career development sector in 2001. The development of the New Competency Framework called for a re-imagined and innovative approach to creating the world's first ISO-compliant competency framework and certification approach for the career development sector. Literature has identified a variety of influencing factors to promote re-imagining and innovative behaviour; these include the need for cognition (Wu et al., 2011), psychological empowerment (Odoardi et al., 2015), creative self-efficacy (Fan et al., 2016), and transformational leadership (Li et al.,2016). To develop the National Competency Framework, CCDF worked in close collaboration with a team of leading professionals in the field of competency development and competency-based certification. This partnership established clear principles concerning standards of excellence, setting meaningful examples for others to follow (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

The Canadian consulting organization actively engaged in *modelling the way* for developing an ISO-compliant competency framework and Industry Standard for certification. Before engaging volunteers from the sector in defining and articulating competencies, they provided extensive formal training on writing standards, using a scaffolded approach that comprised lectures, practice, application, and feedback by experienced members of their

competency-writing team. This process of *modelling the way* continued as the Canadian consulting organization, with their registered psychometrician, led in the development of an Industry Standard that CDPs desiring certification would need to meet. This Industry Standard was reflected in the content of questions developed for the multiple-choice exam, and in the scenarios designed for the behaviour-based performance assessment. This phase of the project was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with its travel restrictions and lockdowns. However, the consulting organization continued *modelling the way*, teaching the process of item writing through training delivered via videoconference to 15 SMEs and each SME was then tasked with developing a set number of case studies and multiple-choice questions. All questions were reviewed by the psychometrician to monitor for quality and to ensure blueprint parameters were met. Following the item development, 20 SMEs were trained by the consulting organization to undertake the item review. The 20 SMEs came together over a series of 16 review workshops, with each workshop facilitated by the registered psychometrician and three to six of the 20 trained SMEs.

Another example of *modelling the way* was with the Code of Ethics (CCDF, 2021a). In this case, the modelling involved a team of volunteers from the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA), which had recently revised their own Code of Ethics. This team recommended extensive revisions to the existing code, based on the revisions that had been made to the CCPA code; the model they offered informed the subsequent work of the Code of Ethics Working Group which resulted in the comprehensive new Code of Ethics.

Challenging the Process

Through *challenging the process*, the project leaders created a safe environment where all project participants had space to challenge the norms while striving to achieve important outcomes (Kouzes & Posner, 2023). The foundation of *challenging the process* hinges on the ability and capacity to have an open mind where it is acceptable to think creatively in response to tasks and activities. Through the face-to-face and virtual consultations, the focus on building the capacity needed to ensure sufficient consultation and engagement from the range of career development professionals reminded everyone within the project that one of its primary assets was coming together to work collaboratively as a team (Knoke & Wood, 1981). Capacity building occurred through many positive developmental and enabling processes (Cameron et al., 2003), where the NSC, NCSC, targeted Working Groups, and project leadership team worked closely throughout the diverse range of development and consultation activities, and other forms of learning where all project participants could challenge themselves and their colleagues in a safe and constructive way (London, 2013).

Several innovative tools and approaches were used to safely engage participants in *challenging the process*. For example, one of the first focus groups was held in the evening during a week of career practitioner training in Nunavut, where practitioners had flown in from several remote northern communities. To create safety and demonstrate respect for their time and contributions during a busy week, interested participants were invited to a dinner meeting at a restaurant of their choice. Table discussions provided opportunities for them to challenge our understanding of the competencies required for CDPs; unique regional competency requirements such as comfort with flying in small planes during snowstorms and the ability to live and work in locations with limited hours of daylight surfaced in this meeting, reminding us of the need for flexibility and diversity considerations in building a national framework. In other settings, tools like Mentimeter, an interactive presentation software, facilitated safe opportunities for participants to *challenge the process*. The beauty of Mentimeter is that it preserves anonymity while offering immediate results to a variety of questions with responses presented in graphs,

word clouds, or in a narrative format.

Enabling Others to Act

When leadership truly is exemplary, all participants are strengthened through collaborative and trusting environments where people feel valued and empowered. When people feel trusted and empowered (Kutsyuruba et al., 2010) extraordinary things happen, and through this process within the project, numerous CDPs became *enabled to act*. It is important to acknowledge the commitment throughout the project to ensure the Competency Framework is freely accessible both via the project website and within an online Learning Management System (LMS) that supports dynamic use of the Competency Framework, Code of Ethics, competency self-assessment tool (Taking Charge), and national certification components. This ensures that everyone across the diverse career development sector can be enabled by the national standard for CDP practice.

Revisiting the Life Strategies example of mapping its Career Management Professional Program to the original S&Gs, as soon as the new Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals became publicly available, the team was *enabled to act*, engaging in mapping courses across their certificate programs to the new framework. This activity revealed several opportunities to address the new competencies (e.g., 7.4 Maintain health and wellness) and reconfigure which courses primarily addressed specific competencies (e.g., 5.2 Monitor client progress). Several of the new Outreach and Leadership competencies have inspired the team to offer additional courses to meet the needs of a broader range of CDPs.

Another group of educators was *enabled to act*, with a focus on providing career development training to K-12 educators. Although the main intent of the three micro-credentials was on one of the CDP Extended competencies (20: *Career Development in the Educational System*), the team identified refinements to that competency, which were later incorporated into the Framework. In mapping the micro-credentials to the entire framework, they were also able to identify several other competencies being developed that came from all parts of the framework (i.e., Professional Practice, CDP Characteristic, CDP Extended, and Outreach and Leadership).

Encouraging the Heart

Creating an environment where achievements are celebrated, contributions are appreciated, and hard work is recognized is the final practice of exemplary leadership, *encourage the heart*. Kouzes and Posner (2003) asserted that when you want people to give their all to a project, to put their hearts, minds, and soul into their work, then you must make certain that all participants know what they are supposed to be doing and why. Although this is the final principle to be addressed, it was one of the first principles to be actioned in establishing the National Stakeholder Committee (NSC). At the inaugural meeting of the NSC, an inspiring short video, "Know Your Why," was shown. Subsequently, throughout the project, moments were built in for participants to engage with each other, celebrate shared success, and build a strong and sustained sense of community that *encouraged the heart* and periodically reflected on the need to *know your why*.

Importantly, the role of subjective well-being in productivity has been explored (Honkaniemi et al., 2015), and has been found to affect an individual's ability to drive continuous behaviours such as creativity and innovation, meaning that when individuals have high levels of satisfaction and well-being, they are likely to be more engaged in creative and innovative practices (Hashim & Tan, 2015). In addition, creative problem solving can be boosted by positive emotions (Koveshnikov et al., 2014). Finally, subjective well-being affects how individuals are able to share knowledge (Cheung & Lee, 2007) due to those with high satisfaction levels being more likely to take part in knowledge sharing activities, promoting new ideas and innovative thoughts (Wang & Yang, 2017). All of this

was attended to by the leaders of this project, during each interaction with team members, stakeholders, and consultation participants. *Encouraging the heart* through attending to individual's needs for food, fun, and work that truly mattered was a constant.

Summary and Next Steps

Ultimately, the project produced a new CDP Competency Framework that is comprehensive, reflects current and best practice, and is the first of its kind across the world to include measurable performance indicators. The framework includes both competencies required of all CDPs (the National Profile) and specialized competencies unique to specific roles within the sector. It clearly delineates the national standard for CDP practice, and with launch of the national certification, Canada will hold the only competency-based, ISO-Compliant certification for the career development sector internationally. Every facet of the project was completed with stakeholder engagement and ownership as a significant priority, which resulted in unprecedented numbers of CDPs, training institutions, employers, and provincial and territorial governments being actively involved and excited participants that helped push the project forward to its successful conclusion.

Globally, a significant body of evidence points to how quality career services delivered by qualified professionals leads to a wide range of positive labour market outcomes for clients. Through having a clear national standard for practice, the certification program positions Canada to be an international leader in the delivery of career services that help Canadians to successfully obtain sustainable and fulfilling work outcomes, and provides a road map for other nations who wish to update or implement a national certification program. The increased cohesion that has been brought to the field through a new definition of CDP, renewed Competency Framework, National Profile, Industry Standard, and Code of Ethics will significantly enhance the quality of service offered by CDPs to their clients. The field is united and ready to raise the bar and move to a cohesive model of national certification.

As a direct result of this project, the Canadian career development field is primed and, ready to respond to increased demands and complexities in practice, where the need for a robust and measurable assessment to ensure quality career development services has never been greater. A strong career development sector strengthens all other industry sectors across the labour market by promoting targeted skills development, labour market attachment, and fluid transitions as skill demands shift. The level of engagement across the career development sector was outstanding at every step of the project, and the leadership and quality of volunteerism has brought the field together in so many rich and unanticipated ways. More than 6000 volunteer hours were logged as in-kind contributions, demonstrating the significant commitment the Canadian career development sector has to raising the bar on its praxis. This immense demonstration of volunteerism was truly remarkable and a source of immense pride across the sector. Crucially, this initiative was unreservedly fueled, driven, and owned by the career development sector from across Canada.

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Etta St. John Wileman Award for Outstanding Achievement in Career Development

This award is designed to recognize and celebrate individuals who have made an outstanding impact in enhancing the field of career development, regardless of role or position within an organization.

It is given in the name of Etta St. John Wileman, a champion and crusader of career, work and workplace development in Canada in the early 20th century.

Consider nominating someone who is a mentor, educator, advisor, advocate and role model. CERIC encourages nominations of members of equity groups.

For full information on nominations and selection, visit **ceric.ca/wileman_award**.

The evolution of recognition

CERIC's Wileman Selection Committee has been working to build on the proud history of the award and evolve it to become more inclusive and accessible. We have:

- ✔ expanded committee membership to include more diverse voices
- ✔ shifted the focus from lifetime to outstanding achievement
- ✔ revised the criteria, expanding the definition of leadership and adding demonstrated commitment to justice, equity, diversity & inclusion

Join us in being able to recognize the full spectrum of professionals making a meaningful difference in career development in Canada.

WATCH FOR NOMINATIONS TO OPEN IN SPRING 2024

Prix Etta St. John Wileman pour les réalisations remarquables en développement de carrière

Ce prix vise à souligner et à célébrer l'apport des personnes qui ont remarquablement amélioré le domaine du développement de carrière, peu importe leur rôle ou leur position au sein d'une organisation.

Ce prix honore la mémoire d'Etta St. John Wileman, pionnière et fervente militante du développement de carrière et de l'amélioration des conditions de travail au Canada au début du XXe siècle.

Envisagez de proposer la candidature de quelqu'un étant un modèle à suivre, un formateur, un conseiller, un porte-parole et ayant été un mentor.

Le CERIC encourage les candidatures de membres de groupes en quête d'équité.

Pour plus d'information sur les nominations et la sélection, visitez **ceric.ca/prix_wileman**.

Évolution de la reconnaissance

Le comité de sélection Wileman du CERIC s'est efforcé de s'appuyer sur la fière histoire du prix et de le faire évoluer pour le rendre plus inclusif et plus accessible. Nous avons :

- ✔ élargi la composition des comités pour inclure des voix plus diverses
- ✔ transféré la focalisation de l'ensemble de la carrière vers les réalisations exceptionnelles
- ✔ révisé les critères, en élargissant la définition du leadership et en ajoutant un engagement manifeste envers la justice, l'équité, la diversité et l'inclusion.

Rejoignez-nous pour reconnaître l'ensemble des professionnels qui font une différence significative dans le développement de carrière au Canada.

LES NOMINATIONS SERONT OUVERTES AU PRINTEMPS 2024

CERIC Advancing Career Development in Canada | Promouvoir le développement de carrière au Canada

ceric.ca

Graduate Student Engagement Program

Programme de mobilisation des étudiants aux cycles supérieurs

CERIC encourages the engagement of Canada's full-time graduate students whose academic focus is in career development or related fields. Faculty members are asked to help identify appropriate graduate students.

Through this program, graduate students will be introduced to CERIC and invited to:

- **Compete for the CERIC GSEP Award**, which provides free registration and up to $1,000 to cover expenses to attend and present at **Cannexus, Canada's Career Development Conference**;
- **Join one of CERIC's committees**;
- **Connect with other graduate students** through the GSEP Network;
- **Write for the CareerWise website**, featuring the top career news and views, with a popular weekly newsletter curating the best of the site;
- **Submit an article** to the peer-reviewed ***Canadian Journal of Career Development***.

THE APPLICATION WILL RE-OPEN IN SUMMER 2024

Ce programme du CERIC encourage la mobilisation des étudiants canadiens aux cycles supérieurs dont les études portent sur le développement de carrière et/ou un domaine connexe. Nous demandons l'assistance du corps enseignant pour nous aider à repérer des étudiants admissibles.

Grâce à ce programme, les étudiants aux cycles supérieurs feront la connaissance du CERIC et seront invités à :

- **Tenter de remporter le Prix GSEP du CERIC,** qui permet à l'étudiant d'obtenir une entrée gratuite à **Cannexus, le Congrès canadien en développement de carrière,** à la présentation d'une affiche et ainsi que jusqu'à 1 000 $ pour couvrir les dépenses associées à la participation du congrès ;
- **Joindre un des comités du CERIC ;**
- **Créer des liens avec les autres étudiants** via le réseau GSEP ;
- **Écrire pour le site Web OrientAction,** qui présente les derniers points de vue et nouvelles en matière de carrière, avec de populaires bulletins hebdomadaires regroupant le meilleur du site ;
- **Soumettre un article** pour la ***Revue canadienne de développement de carrière***, une publication académique évaluée par les pairs.

L'APPLICATION ROUVRIRA À L'ÉTÉ 2024

For more information, contact gsep@ceric.ca or visit ceric.ca/grad_program.

Pour de plus amples renseignements, envoyez un courriel à gsep@ceric.ca ou visitez le site ceric.ca/programme_etudiants.

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Determining the Relationship Between Perceptions of the Nursing Profession and Attitudes Towards Career Future of Nursing Senior Students: An Observational Study

Kezban Koraş Sözen & Tuğba Aydemir
Nigde Omer Halisdemir University, Turkey

Abstract

This investigation aimed to explore the correlation between the perceptions of nursing senior students regarding the nursing profession and their outlook on their future career prospects. The study sample for this descriptive and relationship-seeking research comprised 143 senior students enrolled in the nursing department of a university. The research was finalized with the participation of 105 students who satisfied the inclusion criteria and provided their consent. It was ascertained that Career Future Inventory (CFI) scores exhibited notable variations based on the students' gender, preparedness for the nursing profession, and their post-graduate employment status. The research revealed a substantial positive correlation among the CFI scale's overall score, the sub-dimensions of career adaptability and career optimism, and the total score of the Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS). Furthermore, the sub-dimensions of age, gender, post-graduation work plan, and PNPS were identified as the contributing factors explaining 53.7% of the variation in the students' career plans. The study revealed that the students' perceptions of the status and the quality of the nursing profession were significant factors influencing their career plans. Consequently, it is essential to focus on fostering a positive professional perception among students by incorporating professional values and ethics into nursing education. By doing so, we can positively influence their attitudes towards the nursing profession and, in turn, enhance their career aspirations.

Keywords: Career Future Plan, Nursing, Professional Perception, Professional Qualities, Professional Statute.

Perception is the mental representation and understanding formed by an individual through a combination of knowledge, experiences, attitudes, and beliefs. On the other hand, a profession encompasses all the occupations acquired through an extensive and rigorous education process, with clearly defined boundaries guided by ethical rules and principles (Glerean et al., 2017; Şen et al., 2021). Occupational perception can be profoundly influenced by numerous factors, including cultural norms, the level of societal development, political dynamics, and the overall welfare environment. These elements play a crucial role in shaping how individuals perceive and understand various occupations and professions within a given society (Şen et al., 2021). Hence, each profession holds its distinct perception in every country. Consequently, it becomes essential for individuals selecting their profession to make a conscious and informed decision, equipping themselves with comprehensive knowledge about their chosen field and pursuing it passionately to contribute to its advancement and elevate its status (Sönmez et al., 2019).

The way individuals feel and think about nursing, as well as their perceptions of themselves and the environment they work in, play a vital role in shaping their overall perception of the nursing profession (Avcı Çetin et al., 2019; Mollaoğlu and Yanmış, 2019). Professional perception encompasses a multifaceted understanding that nursing students have about themselves, their surroundings, and their chosen profession. It involves their thoughts, emotions, and perspectives regarding various aspects of nursing. (Avcı Çetin et al., 2019, Kabanya and Mwaniki, 2016). The way nursing students perceive their chosen profession plays a significant

role in influencing their decisions to continue their education in nursing, pursue their career in the field, and shape their long-term career plans. (Apaydın Cırık et al., 2022; Ayaz Alkaya, 2018).

A career encompasses the continuous and purposeful journey of an individual's personal and professional growth. It involves acquiring knowledge, skills, and abilities through education, training, and experiences, which empowers them to pursue their aspirations and ambitions successfully (Karadaş et al., 2017). Career planning involves a thoughtful and systematic process of self-evaluation, exploration, and goal-setting to map out the desired progression in one's professional journey. It is a proactive approach to managing and shaping one's career path, driven by self-awareness and a clear understanding of personal strengths, interests, values, and aspirations (Bektemür et al., 2016, Kavurmacı et al., 2021). Absolutely, career planning is of paramount importance for both student and graduate nurses, just as it is in all sectors. In the nursing profession, having a well-thought-out career plan can significantly impact an individual's personal and professional development, job satisfaction, and overall success in their chosen career path (Kalafat, 2012; Waddell et al.,2015; Yücel Çınar et al., 2011). Engaging in career planning during their education offers numerous benefits that contribute to their success and growth as nursing professionals (Avcı Çetin et al., 2019, Glerean et al., 2017, Kavurmacı et al., 2021, Waddell et al.,2015).

The perception of the nursing profession can significantly influence various aspects of nurse candidates' personal and professional development, including their motivation, self-confidence, and interpersonal relationships. A positive perception may lead them to set ambitious career goals within nursing, such as pursuing advanced degrees, specialized certifications, or leadership roles. When the literature is examined, some studies include nursing profession perception and career planning (Apaydın Cırık et al., 2022, Atefi et al., 2014, Avcı Çetin et al., 2019, Ayaz Alkaya, 2018, Ingersoll et al., 2002; Sönmez et al., 2019). Despite the importance of understanding the relationship between nursing profession perception and career planning in nursing students, the existing studies on this subject are relatively limited. Accordingly, this research was undertaken with the purpose of establishing the correlation between the perceptions of nursing senior students regarding the nursing profession and their attitudes concerning their future career paths.

Research questions

(1) What are the students' perceptions of the nursing profession?
(2) What are the students' career plans regarding the nursing profession?
(3) Do students' perceptions of the nursing profession affect their career plans?

Methods

Type of Research

This study is a descriptive and relationship-seeking research endeavor designed to investigate the correlation between nursing senior students' perceptions of the nursing profession and their attitudes concerning their future career trajectories.

Population and Sample of the Research

The study's population, or universe, included 143 senior nursing students enrolled in the health sciences faculty of a university during the academic year 2021-2022. The inclusion criteria for sampling in this study were as follows: being enrolled in the health sciences faculty as a senior nursing student during the 2021-2022 academic year, actively pursuing continuing education at the faculty during the data collection period, and willingly volunteering to participate in the study.

Participants whose data collection forms were incompletely filled, those who expressed a lack of willingness to participate, and those who were absent during the study period were excluded from the research. The sample selection employed an appropriate sampling method.

However, 28 students who were yet to graduate, 4 who expressed a lack of willingness to participate, and 6 who incompletely filled in the scales were excluded from the study.. The research concluded with the active participation of 105 senior nursing students. To report the study's findings and methodology, the researchers utilized the STROBE checklist, a standardized tool ensuring transparent and comprehensive reporting of observational studies.

Data Collection

The data for the study were collected during the period between May 1, 2022, and May 31, 2022, following the acquisition of all required permissions. Three instruments were employed to gather the study's data: the Personal Information Form (PIF), the Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS), and the Career Future Inventory (CFI). The PIF was utilized to ascertain students' descriptive characteristics, the PNPS to assess their professional perceptions, and the CFI to determine their career future attributes.The data collection tools were thoroughly explained to the students, and their informed consent was sought before proceeding. The data collection process was conducted in person, and the students were requested to read and complete the data collection forms under the researchers' guidance.

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form (PIF)

This form comprises eight questions that were meticulously crafted by the researcher, drawing upon relevant literature (Kalafat, 2012; Yücel Çınar et al., 2011). These questions aim to discern essential characteristics of the students, including age, gender, and their career preferences.

Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS)

The data collection tool utilized in this study was the Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS), developed by Eşer et al. in 2004. The PNPS comprises two sub-dimensions: "Professional Qualities" (17 items) with a score range of 17 to 85, and "Professional Statute" (5 items) with a score range of 5 to 25. These sub-dimensions encompass various statements that describe different aspects of the nursing profession. The scale consists of a total of 22 Likert-type items. A higher total score obtained from the scale (ranging from 22 to 110) indicates a positive perception of the nursing profession (Eşer et al., 2004). In this study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the PNPS was found to be 0.89, indicating good internal consistency and reliability of the scale.

Career Future Inventory (CFI)

The scale used in this study to assess individuals' positive career planning attitudes was initially developed by Rottinghaus et al. in 2005. Kalafat conducted the validity and reliability study of this scale in 2012 (Kalafat, 2012; Rottinghaus et al., 2005). The scale comprises a total of 25 items and is organized into three sub-dimensions: career adaptability, career optimism, and perceived knowledge. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this study's scale was determined to be 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and reliability of the instrument. This suggests that the scale is a reliable tool for evaluating individuals' positive career planning attitudes in the context of this research.

Statistical Analysis

The research data were subjected to statistical analysis using the SPSS v24.0 software package. The normal distribution of the data was assessed utilizing the Shapiro-Wilk test and histogram graphics. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the socio-demographic characteristics of the students. To compare the students' socio-demographic characteristics and the scores obtained from the scales, T-test and one-way ANOVA were utilized. Pearson correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships between the scales. To identify the factors influencing career

plans, stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was employed. The statistical significance was determined based on the criterion of $P<0.05$.

Results

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participating students. The mean age of the students was found to be 22.62±2.05, with 82.9% of them being female. Regarding academic performance, 58.1% of the students had an academic grade point average ranging from 2.00 to 2.99. Regarding their perceptions and career plans, 75.2% of the students expressed a liking for the nursing department. Additionally, 82.9% of the students reported feeling prepared for their future profession as nurses, and 81.9% expressed a desire to work as nurses after graduation. When asked about the reasons for choosing the nursing department, 46.7% of the students stated that employment opportunities played a significant role in their decision. Moreover, 62.9% of the students mentioned that they had not participated in any activities related to career planning (Table 1).

The research findings revealed that the students' average total score on the Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS) was 91.0±12.48, indicating a positive perception of the nursing profession. Similarly, the Career Futures Inventory (CFI) total score average was 83.53±7.59, reflecting positive career plans among the students. Furthermore, a significant negative correlation was observed between the students' age and their PNPS total score, as well as their professional qualities scores. This suggests that as the students' age increased, their perceptions of the nursing profession and their professional qualities within the field tended to decrease.

The study findings indicated significant differences in the Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS) total and professional statute scores among students based on their liking for the nursing department. Notably, students who expressed a preference for the nursing department had higher scores in terms of their professional perceptions. Similarly, the Career Futures Inventory (CFI) total scores, career optimism, and perceived knowledge subscale scores exhibited significant differences based on the students' gender. Male students obtained higher CFI scores compared to their female counterparts. Moreover, the professional statute subscale and PNPS total scores varied depending on the students' readiness for the profession. Students who reported feeling prepared for their future career in nursing had significantly higher scores on these scales. Furthermore, the professional qualities subscale and PNPS total scores differed concerning the students' post-graduation study plans. Those who intended to pursue a career in the nursing field obtained significantly higher scores compared to those considering different career paths. Additionally, significant differences were observed in the CFI total scores and Career Adaptability subscale scores concerning the students' readiness for the profession and post-graduate employment status (Table 1 and Table 2).

Upon examining the relationship between the Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS) and Career Futures Inventory (CFI) scale total and sub-dimension mean scores, the research revealed noteworthy results. Specifically, a significant positive correlation was found between the CFI scale's career adaptability and career optimism sub-dimensions and its total score, as well as the PNPS occupational statute sub-dimension and the total score. These findings, detailed in Table 1 and Table 2, indicate that higher scores in the CFI career adaptability and career optimism sub-dimensions were associated with an elevated CFI total score. Similarly, a stronger occupational statute perception, as measured by the PNPS occupational statute sub-dimension, was positively correlated with higher PNPS total scores. These positive correlations suggest that students with greater career adaptability, optimism, and perception of their occupational statute tend to exhibit more positive overall perceptions of the nursing profession, as reflected in their PNPS scores.

In the hierarchical multiple regression analysis, the Career Futures Inventory (CFI) scale

Table 1

Disparities in Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS) and Career Futures Inventory (CFI) Score Based on Students' Demographic and Descriptive Characteristics (N=105)

Variables	n (%)	Nursing Profession Profession Perception Scale (PNPS)					
		Professional Qualities		Professional Statute		Total Mean (SD)	t/F/r
		Mean (SD)	t/F/r	Mean (SD)	t/F/r		
Age, Mean ±SD	22.62 ±2.05	74.19(9.65)	-,265**	19.91(2.81)	-.039	91.06(12.48)	r =-,211*
Gender							
Female	87 (82.9)	74.37(9.70)	=.439	19.81(2.85)	*t*=-.785	91.06(12.74)	*t*=.107
Male	18 (17.1)	73.27(9.65)	*p*=.662	20.38(2.59)	*p*=.434	90.72(11.46)	*p*=.915
Academic Achievement Level (0-4)							
2-2.99	61 (58.1)	73.14(10.06)	*t*=-1.308	19.60(2.80)	*t*=.-1.325	90.52(13.01)	*t*=.-.467
≥3	44 (41.9)	75.63(8.97)	*p*=.194	20.34(2.80)	*p*=.188	91.68(11.81)	*p*=.641
Reason for Choosing the Nursing Department							
Voluntarily	48 (47.7)	75.52(10.36)	F=1.026	20.81(2.63)	F=5.089	92.58(14.11)	F=1.266
Family's Preference	8 (7.6)	75.0(6.54)	*p*=.362	19.75(2.05)	*p*=.008	94.0(6.74)	*p*=.286
Due to Job Opportunities	49 (46.7)	72.75(9.30)		19.06(2.86)		88.97(11.29)	
Love for Nursing							
Yes	79 (75.2)	75.32(9.13)	F=2.900	20.30(2.75)	F=3.214	92.49(12.20)	F=3.027
No	13 (12.4)	68.69(12.5)	*p*=.060	18.84(3.33)	*p*=.044	83.69(14.24)	*p*=.043
Indecisive	13 (12.4)	72.76(8.07)		18.61(2.02)		89.30(10.16)	
Readiness for Nursing Professoin							
Yes	87 (82.9)	75.01(8.26)	*t*=1.373	20.22(2.73)	*t*=2.597	92.41(11.05)	t=2.604
No	18 (17.1)	70.22(14.30)	*p*=.185	18.38(2.74)	*p*=.011	84.22(15.59)	*p*=.011
Post-Graduation Plan							
Nursing	86 (81.9)	74.60(9.61)	F=3.608	19.77(2.64)	F=2.368	92.13(12.46)	F=5.705
Nurse Educator	17 (16.2)	74.176(6.94)	*p*=.031	20.94(3.45)	*p*=.099	88.41(8.27)	*p*=.004
Non-nursing Profession	2 (1.9)	56.50(20.50)		17.0(0.00)		64.5(12.26)	
Participation in Career Planning Activity							
Yes	39 (37.1)	75.87(10.02)	t=1.377	20.84(2.69)	t=2.688	92.25(13.7)	t=.785
No	66 (62.9)	73.19(9.36)	*p*=.171	19.36(2.75)	*p*=.008	90.27(11.73)	p=.434

SD: standard deviation
PNPS, Perception of Nursing Professional Scale; CFI, Career Futures Inventory.

Table 2

The Association between Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS) and Career Futures Inventory (CFI) Scores (N=105)

Variables	Career Futures Inventory (CFI)							
	Career Adaptability		Career Optimism		Perceived Knowledge		CFI Total	
	Mean (SD)	t/F/r	Mean (SD)	t/F/r	Mean (SD)	t/F/r	Mean (SD)	t/F/r
Age	39.27(5.08)	r=-.005	35.56(3.38)	r=-.119	8.69(1.86)	r=-.183	83.53(7.59)	r=-.101
Professional Qualities		r=.164		r=.155		r=-.101		r=.154
Professional Statute		r=,747**		r=,322**		r=.127		r=,675**
PNPS- Total		r=,195*		r=,220*		r=-.040		r=,219*
Gender								
Female	38.97(4.95)	*t*=-1.331	35.16(2.74)	*t*=-1.847p	8.39(1.61)	*t*=-3.933	82.52(6.69)	*t*= -2.427a
Male	40.72(5.56)	*p*= 0.186	37.5(5.22)		10.16(2.28)	*p*= <.001	88.38(9.78)	*p*=.025
Academic Achievement Level (0-4)								
2-2.99	38.85(4.57)	*t*=-1.006	35.49(3.73)	*t*=-0.249	8.72(2.05)	*t*=0.168	83.06(7.75)	*t*= -0.742
≥3	39.86(5.71)	*p*= 0.317	35.65(2.88)	*p*= 0.804	8.65(1.56)	*p*= 0.867	84.18(7.39)	*p*= 0.46
Reason for Choosing the Nursing Department								
Voluntarily	40.89(5.06)	F=5.65	35.33(2.57)	F=0.972	8.33(1.43)	F=1.782	84.56(6.56)	F= 0.866
Family's Preference	39.87(4.05)	*p*= 0.005	34.37(2.19)	*p*= 0.382	9.25(1.83)	*p*= 0.173	83.5(4.47)	*p*= 0.424
Due to Job Opportunities	37.59(4.78)		35.97(4.15)		8.95(2.17)		82.53(8.81)	
Love for Nursing								
Yes	40.01(5.03)	F=3.702	35.32(3.25)	F=1.506	8.46(1.65)	F=3.634	83.81(7.28)	F= 0.341
No	36.46(3.84)	*p*= 0.028	37.07(4.31)	*p*= 0.227	9.92(2.66)	*p*= 0.03	83.46(8.87)	*p*= 0.712
Indecisive	37.61(5.37)		35.46(3.01)		8.84(1.77)		81.92(8.54)	
Readiness for Nursing Profession								
Yes	39.77(5.05)	*t*=2.231	35.63(3.64)	*t*=0.725	8.8(1.83)	*t*=1.471	84.21(7.85)	*t*= 2.064 a
No	36.88(4.63)	*p*= 0.028	35.22(1.73)	*p*= 0.471	8.11(1.90)	*p*= 0.144	80.22(5.15)	*p*= 0.042
Post-Graduation Plan								
Nursing	39.29(4.93)	F=3.441	35.62(3.29)	F=2.359	8.68(1.79)	F=3.553	83.60(7.28)	F= 5.952 a
Nurse Educator	40.23(5.26)	*p*= 0.036	35.82(3.48)	*p*= 0.1	9.11(1.96)	*p*= 0.032	85.17(7.12)	*p*= 0.004
Non-nursing Profession	30.5(0.70)		30.5(4.94)		5.5(0.70)		66.5(6.36)	
Participation in Career Planning Activity								
Yes	40.64(5.35)	*t*=2.152	35.5(3.61)	*t*=103	8.92(1.84)	*t*=103	85.15(7.47)	*t*=1.696
No	38.46(4.76)	*p*= 0.034	35.54(3.27)	*p*= 0.949	8.56(1.87)	*p*= 0.337	82.57(7.55)	*p*= 0.093

[a] p < .05; SD: standard deviation

PNPS, Perception of Nursing Professional Scale; CFI, Career Futures Inventory

and its sub-dimensions were considered dependent variables. The analysis was conducted in two steps. In the first step, variables such as age, gender, job readiness status, and post-graduation work plan were included in the model. In the second step, the PNPS professional statute and PNPS professional qualities were added to the model. The results of the analysis revealed that gender, post-graduation work plan, and the PNPS professional statute subscale significantly influenced the CFI total scores. The model generated from the regression analysis was statistically significant ($p<.001$), and the variables included in the model accounted for 53.7% of the variance (Adjusted R-squared = 0.537). Notably, the PNPS professional statute level emerged as a critical factor affecting the CFI scores. The addition of the PNPS professional statute subscale to the model resulted in a substantial increase of 37.3% (R-squared change = 0.373) in the variance explained by the model. These findings highlight the significance of the students' gender, post-graduation work plan, and their perception of the professional statute (as measured by the PNPS) in predicting their career scores as assessed by the CFI scale and its sub-dimensions.

In the hierarchical multiple regression analysis, Career Adaptability scores were found to be significantly influenced by the variables of occupational plan and PNPS-Professional Statute. The model created from this analysis accounted for 56.3% of the variance in Career Adaptability scores (Adjusted R-squared = 0.563). Similarly, Career Optimism scores were significantly affected by gender and PNPS-Professional Statute. The model for Career Optimism explained 15.3% of the variance (Adjusted R-squared = 0.153). Moreover, in the analysis of Perceived Knowledge sub-dimension scores, age, vocational plan, and PNPS-Professional Qualities sub-dimension emerged as significant variables. These factors accounted for 21.1% of the variance in Perceived Knowledge scores (Adjusted R-squared = 0.211).

Regarding the effects of individual variables on the model, age, gender, and post-graduation study plan were found to significantly influence the model. Specifically, Perceived Knowledge about the job market increased as age decreased, and male students exhibited more positive career planning attitudes compared to female students. Additionally, students who expressed a desire to work in a profession other than nursing had lower career planning attitudes when compared to those who aspired to work in the nursing field. These results provide valuable insights into the factors that affect Career Adaptability, Career Optimism, and Perceived Knowledge among the students, which can be utilized to develop strategies for enhancing their career planning attitudes and decisions.

Furthermore, the variables of PNPS professional statute and PNPS professional qualities were also found to significantly impact the model. Specifically, students with a higher perception of the professional statute demonstrated a more positive attitude toward career planning. On the other hand, students with a lower perception of professional qualities exhibited a greater understanding of the job market, as reflected in their higher Perceived Knowledge scores (as presented in Table 3).

These findings underscore the importance of students' perceptions of the professional statute and professional qualities in shaping their career planning attitudes and awareness about the job market. Developing a strong and positive perception of the nursing profession and fostering essential professional qualities can play a crucial role in enhancing students' career planning decisions and aspirations.

Discussion

In this research, which explored the perceptions of senior nursing students regarding the nursing profession and their attitudes toward their career future, it was found that the students held positive perceptions of their profession and had optimistic career plans. These positive findings contrast with the results of other studies, such as Yücel Çınar et al. (2011), where the perception of the profession was reported to be at a moderate level. Additionally, studies conducted by Apaydın Cırık et al. (2022) and Sönmez et al. (2019) revealed high

Table 3

Significant Factors Influencing Nursing Students' Career Future Plans: Outcomes of Hierarchical Regression Analysis (N=105)

Dependant Variable	Step	Independent Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	95 % CI Lower-Upper	Model
CFI Total	1	Gender	-5.229	1.841	-.261	-2.840	**.005**	-8.882- -1.577	F= 5.877
		Non-nursing profession	-15.116	5.192	-.273	-2.912	**.004**	-25.416- -4.816	*p*<.001
									R^2 Ch.= .190
	2	Gender	-4.690	1.369	-.234	-3.425	**.001**	-7.407- -1.972	F=21.113
		Non-nursing profession	-11.599	3.936	-.210	-2.947	**.004**	-19.410- -3.788	*p*<.001
		PNPS-Professional Statute	1.753	.193	.649	9.105	**.000**	1.371- 2.135	R^2 Ch= .373
	Overall model								Adj.R^2=0.537
CA	1	Non-nursing profession	-8.680	3.648	-.235	-2.379	**.019**	-15.917- -1.442	F=3.000
									p<.001
									R^2 Ch= .107
	2	Non-nursing profession	-5.843	2.560	-.158	-2.282	**.025**	-10.924- -.762	F=23.292
		PNPS-Professional Statute	1.325	.125	.733	10.580	**.000**	1.076- 1.573	*p*<.001
									R^2 Ch= .481
	Overall model								Adj.R^2=0.563
CO	1	Gender	-2.366	.859	-.265	-2.756	**.007**	-4.070- -.663	F=3.262
									p<.001
									R^2 Ch.=.115
	2	Gender	-2.301	.826	-.257	-2.785	**.006**	-3.941- -.661	F=4.143
		PNPS- Professional Statut	.353	.116	.293	3.038	**.003**	.122- .583	*p*<.001
									R^2 Ch= .087
	Overall model								Adj. R^2= .153
PK	1	Gender	-1.768	.446	-.360	-3.961	**.000**	-2.654- -.883	F=6.544
									p<.001
									R^2 Ch= .207
	2	Age	-.192	.085	-.212	-2.261	**.026**	-.360- -.023	F=5.627
		Gender	-1.683	.438	-.342	-3.839	**.000**	-2.552- -.813	p<.001
		Non-nursing profession	-2.708	1.260	-.200	-2.150	**.034**	-5.208- -.208	R^2 Ch.=.049
		PNPS-Professional Qualities	-.045	.018	-.234	-2.442	**.016**	-.082- -.008	
	Overall model								Adj. R2=.211

PNPS, Perception of Nursing Professional Scale; CFI, Career Futures Inventory. CA= Career Adaptability; CO Career Optimism; PK=Perceived Knowledge; R^2 Ch.= R^2 Changed; SE: Standart Error, β: Standardized Beta, CI: Confidence İnterval. Adj R^2: Adjusted R^2.

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job image scores among students. However, Taşkın Yılmaz et al. (2014) reported a negative image of nursing in their study.

In our research, the positive perception of nursing and the optimistic career plans among the students are attributed to the internalization of professional values received during their nursing education. It is believed that the emphasis on professional values during their education positively influenced their perceptions of the nursing profession and career plans. The study's outcomes suggest that fostering and instilling these professional values in nursing education can contribute significantly to shaping students' perceptions and attitudes toward their future careers in nursing.

Career planning is considered a strategic approach that commences with career choice and necessitates continuous development throughout the education process (Akman Yılmaz et al., 2016; Avcı Çetin et al., 2019). In this study, a positive and significant correlation was identified between the total score and sub-dimensions of the Career Futures Inventory (CFI) scale and the total score and sub-dimensions of the Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS). Similarly, other studies conducted by Mollaoğlu and Yanmış (2019) and Şen et al. (2021) have also reported a relationship between the PNPS and CFI total scores.

Based on these findings, it can be inferred that as students' positive perception of the nursing profession increases, their career planning attitudes and aspirations also tend to elevate. This suggests that cultivating a favorable and constructive perception of the nursing profession can positively impact students' career planning decisions and motivations for their future in nursing. Thus, emphasizing the importance of positive professional perceptions during nursing education can be a valuable strategy for nurturing proactive career planning among nursing students.

Our research revealed that gender significantly influences Career Futures Inventory (CFI) scores, with male students displaying more positive career-planning attitudes compared to female students. This finding contrasts with the studies conducted by Sönmez et al. (2019) and Avcı Çetin et al. (2019), where CFI scores did not exhibit significant differences based on gender. Conversely, in the study conducted by Karadaş et al. (2017), variations in CFI sub-dimension scores were evident between genders.

The inclination of male students to consider nursing as a viable career choice, in contrast to their female counterparts, appears to be a prevalent trend within the population. It is conceivable that this tendency stems from societal perceptions seeking to challenge the notion that nursing is a profession more suited to women.

This gender-based disparity in career-planning attitudes underscores the importance of addressing prevailing gender biases and stereotypes related to certain professions. Promoting diversity and inclusivity in career choices, including nursing, can be instrumental in dismantling these misconceptions and fostering a supportive environment that empowers all students, regardless of gender, to pursue their desired career paths.

Another crucial aspect that can significantly influence career choice in nursing is the perceived status of the nursing profession within different professions, specifically its social value (Glerean et al., 2017). In our study, we found that the occupational statute sub-dimension of the Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS) significantly contributed to explaining students' career future plans, with students who possessed a high perception of the occupational statute exhibiting more positive career planning attitudes (as presented in Table 3).

In the study conducted by Atefi et al. (2014), it was highlighted that nurses' interactions with other health professionals play a vital role in their job satisfaction. Moreover, professional development opportunities and the establishment of career advancement programs were identified as contributing factors to nurses' job satisfaction. Furthermore, Glerean et al. (2017) emphasized that young individuals' perceptions of the nursing profession are influenced by factors such as their relatives, friends, media representations,

and influential figures in their lives. These findings collectively underscore the significance of the social perception and status of the nursing profession, as well as the role of interactions with other healthcare professionals and opportunities for career growth, in shaping students' career plans and job satisfaction in the nursing field. Addressing these factors can contribute to creating a supportive and fulfilling environment for nurses, thus fostering a positive outlook on their chosen career path.

Nurses must possess a keen awareness of their professional qualities to provide high-quality services that honor individuals' uniqueness, integrity, values, and choices (Ayaz Alkaya, 2018). In our study, we found that students with lower perceptions of the nursing profession's quality demonstrated higher knowledge scores about the job market. Other studies (Glerean et al., 2017; Şen et al., 2021) have similarly reported that the perception of both students and employees toward the nursing profession is negatively affected by society's undervaluation of nursing.

In this research, we hypothesize that students with lower professional perception may closely monitor the job markets to compensate for their perceived shortcomings or to actively explore potential opportunities after graduation. The motivation to improve their perception of professional qualifications or to proactively follow job markets could be driving this behavior among such students.

The outcomes of this study highlight the significance of nurturing a positive and valued perception of the nursing profession among students to elevate their sense of professional qualities and commitment to providing exceptional care. Fostering a positive image of nursing within society is also vital in attracting and retaining skilled individuals in the nursing profession..

The positive attitudes of nursing students toward their department, their readiness for the nursing profession, and their aspiration to work in nursing-related fields after graduation are factors that have been consistently reported to positively influence both their professional perception and career plans (Akman Yılmaz et al., 2016; Apaydın Cırık et al., 2022).

In our study, a majority of the students expressed a fondness for the nursing department, felt well-prepared for their future profession, and indicated their desire to work as nurses following graduation. These findings align with similar results obtained in other studies (Akman Yılmaz et al., 2016; Karadaş et al., 2017; Yücel Çınar et al., 2011).

The positive perceptions of nursing among the students in our study appear to stem from the gratification they experience in providing care, where they can put their theoretical knowledge into practical skills during clinical practices. The opportunity to engage in hands-on caregiving and apply their learning in real-life scenarios seems to reinforce their positive outlook on the nursing profession and further enhances their motivation for their future career plans in nursing.

The study revealed that individuals who harbor a genuine affection for the nursing department and feel fully prepared for their future profession exhibit higher scores on both the Nursing Profession Perception Scale (PNPS) and Career Futures Inventory (CFI). Additionally, those who express a desire to work as a nurse after graduation demonstrate a higher perception of the nursing profession, whereas those aspiring to work as academicians obtain higher career scores (as presented in Table 1).

These findings are well-supported by existing studies in the literature (Avcı Çetin et al., 2019; Ayaz Alkaya, 2018; Sönmez et al., 2019), which align with our research outcomes. The act of providing assistance and care to individuals fosters a sense of spiritual fulfillment, contributing to job satisfaction, and significantly influencing students' professional perceptions and career scores.

Conclusion

In conclusion, nursing students' perceptions of the status and quality of their profession are critical determinants influencing their career planning. As such, institutions that offer nursing education have a significant role to play in shaping positive

nursing perceptions and fostering well-informed career plans among their students. To achieve this, it is highly recommended that universities and nursing education providers implement career education programs. These programs can offer valuable guidance and support to nursing students as they navigate their career paths. By participating in such initiatives, students can gain a deeper understanding of the nursing profession, its potential for growth and advancement, and the various opportunities available within the field.

Acknowledgments

The authors express their sincere gratitude to the nursing students who willingly participated in this study.

Authors' Contributions

KKS: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, writing –original draft, writing –review & editing, visualization, formal analysis, supervision. TA: Conceptualization, methodology, writing –review & editing, formal analysis, visualization, supervision. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

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Retirees Paying it Forward: A Retiree/Faculty Mentorship Pilot Program

Sanne Kaas-Mason. *University of Toronto*
Janice Waddell. *Toronto Metropolitan University*
Karen Spalding. *Queens University*
Dr. Wendy Freeman. *Toronto Metropolitan University*
Mary Wheeler

Abstract

Retirees often have a desire to offer meaningful contributions to their academic community after retiring from their academic roles. This article presents findings from a study of a multi-component mentorship program, with a mentorship development component and a career focus, conducted in a Canadian post-secondary institution. In the mentorship program, retiree faculty served as mentors to faculty members from across the academic career continuum. A Merriam-informed case study approach was used to delineate the study, and the analysis of the data was informed by established processes for reflexive thematic analysis (TA), a method for systematic analytic engagement with qualitative data to produce themes. A primary finding from the study was that retiree faculty represent a relevant and promising resource as mentors. Further, both mentors and mentees reported that the intentional focus on the mentoring relationship, the mentor and mentee development program and the voluntary nature of participation were key components of the success. A future focus on understanding mentor motivations, mentor suitability and on mentoring across professions is encouraged. In addition, future researchers and/or administrators are encouraged to be intentionally inclusive of a diverse population in mentorship programs.

Keywords: Mentorship, Retiree Mentors, Mentees Across the Career Continuum, Mentorship Development, The Mentoring Relationship

Retirees often have a desire to offer meaningful contributions to their academic community after retiring from their academic roles (Hall, 2021). Mendez et al. (2017) propose that retirees who serve as mentors benefit from the opportunity to contribute to their field and to meaningfully give back to, and remain engaged with both their academic setting and their faculty colleagues. Mendez et al. (2019a) posit that the impact of retirees' mentorship of academic faculty across the career continuum includes enhanced retention, informed support for faculty as they navigate tenure/promotion processes and an improved overall socialization experience throughout the academic career.

This article presents findings from a pilot study of a multi-component mentorship program conducted in a Canadian post-secondary institution. In this program retiree faculty served as mentors to faculty members from across the academic career continuum. The mentor participants included retiree mentors who retired from their academic setting between 2017-2021. Mentees represented early, mid, and late career faculty members. The primary foci of the study were to inquire into the degree to which 1) faculty mentees experienced support in the development of strategies and their capacity to achieve success in achieving their individual career goals related to their faculty role, 2) retiree mentors developed expertise in the formal role of mentors, and 3) retiree mentors and faculty mentees reported enhanced career, professional and personal satisfaction.

Background

Mentoring in Academia

Garvin (2019) notes that navigating an academic career, with obligations to conduct research,

teach and engage in service to the academic community has the potential to be a demanding and isolating experience. Alves et al. (2019) and (Pope-Ruark, 2022) posit that the demands inherent in the role of faculty members may result in a state of burnout. Sabagh et al. (2018) conducted a review of faculty burnout and reported that higher levels of social support predict lower levels of burnout. Research further posits that the mentoring experiences of academic faculty have the potential to mitigate the risk of isolation and burnout (Cranmer et al., 2018; Ebuwei, 2020). Furthermore, the mentoring experience may enhance professional fulfillment, inclusive of increased productivity, career resilience and a more expansive knowledge about the academic promotion process (Crites et al., 2023; Menzin et al., 2020).

Career development focused mentoring in academia has been described as a dyadic relationship between an experienced mentor and a less experienced mentee with the goal of supporting and fostering the development of the mentee's academic career (Law et al., 2014; Waddell et al., 2017) This relationship is typically achieved through the exchange of experience, knowledge and information within the context of the dyads (Bean et al., 2014; Sarabipour et al., 2021). Mentors draw on their familiarity with institutional norms, values and procedures (Bean et al., 2014; Jackevicius et al., 2014) and their academic experiences to support the mentee as they explore, determine, set and prioritize their academic career goals. These dyadic relationships are often characterized by a hierarchical power differential that allows the mentor to disproportionally influence the scope and direction of the mentoring experience (Ragins, 2016; Waddell et al., 2017). To mitigate potential hierarchical power imbalances, and to ensure a diversity of perspectives, relationship-centered mentorship models are emerging. Examples include peer mentoring (Croke et al., 2021), mentorship circles (Waddell et al., 2017), group mentoring (Pololi & Evans, 2015) and programs modeled on a constellation structure such as mentor networks (DeCastro et al., 2013), or team mentoring, wherein one mentee has two mentors situated at different stages of the career continuum (Webber et al., 2020).

Mentor Outcomes

Martin and Douglas (2018) suggest that goals identified by mentors include the desire to help junior colleagues, share expertise, and to foster personal and professional development. Outcomes reported by various studies include a sense of contribution, pride, accomplishment, and personal satisfaction through mentoring individuals in an academic setting (Mendez et al., 2019a; Mendez et al., 2017; Zellers et al., 2008; Zerzan et al., 2009). Zerzan et al. (2009) also report that mentors gain professional stimulation and a sense of giving back to their profession through engagement in mentoring relationships. Goldberg and Baldwin (2018) further note that drawing on retirees as mentors can free up time for non-retired faculty to focus on teaching and research.

Mentee Outcomes

Faculty mentees benefit from informed support as they navigate tenure/promotion processes and their overall socialization experience throughout their academic career (Mendez et al., 2019a). The experiences of faculty members who have been mentored included i) a reduced sense of isolation, ii) positive socialization, iii) enhanced teaching effectiveness, iv) increased career satisfaction, v) higher rates of promotion, vi) enhanced salary, vii) accelerated leadership development, and viii) a greater sense of competence in navigating their institution and increased motivation to serve as mentors to others (Allen et al., 2004; Bean et al., 2014; Martin & Douglas, 2018; Mendez et al., 2019a; Waddell et al., 2017; Zellers et al., 2008). In particular, early career faculty mentees also report feelings of safety, inclusion, community and belonging (Waddell et al., 2017). The inclusion of early and mid-career faculty participants in the pilot study described in this article was based on the desire to explore and respond to the needs of faculty

mentees across the early and mid-stages of the career continuum as well as the stated desire of academic retirees to support faculty the academic success of faculty colleagues.

The Mentorship Relationship

It has been reported that the mentoring relationship is key to achieving the objectives/goals of mentoring (Allen, 2007; Martin & Douglas, 2018; Ragins, 2016; Sarabipour et al., 2021) and that participation in a mentoring development program that prepares both mentor and mentee participants for their respective roles can be instrumental to the development of strong, positive mentoring relationships (Pololi & Evans, 2015). Ragins (2016) defines high-quality mentoring relationships as close relationships that are mutually beneficial experiences, that meet the needs of both mentors and mentees. They are characterized by respect, trust, explicit expectations, honesty, friendship, and support (Allen et al., 2004; Croke et al., 2021; Martin & Douglas, 2018). To date the application of academic mentorship programs focused on relational mentoring have shown potential for developing a sense of inclusion, rapport, and support (Waddell et al., 2017), improved life satisfaction, work-life balance, ability to experience a meaningful connection, high self-esteem, enhanced self-confidence, and a safe environment that buffers mentees from negative and stressful workplace experiences (Bean et al., 2014; Ragins, 2016). High-quality mentoring relationships stand in contrast to a mentoring relationship where the motivation to engage in the mentoring experience is driven by an interest in receiving a return on the investment in the experience (Ragins, 2016). While Ragins' conceptualization of the 'high-quality mentoring relationships' arose from studies that were conducted in workplaces outside of the academy, this pilot study includes the exploration of relational mentorship in the academy.

The Experiences of Retiree Mentors

Engaging retirees as mentors to faculty across the career continuum has the potential to address the issue that, although more senior employed faculty members may wish to support their colleagues through mentorship, the time to devote to the role of mentor is scarce (Pololi & Evans, 2015). Furthermore, it is often the senior faculty cohort who are responsible for evaluating their early to mid-career colleagues (Hobson, 2016), making them unavailable to serve as mentors. Drawing on retiree faculty to assume the mentor role has the potential to address this paucity of available senior employed faculty who may wish to assume the role of mentor for early to mid-career faculty colleagues. the mentor role.

The Role of Mentorship Development

An essential element of retiree/mentee mentorship that is not addressed in current scholarship is the need for mentorship development related to the roles of both retiree mentor and faculty mentee. Mentorship development programs aimed at preparing academic mentors and mentees to engage in an effective mentoring relationship have been found to have a positive impact for both mentor and mentee participants. Pololi and Evans (2015) described how a two-day mentorship development and career advancement focused program facilitated the development of trust between mentees and mentors, and how the presence of trust allowed the participants to work collaboratively and openly on their academic development in a subsequent year-long mentoring experience. Mendez et al. (2019b) described the efficacy of a mentor/mentee orientation session focused on effective strategies to establish trust and shared expectations to create a foundation for a successful mentoring relationship.

Understanding the Role of Mentorship for Faculty Across the Career Continuum

Mentorship programs in academia often focus on supporting and socializing faculty members as they navigate cultural and institutional expectations

across their academic life (Jackevicius et al., 2014; Mendez et al., 2019a; Waddell et al., 2017; Zellers et al., 2008). In a study of a collaborative mentoring program, Pololi and Evans (2015) reported that both early and mid-career cohorts found the mentorship program experience to be rewarding. Specifically, the authors noted that group gatherings, a long duration (one year), and an explicit focus on the mentoring relationship enabled the development of trustworthy mentee/mentor relationships that allowed participants to work productively on their career development. Additionally, Mendez et al. (2017) described a career development-focused mentoring program that included early and midcareer mentee participants. They observed that both early and midcareer mentees benefitted from the mentorship.

This article reports a multi-component mentorship pilot program with the aim to develop a stronger understanding of the potential role of retirees as mentors, the impact of professional development for both mentors and mentees, including mentees that are early, mid, and late career faculty members. The program engaged retiree mentors and faculty mentees (across the career continuum) in a mentorship development program that prepares members of each group, and as a collective, to engage in meaningful and productive mentoring relationships.

Conceptual Frameworks and Anticipated Outcomes

This study was guided by the IMPACT mentoring program described by Mendez et al. (2019b), and the conceptual framework, 'Benefits of the Being a Mentor', developed by Ragins and Scandura (1999). The 'Benefits of the Being a Mentor' framework highlights five factors that contribute to mentor benefits (rewarding experience, improved job performance, loyal base of support, recognition by others and generativity) and was used to provide a conceptual underpinning for the IMPACT program. In the IMPACT program, retiree mentors, as well as early and mid-career mentees, participated in mentorship development centred on the following three domains: career development, sponsorship, and coaching. The structure and foci areas of the IMPACT program and the Benefits of Being a Mentor Framework guided the structure of this study. Specifically, in the RPIF study, the intervention components included: 1) retiree mentors and mentees working in dyads, and 2) both mentors and mentees engaged in professional development specific to their respective roles (career planning and development for mentees and career coaching development for the mentors).

The 'Benefits of Being a Mentor' framework and the IMPACT program further guided the anticipated outcomes for the RPIF study in that mentors would: 1) continue their engagement in academia, and their profession(s) in a formal and meaningful manner, 2) have an opportunity to formally invest in and support the next generation of professors and academic leaders and 3) gain personal satisfaction in the opportunity to positively promote mentees' accomplishments and academic career development. Anticipated mentee outcomes were that faculty mentees would: 1) be supported by retiree mentors as they navigated their academic career, 2) receive support in furthering their socialization within and external to their professional field, 3) engage with, and benefit from, the experiences of fellow faculty mentees across the career continuum, 4) develop an enhanced understanding of the roles of university departments and staff that have the potential to support their ongoing academic career development and 5) report enhanced career, professional and personal satisfaction.

Method

Retirees Paying It Forward

The Retirees Paying it Forward (RPiF) mentoring program was a voluntary three-phase multi-component program that shaped the mentorship relationships between retiree mentors and faculty mentees through a series of mentorship development workshops. The phases and components are outlined in Figure 1. The program focus was on career development

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in academia, in ways that are not specifically tied to any particular school or to the faculty in which the study was conducted. The program was held virtually due to the restrictions put in place to mitigate the spread of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

The Mentorship Development Program

RPiF participants engaged in a formal mentorship development program consisting of several virtual workshops, related to their role as mentors and mentees (see Figure 1). The workshops took place over time, allowing the participants to reflect on the concepts and workshops they engaged in within the mentorship development program (see the Appendix for more detail). The program was facilitated by a professional career coach external to the university, as well as members of the research team with expertise in career planning and development. A career development-focused workbook titled Building Successful Mentoring Relationships©, (donnerwheeler & Integral Visions Consulting Inc., 2016) was used to guide the structure and process of the mentorship development program for both mentors and mentees.

Mandatory mentor workshops included: 1) mentor development, 2) coaching skills, 3) relationship building and 4) a group check-in with mentors. Mandatory mentee workshops focused on 1) career planning & development, 2) mentee development and 3) relationship building. Individual check-ins with the mentees were conducted with a member of the research team twice over the course of the project. Both mentors and mentees had the option to attend a panel event describing key resources related to academic career development available from different departments across the university (e.g., Human Resources, Office of the Vice-President of Research and Innovation, Office of the Provost, Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching).

Figure 1

Phases and Components of the RPiF Pilot Program

Phase 1: Mentorship Development (2 months)
The mentorship development program consisted of the following workshops: *Mentors:* 1) mentor development (90 min), and 2) coaching skills (90 min). *Mentees:* 1) career planning & development (90 min), and 2) mentee development (90 min). *Mentors and Mentees:* 1) relationship building (90 min), 2) matching session (120 min), and 3) academic career development panel (90 min)
Phase 2: Engagement (5 months)
The frequency of mentor/mentee dyad meetings were determined by the needs of the mentees and as agreed upon by the dyad. *Mentors:* group check-in with research team (60 min) *Mentees:* 1:1 check-in with research team (2 x 30 min)
Phase 3: Feedback
Mentors: Focus group (60 min) *Mentees:* Focus Group (60 min) *Mentors and Mentees:* adjournment event (60 min)

The Matching Process

Retiree mentors and faculty mentees were matched into dyads. The matching process was informed by the principles of choice-based matching (Blake-Beard et al., 2008). In choice-based matching, participants engage in one (or more) selection activities from which both (or either) mentors and mentees provide feedback on their preferred matches. Blake-Beard et al. (2008) has found that participant involvement in choice-based matching increases psychological ownership and commitment towards the mentoring experience and deepens the mentoring relationship. In this study, mentors and mentees participated in a two-hour virtual selection activity, where every potential mentor/mentee dyad combination met in private break-out rooms for successive 6-minute discussions. Prior to the activity, participants were asked to prepare a brief verbal introduction of themselves, to reflect on what they value most in a mentoring relationship and to consider their unique needs related to the mentor-mentee relationship. The decision to ask participants to share what they value most was rooted in a belief that an axiologically informed conversation in the selection activity would encourage an axiologically focused reflection on which candidates would be an effective dyad partner. Following the activity, mentees were asked to create a non-ranked list of five priority mentors they believed they could work with effectively. Based on this information, the research team created mentor/mentee dyads. All mentees were matched to an identified priority mentor.

The Mentoring Period

Mentor and mentee participants worked together over a period of five months, during which the dyads were asked to engage in the Building Successful Mentoring Relationships© workbook (donnerwheeler & Integral Visions Consulting Inc., 2016). Mentor/mentee dyads met regularly during this time. Dyads scheduled the frequency and duration of the meetings to align with the mentee needs. In addition to the specified check-ins with the research team described above, dyads were also invited to contact members of the research team with any questions related to the study.

End of Study

The study focus on relational mentoring guided the collective experience at the conclusion of the study. The constraints related to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic negated the possibility of an in-person event and, therefore, a virtual gathering was held with all study participants. During the gathering, the research team shared the themes from the study, followed by the opportunity for mentor and mentee participants to share concluding thoughts regarding the study and related findings with their peers.

A Case Study Approach

A Merriam-informed case study approach was used to delineate the study of the multi-component mentorship program. The Merriam and Tisdell (2016) definition of a case is "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 45) that is singular, and where the identification of the object of study and the delineation of its boundaries is constructed by the researcher. The case was the multi-component mentorship program titled Retirees Paying it Forward. As a constructivist methodology it focuses on understanding and meaning making within the case, which necessarily includes processes of consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said (Yazan, 2015). Given that the primary focus of this study was to explore the retiree mentors and faculty mentees experience of the RPiF program, and their role as mentors and mentees, a constructivist methodology was deemed to be an appropriate fit.

Recruitment and Eligibility

The faculty within the university where this study took place is comprised of nine distinct and diverse academic programs serving approximately 7,500 students. The retirees who had been employed as full-time faculty members had retired in 2010 or later, and current full-time tenured stream faculty members across the career continuum were eligible to

participate as mentees. All retirees had previously held administrative positions within their career, and the mentees spanned pre-tenure to full professors. Study participants were recruited through email sent by an academic coordinator, from the research team to retirees and faculty members across one Faculty. A maximum variation sampling strategy (Silverman, 2006) was used to ensure a diversity of perspectives and emails were distributed to all individuals who fit the inclusion criteria. Retirees and faculty members who expressed an interest participated in a telephone conversation where the study objectives were explained, and questions addressed. Eighteen (18) participants were recruited for the study; nine retiree mentors and nine faculty mentees. Retiree participants had retired from three academic programs and faculty participants were from five academic programs.

Data collection

Data were collected at the termination of the pilot program, in separate focus groups for retiree mentors (n=9) and faculty mentees (n=9). Focus group questions were open ended and included, but were not limited to, prompts to describe (for retiree mentors) 'the experience of being engaged in academia beyond retirement' and 'the relationship with the mentee with respect to this study'. FCS faculty mentees were prompted to describe, among other things, 'their motivation to participate in the study' and 'the experience of being mentored by a retiree mentor'. As a research technique, focus groups represent a way for a moderator to access data and insights, using the verbal responses and the interaction within the group as mechanism to enhance the data and insights (Morgan, 1997; Stalmeijer et al., 2014). In line with the constructivist paradigm's interest in meaning and understanding, focus groups leverage the dynamics of the group and record the emergence of opinions, meanings, feelings, attitudes and beliefs about a topic area (Stalmeijer et al., 2014). All focus groups were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each member of the research team reviewed all recorded discussions prior to engaging in the collaborative analytical work processes. At the end of study event, themes that were produced from the focus group data were shared with the study participants. In comments and feedback, the participants confirmed that the themes resonated with their experiences.

Analytical approach

Analysis of the data from the multi-component mentorship program was informed by established processes for reflexive thematic analysis (TA), a method for systematic analytic engagement with qualitative data to produce themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022a, 2022b). Reflexive TA recognizes the subjectivity of the researchers as a valuable tool in developing rich analysis and thus, requires an "reflexive unpacking" by the researchers. In this study, such reflexive unpacking was achieved by the research team, comprised of two scholars of nursing education, one education scholar, and one doctoral candidate by working in an iterative and collaborative manner. The four-person team met regularly throughout the study intervention to discuss perspectives, actions, and findings. At times, the research team worked in dyads, after which the dyads came together to discuss the output of the dyad work (e.g., notes on analytical observations). In addition, descriptions, notes and analytical observations were kept in a shared folder to which all members of the research team had access.

Findings

Themes – Mentors

Table 1 outlines the themes that were produced from the mentor focus groups. Across the themes, the appreciation for the connection between the mentors and 1) their work as academics, 2) to their colleagues and 3) to the institution was evident. In several instances, there was strong evidence of how this connection continues to exist beyond the date of formal retirement.

Table 1

Themes- Mentors

Theme	Description	Representative Quote
1: Staying connected	Captured both the sense that mentors wished to contribute to the development of the careers of their junior colleagues, and also wished to maintain a connection to each other, to academia, to the Faculty and to the institution.	"It was really important to me to continue to be involved with the department and faculty colleagues."
2: Paying it forward	Captured comments that made a connection between the experiences that mentors had themselves, the impact of this experience on their own career development and the interest in offering such an experience to others.	"I had some excellent mentors… over my career and found the experience enriching, but also, it helped move my career forward, there's no doubt about it".
3: The mentoring relationship	Relational engagement was reported as key for mentors. Comments that highlighted the mentoring relationship focused on how relational engagement can strengthen the effectiveness of mentoring. Mentors expressed that this is especially true when mentoring across disciplines. There was an acknowledgement that investing in getting to know each other and making efforts to understand the context that the mentees lived in, and worked to develop their career in, was a strong variable in the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship.	"I knew my mentee, but from having worked on a committee or two – so only very professionally. We always pulled in the personal, so we got to know each other…I think that truly contributed… to the development of the relationship …". "I learned that, as always, it is the relationship that makes the outcome".
4: Mentor skill development	The mentoring development program that equipped mentors to engage in informed academic mentorship with a career focus was viewed as important. Following the completion of the workshops, mentors felt supported and prepared to enter the experience. The workshops and the workbook were used to facilitate effective relationships.	"… sometimes I would, especially in the, in the early meetings, I would go back, and I'd refresh, in my mind I'd scan the questions that that were there to prompt or to, you know, help you sort of find your way".

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Table 1

Themes- Mentors

5: Enrichment through engagement	Mentors expressed that the opportunity to engage post-retirement represented a welcomed departure from the usually rigid structure of academia. In the study intervention, they had the freedom to stay engaged in activities that they found enriching without the constraints that academic life demanded.	"…I worked to try and maintain a connection with colleagues, I didn't formally teach classes, simply because I wanted the freedom to not be constrained by marking and deadlines and things that I wasn't looking forward to"
6: The academic context	Uniquely, retiree mentors could offer a rich understanding of the history and culture of an institution. This allowed for a uniquely meaningful perspective to be passed on to the mentees who were navigating the institution. At the same time, mentors were keenly aware that the academic context was undergoing change. The expansion of requirements and obligations on faculty was noted, and comments highlighted that participation in programs like the study intervention would need to remain voluntary in order to maintain the level of genuine engagement that was required for it to be successful.	"...the wisdom of how you do it within the culture of the university is sometimes something perhaps we can bring to the, to the table." "We don't want to see this as yet another job requirement that you must do either as a mentor or mentee."
7: The career trajectory of the mentee	Comments were grounded in a desire to provide a differentiated mentoring experience that was specific towards the individual mentee, and their location along the career trajectory. This was also evident in the inquiring work mentors engaged in to establish where the mentee was at and then match their coaching and mentoring strategies to that.	"Where they're at in their career trajectory makes a difference." "There may also be different levels of anxiety as well. I mean, I mean, the amount of anxiety that probationary faculty feel is just enormous."

Anticipated Outcomes - Mentors

It has been noted that navigating the complex process into retirement raises questions of identity, purpose and fulfillment (Strage, 2018; Van Ummersen et al., 2014; Yakoboski, 2015). For mentors, participation in the study may have offered some mentors the opportunity to remain engaged in the academic environment as they transitioned to retirement. In this study, retirees spoke positively of the continued connection with the academic community, the opportunity to contribute to the career development of mentees and the enrichment they experienced in their role of mentor. The anticipated mentor outcome that mentors would "continue their engagement in academia, and their profession(s) in a formal and meaningful manner" (outcome # 1) was reflected in the appreciation they expressed for maintaining relevant connections (theme 1), the enthusiasm they demonstrated for paying forward the support

they received during their time as faculty members (theme 2) and the enrichment they experienced in their new mentor role (theme 5). The perceived importance related to the mentorship development program (theme 4) and the meaningful relationships that developed between mentors and mentees (theme 3) were similarly connected to their expressed experience of being formally and meaningfully engaged as mentors.

The anticipated mentor outcome that mentors would "have the opportunity to formally invest in and support the next generation of rising professors and academic leaders" (outcome #2) was similarly reflected in the expressed appreciation for maintaining relevant connections and the opportunity to 'pay it forward'. In particular, their ability to provide broad and illuminating perspectives of career advancement and leadership as a result of their historical knowledge and understanding of the academic context (theme 6), afforded mentors a panoramic view that the mentees were still developing. Seeing the bigger picture also allowed retiree mentors the opportunity to provide mentoring that was relevant and meaningful to mentees where they were at (theme 7). Mentors spoke of having invested and supported the next generation of faculty members in a variety of informal ways throughout their career.

It was also anticipated that mentors would "gain personal satisfaction in the opportunity to positively promote mentees' accomplishments and academic career development" (outcome #3). Mentor appreciation for the mentorship development (theme 4) that enabled them to pass on the benefits they had received from mentoring (theme 2) was supplemented by comments that expressed satisfaction at passing on their lessons learned of the historical institutional culture (theme 6) - formal, informal and hidden – to the mentee faculty members. Retirees spoke of the accomplishments of the mentees with enthusiasm and as described below, mentees spoke of an intentional and targeted focus on their career development with appreciation.

Themes - mentees

Table 2 captures the themes from the mentee focus groups. Across the themes there was a strong acknowledgement of the unique opportunity it was, to take time to reflect on one's own career and an appreciation of doing so with the guidance of senior colleagues.

Anticipated Outcomes - Mentees

The anticipated outcome that mentees would "be supported by retiree mentors as they navigate their academic career" (outcome #1) was reflected across the five identified mentee themes. Not only did mentees embrace the support they had during this reflective pause to consider their career (theme 5), they also experienced a genuine interest being taken in their career (theme 1). They reported that mentors would strengthen the mentoring relationship (theme 2) by tailoring the mentorship to their career stage and associated needs (theme 3) much like a personal trainer does (theme 4). It is worth noting that one of the mentor workshops in mentorship development program focused on coaching skills, emphasizing mentee-centered discussions and exercises that enhanced the mentee's ability to articulate their specific career needs openly. Further, mentees noted that because they were matched to retirees, they felt more comfortable accepting the investment that mentors made in their mentoring. Where they might have otherwise felt that they were encroaching on the time of a senior faculty colleague, working with retirees alleviated this concern, and enhanced the support they felt by the mentors. The findings suggest that that retiree faculty represent a relevant and promising resource as mentors.

It was further anticipated that mentees would "receive support in furthering their socialization within and external to their profession field" (outcome #2). The importance of the mentoring relationship (theme 2) was similarly relevant here. Both mentors and mentees were guided by an emphasis on relational engagement in the Building Successful Mentoring Relationships© workbook and across the mentorship development program. For example, one of the initial

Table 2

Themes- Mentors

Theme	Description	Representative Quote
1: Focus on the academic career	Captured an awareness that mentees developed about different career trajectories and leadership possibilities that exists at the program, Faculty and institutional level. For some, this awareness was enhanced when matched to a mentor from a discipline other than their own.	"… to listen to learn from the experiences of others, to make better decisions in terms of what lies ahead. And how you know what the different trajectories can be."
2: Relationship formation	Relational engagement was reported as key for mentees. There was an acknowledgement that the centering of the mentoring relationship and the investment that both mentors and mentees made into developing an effective relationship, allowed mentees to speak about various aspects of their lives, including pressures and joys they experience outside of their academic role (e.g., with family/ friends/community).	"And we know that our time is really limited in what we have and how normally I wouldn't give myself the luxury of time to have a lovely talk about family, because that wasn't necessarily my initial thought, but it was lovely."
3: Meeting us "where we're at"	Mentees were aware of the targeted and individualised mentoring they received. They noted the importance of having their specific career location and vision understood and reflected in the way mentors engaged with them. They noted that mentors worked diligently to identify possible connections or next steps in their careers that may not have been considered by the mentee.	"It's – I really feel more grounded in knowing that I have some people to bounce decisions off of but also at the same point in time I've been encouraged to reach out to speak to people that I wouldn't have before."
4: Personal trainer	This theme centred on the time and accountability that was experienced by the mentees. They arranged for time to be carved out to spend with the mentor and this was their time. Also, mentees expressed the value of having a mentor that was retired. They felt that there was a different nature to the time they spent together and felt that they could not expect or ask for this from a senior faculty colleague.	"…. I'm working with my mentor, you know, I was accountable to the time that they were putting in. And so, I made sure that I set aside the time to prepare or reflect or work on things so that it was sort of a like I didn't feel like I was wasting [their] time."

Table 2

Themes- Mentors

5: Seeing the 'big picture'	This was a reflective pause that mentees allowed themselves. Mentees spoke of taking a welcomed moment to gaze beyond their day-to-day demands and see the broader perspectives that their mentors made visible to them. The importance of being exposed to perspectives that illuminate the diversity of possibilities on the road ahead and pausing to reflect on them was captured by this theme.	"It was an opportunity for me to kind of reflect on my career." "… I guess it kind of confirmed, and I guess, having the opportunity to talk to the people like to my mentor that I was kind of on the right track and I enjoyed doing what I was doing, but it did give me an opportunity to reflect upon my career, and where it can go."

activities for the mentor/mentee dyad is to develop a Mentoring Relationship Agreement. To develop this, the mentors and mentees are given guided questions that foreground their expectations for their mentoring relationship. This contributed to the positive emphasis both groups placed on the relationship itself. The subsequent development of trust in the relationship then allowed for conversations within and across disciplines or fields of study that were driven by curiosity and genuine interest by mentors who were favourably perched to see the bigger picture (theme 5).

The expectation that mentees would "engage with, and benefit from, the experiences of fellow faculty mentees across the career continuum" (outcome #3) was also linked to the ability of mentees to see a "bigger" picture (theme 5). Because mentees were from across the career continuum, and because they came together in several mentorship development workshops, they shared experiences, thoughts, concerns and celebrations with each other. While the relationships they developed with each other across the mentee groups may not have been as deep as their relationship with their mentors, this engagement was also generative.

The anticipated outcome that mentees would "develop an enhanced understanding of the roles of university departments and staff that have the potential to support their ongoing academic career development" (outcome #4) was met in two ways: 1) through ongoing conversations with the mentors, and 2) by attending the panel event showcasing key resources related to academic career development from across the university. This event was optional, and seven of the nine mentees attended. Mixed feedback was offered with some participants benefitting from the exposure and information, while others felt they were already familiar with the resources. This was an instance where a more tailored approach to meeting the mentees where they were at (theme 3), may have enhanced the reported experience of the mentees.

Lastly, it was anticipated that mentees would "report enhanced career, professional and personal satisfaction" (outcome #5) as an outcome. The targeted focus on their academic career (theme 1), the high-quality mentoring relationship mentees developed with their mentors (theme 2), the notion of being met where they are at (theme 3) and the experiences of being paired with mentors who were able to see "the big picture" (theme 5) all served to meet this anticipated outcome. Collectively the findings within these themes contribute to the enhanced satisfaction reported by the mentees. The findings suggest that mentees from across

the career continuum benefit from the mentoring experience and relationship and that there is also a benefit to mentee group interaction.

Discussion

A primary finding from the study is that retiree faculty represent a relevant and promising resource as mentors. Given previous research findings (Mendez et al., 2019a; Mendez et al., 2019b; Mendez et al., 2017), this finding is perhaps not surprising. By virtue of their employment with the institution, retirees have developed relevant institutional knowledge, and important insights into the culture of the institution they retired from. This vantage point offers retiree mentors a panoramic view that mentees are still developing (Hall, 2017). Mentees reported that this "bigger picture" perspective enables mentors to offer advice and support that are relevant beyond the ongoing shifts that occur in daily academic life, and that their absence from the academic institution has the potential to be an available, welcoming and informed source of support and advice within the context of academia. In addition, it is important to note that when mentor participants had previously held leadership positions within the institution, as most of the participating RPiF mentors had, they were able to offer a perspective on leadership that included, but was not limited to, the administrative leadership positions that existed within their home department.

RPiF retiree mentors reported that they value the connection to their former place of employment, the structured and formal preparation for their role as mentors and the opportunity to support the career goals of faculty mentees. Mentees, from across the career continuum, also reported that being mentored by a retiree has benefits. While all parties acknowledge that the landscape of academia is undergoing change, and that the obligations for faculty members are increasing, the bigger picture perspective gained by the mentors over their career has the potential to broaden the perspectives of mentees. For example, how leadership outside of their own department may be quite different from that experienced within their department. Through participation in the RPIF program, mentees were exposed to career opportunities outside of their disciplinary departments and offering an opportunity to reflect on their own trajectories. This reflection allowed mentees to express that they were on the most suitable path, or that they need to pause and "look up" from their daily demands of academic work and see the range of opportunities that exists.

The Mentoring Relationship

As reported elsewhere (Bean et al., 2014; Martin & Douglas, 2018; Pololi & Evans, 2015; Ragins, 2016; Sarabipour et al., 2021; Waddell et al., 2017), the mentoring relationship is key to effective mentoring. Ragins (2016, p. 228) states that, "Extraordinary outcomes require extraordinary relationships…". The results of this study suggest that when mentors and mentees invest in a high-quality relationship, the knowledge exchange within each dyad becomes reciprocal and genuine. Both mentors and mentee participants noted that the investment in the relationship between the mentor and mentee strengthened the quality and effectiveness of the mentoring process and outcomes. Mentees reported that a strong mentoring relationship allowed them to share various aspects of their lives in- and outside of academia with ease and comfort. Mentors described that knowing about context within which the mentees live, work, and develop their careers made it more possible for them to provide mentoring that was uniquely targeted to their mentee. Mentors added that the investment in the mentoring relationship was particularly relevant to dyads where the mentor and mentee are not in the same program. Administrators who wish to set up a mentorships program that spans multiple academic programs or Faculties may find this to be useful. In such cases, in particular, where participants are not well versed in the academic culture that exists within the field of the other, relational engagement can be the glue that provides, what Ragins (2016, p. 229) calls the "relational closeness" that makes it more

possible for people to express their needs.

The Mentorship Development Program

While all retiree participants reported that they had previously served in the role of mentors, few had participated in a structured program focused on developing their role as mentors. The mentorship development program in this study offered both mentors and mentees a clear understanding of 1) what is expected of them in their respective roles, 2) what they can reasonably expect of their partners, and 3) guidance for how to achieve their desired result. Both groups reported that participation in the structured and formal mentorship development program was an important investment in their understanding of their role in the mentoring experience. This finding aligns with previously reported literature that has highlighted the relevance of formally preparing mentors and mentees for their respective roles (Mendez et al., 2019b; Pololi & Evans, 2015).

This pilot study was made possible by a mix of funded and in-kind resources. As a pilot, this was appropriate. Continuous mentoring programs (both the mentorship development programs and the mentoring programs that they exist within) require an allocation of resources that is appropriate and continuous. Supporting mentors and mentees to support each other needs knowledgeable project owners (those who initiate and oversee the project) and strong administrative personnel who work together on a continuous basis, making it possible to improve the program year over year. The focus on relational mentoring also requires that the project owner and administration become and remain knowledgeable about relational mentoring as it continues to be studied so that evolving understandings of relationality can be applied to the project. Where appropriate and continuous resourcing can be secured, the study shows that structured mentorship programs that focus on career development and uses retiree mentors to mentor faculty from across the career continuum can be successful.

Voluntary Participation

Bozeman and Feeney (2007) report that the knowledge translation that occurs in mentoring relationships must be free from the obligation to share knowledge that might exist, for example, in a supervisor/employee relationship. In this pilot, the voluntary nature of participation was highlighted in the invitations to faculty and the participants noted that participation as either mentors or mentees must remain voluntary, should the program continue. The voluntary nature of participation is the foundation upon which the investment in a high-quality mentoring relationship can be built.

A Quick Pivot and an Adaptable Group

As with many other activities during this time, the study intervention was planned as an in-person experience, but the outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 virus forced the program online. Both mentors and mentees noted that it was an unusual situation for them to participate as a research participant in a mentorship program during a time where uncertainty related to the SARS-CoV-2 virus made this shift to a virtual delivery necessary, and where a relatively new communication modality (Zoom) was being broadly introduced in academic settings. While there was some initial trepidation about how the quick pivot to virtual would impact the work that it is to develop a meaningful mentoring relationship, mentors and mentees proved to be adaptable. Some even preferred a virtual – or a hybrid – version of a program like this, and, in one instance, the virtual delivery was described as an "unexpected bonus". With the transition back to in-person interactions, a researchers may consider a hybrid mentorship model where, for example, the regular mentor/mentee meetings are virtual, while group interactions (e.g., workshops in the mentorship development program) take place in person.

Limitations

The nature of a pilot study is to implement a program that

is smaller than the ultimate aim. Should a multi-component career development mentorship program be continuously implemented it is possible that more than nine dyads would be formed, offering a broader diversity of experiences for administrators to draw on when making program improvements. Ideally, this broader range of experiences would include a diversity of views from faculty members who belong to groups that have been underrepresented historically. Mendez et al. (2019b) highlight the importance of mentoring for faculty from across minority groups, and we concur. Such views were not broadly available to us in this pilot program. If this study was to be replicated or a continuous program was developed, that would be a key area of focus. It is also a characteristic of a pilot that it is the first of its kind. Therefore, findings cannot draw on the culture of the program or be informed by historical occurrences, including things that have been tried and dismissed. Such things are not known in a pilot.

Conclusion

In this pilot study a multi-component mentorship program inclusive of academic retirees as mentors and faculty mentees was designed and implemented in an academic setting. The study focused the mentoring experience on academic career development. The pilot program included mentorship development components for both mentors and mentees that were aimed at preparing each group for their respective role as mentors and mentees. The primary foci of the study were to inquire into the degree to which 1) faculty mentees experienced support in the development of strategies and capacity to achieve success in achieving their individual career goals related to their faculty role, 2) retiree mentors developed expertise in the formal role of mentors, and 3) retiree mentors and faculty mentees reported enhanced career, professional and personal satisfaction. The primary study finding is that retiree faculty represent a relevant and promising resource to serve as mentors for faculty members across the career continuum. Study results further suggest that mentors developed relevant expertise related to their role as mentors in the mentorship development program. This then allowed them to provide the support that mentees needed in order to focus on developing strategies and capacity towards meeting their faculty role-specific career goals. Both groups spoke of a satisfying experience with a positive impact.

Future Research

This study establishes the value of retiree mentors as well the importance of supporting both mentors and mentees with a multi-component mentorship development program. As this was a pilot program, the need for future research on understanding mentor motivations, mentor suitability and on mentoring across professions was identified. Specifically, deepening understanding of mentor characteristics and motivations will strengthen future mentorship programs. A focus on understanding the recruitment and selection of mentors will additionally support the important goal of ensuring that the necessary diversity of mentors not only by discipline and experience, but by race and gender allows for more representative mentor/mentee matching.

Acknowledgement

Funding for this study was generously provided by the Faculty of Community Services, Toronto Metropolitan University

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APPENDIX

Retirees Paying It Forward: A Retiree/Faculty Mentorship Program

Intervention Description

Mentors and mentees engaged in interactive, experiential workshops to prepare them for their respective roles of mentor/mentee, and for the mentor/mentee relationship.

Workshops
Faculty Mentors - Retirees

Retiree participants in the following workshops:

- **Mentorship Development Workshop:** a 90-minute interactive workshop that introduced mentors to mentoring skills within the academic context. Participants received a published mentorship workbook for ongoing use and reference.
- **Coaching Skill Workshop:** a 90- minute workshop focused on how coaching skills can contribute to the development of a successful mentoring relationship. Participants received resource materials on coaching.

Faculty Mentees – Faculty Members

Faculty participants participated in the following workshops:

- **Career Planning and Development Workshop:** A 90- minute interactive workshop that introduced mentees to a career development model and engaged them in experiential activities that prompted them to develop a career vision for their academic career, a self-assessment related to their capacity to actualize their vision and to identify their strengths and areas for development in relation to their vision and self-assessment.

- **Mentee Development Workshop:** A 90-minute workshop focused on an overview of mentorship and introduced participants to the Five-Phase Mentoring Relationship Model©. The first two phases, its purpose and engagement in the mentor/mentee relationship were highlighted. Participants received a published mentorship workbook for ongoing use and reference.

Retiree Mentors and Faculty Mentees

Retiree Mentors and Faculty Mentees participated in a **Matching Workshop** that actively engaged mentors and mentees in the matching process. In preparation for this workshop, everyone was asked to consider what they value most in a mentoring relationship, and what their needs were for the mentoring relationship. Each mentor and mentee met with nine potential dyad partners to share their values, beliefs and hopes related to the mentor-mentee relationship. Following the workshop each mentee was asked to identify 5 mentors (in no order of preference) with whom they shared similar values, beliefs about, and hopes for, the mentorship relationship. The matching process conducted by the research team was guided by the shared values and beliefs of individual mentors and mentees.

Following the matching process mentors and mentees engaged in a 90-minute **Building Successful Mentoring Relationships Workshop** focused on the final three phases of the Model, planning, emergence, and completion.

Additional Support

1. An interactive dialogue with mentor/mentees and key University departments to provide an overview of information, resources and opportunities that are relevant to the mentees' academic career vision and related goals and objectives.
2. Mentor check-in which provided an opportunity for mentors to come together as a team and share the unique experience of each mentor to-date as well as the nature of varied mentoring approaches.
3. Mentee/mentor dyad check-ins on a monthly basis to share learnings.

Applying Neuro-Informed Career Focused Counselling: A Single Case Study Analysis

Patrick Phillips
Trinity College Dublin

Abstract

This article will present findings from a single case study analysis on the application of Neuro-Informed Career-Focused Counselling proposed by Luke and Field (2007). A search of Google Scholar for academic sources on the application of neuroscience to career counselling returned few publications. The only publications with neuroscience and career counselling in the title included a book chapter by Luke and Field (2017) and an article by Dickinson, Miller, and Beeson (2021). There are further articles that reference neuroscience in career counselling; however overall, the contribution of neuroscience to career counselling remains limited. This article hopes to address this gap in the literature by exploring how theories from neuroscience can be applied in career counselling. In response to suggestions that career counselling requires further research and models to prove its effectiveness (Bernes, Bardick, & Orr, 2007; Guindon & Richmond, 2005). This article proposes that neuroscience may be a fruitful discipline to explore for this reason.

Keywords: Neuroscience, career counselling, bullying

The primary research conducted for this paper involved an in-depth analysis of a single case study participant. The participant had recently left a position in a pharmaceutical company in which she was the victim of bullying by her line manager for about two years. The participant was working with a therapist to process the experience, and she also wanted career counselling to assist with rebuilding her career.
In the following sections of this article background information to the study will be provided followed by details of the research philosophy. This article will then discuss three phenomena described via neuroscience which can lead to helpful insights for career counsellors The first is the neuroscience of safe and trusting relationships, the second is a neuro-informed assessment of the stress response, and the final component is the neuroscience of narrative construction. It is proposed here that an instance of bullying is a suitable opportunity to study these three phenomena in career counselling as bullying has an intense effect on a victim's nervous system which greatly impacts career decision making, as will be discussed later. Throughout the course of this article direct quotes from the participant will be included to support the secondary research being presented.

Career Counsellors are Applied Neuroscientists

Prior to discussing next steps, it is worth noting that Cozolino and Sprokray (2006) proposed that professionals working in helping professions such as adult education and therapy, are unwitting applied neuroscientists. By this they mean that the work they do with clients and students can stimulate conditions in the brain which can result in neuroplasticity . With this view in mind, it is proposed here that career counsellors are also applied neuroscientists and it is therefore helpful to have a general understanding of the neuroscience of learning (Miller, 2016). As we work to help our clients develop new ways of relating to their career, we can also appreciate that we are helping our clients to create new neural pathways in their brains. We can use this information as a means for motivating our clients, and it can provide another lens through which we can explore the practice of career counselling.

For example, we can explain to a client that a moderate

level of the stress has been shown to stimulate neuroplasticity via an increase in the production of neurotransmitters and neural growth hormones which have the effect of enhancing neural connections, and cortical reorganisation (Cowan & Kandel, 2001; Myers et al., 2000) . To make use of this information in career counselling the first step for the counsellor is to create a bond with the client based on trust and safety (Cozolino & Sprokray, 2006). With this in place, the counsellor can encourage a client to take action via the creation of moderate levels of stress, which in turn will create the conditions necessary for learning via the release of dopamine, serotonin, norepinephrine, and endogenous endorphin production (Kilgard & Merzenich, 1998; Kirkwood et al., 1999; Huang et al., 1999). This is an example of a helpful model of neuro-informed career-focused counselling which career counsellors can use in their work with clients.

Although moderate stress is helpful for learning, severe stress is counterproductive to the learning process. In the case study presented here, the participant was experiencing hyperarousal of the stress response due to workplace bullying by her line manager. Furthermore, besides hyperarousal l of the stress response being detrimental to the learning process, it also has a host of other negative consequences for an individual relating to long term mental and physical health as will be discussed here in further detail (Miller et al., 2007).

Career Counselling , Personal Counselling, and Trauma

At this juncture it is important to reiterate that the participant of this study is working with a therapist to address the psychological impact of bullying which can be traumatising (Nielsen et al. 2015; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). It is not suggested here that it is the career counsellor's responsibility to directly address the trauma. Nonetheless, Powers and Duys (2020) advised career counsellors to understand trauma to assist clients in working with career-related traumatic events, and to know when to refer clients to trauma specialists.

Furthermore, there is a significant body of literature which argues that career counselling and personal counselling are inseparable (Chen, 2001; Hoare et al., 2012; Krieshok, 2009; Krumboltz, 1993; Nevo & Wiseman, 2002; Richman, 1993; Schultheiss, 2006). It is therefore advisable to determine methods for supporting clients in career counselling when addressing complex psychological issues, which can result from negative career related phenomena. Examples of negative workplace experiences other than bullying can include sudden redundancy, long-term unemployment, working long hours, and managing excessive workloads.

Career counsellors must wear different hats in the career counselling process; one meeting might involve reviewing a CV or preparing a client for an interview, the next consultation may involve consoling a client who has been made redundant. Career counsellors never know what might come up in the course of their work, and while we cannot be experts in all areas of counselling, it is advisable to stay abreast of the literature on personal counselling theories . Understanding the fundamentals of trauma, including its biological components is also advisable.

Background to Case Study

In September 2021, a client, referred to in this article by the pseudonym Neeta, presented for career counselling. Neeta joined a multi-national company towards the end of 2018 as an individual contributor ; she was working at this company until early 2021 when she resigned with immediate effect. Neeta felt she had made every effort to manage the situation constructively via a series of appeals to senior management and the human resources department. Zapf and Gross (2001) demonstrated from their research that instances of bullying often result in the victim leaving the company. According to Zapf and Gross (2001), the process begins with the victim submitting a constructive complaint to senior management. However, the typical outcome sees the victim of bullying leave the organization due to perceived lack of action

from senior management. This was the case in the case study presented here also.

Career counselling with Neeta commenced in January 2021; Fortunately, she had secured an offer from another company,. However, she was still suffering the effects of bullying from her previous manager. She stated that her self-esteem was greatly diminished and she no longer had any motivation. She also advised that she had "lost faith in humanity to do the right thing" and she had lost the ability to trust other people.

Neeta was now extremely anxious about starting her new job in a matter of weeks. She advised that the new job was perfect for her and represented exactly her interests and passions. However, because of her experience at her previous employer she could not generate any excitement for this new challenge, "I am very nervous; I'm very scared. I don't know [how] it's going to be; I'm not even thinking about it. I'm not excited." Neeta was describing symptoms of arousal and re-experience which are consistent with the findings of Tehrani (2004) on workplace bullying. Tehrani (2004) identified arousal as tenseness in the body, feeling depressed, avoiding people, and mood swings. Re-experience was defined as dreams relating to the bullying, difficulty falling asleep, and waves of negative feelings about the bullying. All these symptoms were described by Neeta in this study and will be discussed further in this article.

Neeta requested career counselling to help her prepare for re-entry into her career journey with this new job which was due to commence in a matter of weeks. She wanted to try and prepare herself mentally and emotionally for this process of reintegration. The goal of the five career consultations were intended to help her do that.

Structure of Case Study and Research Philosophy

Five one-to-one career counselling sessions were conducted with 34-year-old Neeta on a weekly basis starting in February 2021 with each session lasting 60 to 70 minutes. This research strategy represents a qualitative approach as the aim is to explore the feelings, social constructs, and beliefs of the participant being interviewed (Bryman, 2012). To analyse the data, a thematic approach was utilised which involves identifying certain themes or patterns that arise out of the data set (Saunders et al., 2019). . Through the using of coding, the aim is to identify elements of the data that relate to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Codes can be described as words, sentences, or phrases that capture the essence of why a specific piece of data might be relevant.

The interview approach was unstructured as the objective was to allow Neeta to speak freely regarding her experience of bullying. The aim of the interviews was to provide as much space as possible to Neeta to facilitate the creation of a narrative regarding her experience. . Throughout this research process, I endeavoured to remain aware of bias which might influence the interview process. Recognizing and monitoring the impact of researcher biases is a crucial step in producing credible qualitative research (Berger, 2013).

Ethical Considerations

Considering the subject matter of this study it is necessary to ensure suitable ethical guidelines are followed. I began by providing Neeta with a description of the research via an initial video discussion. I explained to Neeta that I hoped the five one-to-one consultations would be beneficial to her in helping progress in her career while also contributing useful data for this article. Neeta was advised that her involvement was voluntary, and she was free to withdraw at any time. I provided Neeta with a consent form which outlined the nature of the research which she signed and returned. She was also provided with access to all recordings and was assured the recordings would be kept confidential via secure storage on a laptop protected by a firewall.

Throughout the process of writing up the findings, Neeta was kept abreast of any relevant developments. It is worth reiterating that throughout the duration of our consultations Neeta was also working with a therapist to directly address her trauma. We

agreed that Neeta would advise her therapist and myself if she felt the career counselling process became overwhelming at any point. Neeta advised she felt comfortable with the above arrangements and was content to contribute to this research. I continue to have dialogue with Neeta to keep her updated on any further changes that are being made to this article.

A Neuro-Informed Career-Focused Counselling Case Study

The remainder of this article will discuss the findings of the one-to-one career consultations with Neeta via the lens of neuro-informed career-focused counselling (Luke & Field, 2017) . As discussed in the introduction, this article will look at three phenomena relative to career counselling via the lens of neuroscience. The first element is the relevance of relationships: a relationship built on trust creates learning via neuroplasticity; conversely a negative relationship can incur hyperactivation of the stress response which reduces learning. In the case of Neeta, the goal was to attempt to diminish the impact of the bullying she suffered through the creation of a safe and trusting relationship with the author via the career consultation process.

The next section of the discussion will examine the neuroscience of the stress response. It is helpful to discuss the stress response as this is a physiological phenomenon that ultimately leads to the negative emotions Neeta is experiencing. The final phase of the discussion will test the principle of co-construction of a narrative as a means for diffusing the stress response. By creating a rapport between the author and Neeta, it was hoped that the chronic stress response that Neeta was experiencing would decrease in its severity via the process of narrative construction. Throughout this discussion, Neeta's own words will be provided as examples.

The Neuroscience of Relationships in Career Counselling

A safe and trusting relationship has been recognised as vital to the maintenance of mental, emotional, and physical health (Rogers, 1951). With the creation of new technologies such as functional magnetic resonance imaging and the electroencephalogram we can now study social connection at a biological level. Research indicates that social relationships activate different networks in the brain which in turn activate a cascade of physiological responses elsewhere in the body (Eisenberger & Cole, 2012). In the context of the workplace, an employee subjected to bullying may experience activation of the basic neural alarm system (Eisenberger & Cole, 2012). This alarm system, or stress response, has been shown in neuroscientific studies to include the amygdala, dorsal anterior cingulate cortex, anterior insula, and the periaqueductal grey (Eisenberger & Cole, 2012). These brain regions appear to activate autonomic and endocrine mechanisms that, when chronic, can cause complications for the employee's health. This research therefore indicates that prolonged bullying is unhealthy. . This information alone is worth knowing for career counsellors, as this biological process can be referred to in the context of career counselling.

There are two perspectives to explore regarding relationships with Neeta; first, her relationship with her manager who was the source of the bullying and, second, the importance of the rapport that is built between Neeta and me as her career counsellor. Her line manager played a role in creating a state of chronic hyperarousal; and I hoped to play a role in counteracting her chronic hyperarousal by creating a sense of safety and trust. Neeta described how the bullying by her line manager and the lack of support from human resources felt on a relational level:

> "It's like David and Goliath. I'm the David and I have a Goliath giant which is made out of people and they're shooting at me constantly, constantly shooting at me and I'm trying to defend myself. I'm trying to run; I'm trying to do whatever I can."

Neeta provides a powerful metaphor to describe her psychophysiological reaction to the experience of interacting with her line manager, and the human resource manager who she feels failed to protect her. She stated that she felt a general sense of rejection by the group which caused her to lose respect for herself: "I lost self-respect for myself because I was trying so hard to fit into that group dynamics." Neeta felt like she was always under fire and constantly needed to find ways to prove herself causing chronic activation of her stress response. Furthermore, in the fourth consultation with Neeta, a discussion regarding her relationship with her father arose. Neeta felt she had to work hard for her father's approval: "You know the biggest thing that I wanted from my father? I wanted validation. I wanted to have him say, oh, I'm really proud of you. I wanted him to respect me." Based on Neeta's statements, it appears that her father and line manager were people in her life who had a significant impact on her psychophysiology. While these relationships often resulted in the activation of Neeta's stress response, it can be hypothesised that relationships which provide her with a sense of safety, acceptance, and trust should lead to a reduction in the stress response. This may be achieved via a combination of one-to-one consultations with myself in addition to the work she is doing with her therapist, and via a positive working relationship with her new line manager. Neeta did indicate directly in our one-to-one consultations that she felt a degree of trust towards me "I'm talking to you today; I'm trusting you." Neeta is also making efforts to foster positive relationships in her personal life as well. She recently took up a hobby which is providing her with further opportunities to develop positive relationships that can also help regulate her nervous system so it returns to homeostasis (Miller et al., 2007).

The Neuroscience of the Stress Response

As shown in the previous section, Neeta's relationship with her line manager had significant consequences for her from a neuroscientific perspective. Decision making is compromised when under stress (Dickinson et al., 2021). This appears to be caused by decreased activation in certain parts of the brain such as the prefrontal cortex which is partially responsible for working memory, cognitive inhibition, and cognitive flexibility (Shields et al., 2016) . Stress occurs when the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis activates the release of cortisol from the adrenal glands in response to a perceived threat (Alon et al., 2020). This biological process puts the mind and body into a heightened state of readiness, the heart starts pumping blood to the muscles, blood vessels constrict in preparation for blood loss from injury, muscles become tense, and pupils dilate. This physiological process leads to negative feelings such as anxiety.

Typically, workplace stress does not cause full activation of the sympathetic branch of the nervous system, it tends to occur at a lower grade. However, if stress is chronic and/or acute it can lead to long term physical and mental health problems. Cortisol reduces the brain's capacity for neuroplasticity which adversely impacts our ability to learn new information. Dendrites are branches of the neuron responsible for carrying information from one neuron to another; these degenerate during prolonged periods of cortisol release (Mariotti, 2015). Furthermore, neurons can experience diminished insulation which compromises efficiency, and finally prolonged cortisol release can also lead to the death of neurons (Luke & Field, 2017).

In addition to stress compromising cognitive performance in the present moment, it can also cause a cascade of further biological processes such as inflammation, which is considered a possible precursor to serious illnesses such as cardiovascular dysfunctions, cancers of various forms, and diabetes (Mariotti, 2015). When working with clients experiencing chronic stress, career counsellors can bring to a client's attention the long-term implications of not taking steps to address stress. It may not necessarily require the client to leave a place of employment or change career.

The client may be able to make a smaller collection of decisions which alleviate stress. This might include working less hours and spending more time engaging in stress reduction strategies such as exercise and mindfulness/ meditation.

Neeta was clearly experiencing this psychophysiological process on an ongoing basis in her work as evidenced in the following extract:

> "I remember I would go in the office, and something would happen in the morning and that's it; my day was gone. So, these people wouldn't trust me with my expertise. I was not able to give them my hundred percent, I was going to the calls and I was distracted because I was feeling bad and disheartened and I could not give them my hundred percent"

Neeta's statement indicates that her capacity to focus was compromised as a result of the severe level of stress she was experiencing daily at work. She explains that something would happen in work, and she would be unable to focus properly for the day. Neeta was likely arriving at work already in the stress response in anticipation of interacting with her manager; in this heightened psychophysiological state a small inconvenience was enough to make her situation worse. The stress response was impacting Neeta's capacity to perform at her job while also creating significant negative emotions. Through our consultations, Neeta examined the negative impact this stress was having on her. This assisted Neeta in interpreting her decision for leaving the company as the correct decision.

Co-Construction of a Narrative

Cozolino and Sprokray (2006) proposed that negative learning experiences increase stress and decrease the possibility of neuroplasticity; conversely if negative experiences are addressed via the establishment of a narrative, anxiety decreases and neuroplasticity is stimulated (Cozolina & Sprokray, 2006). The use of narrative in career counselling has been discussed previously (Cochran, 1992), and so it is interesting to consider narrative at the intersection of neuroscience and career counselling. Powers and Duys (2020) proposed that narrative guidance counselling is well suited to processing negative experiences as it aims to provide a medium through which a client can make sense of a traumatic experience, while also providing a means for establishing a sense of hope for the future. The narrative framework requires the career counsellor to listen deeply to the client, and to allow time and space for the client to form their story; it was for this reason that the interview philosophy took an unstructured approach. Through narration, the client can potentially bring meaning to their experience (Savickas, 2009 et al.,), and produce a story which can provide hope that they will be able to move into a positive future; the client in effect becomes an author of their story (Powers & Duys, 2020). Although narrative has been addressed in the career literature, a neuroscientific basis for the relevance of narrative has not been presented.

According to Cozolino and Sprokray (2006) negative statements from important people in our life such as parents, teachers, and managers become stored in the nervous system, which when invoked, negatively impact performance. Cozolino and Sprokray (2006) support the arguments of Powers and Duys (2020) and Savickas (2009 et al.,) by proposing that processing negative experiences requires the co-construction of a narrative. In the context of career counselling, this involves encouraging the client to describe the scenarios in as much detail as possible and to make a concerted effort to make sense of the situation. For Cozolino and Sprokray (2006) it is the active process of making sense of an experience that creates the conditions for improved self-esteem, "In terms of its role in self-esteem, a learner's self-narrative becomes a blueprint for action that can turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy" (p. 16) . It is important to note that the brain is biased towards learning and remembering negative experiences (Davis, 2002; Vyas & Chattarji, 2004). This indicates that in the context of career counselling, it will take more effort to help clients overcome negative career-

related phenomena versus positive experiences.

With regards to working with Neeta, the five sessions were designed to help Neeta construct a narrative around her experience of bullying. As stated, Neeta spent over two years on the receiving end of bullying by her line manager. From a neuroscientific perspective her psychophysiology had to absorb the treatment meted out by her line manager every day. Neeta's entire sensory apparatus was inundated with data that resulted in a cascade of psychophysiological reactions that can be described as a severe form of the stress response. The goal of neuro-informed career-focused counselling (Luke & Field, 2017) is to attempt to diffuse the stress response by helping Neeta construct a narrative around her experience of bullying. By constructing a narrative, Neeta can make sense of what occurred, which in turn should hypothetically decrease the severity of the stress response.

To further support the process, Cozolino and Sprokray (2006) recommended journaling as a helpful exercise in narrative construction. This exercise was proposed to Neeta as an activity to take up between the weekly one-to-one consultations. In the psychological literature journaling has been shown to be effective in processing negative emotions (Donnelly & Murray, 1991; Kim-Godwin, 2020; Pennebaker & Segal, 1986) . Neeta took up this suggestion enthusiastically and it appeared to be helpful for her:

> "And when I started writing, I started with the background and all that. And I didn't realize that it was hitting me and everything was coming back to me, every little movement, everything that happened; like the things that I've not even told to anyone, they're coming back to me from a day-to-day point of view. And I kept writing and I was like, okay, I'm going to keep writing. I got so emotional. At one point I remember I was writing, and I was crying and then I got really angry while writing. And I just kept going. And I got so anxious at that moment because it was like remembering everything. It was like, I was reliving everything. It was difficult. And I wrote between - I couldn't stop after 15 minutes, I wrote for 25 minutes."

It would appear from this excerpt that Neeta is processing a range of powerful emotions via the act of writing, this would support the findings in the literature (Donnelly & Murray, 1991; Kim-Godwin, 2020; Pennebaker & Segal, 1986) The process of describing and labelling negative experiences appears to reduce the strength of the experience on the brain and nervous system (Lieberman et al. 2007). Throughout the five one-to-one consultations I endeavoured to create space for Neeta to narrate her experience. She was encouraged to examine her experience in as much depth as possible. Through the consultations and the journaling, it was hoped that Neeta would create a narrative around her experience that would help her make sense of what occurred, and by doing so, her brain and nervous system would gradually come to the realization that the threat had now passed.

Conclusion

This article provides further support for the application of neuro-informed career-focused counselling as introduced by Luke and Field (2017). This was done via the examination of a single study participant who was in the process of recovering from bullying by her line manager. By understanding the neuroscience of relationships, the stress response, and the process of co-constructing a narrative, a career counsellor can visualise themselves as an applied neuroscientist (Cozolina & Sprokray, 2016), who assists their clients in taking action that will lead to changes in the structure of their brains and nervous system. A career counsellor can also use these same theories to explain to the client what occurs on a biological level as they engage in the often-complex process of career path planning.

Finally, although neuroscience is an exciting field of study with significant potential in the context of career counselling, it is also important to keep a realistic view of what it can offer. Grant (2015) advised caution when applying

neuroscience to the discipline of coaching which is closely related to career counselling. Grant (2015) stated there is still no neuroscientific model for coaching, and the same holds true for career counselling. I therefore identified and focused on three phenomena (relationships, stress response, and narrative) which have been studied to a reasonable extent in the neuroscientific literature, with the goal of explaining how understanding these phenomena can be leveraged in the context of career counselling.

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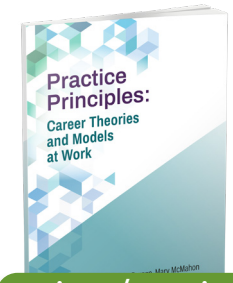

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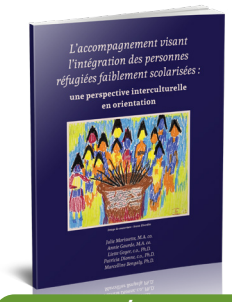

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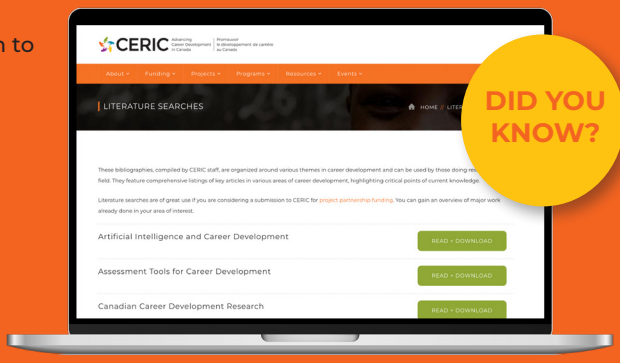

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Career Counselling Individuals Experencing Workplace Bullying

Charles P. Chen & Michelle Fung
University of Toronto

Abstract

Workplace bullying is a pervasive career issue that impacts not only the victim's vocational well-being, but also the perpetrator, witnesses, and organization. Since many victims of workplace bullying leave their jobs, counsellors should be aware of these issues in order to effectively support clients through their transitional difficulties. This article provides a conceptual overview of workplace bullying by exploring the causes and effects of bullying on victims, perpetrators, and the organization. Implications for counselling the victims of workplace bullying are discussed using insights from social cognitive career theory and work adjustment theory.

Keywords: career development, career theories, counselling interventions, workplace bullying

Workplace bullying is a serious issue that is gaining more attention both in organizations and among researchers. This is a wide-spread concern from manufacturing to retail to higher education to healthcare, however, most workplace bullying is left unreported, undocumented, or dismissed (Kohut, 2008). Globally, Nielsen and Einarsen (2018) estimated the prevalence rate of workplace bullying to be around 15%, further nuanced by differences in demographic characteristics, geographical locations, and measurement or methodological factors. According to a systematic literature review of 14 samples, the prevalence of workplace bullying typically fluctuates between 7.6% to 19.4% in North America, with the exception of very high prevalence in the healthcare sector (León-Pérez et al., 2021). The Canadian Safety Council reports that 75% of victims of workplace bullying end up leaving their jobs, and this issue is four times more common than sexual harassment or workplace discrimination. It is evident that this is a problem increasing in frequency and concern with implications for the physical, psychological, and mental health of victimized individuals and witnesses of bullying, as well as costs to organizations.

Definition of Workplace Bullying

According to the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety (2005), bullying is defined harmful physical or verbal acts in the workplace, often occurring repeatedly to intimidate, offend, degrade, or humiliate an individual or group. In the literature, there are many variations in the definition of what constitutes workplace bullying, but they all essentially encompass the same elements in one form or another – repetition, duration, escalation, power disparity, and attributed intent (Einarsen et al., 2003; Rayner & Keashly, 2005; Rayner et al., 2002; Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007).

Bullying can be verbal and non-verbal, direct or indirect. Bartlett and Bartlett (2011) explained that bullying acts could be classified into three themes – work-related, psychological/personal, and physical/threatening. Work-related acts of bullying revolve around workload and work process (e.g., withholding information or resources, overruling decisions, flaunting status or power); psychological/personal bullying includes acts of gossiping, isolation, accusation, belittlement, humiliation; physical/threatening refers primarily to acts of violence and threats.

When determining if someone's behaviour is considered bullying, it is important to keep in mind the factor of culture. Cultural

variation in forms of interaction can cause confusion in interpreting whether a behaviour is considered to be abusive (Escartin et al., 2011). Thus, it is important to clarify the definition of workplace bullying in different cultural contexts for theoretical and practical implications (Escartin et al., 2011).

This paper will provide a conceptual overview of workplace bullying – what the causes and effects on the bullies/perpetrators are, the causes and effects on the bullied/victims and the witnesses of bullying, and the role of organizations. The issue of workplace bullying will then be explored through two career theories: social cognitive career theory (SCCT) (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) and Dawis and Lloyd Lofquist's (1984) work adjustment theory. The final part of this paper will look at what can be done to address workplace bullying and the implications for counselling for the target population who are coping with this mid-career crisis and transitional difficulties – the victims of workplace bullying.

The purpose of this paper is to offer career counsellors two approaches on how to identify clients who are current or past victims of workplace bullying. Recognizing that some individuals may be hesitant to disclose their experiences, our focus is on approaching the topic with utmost sensitivity. We aim to discuss the detrimental personal effects of bullying, including depression and anxiety, diminished job satisfaction, disturbed sleep, and, most importantly, guide and support clients as they are finding ways to cope with the harmful work environment.

Profile of the Bully/Perpetrator

Why does bullying occur?

The question of why people bully can be explored through various avenues such as personality, work pressures, mental health issues, and social learning. Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007) found that "systematic exposure to negative social experiences in childhood, such as bullying, may cause serious negative aftereffects in adult life (i.e. a vulnerable personality). Thus, empirical findings indicate that persons who were victimized at school are more likely to be victimized in the workplace" (p. 747). Kohut (2008) listed some general characteristics of bullies, which include difficulties in interpersonal relationships, lack of empathy, difficulties maintaining boundaries, holding rigid and irrational belief patterns, hidden agendas, lack of emotional intelligence, self-reflection, and perspective taking. In addition, Djurkovic, McCormack, and Casimir (2004) stated that a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for bullying to occur is the element of power differential either in the form of positional or personal (i.e. being friends with one's super-ordinate) power.

Many bullies may be jealous or feel threatened by others' competency, qualifications, intelligence, and success in the workplace. They are often skilled in one main skill, have rigid work patterns, and struggle to adapt to coworkers deviating from their patterns (Kohut, 2008). In a study on bullying at work, perpetrators were found to be more aggressive than those who do not report any involvement with bullying (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007).

Effects on the Bully

Most of the existing research on the topic of workplace bullying tends to be on the causes and effects on the victims, but little has been done to explore the effects that bullying has on the perpetrators. This type of research can be quite valuable because if people become aware that both the bully and the bullied suffer negative consequences from workplace bullying, perhaps this could be a valuable tool to combat this issue. Jenkins, Winefield, and Sarris (2011) conducted an exploratory study to look at the consequences of being accused of workplace bullying. Participants reported physical and psychological concerns associated with being accused of bullying or harassment, regardless of whether they were found guilty or not. The accused experienced anxiety, depression, stress, trouble sleeping, and felt suicidal, devastated, and mortified. In addition, both those found guilty and not guilty of the bullying allegations had strong perceptions of unfairness because they felt the

organization failed to abide by the policies outlining how allegations were to be investigated. These concerns and feelings were further confirmed by more recent studies (Vranjes et al., 2022; Wicks et al., 2021). Negative consequences of being accused led to forced resignations, wrongful dismissals, or voluntary leaves due to a lack of trust and support from the organization to return to their role regardless of being found guilty or not.

Profile of the Targets of Bullying

Workplace Bullying Behaviours

The victims of workplace bullying are often subjected to a variety of negative behaviours. Djurkovic et al. (2004) outlined a five-category taxonomy of workplace bullying behaviours, which appears to be quite representative of the existing workplace bullying literature: 1) threat to professional status (e.g. humiliation, the accusation of lack of effort); 2) threat to personal standing (e.g. name-calling, insults, teasing, and intimidation); 3) isolation (e.g. preventing access to/withholding resources and opportunities, social isolation); 4) overwork (e.g. undue pressures, impossible deadlines, constant unnecessary disruptions; and 5) de-stablization (e.g. failure to give credit where it is due, assigning meaningless tasks, removing responsibility, and setups for failure).

Who Gets Bullied

The issue of workplace bullying is unique from workplace harassment or violence in that acts are typically subtle and trivial, and targets may not even realize they are being bullied. Victims of workplace bullying are typically high-achieving, dedicated workers (Futterman, 2004). Their eagerness often makes them easy targets of workplace bullying.

Furthermore, according to the International Labour Organization, those who have raised concerns about inappropriate, unethical, or bullying behaviours are often stigmatized as "having a negative attitude, being paranoid or engaging in whistle-blowing" (Futterman, 2004, p. 14). Systematic reviews of cross-sectional and prospective studies also indicated that a range of work stressors, such as role conflict and ambiguity, workload, job insecurity, and cognitive demands have shown to heighten the risk of being the target of bullying (Reknes et al., 2014; Van den Brande et al., 2016).

A study conducted by Brousse et al. (2008) examined the psychopathological features of a patient population of targets of workplace bullying. They found that neuroticism often distinguished targets of workplace bullying, which was characterized by excessive emotional sensitivity, inclination to protest, and inability to cope with stressful events. Thus, there are strong associations with work disability for those identified with neuroticism when faced with interpersonal conflicts, bullying tactics, and psychological decomposition as work-related conflicts accumulate (Nielsen et al., 2017; Podsiadly & Gamian-Wilk, 2017).

Effects of Bullying

Individuals who are bullied often experience a range of physical, emotional, mental, and psychological issues such as sadness, depression, loss of confidence and esteem, self-blame, job dissatisfaction, reduced productivity at work (which can intensify bullying), sleep difficulties and strain on interpersonal relationships (Glambek et al., 2014; Hansen et al., 2014; Hoobler et al., 2010; Verkuil et al., 2015). These effects are similar to those on the perpetrators. Some victims of bullying may even develop symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder such as avoidance, intrusion, and hyper-arousal (Nielsen et al., 2015). Interestingly, colleagues who merely witness bullying may also feel threatened and experience symptoms of general stress (Djurkovic et al., 2004).

In order to address these issues, there are several options for the targeted individual to consider: ignore the behaviour and/or the perpetrator, report (present documented incidents), decide to stay or leave the organization, and what Kohut (2008) called the N.I.C.E four-point plan (N = neutralize emotions to remain

rational; I = identify bully's type; C = control encounters; E = explore options to end conflicts without escalating the conflict). If a client decides the best option for them is to stay at the organization, career counsellors can focus on helping clients cope with the personal and professional consequences of workplace bullying. If a client decides to leave, they are likely to experience anxiety in the job search process, loss of their self-identity if one's career was a defining part of their being and identity, or financial difficulties. Thus, counsellors can support clients to determine if they should look for another position in a less hostile working environment or consider changing to a whole new career.

Organizational Contributions and Interventions

The literature on workplace bullying often includes the role organizations have in this issue. For example, some work cultures normalize workplace bullying through tacit encouragement or failing to intervene certain problems (Cleary et al., 2009). Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007) proposed that psychosocial factors in the work environment should be taken into consideration when attempting to determine why bullying occurs. For example, bullying can be a consequence of micropolitical behaviour, rivalry, competition, and compression of career structures. In turn, interpersonal conflicts can arise and some may resort to bullying as a competitive tactic.

When bullying occurs in the workplace, not only do individuals suffer, but the organization suffers too. If employees are suffering from emotional and psychological harm, their work performance may likely diminish (Nauman et al., 2023). For organizations, this can lead to economic costs in the form of reduced productivity, absenteeism, high turnover rates, lowered morale, wrongful dismissal lawsuits, and damaged customer relations (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Giga et al., 2008; Magee et al., 2017; Nielsen et al., 2016). Additionally, psychological injury claims cost significantly more and require longer recovery time than physical injury claims (Jenkins et al., 2011). Thus, the health of both the victim and perpetrator is important from an organization's economic perspective.

Commonly proposed solutions for organizations to deal with workplace bullying are to make improvements in the areas of education, prevention, assessment, monitoring, corrective actions, and corporate responsibility (Vickers, 2006). The implementation of more structured approaches such as zero-tolerance policies, bully-free environments, and a culture of respect is necessary to promote the right that each person has to a fair and equitable workplace where one is treated with respect and dignity (Cleary et al., 2009; Khan & Khan, 2012; McKay et al., 2010; Özer & Escartín, 2023).

Theoretical Conceptualizations

Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) highlights the triadic reciprocal interaction between the individual, the environment, and behavioral variables that form career and academic interests, and the translation of these interests into goals, actions, and attainments (Chronister & McWhirter, 2003; Sharf, 2010). The model assumes each person is an active agent in their environment. The social component of SCCT examines how human thoughts and behaviours are influenced by one's social environment. The idea that personal attributes and cognitive processing influence perceptions and behaviours in one's environment reflect the cognitive aspect.

Applying the concepts of SCCT to the issue of workplace bullying, Claybourn (2011) explained that employees exposed to harassment will report many negative thoughts and feelings (as outlined in the 'Effects of Bullying' section), but the low levels of organizational commitment factor have high potential to perpetuate this issue as it leads to limited concern about the well-being and courteous treatment of fellow colleagues. Furthermore, findings have shown a relation between employee satisfaction, work characteristics, and employee behaviour are interrelated.

For example, researchers have found a statistically significant negative correlation between job satisfaction and organizational aggression (Claybourn, 2011). This applies also to employees who witness bullying and to both victims and witnesses who hold negative perceptions of the organization, which in turn leads to lower job satisfaction and higher levels of negative behavioural intentions and workplace behaviours (Claybourn, 2011). Given the fact that the individual, the environment, and behaviours are all interconnected, it is no surprise that if one is exposed to a negative environment and bullying behaviours, the individual may experience negative thoughts and feelings, and react based on the negativity.

Work Adjustment Theory

Sharf (2010) outlined Dawis and Logquist's theory of work adjustment as an ongoing, dynamic process of achieving and maintaining correspondence with a work environment. The two characteristics of this theory are satisfaction and satisfactoriness, which refer to a worker's satisfaction with one's work, and employers' satisfaction with employees' performance, respectively. This theory is applicable to those who are experiencing work adjustment problems, and those who are victims, witnesses, or perpetrators of workplace bullying are likely to encounter such issues.

If a workplace has a culture of bullying, it is evident that the work environment is failing to satisfy employees' needs, and in turn, individual employees are likely to demonstrate lower morale and productivity, and higher levels of tardiness, absenteeism, and turnover (Sansone & Sansone, 2015). Thus, workplace adjustment theory is applicable to the issue of workplace bullying as it can help clients with adjusting to work problems, including conflict with coworkers and superiors (Sharf, 2010).

Workplace Bullying and Career Counselling Implications

Given that workplace bullying is gaining more attention as a pervasive and serious career crisis involving implications for one's vocational well-being, training counsellors to identify these situations is paramount because many clients often do not even recognize that they are targets of bullying due to the subtle nature of bullying behaviours. A lack of awareness on the part of the counsellor can lead them to inadvertently hold targets responsible for the maltreatment or to misdiagnose their symptoms of depression and anxiety, for instance, as the result of a mental illness. Inaccurate diagnoses have great potential to intensify the targets' suffering. Thus, it is vital that counsellors gain a complete understanding of a client's work context in order to determine whether presenting symptoms are consistent with workplace bullying or a mental health issue, so appropriate coping strategies or treatments can be devised and implemented (Lewis et al., 2002).

Another consequence of workplace bullying is the detriment of relationships with significant others, another reason why a counsellor's understanding and support are so crucial. Lewis, et al. (2002) reported that the experience of workplace bullying is so incomprehensible to significant others that in the midst of trying to provide support, the potential exists that they may question whether the victim somehow invited such treatment. Some may even become frustrated with the victim's lack of action and withdrawn behaviours, thereby increasing the feeling of isolation and creating more stress.

SCCT Counseling Implications

As clients contemplate their options in response to workplace bullying, a social-cognitive career counselor can encourage them to exercise their career self-efficacy to successfully accomplish their life career developmental tasks (Coogan & Chen, 2007). One's perceived level of self-efficacy is often negatively affected as a result of workplace bullying due to repeated messages challenging one's competency and performance. Sharf (2010) proposed that SCCT counselors help clients increase their self-efficacy and belief in positive outcome expectations

through the identification of one's assets, previous experiences and accomplishments, and career-related skills. This can also be accomplished by dividing tasks into smaller, more manageable parts to increase the client's chances of success, and opportunities to receive positive reinforcement. The counsellor can support and encourage the client to expand one's skills repertoire and develop tasks to further increase a sense of self-efficacy. Throughout this process, background contextual factors such as culture, gender, and contextual/environmental influences proximal to choice behaviour need to be taken into consideration during the exploration of career options.

Work Adjustment Theory Counselling Implications

At a time of indecision and confusion about one's career future, a counsellor working with the work adjustment theory first needs to assess a client's abilities, values, personality, and interests. Then the counsellor and client can collaboratively explore the requirements and conditions needed for the client's occupations/careers of interest. The final step would be to narrow the career choices down to a manageable number based on the degree of fit between the individual and the environment before making a final decision to stay or leave one's current position (Sharf, 2010).

Applying this to working with clients victimized by workplace bullying, an assessment of the client's personality and their working environment can be made (Sharf, 2010). The counselor can either help the client make adjustments to one's current abilities to better cope with the bullying, such as assertiveness training and coping strategies. However, the reduced confidence and self-esteem resulting from bullying can hinder the client from benefiting from these adjustments. Changing the environment by changing jobs or transferring departments in order to improve the individual's satisfaction with work is one option. Alternatively, if a discrepancy exists between an individual's values and abilities and the workplace's reinforcer persists, possible solutions are to adjust one's expectations of the reinforcers (i.e., stop trying to please the bully) or to seek reinforcement outside the workplace.

Conclusion

Workplace bullying is a serious issue that is gaining more attention as there is increasing awareness of the negative implications for all involved – the bully, the bullied, witnesses, and the organization. The bullied's perspective can be understood from the social cognitive career theory and work adjustment theory. The potential flaws in the triadic reciprocal interactions or the components of satisfaction and satisfactoriness affecting one's vocational well-being are important areas to consider both in understanding a client's situation, and in the process of deriving solutions so clients are assisted for workplace bullying and not misdiagnosed. Therefore, career counsellors should be especially sensitively attuned to the possibility of workplace bullying and be adequately equipped to deal with such issues in a professional and skillful manner. At the same time, counsellors must acknowledge the wide array of negative consequences of bullying (e.g., physical consequences including headaches and sleep disturbances, psychological consequences like depression and anxiety, and work-related consequences like low job satisfaction) that shape how clients proceed with their lives.

Author Correspondence

Charles P. Chen, PhD, is Professor of Counselling and Clinical Psychology and a Canada Research Chair in Life Career Development at the University of Toronto.

Michelle Fung, MEd, is a counsellor and psychotherapist based in Toronto.

Address correspondence to:

Professor Charles P. Chen, Counselling and Clinical Psychology Program, Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE),

University of Toronto, 252 Bloor Street West, 7th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5S 1V6.

E-mail: cp.chen@utoronto.ca

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Career Development of Working Mothers: Helping and Hindering Factors in Doing Well During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Larissa Rossen, Esther Oh & Deepak Mathew
Trinity Western University

Abstract

Women's career development amid the COVID-19 pandemic suggests that we may be facing a 'female recession', where women are at significantly increased risk for dropping out of the workforce with the gender gap in the workplace likely to grow. However, the pandemic may have presented opportunities for working mothers to engage creatively in personal career decisions due to increased opportunities to work flexibly and pivot in a very quickly changing labour market. This qualitative study used the enhanced critical incident technique to explore the intersection of working mothers and career development considering the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants for this study were a sample of 18 working mothers in North America and Australia. Key factors that were identified as helping women do well in their career development during COVID-19 included: Supportive workplaces, social support, personal protective factors, job market factors, and resources (predominantly financial). Hindering factors to working mothers' career development included: workplace challenges, family challenges, personal stressors, job market factors, COVID-19 mandates and restrictions, and childcare. The findings from this study help elucidate factors that contribute to a meaningful and productive career so that clinicians and other professionals can support, advocate, and encourage women who remain working during motherhood.

Keywords: working mothers, career advancement, COVID-19 pandemic, enhanced critical incident technique (ECIT), qualitative research

On the 11th of March 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) that spread throughout the world a pandemic (WHO, 2020). As of the 23rd of May 2021, more than 166 million cases were confirmed and more than 3.45 million confirmed deaths were attributed to COVID-19, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in history (WHO, 2020). As a result of the pandemic, individuals, families, communities, and countries across the world self-isolated and socially distanced in ways never seen before to slow down the infection rate. Due to physical distancing guidelines associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses and employees transitioned to working remotely from home often without adequate training and resources (Como et al., 2021). Many other workers lost their jobs due to the rapidly changing landscape of the labour market. Workers across all sectors simultaneously navigated the fear and uncertainty surrounding the virus, including their career trajectories and job security. For working mothers, evidence suggests they are at increased risk of dropping out of the workforce and the gender gap in the workplace may be at risk of growing despite the gains that have been made over the past few decades (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

Motherhood, Career Development, and COVID-19

The association between motherhood and reduced or restricted career outcomes is well established (Mäkelä, 2009; McIntosh et al., 2012; Warren and Brewis, 2004). Combining career and motherhood can mean that women find it difficult to establish the degree of impact in their careers which they would hope for due to juggling paid work and family responsibilities. This juggling act directly affects the type of roles working mothers can obtain or are offered (McIntosh et al., 2012).

Waldfogel (2007) termed it the 'penalties of motherhood' related to women's career progression. She noted that this penalty may last for a woman's entire career, even after childcare has ceased, due to the negative effects of career breaks forming a negative shadow on their future careers, compared to men's careers which suffer little to no disadvantage (Waldfogel, 2007). Although flexible employment, in terms of hours or part-time work, may be appealing to women due to their flexibility and ability to combine work and family responsibilities more easily, they can come at a cost to their long-term career (McQuaid et al., 2009). These constraints frequently force women to take less attractive employment which accommodate personal circumstances on reduced salaries and hours of work or both.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, working mothers had similar career ambitions compared to working women overall and had higher ambitions in some categories such as motivation for promotion and advancement (McKinsey & Company, 2021). In fact, in recent years, working women had made many gains in achieving equal opportunities and job prospects compared to men - Between January 2015 and January 2020, the number of women in senior-vice-president positions increased from 23 to 28 percent (McKinsey & Company, 2021). However, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, up to 33% of working mothers considered downshifting their careers or leaving their jobs altogether (McKinsey & Company, 2021). In fact, women sustained a greater proportion of the job losses due to COVID-19 in part because they were overrepresented in occupations and sectors hit especially hard during the pandemic, such as accommodation, food, sales, and manufacturing (Catalyst, 2020). Women were also dropping out of the labour force due to growing responsibilities of unpaid work at home, including the responsibility for childcare and homeschooling children or caretaking for other family members, revealing the gendered nature of the mandatory imposition of home working during the pandemic (Ashman et al., 2022; Clark et al., 2021).

Mothers are also more than three times as likely as fathers to be responsible for most of the housework and caregiving during the pandemic. Latina mothers are 1.6 times more likely than white mothers to be responsible for all childcare and housework, and Black mothers are twice as likely to be handling these duties for their families (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Latina and Black women are more likely to be their family's sole breadwinner or to have partners working outside the home during the COVID-19 crisis, so leaving the workforce or downshifting may not be a realistic option. Of mothers who have considered leaving the workforce, Asian and Latina mothers were more likely to say that their decision was related to domestic and childcare responsibilities (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Most of the literature surrounding the pandemic and career development related to working mothers shows a bleak picture. Yet the pandemic may present opportunities for working mothers to engage creatively in personal career decisions considering increased opportunities to work flexibly and pivot with a very quickly changing labour market. Considering the uncertainty, loss, disruption, and anxiety presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the experience of precarity may evoke resilience and resistance (Grenier et al., 2020, p. 9) in working mothers, which may transform the circumstances that exacerbate vulnerability.

The Current Study

This study aims to explore the intersection of working mothers and career development in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the study will focus on working mothers who self-report doing well in their careers since the COVID-19 outbreak began. The research aims to explore factors that helped and hindered working mother's career trajectories, considering the global pandemic, to understand what these women perceive as contributing to a meaningful and productive career.

Method

In this section, we describe the procedure, participants, and the enhanced critical incident

technique (ECIT) methodology utilized in the present study. The Research Ethics Board of the University affiliated with the research approved the study before it took place.

Procedure

Working mothers, with children of any age, were invited to participate in the study through word of mouth and social media outlets, from North America and Australia. Inclusion criteria for the study included: a) Mothers with a living child at home; b) Mothers who are currently engaged in any type of paid work, whether self-employed or working for an employer; c) Mothers who report doing well in their careers during the COVID-19 pandemic and are willing to share about their experiences, and; d) have a minimum English proficiency. Mothers interested in participating were briefed on the research and screened for the inclusion/exclusion criteria. If participants indicated they would like to participate in the study, they completed the consent form, and a first interview was scheduled.

Formal semi-structured, qualitative interviews were conducted by LR and EO over Zoom between June 2022 – March 2023. Demographic data was requested to better provide a contextual frame for describing and interpreting the data. Each mother was interviewed individually on two separate occasions to facilitate the development of a deeper relationship between the researcher and participant and, in turn, generate richer disclosure. The first interview invited each mother to share about doing well in her career during the pandemic and lasted on average 46 minutes (range: 23-90 minutes). During the second interview, each participant provided feedback on both individual and grouped participant factors and the categories in which each factor was placed. The second interview lasted approximately 15-30 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim by LR and EO. Participants received a $25 CAD gift voucher for participating in both interviews.

Participants

The participants in this study were 18 working mothers who self-identified as doing well in their careers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most participants worked full-time (n=16). Four of the participants were self-employed while 14 participants were employees of workplaces and/or industries related to public health, education, non-profit, government, private sector, and small business. The participants' ages ranged from 27 to 48 years old, with a mean age of 35. The participants were located in Canada, Australia, and the United States. All participants were mothers of biological children. Most participants were married (n=16). One participant identified as Latina, six participants identified as Black/African American, and 11 participants identified as White/Caucasian. Please see Table 2 for detailed demographic data for participants in the study.

Two participants had a pre-existing relationship with LR, and all participants were briefed on the researcher's reasons for doing the research. Four participants completed the consent form but withdrew before the first interview. One participant gave the reason that she was too busy; The other three participants did not respond. Five participants participated in first interview and not second interview; Three of these participants did not respond, one participant was too busy, and one person was not happy about the gift card amount ($25 CAD).

Enhanced Critical Incident Technique

The enhanced critical incident technique (ECIT), an adaptation of the critical incident technique (CIT; Flanagan, 1954), was chosen for the present research because it is designed to capture helping and hindering aspects of a specific phenomenon—in this case, working women who report doing well in their career development during the COVID-19 pandemic—from the perspective of the lived experiences of the participants. Also, the ECIT has been expanded to capture "wish list" (WL) items, or what participants wished they would have known or would have had for the experience being studied. The ECIT framework

Table 2

Participants' Demographics

P#	Age	Highest Education	Current Relational Status	Parental Status: No. Children	Occupational Status	Country of Residence	Ethnicity
#1	30	Bachelor's degree	Married	Shared parental care: 2 children	Full-time; Customer Service	United States	Caucasian
#2	46	Bachelor's degree	Married	Shared parental care: 1 child	Full-time; Business owner	Australia	Caucasian
#3	40	Post-graduate diploma	Separated	Custody 50%: 2 children	Part-time, self-employed; Psychologist	Australia	Caucasian
#4	31	Post-graduate	Married	Shared parental care: 1 child	Full-time; Accountant	United States	African-American
#5	37	College	Married	Shared parental care: 1 child	Full-time; HR Administrative Assistant	Canada	Caucasian
#6	30	Bachelor's degree	Married	Shared parental care: 1 child	Full-time; Office assistant for retail company	United States	African-American
#7	27	College	Single, never married	Single parent: 1 child	Full-time; Business owner	United States	African-American
#8	32	Master's degree	Married	Shared parental care: 1 child	Full-time; Business owner	United States	Caucasian
#9	30	Bachelor's degree	Married	Shared parental care: 1 child	Full-time; IT Consultant	United States	African-American
#10	30	Bachelor's degree	Married	Shared parental care: 2 children	Full-time; Public Health expert	United States	African-American
#11	39	Bachelor's degree	Married	Shared parental care: 2 children	Full-time: Registered Nurse	Canada	Caucasian

Table 2

Participants' Demographics

P#	Age	Highest Education	Current Relational Status	Parental Status: No. Children	Occupational Status	Country of Residence	Ethnicity
#12	38	Post-graduate diploma	Married	Shared parental care: 2 children	Part-time; Psychologist	Australia	Caucasian
#13	34	Master's degree	Common law partnership	Shared parental care: 1 child	Full-time; Policy Analyst	Canada	Caucasian
#14	32	Bachelor's degree	Married	Shared parental care: 3 children	Part-time, self-employed; Administrative, marketing services	Canada	Latin-American
#15	27	Bachelor's degree	Married	Shared parental care: 1 child	Part-time; Rabbi	United States	Caucasian (Jewish)
#16	34	College	Married	Co-parenting: 1 child	Full-time; Housekeeper	United States	Caucasian
#17	48	Master's degree	Married	Shared parental care: 1 child	Full-time; Research Administration	United States	Caucasian
#18	40	Bachelor's degree	Married	Shared parental care: 2 children	Full-time; Teacher	United States	African-American

is embedded within the post-positivist paradigm.

The ECIT protocol involves a semi-structured, qualitative interview about the experience of interest. In this study, participants were asked to describe what helped them most in their career development during the COVID-19 pandemic and what hindered or got in the way of them doing well in their career development. They were also asked to describe "wish list" (WL) items, which represent retrospectively what they think would have been helpful to know or to have during the pandemic related to doing well in work. This semi-structured interview protocol focused on the subjective perspectives and insights of the research participants. Please refer to Appendix A and B for interview schedules 1 and 2 respectively.

Data Analysis

Inductive data analysis identified each event or aspect of the experience (each called a "critical incident") the participants described. Transcribed interviews were used to determine critical incidents (separated into helping and hindering factors) and wish list items. According to the ECIT technique, critical incidents (CIs) and wish list (WL) items extracted are those supported by

examples (Butterfield et al., 2009). Two researchers (LR and EO) independently coded the data and formed categories from individual items using inductive reasoning, patience, and the ability to see similarities and differences among the CIs provided by participants.

Each CI was placed into a category, either by identifying a new category or placing the CI into a pre-existing category from earlier interviews in the study. The researchers (LR and EO) made decisions about the exclusivity of the categories, deciding which larger categories needed to be separated or if smaller related categories needed to be merged. This process was conducted one interview at a time until no new categories emerged. A minimum participation rate of 25% was required for category retention (Borgen & Amundson, 1984). Once final categories were established, key themes were identified to summarize and report the results effectively.

Research Team

A research team was utilized in the present research and comprised: one assistant professor of counselling psychology with a PhD who identifies as female (LR), one associate professor of counselling psychology with a PhD who identifies as male (DM), one master's level researcher who identifies as female (EO), and several master's level research students all identifying as female. LR and DM have significant experience in conducting qualitative research pertaining to the topics of motherhood and career development, respectively. The primary researcher, LR, became a mother during the COVID-19 pandemic and was eager to support working mothers who chose to stay in the workforce, despite the challenges. LR formulated the research study to encourage and equip mothers in their career development in light of the pandemic challenges that working mothers faced.

Rigour and Validation

ECIT requires nine credibility checks as outlined by Butterfield and colleagues (2005, 2009), which were followed in this study to ensure validity and rigour (see Table 1). To fulfil the first credibility check, all interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Second, interview fidelity was maintained by reviewing interview protocols and the principal investigator providing supervision of initial interviews. A member of the research team reviewed subsequent interview recordings to determine that the interview protocol had been followed. Third, independent extraction of the CI and WL items took place on all interviews, beyond the recommended 25% of interviews by Butterfield and colleagues (2005, 2009). Fourth, to ensure exhaustiveness was reached, a log of each interview was tracked as its CI and WL items were placed into the emerging categories until new categories did not emerge. Fifth, the minimum participation rate (percentage of participants that endorsed a category) determined the strength of a category. A minimum participation rate of 25% is the standard established by Borgen and Amundson (1984). Although one of the categories did not meet this threshold (see Table 3), the research team, after in-depth consultation, considered this category significant enough to include. Sixth, the ECIT technique suggests an 80% match rate on categories by independent researchers (Andersson & Nilsson, 1964). The present study enhanced rigour by having two researchers conduct data analysis and interpretation together, ensuring 100% agreement across all categories. Moreover, an 88% match rate resulted from an independent judge's placement of CI and WL items into established categories. Coding discrepancies were addressed throughout the analysis and interpretation process between the two coders. Seventh, cross-checking by participants via a second interview allowed participants to confirm and review CI and WL items as well as categories. The eighth credibility check drew on opinions of experts in the field regarding the categories formed. Two experts were considered as part of the research team, and they provided their expertise concerning the data analysis process and provided additional insights about the categories/themes that were

Table 1

Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT) Credibility Checks

Credibility Check	Description
Audiotaping and Transcribing	The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed in order to ensure that researchers work directly and comprehensively from the words of participants rather than from inferences or incomplete notes.
Interviewer Fidelity	Interviewer fidelity was ensured by using a structured interview protocol, and researchers reviewing each other's interviews periodically.
Independent Extraction	Butterfield et al. have recommended selecting 25% of the transcripts to give to an independent individual, following which the researcher would normally discuss possible discrepancies and calculate a concordance rate. For this study, the authors enhanced the third credibility check of independent extraction by collaboratively extracting CI and WL, and placing them in categories by consensus with 100% of the transcripts.
Exhaustiveness	Exhaustiveness, the fourth credibility check, indicates the point at which no new categories are being identified. This criterion was reached after 13 interviews, after which no other interviews were necessary.
Participation Rates	Participation Rate (discussed in the text) not only provides a minimum requirement for retaining a category but also serves to establish relative strengths of each category.
Placing Into Categories by a Judge	In this credibility check, 25% of the CIs are assigned to an independent judge for category placement with a recommended match rate of 80% with the PI. This credibility check was modified similarly to the check of independent extraction in that the researchers placed the incidents into categories collaboratively. The researchers achieved 100% agreement through discussion at the time of category formation and coding. An independent judge further confirmed category placement with a match rate of 88%.
Cross-Checking by Participants	After the participant's results were analyzed and incidents were elicited and placed into their respective emerging categories, participants were contacted to do a second interview (by phone, e-mail, or videoconference) and were provided with a copy of their incidents along with the categories that these incidents were placed to confirm whether they had been placed appropriately. This honours participants' voices as the final authorities in representing their lived experience.

Table 1. Continued

Credibility Check	Description
Expert Opinion Review	The categories were submitted to two outside experts for an expert opinion review. The experts were asked, (1) do you find the categories to be useful?; (2) are you surprised by any of the categories?; and (3) do you think there is anything missing based on your experience? The categories in this study were submitted to a registered midwife, and a nurse practitioner, who is also qualified as a licensed lactation consultant and is currently working in perinatal care. Both experts confirmed that the categories were congruent with their expertise, and current research in the field.
Theoretical Agreement	Theoretical agreement involves reporting assumptions underlying the study, and comparing emergent categories with relevant literature.

Note: These nine credibility checks were performed to enhance the rigour of the analysis, according to the guidelines of the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005; Butterfield, Borgen, Maglio, & Amundson, 2009), with specific project applications and/or modifications clearly noted under each description.

extracted. Finally, the ninth credibility check was to attain theoretical agreement for the emergent categories and themes, along with the assumptions of the study, concerning the existing literature. There was consistency between the literature and the assumptions and categories/themes, as elaborated in the discussion.

Results

There were 189 CI and WL items that were reported by the participants. Of these items, 82 (43%) were helping factors, 65 (34%) were hindering factors, and 42 (22%) were wish list items. These incidents were placed into 15 categories, as presented in Table 3. The categories are described below in descending order of number of CI and WL items. Appendix C shows a detailed breakdown of the results categories.

Helping

Work

This category refers to elements of the participants' workplaces or work situations that contributed to a positive career experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants spoke to helpful factors such as supportive management and colleagues, workplace culture that valued family and well-being, flexibility in the workplace, adequate workplace resources, and the ability to work from home. For many of the participants, having a workplace that understood and supported their lives as working mothers was essential for them to do well in their careers. An example of this can be seen in one participant's workplace culture:

> The unique thing of where I work is that there is a very big focus on family. So even during the start of the COVID pandemic, when a lot of day-cares were closed and people did not have family support, there were a lot of policies that were put in place to allow for flexibility for parents. And two years down the road now, I think there's even more of an expectation at the organizational level around flexibility when it comes to childcare. And an example is when [baby] is sick, and I can't have childcare, I can work between the hours that she's napping, which I don't think a lot of other organizations would allow for (13).

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Table 3

Categorization of Results

Categories	P#	P%	I#
Helping			
Work	15	83%	35
Support	14	78%	23
Personal protective factors	6	33%	13
Job market factors	5	28%	6
Resources	5	28%	5
Hindering			
Work	17	94%	29
Family challenges	7	39%	8
Personal stressors	7	39%	8
Job market factors	6	33%	7
COVID-19 mandates/restrictions	5	28%	7
Childcare	6	33%	6
Wish List			
Work	10	56%	21
Resources	8	44%	10
Government preparation/policies	6	33%	7
Support	4	22%	4

Note. P#: Number of Participants; P%: Percentage of Participants; I#: Number of Incidents

Working from home not only increased flexibility with household and childcare responsibilities but also contributed to a sense of renewal and creativity around work. One participant described the inspiration she gained in accessing new online opportunities:

> I don't feel limited anymore. I don't feel limited to where I'm at. There's a flow, there's an expansion, and I'm excited about it… You can get creative influences without necessarily having to travel. And now there's all these online teachers. I could be in Michigan and learn techniques from this lady in Oregon… COVID has opened up or encouraged these channels (2).

Support

Incidents in this category pertain to social and domestic/childcare support that enabled the participants to do well in their careers. Many of the participants shared how support from family members allowed them to balance their domestic and work responsibilities. Most often, support came from mothers and spouses. One participant spoke of how her mother's support helped her, stating:

> I had time for myself. My mum would just advise I go to sleep so I could go back to work the next day. It was really helpful, like the stress of cooking after work, making sure [my daughter] has gone to bed on time…My mom released me of that stress (4).

Spouses or partners were also helpful in sharing family responsibilities, with one participant stating, "I have quite a supportive partner, we divide and conquer the domestic responsibilities. We would take turns like it wasn't always all on me" (12). This applied for childcare as well: "with [my husband] being at home, we were able to share, I work two hours, and then you work two hours… being able to have two hours of uninterrupted work was helpful, as opposed to being on call with kids" (14). The participants also experienced emotional support

from family and friends as being helpful in overcoming work-related challenges. One participant described how social media allowed her to feel connected to others in the pandemic despite physical distancing and isolation measures.

Personal Protective Factors

The incidents in this category reflect aspects of the participants' personal characteristics that allowed the participants to manage or overcome career-related difficulties which, in turn, enhanced their career trajectories. The incidents related more specifically to their organizational and time management skills, perspectives, and sense of meaning or purpose. These factors allowed the participants to prioritize what was important to them and work towards their career and life goals. This could be seen in a practical sense, with one participant sharing, "what's really helped me is how I manage my time. I really needed to have a schedule and plan to manage my time" (8). Participants also reflected on deeper values and expectations. According to one participant:

> I don't need to be that top tier of excelling. I'll just go for the very basic. It's really important to me to have a healthy home life and not have too much stress during the day, that's almost more important to me than the extra money that I might make (5).

Job market factors

This category refers to how the participants' careers were positively impacted by job market factors, particularly considering the job market changes that took place because of the pandemic. For instance, some participants worked in industries that experienced significant growth while others found new opportunities that opened to them. One participant noted:

> The particular industry I was working with, it was digital marketing with e-commerce brands. So that actually grew a lot during the pandemic because everyone was buying online. Our industry actually benefited from it. So, we still had a lot of work (14).

There was also a positive impact of working in a field that had job security while others may have experienced less stability during the pandemic. For instance, one participant shared:

> I think just having broad employability…that was really helpful at a time where there was a lot of uncertainty, people are losing their jobs, businesses are closing. I felt comfortable that should I choose to leave that I would still be able to get a job (3).

Resources

This category included incidents related to an access to resources that benefited the participants' careers, particularly financial resources. One participant described how financial resources allowed her family to live comfortably without facing significant challenges:

> I would say having some amount of financial privilege, I don't take that for granted. Like being able to drive places and not rely on transit. Being able to afford help. And we could meet our own personal financial goals as a family (11).

Another participant described how she was able to rely on financial savings to start her business during the pandemic: "My savings did come in handy because no one was there to lend me money. So, my savings really helped" (7). Lastly, one participant mentioned how it was helpful to have proper technology to effectively work from home.

Hindering

Work

This category reflects aspects of the participants' workplaces that impeded the ability to do well in their careers. Some of the participants noted additional challenges brought on by the pandemic, such as a diversion of resources towards addressing

the pandemic, an increase in workload, and delays in workflow or work processes. One participant shared:

> COVID slowed everything down… It made new ideas and new initiatives hard to go ahead with. So, I might have been able to better advance my career and try and lead some new initiatives, but COVID hindered that and made things harder to do (5).

Similarly, another participant noted, "A lot of people were deployed to other COVID related duties. It was a hindrance in the deliverables that we were supposed to meet" (13). While many of the participants appreciated the benefits of working from home, they also struggled with it, particularly with technological issues and the lack of face-to-face communication. Working from home was distracting or less efficient in some ways, as expressed by one participant: "I think you do end up working less because you have housework staring at your face. Even if you don't have kids that's happening. So, I feel there's more interruptions in that way" (11). One participant noted how using virtual platforms for meetings slowed timelines:

> It's a good tool for making decisions in small groups, but it's actually very difficult to make decisions and get work done in larger groups. I felt like the inability for people to meet in person for like, two hours and have those side conversations with one another, I think it did hinder the timelines (13).

Notably, several participants named the ability to work from home as both a helping and hindering factor. This apparent contradiction between categories reflects that some factors have a dual nature of being both helpful and hindering. Participants who were self-employed also noted difficulties with starting or running a business during the pandemic, such as limited customer and product bases and moments of self-doubt as many businesses shut down.

Family Challenges

The incidents in this category describe the challenges arising from family and home life that impacted the participants' career experiences. Participants reflected on the difficulty of balancing family and work demands which led to minimal time for themselves. According to one participant, "having a family to run makes me responsible for things going on in my family. If I'm not working, I'm thinking about my family. So, it's kind of distracting because there is no time to think about myself" (6). Some of the participants also shared how a lack of family support hindered their careers, especially when they lacked support from their spouse. In one participant's words:

> It frustrated me that my husband didn't ask for flexible work arrangements. There was just that assumption that I was in a position to be more flexible. I really felt like it was all falling to me as the mum to manage (3).

One participant also noted the challenge of working while her son's school was closed, as she could see how he was struggling to cope.

Personal Stressors

This category included incidents related to personal traits or struggles which created challenges in the participants' career lives. Participants experienced a mental health toll manifesting as burnout and anxiety amid uncertainty and additional demands on their energy and time. One participant shared about the anxiety she experienced during the pandemic as follows:

> I experienced fear, that constant worry about if things would work out, or if they won't work out. I think it really affects even your output at work. Sometimes you feel demotivated like, why am I working? And when you see the environment around you, they are so negative, there are a lot of things that are going around the environment which can really discourage you (8).

Job Market Factors

The incidents in this category reflected job market factors, particularly those precipitated by the pandemic, that had a negative effect on the participants' careers. Some participants noted how certain opportunities became unavailable due to the pandemic, while one participant lost her job. Several participants reported a perceived change in work attitudes, noting a lack of accountability on their teams and a labour shortage that impacted their ability to find suitable workers. According to a participant:

> Nobody wanted to work. They put in place extra incentives on unemployment. We're trying to hire people, but they didn't want to work because the government was doing all these subsidies. And even though those subsidies stopped, we still can't really hire people. There's this whole different attitude to the workforce…so many more people say I only want remote work, but our work isn't remote. So, it's not a good fit (17).

COVID-19 Mandates/Restrictions

This category represents the career-related difficulties that were caused by COVID-19 mandates and restrictions. Some of the restrictions impacted the participants' abilities to perform work duties or made it more challenging to focus on work. One of the participants, a business owner, emphasized how they endured significant stress in trying to comply with the mandates, particularly because they were continuously changing. This participant shared:

> It was the amount of time and effort and fear and stress. There was no return on investment with it. I could have lost everything on a fine. I could have lost my business because it could have been a COVID hotspot. Because someone didn't wash their hands or I hadn't followed a particular mandate, I could have potentially lost everything (2).

Childcare

In this category, the participants described additional challenges with continuity of childcare during the pandemic that impacted their careers. The emphasis was on the closure of day-cares that created unpredictability and increased stress in managing childcare with work. For example, one participant explained:

> I would say one of the hardest things about the pandemic has been the unpredictability of childcare, especially in the beginning. Because before, if you're just exposed to COVID, you have to isolate for two weeks, before vaccines were a thing. I remember even when the younger one's day-care had an outbreak of COVID, and everyone had to isolate, and I had just started this new job (11).

One participant also noted that day-cares were stricter in prohibiting sick children from attending at that time, which created difficulty in finding childcare.

Wish List

Work

The items in this category describe aspects of work that would have helped the participants have a positive career experience during the pandemic. One of the prevalent themes was a desire for increased flexibility and autonomy over work, such as decision-making over working hours and whether work can be done from home or in the office. One participant described this desire as follows:

> We are moving back towards more time spent in the office. So, I do wish that there was a little bit more of an emphasis on flexibility, like, it wasn't so rigid. Like not just you have to go into the office on Mondays and Fridays. I do wish I could make that decision for myself (13).

This wish for autonomy over working hours was shared by another participant whose manager did not allow her to work from

home, even on days her children were sick, forcing the participant to use her own sick leave:

> I think a little bit of flexibility and understanding from management goes a long way so that you are able to do your job. I'm falling behind on my deadlines, because my kids are sick and I had to stay at home with them, even though my daughter has a three-hour nap and there's a chunk of time I could be doing uninterrupted work (11).

A similar wish was for increased support and understanding from management on the challenges of being a working parent. Participants also wished for resources such as training and additional employees to help with managing heavy workloads. One participant identified how they missed in-person social opportunities and moments of connection with co-workers, sharing, "A big wish list thing would be more fun social opportunities with co-workers … that's really been lost… COVID kind of separated everyone" (5).

Resources

Items that indicate a wish for increased access to resources were included in this category. The incidents reflect a desire for increased financial resources, with many participants reporting that it would have been helpful to have financial support from the government, their workplace, or family and friends. Some participants also wished for health-related resources such as access to therapy or wellness stipends from work to access fitness classes. One participant shared, "I feel like if the government distributed some of those grants to some people to help out… When I lost my job, no money is coming. You're only spending without having anything coming in" (1). Another participant spoke to the financial costs associated with working from home:

> We did more online meetings. Anything that had to do with [being] online, which will warrant you removing money from your pocket to make sure you achieve it. I couldn't really do that because of finances. I failed once, I had to open up to my boss, and thank God my boss was supportive. He had to get it from his pocket to help me get it done (4).

Government Preparation/Policies

The items in this category refer to a desire for government action that would have helped the participants' careers. These incidents communicate the participants' sense of frustration towards the government at its handling of the pandemic, with many participants wishing the government had been able to respond to the pandemic in a timelier manner. These statements also reflected how difficult the pandemic was for the participants. Most of the participants did not have specific suggestions that they would have wanted to see implemented, but expressed a belief that the effects of the pandemic would not have been as devastating had the government responded differently:

> I wish that our leaders would take this thing seriously. That's what I wish for. Because things are not the same since COVID. Things have not been the same. Food, inflation, family get togethers are different. The world is different. Everything's expensive (18).

Similarly, another participant shared, "It would have made the COVID-19 pandemic risks less impactful, there would be less dead. There would be less strain on us" (10). One participant said,

> I hope we never, ever repeat what was done because it took a long time, but the state and the public education department finally acknowledged the harm that was done, the irreparable harm. I think we learned that for the families, for the kids, the shutdown was far worse than beneficial (17).

Support

This category contains items that reflect the participants' wish for additional support with domestic or childcare tasks,

whether this was from family or hired help. For those who did not have consistent support, it would have been helpful for their careers. One participant explained this as follows:

> I didn't have family here that the kids could go to. So, in an ideal world, someone else that could have looked after the kids. I think, then you can think of not just doing the minimum, but actually doing better work. I think if you want to keep growing in your career, you would want to be fully there and make the most of your time and think outside the box. And that creative side wasn't there, because your mind is trying to take care of other things (14).

Discussion

As the pandemic continues to affect the global workforce and shape the careers of working women, the present research provides the opportunity to understand working mothers doing well in their career development in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The literature to date emphasizes a negative view of women's careers during the pandemic (Akanji et al., 2022; Catalyst 2020; Delaney et al., 2021; Dizaho et al., 2016; McKinsey & Company, 2021), but the current research showed that some women were able to respond, adapt, and do well in their careers considering the challenges that arose during the pandemic. Key factors that were identified as helping women do well in their career development included: Supportive workplaces, social support, personal protective factors, job market factors, and resources (predominantly financial). Hindering factors to working mothers' career development included: workplace challenges, family challenges, personal stressors, job market factors, COVID-19 mandates and restrictions, and childcare. Participants wished for workplace support, resources, government preparation/policies, and general social support. The findings highlight that, despite the challenges of the pandemic, working mothers adjusted their expectations and prioritized what was important to them and worked towards their career and life goals.

Career-related Adaptation and Adaptability

Career-related adaptation is arguably one of the most important attributes that working mothers displayed to both weather and thrive in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The capacity to cope with, and capitalize on, change, and the ability to recover when unforeseen events alter life plans, were resilience factors clearly highlighted in the lives of working mothers during the coronavirus pandemic. Although the pandemic presented career-related uncertainty, there was also the opportunity to capitalize on the changes that the pandemic produced. Adaptability in the face of uncertainty was important because it allowed individuals to see the possibilities in unanticipated change. Working mothers were already well versed in adaptability and unanticipated change - they came into the pandemic equipped with these attributes due to the nature of balancing family and work responsibilities long before restrictions began. Working mothers are adept at quickly pivoting and adapting when unexpected events arise across the family and work domains. For example, when their child is sick and not able to attend day care, mothers are the ones who predominantly respond and take necessary action to ensure that the family is supported while simultaneously juggling work priorities.

Career adaptability, an internal resource that individuals adopt to cope with present and future developmental tasks, career transitions, and work needs (Savickas, 2005), is an important inner capacity that overlaps with career-related adaptation (Wang et al., 2018). According to career adaptability theory, work family strength occurs when an individual's work and family roles bring strength to each other (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006); That is, a positive experience in one role could be transferred to the other role to improve quality of life (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). Many studies found that work family conflict experiences have a negative effect on work, family, and individuals, whereas work family experiences engendered a

mutual positive effect on others and helped individuals (Magee et al., 2012; Van Steenbergen, Kluwer, & Karney, 2014; Wang et al., 2018). These positive experiences between work and family roles are a strength for working mothers and help to elucidate the findings of this study.

Precarity

Working mothers' response and reaction to the overriding sense of uncertainty and threat evoked by the coronavirus crisis, including ongoing structural and systemic injustices, can also be viewed through the lens of precarity. Precarity refers to uncertainty, loss, disruption, and anxiety, which affects the lives of people across the globe (Grenier et al., 2020; Han, 2018; Kalleberg, 2018; Standing, 2011). Although precarity has been described as exposing the "fragile and necessary dimensions of our interdependency" (Butler, 2012, p. 136), the experience of precarity can also evoke "resilience and resistance" (Grenier et al., 2020, p. 9) which has the potential to transform the circumstances that exacerbate dissonance and vulnerability, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Using precarity as a conceptual framework helps us to deepen and broaden the understanding of how working mothers coped with the overwhelming sense of vulnerability that has defined the COVID-19 pandemic era (Lorey, 2015; Standing, 2011). Working mothers showed resilience and resistance considering the COVID-19 pandemic and the disruption and uncertainty it caused. Participants in the study highlighted personal protective factors such as keeping a positive mindset, exercising self-compassion, taking care of their mental health, embracing their personal determination, and adapting perspectives on priorities and life goals were ways that working mothers showed resilience and resistance during the COVID-19 era. Participants also revealed the deeply meaningful and purposeful way that they connected to their work and community throughout the pandemic. Many of the participants in this investigation were able to articulate forms of resistance that reflected critical consciousness. This was particularly notable in the many responses that called for more activist and family-friendly policies from the government, which reflects a possible pathway to resistance. The pandemic not only highlighted the strengths and capacities that working mothers possess, it also represents a way to elevate the voices and actions of working mothers who were thrust into a highly stressful and precarious life in the year 2020 as they balanced work and family spheres.

Broadening our Understanding of Career Development for Working Mothers

The traditional paradigm of career development, and its associated scientific and professional literature, was constructed with two separate and gendered domains of life in mind: The work domain (or paid employment, gendered male) which was supported by the family domain (gendered female; Richardson, 2012). These two domains, work and family, were once considered complementary to one another and even necessary for the other. However, over time, career development discourse has predominantly privileged paid employment or market work to the detriment of personal care work within the family, such as parenting. As a result, the bearing and raising of children, among other caring work such as unpaid or volunteer work in neighbourhoods and communities, is not acknowledged or valued as work, per se, by the language and discourse of career development and of work and family (Richardson, 2012).

Although there has been considerable change in the realm of women's participation in the workforce and men's participation in family-life, the genderization and marginalization of child-rearing continues to be devalued and the foundational structure of career discourse continues to constrain any forward movement. Furthermore, and most significantly, the devaluation of

personal care work contributes to social inequality, both materially in terms of economic resources and in relation to deficits of care (Richardson, 2012). As more women participate in market work, men and women with economic resources can afford to hire others, usually women, to help them perform their personal care work leading to further genderization and marginalization of women and personal care work.

Considering the research on the COVID-19 pandemic, and women's participation rates threatening to be reduced in favour of family commitments, this present research highlights what is already known in literature with regards to career encompassing both paid work and personal work. In fact, the definition of career, according to the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC) in conjunction with the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners, encompasses the sequence of occupations (paid and unpaid) in which one engages throughout a lifetime, including work, learning and leisure activities. Careers include how persons balance their paid and unpaid work and personal life roles (Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners). This conceptualization of career to include the care of dependent others, the care of self, relationships with others, and communities, enables care work to be considered more central in the political debate and the importance of the making of liveable lives (Tronto, 2009, as cited in Richardson, 2012). This shift in vocational psychology is described by Richardson (2012) as one that transitions from helping people develop careers to helping people construct lives through work and relationship. Encompassing a social-constructionist perspective, informed by feminist and social justice values, this new approach advocates for more attention to be paid to care work being done in the personal domains of life, in addition to traditional paid or market work.

Limitations and Future Research

This study presents many of the traditional limitations that characterize qualitative research. Namely, the study did not yield a sample that is diverse across all relevant contexts. Although we had diversity incorporating many participants from African American decent, our research is limited in its ability to speak to cultural and ethnic nuances in working mothers' career development during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, most participants were at minimum college educated, which impacts the types of jobs/careers they may engage in. Future research might benefit from more focused purposive sampling to contribute further to our understanding of this phenomena. A further limitation relating to sampling is that the experiences of working mothers varied according to their geographical location, mainly due to the differing responses to COVID-19 based on sociocultural and political context. It may be helpful for future research to be limited to a distinct geographical region to understand the unique and nuanced experiences of working mothers in their context. Another limitation for this study pertains to the timing of interviews and pandemic status. Due to the lag between first and second interviews, some participants noted during their second member check interview that their responses (from the first interview) had changed primarily due to the continual and rapidly changing nature of pandemic restrictions. Some of these additions reflected the participants helping, hindering, and wish-list factors related to post-pandemic work-related trends. For example, one participant (#3) noted that she was worried that remote working opportunities, which enabled her to do well in her career during the pandemic, might cease and force her to return to the office. This comment reflected the ongoing nature of post pandemic-related changes rather than the specific research question that was sought to be answered in this study. Future research may seek to understand how working mothers continue to do well during the post-pandemic era. Single mothers faced even greater workloads during the COVID-19 pandemic - 10 percent more single mothers reported spending an additional three or more hours per day on housework and childcare than

mothers overall (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Our research recruited predominantly married women in heterosexual relationships which are more likely to experience a gendered division of labour compared to homosexual relationships (Murphy et al., 2021). Future research might focus on experiences of doing well in career development in non-heteronormative relationships. Lastly, the age of children and level of care required varies greatly in this study which may impact the time management of mothers.

Implications

The results of this study have significant implications for counselling practice, policy, and advocacy efforts. As a response to the intersecting losses in the face of precarity, Blustein et al. (2022) proposed an integrative approach to counselling practice that is rooted in the unique challenges of the pandemic, encompassing work, nonwork, and social issues presented in a trauma-informed framework. The findings from this study affirm the importance of counselling interventions that validate the intersecting strengths and challenges that working mothers face to provide effective therapy that integrates work and nonwork issues. Career professionals can also help foster career-related adaptation in working mothers by helping them to embrace uncertainty and see the possibilities in unanticipated change. The results from this study also provide useful ideas for policy. Many participants addressed wish-list factors pertaining to government policies and support throughout the pandemic, such as being better prepared or taking a different approach. The results present specific and practical ways individuals, families, workplaces, and governments can foster working mothers doing well in their careers considering the COVID-19 pandemic. Advocating for the broadening and expanding of the definition of personal care work will help the family domain be considered more central in people's lives and, in turn, help create harmony between work and family life. Conceptualizing career development through paid work and relationship will help to create broader systemic change in the labour market where personal care work and the family domain are given their rightful and central place, rather than remain in tension with paid labour market work. This new definition is also important in valuing the importance of personal care and family work in career trajectories of working mothers with which we serve.

Conclusion

This paper explored career development in working mothers as a response to the worldwide coronavirus pandemic. Although the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges to the labour market for working mothers in the form of job losses and juggling the family domain, the mothers in this study demonstrated ways that working mothers thrived in their career development throughout this unprecedented time. Mothers reported a supportive workplace, family, friends, job market factors, and resources which assisted them in being able to successfully juggle family and work needs. The research also revealed personal protective factors, such as organizational and time management skills, perspectives, and the sense of meaning or purpose women derived from their work, which allowed mothers to do well in the careers during the pandemic.

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Appendices

Appendix A

First Interview Guide

Participant #: _____ Interviewer Name_____

Date: _____ Interview Start Time: _____

Introductory Script: Thank you for choosing to participate in this interview. Before we proceed, I want to remind you that, at all times during the interview, you may choose to disclose or not to disclose any information, depending on how comfortable you feel. You also may request to take a break or to discontinue the interview at any time.

1. Contextual Component

Preamble: As you know, we are interested in working mother's experiences of doing well in their careers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background as to how I became interested in this study – hearing stories of mothers struggling to balance work and family life during pandemic, reading about lots of working mothers leaving the workforce, and YET I was hearing of mothers doing really well and adapting well to the pandemic (e.g., I was able to start business from home – a dream!)

This is the first of two interviews, and the purpose is to collect information about what you have experienced and how it has affected you.

a. As a way of getting started, perhaps you could tell me a little bit about your career and work life (query for self-employed/work or employer, type of work, length of time in career, career trajectory prior to and after the COVID-19 pandemic, etc.)

b. Perhaps you could also tell me a little about your family life? (query for whether the mother is married/single/otherwise, number of children, living arrangement, type of care provider, if applicable)

2. Critical Incident Component

Transition to Critical Incident questions: Summarize what has been discussed so far about work life and family life.

a. I'm going to start by asking you to think about factors that helped you most in your work life during the COVID-19 pandemic. W**hat helped you most in your career since the outset of the pandemic?** (Probes for each area: What was the incident/factor? How did it impact you? How did it help?" Can you give me a specific example where _____ helped? What are some other factors that were especially helpful?)

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HELPING		
Helping Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by …?)	Importance (How did it help or impact you? Tell me what it was about ... that you found so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

b. Now I'm going to ask you about factors that made these experiences more difficult or hindered your career during COVID-19 in some way. **What kind of things happened that made it harder for you to do well in your career during the COVID-19 pandemic?** (Probes for each area: What was the incident/factor? How did it impact you? How did it hinder?" Can you give me a specific example where _____ hindered? What are some other factors that were especially difficult?)

HINDERING		
Hindering Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it hinder? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so unhelpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

c. Summarize what has been discussed up to this point with the participant as a transition to the next question: We've talked about factors that have helped you in your career during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as (name them), and some things that have made these experiences more difficult, such as (name them). **Are there other things that would have helped you (or that you would have wished for) to have a better experience in your career during the COVID-19 pandemic?** (Alternate question: I wonder what else might be or might have been helpful to you that you didn't/don't have access to?)

WISH LIST		
Wish List Item & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How would it help? Tell me what it is about .. that you would find so helpful.)	Example (In what circumstances might this be helpful?)

3. Demographics Component

i. Age

ii. Education

iii. Marital Status

iv. Parental Status (note: single parent, guardianship/custody arrangements)

v. Occupational Status (note: employed F/T, P/T, on leave, etc.)

vi. Occupational Category (note: self-employed, employer)

vii. Occupation Type (note: counsellor, doctor, teacher, etc.)

viii. Income level (household)

ix. Country of birth
If not Canada, (a) length of time in Canada; and (b) 1st language

x. Ethnic and Cultural Identification: _____ Query for any culture-specific perinatal practices (e.g., traditional Chinese confinement period): _____
_____
_____

xi. Children's Information (ages, if with current partner?, and note if adopted)
Age: Child with Current Partner?YES□ NO□ Adopted? YES□ NO□ Age: Child with Current Partner?YES□ NO□ Adopted? YES□ NO□ Age: Child with Current Partner?YES□ NO□ Adopted? YES□ NO□ Age: Child with Current Partner?YES□ NO□ Adopted? YES□ NO□ Age: Child with Current Partner?YES□ NO□ Adopted? YES□ NO□

Interview End Time: _____ **Length of interview:** _____

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Appendix B

Second Interview Guide

Participant: Name / #
Date: _____
Interviewer(s):_____

CRITICAL INCIDENTS		
Helping	Hindering	Wish-List

Follow-up/Clarification questions:

Questions:

1. Are the helping/hindering incidents and wish list items correct? Y / N
2. Is there anything missing?

_____

3. Is there anything that needs revising?

_____

4. Do you have any other comments?

_____

_____

CATEGORIES		
Helping	Hindering	Wishlist
Category name Incident	**Category name** Incident	**Category name** Incident
Category name	**Category name**	
Category name	**Category name**	
Category name		

Questions:

1. Do the category headings make sense to you? Y / N

2. Do the category headings capture your experience and the meaning that the incident or factor had for you? Y / N

3. Are there any incidents in the categories that do not appear to fit from your perspective? If so, where do they belong? Y / N

Wrap up question:

1. From your experience, what is the most important thing for career practitioners to be aware of about mother's experiences of working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. From your experience, what would you most like to share with other mothers about how to have the most positive career trajectory in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

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Appendix C

Results Categories

Helping	Hindering	Wishlist
Work (35)	**Work (29)**	**Work (21)**
Supportive team • Colleagues were helpful/supportive (P9) + (P3) + (P5) • Welcoming team (P3)	Unsupportive management • Unsupportive manager (P3) • Lack of support from employer/ management around flexible working hours (P11)	Management • Supportive manager who understood challenges of being working mom (P3) • Regularly scheduled feedback from manager (P5) • Understanding boss (P9) • For employers to focus on productivity rather than hours worked (P13)
Supportive management • Managers are mothers or parents (P13) • Supportive/understanding manager (P16) • Workplace was supportive and responsive about her need to balance family and work (P12) • Management helped keep the team connected (P14)	COVID related issues • Bureaucracy of working in government office, COVID made things slower (P5) • Absenteeism at work due to illness (P11) • No raises or bonuses (P17) • People had to focus on COVID-related duties rather than original tasks or projects (P13) • Management wanted employees to work fewer hours so they could claim CERB, felt like a moral or ethical dilemma (P14)	Flexibility • Flexibility on work policies for using sick time (P11) • Flexibility from management on working hours (P11) • More flexibility and autonomy in whether to work from home or in office (P13) • Less rigidity around in-person requirements (P15)
Workplace culture • All-female staff who are flexible and accommodating around work-life balance (P15) • Workplace culture has focus on family and mothers (P13) • Company valued family life, values aligned with her own (P14) • Wellbeing a priority in her company for employees (P12)	Workload • Being the only employee in her unit (P6) • Multitasking and filling in for her boss - overworked (P6) • Lagging behind at work (P9) • High numbers of COVID patients (overworked) (P10) • Increased workload due to COVID protocols (P16) • Increased workload (P4)	Socializing • Social opportunities with coworkers (P5) • Small in-office treats, more food sharing (P5)
Flexibility • Flexibility at work (P11) + (P17) • COVID made people think outside the square, come up with new ways of working (P12)	Feeling safe at work • Unvaccinated employees back in office (P5) • Additional logistical planning around every aspect of work and life (P15)	Workload • Reduced workload (P9) • Boss to provide fewer responsibilities (P6) • More colleagues in unit to help with workload (P13) + (P9)

Appendix C...continued

Results Categories

Workplace resources • Training from work on how to manage COVID 19 (P10) • Workplace provided financial support and/or healthcare (P4) + (P10) • Company hired additional employees to help with workload (P14) + (P10) • Workplace was able to respond quickly to the pandemic (P17) • Financial incentives for extra work (P14)	Additional challenges in working from home • Teaching over Zoom (P18) • IT issues (P5) • Using Zoom technology (P13) • Communication issues due to lack of in-person conversations (P14) • Inability to see people face to face (P12) • Working from home (P14) • Limited or discontinued in-person work opportunities/ activities (P15) + (P13)	Training • Additional training on how to manage pandemic (P10) • More time for training courses (P5)
Feeling safe at work • Protective equipment (P10) • More sensitivity to illness (P15) • Daily wellness check before employees come into office (P13)	Business/self-employment • Moments of hardship in starting her own business (P7) • Limited source of products (P7) • Limited customer base (P7) • Self-doubt about business succeeding (P8) • Lack of support from community (P2) • Didn't have processes in place as business grew too fast (P2)	Feeling safe at work • Continued emphasis on public health protocols within the workplace (P13)
Working from home (P5) + (P18) • Acceptance for using Zoom technology as part of work and school (P15) • Ability to work from home (P2) + (P13) + (P14) • Ability to do new things online (P2)		Business • Business advisor or mentor (P7) • To have had policies and procedures in place with business (P2) • Trained and qualified staff (P2) • Confidence to shut down certain work activities, learn how to say no (P2)
Highlighting of workplace challenges (P3)		
Didn't have to worry about lesson plans (P18)		
Reconnecting with parents (of her students) (P18)		

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Appendix C...continued
Results Categories

Support (23)	Family Challenges (8)	Resources (10)
Social support • Words of encouragement from family (P1) • Social support from best friend(s) (P1) + (P9) + (P16) • Social support from social media (P1) • Mom provided financial and/or emotional support (P7) + (P16)	Unsupportive husband • Husband assumed she was responsible for family duties (P3) • Husband wasn't supportive of career and not financially supportive (P4)	Health • Resources to access therapy (P8) • Employers to provide wellness stipends (P13) • No health issues (P6)
Support with childcare • Mother helped with childcare (P9) + (P16) and household tasks (P4) • Mother in law was able to come and help, family support (P14) • Nanny (P10) • Mother and mother in law both available to help with childcare (P13) • Living in complex with other kids and a playground (P14) • Kept daycare open more than schools (P14)	Balancing family and work • Additional responsibilities and stress from having a family (P6) • Family demands (P9)	Financial • Financial support from government (P1) + (P2) • Having more finances (P4) • Increased credit limit to get loans (P7) • Financial support from government and/or family/friends (P8) • Financial aid/support from work (P1) + (P10)
Supportive partner • Stay at home partner who was a full-time caregiver (P5) • Financial support from husband (P8) • Husband helped with taking care of daughter (P9) • Supportive partner who divides family responsibility (P11) + (P17) • Encouragement from husband (P1) • Supportive husband who had a shift work schedule (P12) • Husband worked from home (P14)	Limited school activities • Schools and school activities being closed (P17) • Homeschooling and managing kids (P12)	
	Other • Not having family support (P2) • Car difficulties (P6)	

Appendix C...continued

Results Categories

Personal protective factors (13)	**Personal stressors (8)**	**Government preparation/policies (7)**
Organization • Organizational skills (P5) • Strong boundaries between work and home (P5) • Organized and compartmentalized day (P12) • Time management (P6) + (P8)	• Perfectionistic attitude which causes burnout (P9) • Burnout from balancing family and work life (P10) • Uncertainty of how long COVID would last, holding pattern (P12)	• Government more prepared to deal with COVID (P8) + (P10) • Free transportation (P16) • Help with getting essential items (P16) • Government would have taken a different approach to dealing with COVID (P17) • Government would have taken COVID more seriously (P18) • Continued telehealth options (P3)
Perspective • Positive attitude (P5) • Self-compassion (P5) • Personal determination (P8) • Positive mindset (P12) • Changing perspective on priorities and life goals (P2) • Taking care of mental health (P8)	Health • Poor health (P6) and sleep patterns (P9) • Mental health crisis (P15) + (P2) • Constant fear/anxiety (P8)	
Sense of meaning or purpose • Sense of meaning/purpose from son (P7) • Sense of contributing to community driven by people wanting to connect in the aftermath of COVID (P2)		
Job market factors (6)	**Job Market Factors (7)**	**Support (4)**
• Job security (P17) • Broad employability (P3) • Fast-growing business (P7) • Increase in sales and business really picked up (P2) • New opportunities that arose from travel restrictions (P3) • Field of work/industry grew during pandemic (P14)	• Fewer opportunities because people not interested in online classes (P1) • Possibility of impacted student internship opportunities (P15) • Difficulty finding people to work, limited staff options (P16) + (P2) • Workforce attitude change and labour shortage (P17) • People seemed less accountable about work (P13) • Losing job (P1)	• Family close by to help (P3) • Nanny (P7) • Retired grandparents who could care for children on short notice (P11) • Alternative options for childcare (P14)

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Appendix C...continued
Results Categories

Resources (5)	**COVID Mandates/Restrictions (7)**	
Financial • Financial savings (P7) • Access to resources, financial privilege (P11) • Putting herself on a budget (P18) Greater flexibility around homeschooling (P12) Proper technology to facilitate working from home (P5)	• COVID impacted ability to see clients (P4) • Travel restrictions highlighted unhappy living and working arrangement (P3) • Requirement to wear a mask impacted ability to perform work tasks (P16) • Letter requirement to commute to jobs (P16) • Rigidity of government mandates (P17) • COVID rules continuously changing (P2) • COVID mandates from government (P2)	
	Childcare (6) • Looking after the kids impacted ability to look for job (P1) • Au pair leaving quickly after restrictions (P3) Daycares • Closure of daycares (P7) • Unpredictability of childcare (P11 • Increased difficulties of finding suitable childcare (P15) • Daycare difficulties with sickness (P14)	

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Career Counselling Considerations for Individuals With Mental Disorders

Alyssa M. Cappon & Dr. Deepak Mathew
Trinity Western University

Abstract

Individuals who have experienced mental disorders face significant career barriers that are not related to their capabilities nor their desire to participate in the workforce. Their unique skills and strengths often go unrecognized. This creates a situation where a population with immense potential and valuable perspective is often overlooked or deemed unemployable. By neglecting to tap into their talents, employers not only perpetuate a cycle of stigma and discrimination but also miss out on the opportunity to benefit from their diverse contributions. Through recognizing and drawing out strengths, career counsellors can play a vital role in transforming the narrative surrounding these individuals and can help foster a more inclusive and equitable employment environment. It is essential to address the dual challenge of reducing employment barriers while highlighting the invaluable qualities and qualifications that make this population uniquely qualified for various careers. This article discusses key career barriers faced by individuals who have experienced a mental disorder and their unique career strengths. This article also presents relevant career counselling considerations aimed at assisting clients in navigating these unique challenges while capitalizing on their unique strengths.

Keywords: mental disorders, employment barriers, employment skills, counselling interventions, career theories.

Approximately 50% of the Canadian population will have or have had a mental disorder by the age of 40 (CMHA, 2021). Individuals who have experienced mental disorders are much less likely to be employed than those who have not (Brouwers, 2020). It is a common misconception that individuals with mental disorders do not possess the capacity nor the desire to participate in vocational activities. Research has shown that the majority of individuals with mental disorders have the capacity and the desire to work (Guhne et al., 2021).

There has been growing interest in understanding the relationship between mental health and career processes due to the staggering social and economic costs that create a heavy burden on the workplace (Leka & Nicholson, 2019). Mental disorders cover a wide range of experiences. Individuals with highly stigmatized disorders, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and substance use disorders have the highest unemployment rates (Hakulinen et al., 2019; Holm et al., 2021). It is estimated that the unemployment rate among people with bipolar disorder is 40% - 60% (Holm et al., 2021; Marwaha et al., 2013). It is estimated that the unemployment rate among people with schizophrenia is 70% - 90% (Haro et al., 2013; Holm et al., 2021). Substance use disorders are also highly prevalent among unemployed people (Nolte-Troha et al., 2023). In Holm et al. (2021), when employment was defined as receiving a salary that is greater than the first quartile of the general population, 6% of individuals with schizophrenia were classified as employed and 37% - 39% of people with bipolar disorder were classified as employed.

Given that career counsellors are bound to encounter clients who have experienced mental disorders (Sgaramella et al., 2015), it is crucial to understand the vocational assets these individuals possess so that they can draw from their strengths to find meaningful and sustainable careers (Drobnič , 2023). The problem presented here is twofold: individuals who have experienced highly stigmatized mental disorders face significant barriers in accessing

and maintaining employment, and their unique skills and strengths often go unrecognized in the job market. This creates a situation where a population with immense potential and valuable perspectives is often overlooked or deemed unemployable. Our current employment landscape fails to acknowledge the unique skills that individuals from this population can bring to the workplace. Therefore, it is essential to address the dual challenge of reducing employment barriers while highlighting the invaluable qualities and qualifications that make this population uniquely qualified for various careers.

Through recognizing and drawing out strengths, career counsellors can play a vital role in transforming the narrative surrounding these individuals and fostering a more inclusive and equitable employment environment. There is a need to explore and develop effective counselling interventions and strategies that consider their specific strengths, experiences, and aspirations, while also challenging stereotypes and promoting equal employment opportunities.

This article discusses some important career considerations for individuals who have experienced a highly stigmatized mental disorder including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and substance use disorders. This article focuses on those who are currently experiencing mild to no symptomology. The aim of this article is to enhance our understanding of career considerations for these individuals and to promote a positive psychology approach in supporting their career development.

Employment Barriers

Individuals who have experienced mental disorders face significant career barriers that are not related to their capabilities nor their desire to participate in the workforce (Gühne et al., 2021).

Stigma and Discrimination

Past research has documented that there are prejudicial attitudes held by the general public towards individuals who have experienced a mental disorder (Gayed et al., 2018; Young et al., 2019). Individuals from this population are likely to encounter direct discrimination and stigmatization in various environments. Indirectly stigmatizing messages are abundant in society. Individuals who have experienced mental disorders are exposed to messages about people like themselves, depicting them as dangerous and hopeless and ridiculing them throughout their everyday lives (Wahl, 2012; Young et al., 2019). The impact of identification and internalization of such messages cannot be overlooked. Individuals tend to avoid seeking treatment, terminate treatment early, and attempt to hide their condition (Brouwers, 2020; Gayed et al., 2018). These actions are understandable, given that individuals with mental disorders are less likely to be offered a job, rented an apartment, or admitted to a school program than someone who does not have a disorder (Waghorn & Lloyd, 2005; Wahl, 2012). Such discrimination leads to inequality of opportunity and often leads to high rates of unemployment, poverty, and homelessness (Ridley, 2020; Thomas et al., 2019; Wahl, 2012). Thus, significant challenges are present when attempting to obtain and maintain employment. Stigma and discrimination affect career outcomes through prejudicial hiring practices, limited employment opportunities, unfair treatment in the workplace, self-disclosure difficulties, and self-esteem challenges (Hampson et al., 2020; Thomas et al., 2019).

The general public likely does not understand the impact or reality of experiencing a mental disorder and as such, avoid people with mental disorders (Waghorn & Lloyd, 2005). Unfair discriminatory hiring practices produce work environments where individuals with mental disorders are not present. As such, stigma and discrimination contribute to further propagation of the misconception that individuals with mental disorders cannot and should not be integrated into the workforce (Hampson et al., 2020; Hampson et al., 2016; Waghorn & Lloyd, 2005).

Disruptions in Work and Education

Due to the nature of experiencing a mental disorder, individuals are likely to experience disruptions in normative employment and education pathways. The timing of mental illness can disrupt primary, secondary, or tertiary educational attainment and skill training which could disrupt normative career development processes (Hakulinen et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2019; Waghorn & Lloyd, 2005). This often results in financial constraints that influences the ability to seek employment or further an education. As a result, this disruption can cause long-term unemployment and limitation of potential career prospects. Subsequently, experiencing a mental disorder can limit individuals to attaining less skilled jobs, which lowers their work status and income (Hakulinen et al., 2019; Waghorn & Lloyd, 2005). Thus, individuals who have experienced a mental disorder are likely to have employment gaps due to their condition.

Limited Social and Professional Networks

Individuals from this population may have limited social and professional networks due to the experience of their disorder. Professional networks are influential on career success (Niehuas & O'Meara, 2015) as they provide information and influence the growth of social resources. Some of the factors that may contribute to individuals who have experienced a mental disorder having limited networks include: social isolation, lack of support systems, employment gaps, reliance on peer relationships, limited exposure to workplace environments, and a lack of confidence (Drake & Bond, 2008; Marwaha & Johnson, 2005; McAlpine & Warner, 2002; Thomas et al., 2019).

Psychopathological Symptoms

Although this article focuses on individuals who are experiencing mild to no symptoms of their mental disorder, symptoms or fear of symptoms returning can be a significant challenge for obtaining and maintaining employment (Henderson et al., 2011; Thomas et al., 2019). Individuals might fear disclosing their mental health disorder due to fear of discrimination. However, non-disclosure can create challenges in obtaining appropriate supports. Stressful work environments could exacerbate symptoms, which may be a unique concern for individuals from this population. Further, cognitive, perceptual, affective, and interpersonal deficits may be produced through the experiencing of a mental disorder. Cognitive deficits have shown consistent association with unemployment and poor work performance (Waghorn & Lloyd, 2005).

One notable challenge when considering the employment of individuals with mild to no symptomology is the episodic nature of mental disorders. Despite treatment adherence, mental disorders often fluctuate in severity and emerge episodically (Thomas et al., 2019; Waghorn & Lloyd, 2005). Unexpected episodes may severely compromise a person's stability and their belief in their own abilities. Individuals may experience periods of stability during which they gain hope for their future and then destabilize upon return of symptoms. It is presumable that this cycle of stabilization and destabilization is discouraging and difficult to manage.

Employment Skills and Strengths

The focus of past research aimed at investigating associations between mental disorders and employment outcomes is almost entirely founded upon the disease model of human functioning (Kamdar et al., 2020; Luciano et al., 2014). The disease model focuses on deficits and their negative influences. I propose here that such a focus only exacerbates the misconceptions about people who have experienced a mental disorder. In contrast, the positive psychology approach (Seligman, 2002) taken in this article proposes that experiencing a mental disorder contributes to profound and meaningful outcomes that are uniquely advantageous and desirable by employers (Drobnič,

2023). Although this article focuses on desirable traits in the realm of employment, it is important to note that a positive psychology approach does not just focus on positive personal traits. Subjective experiences such as well-being, happiness, and satisfaction should also be considered as integral components of success. Constructive cognitions (e.g., hope and optimism) should also be considered as useful toward success and a meaningful measure of success (Drobnič, 2023; Snyder & Lopez, 2001).

Resilience

Resilience is defined as the human capacity to adapt swiftly and successfully to stressful events and the ability to revert to a positive state (Shrivastava & Desousa, 2016). Individuals showing little to no mental disorder symptomology are likely far along their recovery journeys and as such have had the opportunity to cultivate resilience to respond to challenges. Having experienced a mental disorder positions individuals in a disadvantaged position. Individuals who learn to manage their symptoms typically need to overcome adversity, build coping strategies, engage in self-reflection and personal growth, build support networks, learn from setbacks, and embrace a new identity. Employment often involves facing challenges in demanding environments. Individuals who have overcome adversity in their personal lives have already demonstrated the ability to deal with and persevere through difficult circumstances. These individuals are flexible and adapt to new circumstances quickly (Siebert, 2005; Thomas et al., 2019). Employee resilience has been identified as essential to organizational adaptability in dynamic work environments (Tonkin et al., 2018).

Empathy and Non-Judgment

Empathetic ability depicts "the act of correctly acknowledging the emotional state of another without experiencing that state oneself" (Halpern, 2003, p. 670). However, the function of empathetic connection is not simply to label emotional states but to truly recognize what it feels like to experience something (Halpern, 2003). It is documented that facing adversity often requires individuals to undergo a process of posttraumatic growth (Jayawickreme et al., 2021) during which time they increase their tendencies to adopt the perspectives of others and to feel responsible for others welfare (Canevello et al., 2022; Lim & DeSteno, 2016). Therefore, the adverse experience of having a mental disorder likely results in increased empathy. This empathy can be invaluable in careers that involve supporting others. People who have experienced a mental disorder often develop a broader understanding of human experiences, including the complexities of personal struggle (Lim & DeSteno, 2016).

Empathetic ability is a valued skill in most workplaces. In fact, there has been a movement toward empathy training in workplaces, especially for individuals employed in service positions (Lajante et al., 2023). In one survey, 84% of CEO's reported that empathy is a crucial skill in customer service positions (Lajante et al., 2023). Empathetic ability increases the ability to navigate diverse work environments, collaborate with others, work with people from diverse backgrounds, and contribute to creating inclusive work environments (Madera et al., 2011; Muncy, 2020). It is my assertion that individuals who have experienced stigma and judgment are more likely to hold non-judgmental attitudes. As such, these individuals are likely to advocate for equality, challenge stereotypes, and promote a culture of compassion and acceptance in the workplace. Being a good team player has been identified as an employment facilitator for individuals who have experienced a mental disorder (Thomas et al., 2019).

Problem-Solving

Experiencing a mental disorder typically requires the capacity to effectively solve problems. In fact, Problem-Solving Therapy (PST) is an approach that has been utilized successfully as an intervention

for individuals with depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems (Becker-Weidman et al., 2010; Bray et al., 2007; Broström et al., 2021; Haaga et al., 1995; Kant et al., 1997; Marx et al., 1992; Ranjbar et al., 2013). Problem solving, especially social problem solving, is considered an effective characteristic for reducing psychological disorder symptomology (Balck et al. 2019; Nezu et al., 2004). Individuals who have experienced a mental disorder have learned to adapt to changing circumstances. They have learned analytic skills, how to identify solutions, and how to make informed decisions (Noordsy et al., 2002). Problem-solving skills are in high demand by employers (Rios et al., 2020). Individuals who have experienced a mental disorder have had to learn problem-solving skills to overcome their own maladaptive symptomology. Therefore, when these individuals enter the workforce, their problem-solving abilities should be regarded as a transferable skill for overcoming workplace challenges (Thomas et al., 2019). As such, I propose that these individuals are likely to be able to bring fresh perspectives and innovative approaches to the workplace. Further, they are likely able to facilitate enhanced productivity. Problem-solving has been identified as an employment facilitator for individuals who have experienced a mental disorder (Thomas et al., 2019).

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is a key component of emotional intelligence (Aránega et al., 2020; Goleman, 2021). It is recommended that employers implement programs aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence to avoid employee burnout, facilitated self-motivation, resolve conflict, and promote growth of their organizations (Aránega et al., 2020). Self-awareness is a fundamental attribute of leadership (Showry & Manasa, 2014). Successful leadership ability is widely acknowledged as emergent when people become aware of critical personal experiences in their own life and their driving forces, respond by rethinking about self, and redirect their actions (Showry & Manasa, 2014). Individuals with heightened self-awareness are likely able to delegate tasks effectively, ask for help when needed, and build complementary teams. They are likely effective at receiving feedback and incorporating it, are likely open to learning, and can adapt to different situations. These individuals likely excel at communication and collaboration, they are more likely to engage in honest communication and express themselves maturely. They are likely able to navigate conflicts constructively. Overall, these individuals are always striving for self-improvement in their personal lives which translates to open minded and receptive employees in the workplace. (Showry & Manasa, 2014).

Experiencing a mental disorder causes heightened distress within oneself. As such, individuals who have experienced a mental disorder typically need to partake in self-reflective processes in order to function successfully. Such vigorous self-reflective processes are not critically necessary for the general population. Rehabilitation programs for mental disorders typically include self-awareness practices such as engaging in talk therapy or self-help groups. For example, the dominant recovery program for substance use disorders, the 12-Step Program, is characterized by a process where individuals heal their relationships with themselves and others (Borkman, 2008; McGovern et al., 2021). Such a process involves detailed exploration and admittance of one's fears, shortcomings, and wrongdoings. Therefore, through self-reflective practices, individuals move from dysfunctional symptomology to adaptive ways of being (Borkman, 2008; Cripps & Hood, 2020; Lindstrom et al., 2021). I propose that the self-awareness built during recovery from a mental disorder is a transferable employment skill that should be regarded as valuable by employers.

Career Pathway: Wounded Healer

The previous section outlined employment skills and strengths that individuals who have experienced a mental disorder likely possess. This

section outlines a specific career pathway that may be especially fitting for these individuals. The concept of a wounded healer originated from Greek mythology and was further developed into psychology and counselling contexts (Jackson, 2001). The term refers to a person in a helping role who has personally experienced and overcome adversity. This person's lived experience serves as the foundation of understanding, empathy, and healing for others who are facing similar challenges. Individuals who have experienced a mental disorder may be uniquely suited for career pathways that align with wounded healer ideology.

The psychologist Carl Jung proposed that the wounds of the healer allow them to connect deeply with others and provide compassionate support (Jung, 1951). Jackson (2001) states that "the wounded healer refers to the inner woundedness of a healer - the healer's own suffering and vulnerability, which have been said to contribute crucially to the capacity to heal" (p. 2). The experience of woundedness has left lasting effects on these individuals that:

> later serve constructive purposes, in the form of attributes and sensitivities that recurrently serve them in ministering to those whom they treat, or in the form of symptoms and characteristics that stay with them and usefully influence their therapeutic endeavours (Jackson, 2001, p. 2).

Thus, these individuals' experiences, which are often regarded as deficits by society, actually enhance their healing capacities.

Two of the most influential individuals on psychological thought, Sigmund Freud (psychologist) and Carl Jung (psychiatrist), were self-proclaimed wounded healers. Both of these men experienced extreme anguish and used their anguish experiences to guide their work. Both men formulated a psychological healing modality and both modalities were influenced by the ways in which they ministered to themselves and resolved their own disorders (Jackson, 2001). These examples challenge the common belief that individuals with mental disorders are incapable of effective and meaningful work and supports the assertion made here, that those who have mental illnesses may be uniquely qualified as healers. Wounded healer ideology has been adapted to fit into many contexts. The benefits of the wounded employed as healers has been documented in many professions including social workers (Straussner et al., 2018), physicians (Graves, 2008), teachers (Esping, 2014), therapists (Wolgien & Coady, 1997), various addiction treatment positions (White, 2000), and prison re-entry program workers (LeBel et al., 2015).

The concept of a wounded healer may have significant implications for the career trajectories of individuals who have experienced mental health disorders. By their nature, wounded healer positions take the hardships that these individuals have faced and transform them into valuable career assets. As such, the educational attainment and work experience typically valued by other occupations is replaced by the value of the individuals lived experience of adversity in the securing of employment process. However, individuals in wounded healer positions have unique considerations that may hinder their career trajectories such as their personal treatment adherence, supports, and other factors that may influence their personal mental health stability. It is important to consider the personal context of each individual in light of the specific benefits and challenges that are characteristic of holding a wounded healer position. The next section outlines some of these specific benefits and challenges to consider.

Wounded Healer: Benefits and Challenges

White (2000) states that eight benefits have been identified that wounded healers in addiction treatment roles possess when compared to non-wounded healer workers. Wounded healers 1) possess a knowledge of the physiology, psychology, and

culture of a mental disorder that is derived from direct experience, 2) have the capacity for emotional identification with their clients, 3) have an absence of condescension derived from equality of shared experience, 4) have their own gratitude for their own recovery which compels them to help others, 5) have their own stories which facilitate hope for others, 6) possess a willingness to be more direct with clients than their non-wounded peer helpers, 7) serve as a role model for their clients, and 8) have the ability to provide their clients with personal orientation to the recovery lifestyle.

White (2000) also states that seven specific challenges have been identified that wounded healers in addiction treatment roles may encounter:

> 1) experience interprofessional conflicts arising from differing views about the nature of addiction and recovery as well as from their own unresolved feelings about past maltreatment by professionals, 2) overextend themselves to compensate for their self-perceived lack of credentials, 3) experience special problems of countertransference with clients, e.g., trying to program a client's recovery within the framework of his or her own recovery, 4) develop a dependency upon the social and emotional intensity of the work milieu to meet unmet social and intimacy needs, 6) experience role confusion and role conflict between mutual support group activities and professional counseling activities, and 7) to experience a rare, but quite real, vulnerability for relapse (p. 17).

Career Counselling Approaches

When working with clients who have experienced a mental disorder, career counsellors should apply specific overarching approaches that leverage client resourcefulness and reframe potentially negative perceptions into positive ones. A positive psychology career counselling approach (Drobnič , 2023; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) is especially fitting with an emphasis on identifying strengths, talents, and positive attributes. Focusing on strengths will likely help clients build self-efficacy and confidence (Drobnič , 2023; Harris & Thoresen, 2006). A positive psychology approach further emphasizes the necessity to set and pursue goals regarded as meaningful by the client. Counsellors should help clients break down big goals into smaller more manageable steps. Small steps facilitate a sense of accomplishment and promote hope for the future.

A person-centered (Rogers, 1949) approach is also fitting as it emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and empathetic counselling environment. When working with this population, career counsellors can apply this approach by fostering a nonjudgmental and accepting atmosphere, actively listening to clients' concerns, and acknowledging their unique experiences and strengths. Counsellors applying this approach may ask clients what is important to them and why, to describe how they see themselves in a year's time or in a particular position at work, and what they view as their strengths and challenges (Kidd, 2002).

Systemic approaches, such as ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), may also be fitting. Systemic approaches recognize the influence of various systems on an individual's development. Counsellors taking this approach are encouraged to collaborate with other professionals to provide comprehensive support and address multiple ecological factors that may be influencing career trajectories. Taking an ecological/systems approach allows for clients to understand the systemic factors that contribute to their current career positions. Further, it enables counsellors to help clients create plans to counteract negative systemic influences that may be contributing to their career position. One specific systemic approach is the story telling approach (McMahon et al., 2004). Counsellors applying this approach ask their clients to tell their stories in relation to the systems that have influenced them. In doing so, clients begin understanding the systemic influences on their lives (meaning making), identify the patterns that have contributed to their current

career positions, and gain the capacity to play a more active role in constructing their futures (Patton & McMahon, 2021). These forementioned approaches are overarching and can be adapted to fit with specific career theories which are discussed in the next section.

Relating Issues to Career Theory

This discussion about applying specific career theories is not meant to be exhaustive; its purpose is to offer potential considerations to promote useful thinking regarding how career theories can be adapted to the population discussed. Counsellors must consider their client's context when applying theories, engage in critical thought, and be creative in their application.

John Holland's theory of vocational choice (Holland, 1959) suggests that people are attracted to careers that align with their personality types. It proposes six vocational types (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional) and suggests that individuals are most likely to thrive and be satisfied with their jobs when they are in environments that match their personality traits. When applying this theory to individuals who have experienced a mental disorder, their specific personality type during different presentations of their disorder should also be considered. For example, if someone who has experienced bipolar disorder has a social type of environmental preference but also expresses the need to isolate when they feel symptomatic, their social preference should be considered important in their career environment alongside the necessity to have the option to withdraw. This person may be better suited in an environment where they have various social interaction options, even though their type alone indicates they are likely to thrive in a socializing environment. Counsellors should consider the influence of mental health by exploring the history of symptomology and the client's perception of their likely future trajectory of symptoms. After exploration, counsellors should be creative in career exploration options, accounting for both the dominant personality type and the subtypes, if they appear during assessment.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994) emphasizes the role of self-efficacy, interests, and goals in career development. SCCT proposes that career choices are influenced by individual's beliefs in their own capabilities, their interests, and the social context in which they operate. It is likely that individuals who have experienced a mental disorder have diminished self-efficacy beliefs due to the negativity of their past experiences (Jahn et al., 2020). It is important that these beliefs be addressed and challenged in order to build self-efficacy. It is likely that individuals from this population have functioned within peer social environments where they observed and internalized negative outcome expectations. Individuals from this population may also have limited knowledge of potential career options due to restricted exposure to professionals.

Counsellors can work to cultivate positive outcome expectations so that individuals can overcome barriers to encourage the belief that they are capable of pursuing careers that interest them. They may benefit from exposure to role models who have successfully navigated similar challenges and achieved a career role desired by the client. Counsellors should provide opportunities for clients to learn from such role models as this exposure could expand their awareness about what is possible for them. SCCT is a fitting theory to apply to this population, as it recognizes the importance of the environment in shaping career development. This recognition offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the direct influences of specific challenges. It emphasizes the role of self-efficacy and allows for interventions that build confidence.

Super's Career Development Theory (Super, 1963) is based on the belief that self-concept changes overt time and develops as a result of experience. Super proposed that each person goes through stages of career development (growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline). Individuals who have experienced a mental disorder have likely experienced interruptions in

the natural stages of career development. Further, self-concept formulation is partly based off opportunity to play various roles and the outcomes of such role-playing. As such, individuals who have experienced a mental disorder have likely experienced role failure which results in a misconception of their own abilities. For example, an individual who held a fulfilling career may have lost their job due to their condition. They may believe they are incapable of regaining a desired career role. These difficulties may be particularly relevant for individuals who have previously experienced long periods of rehabilitation or hospitalization which may have influenced their career trajectories. Extended periods of focus on mental health symptomology instead of normative life tasks is likely part of these individuals' background. Counsellors should aid clients in exploring and clarifying their self-concept through identifying values, abilities, and goals. I propose that counsellors should adapt the life and career stages to incorporate the unique recovery tasks completed by this population. Individuals who have successfully navigated complex situations should be recognized as capable of doing so and, as such, counsellors can identify transferable skills from these experiences that can relate to career successes.

The Chaos Theory of Careers (CTC) (Pryor & Bright, 2003) could be particularly useful for individuals who have experienced a mental disorder. It acknowledges the unpredictable and dynamic nature of career development and emphasizes the necessity for adaptability and resilience. Individuals from this population likely do not have traditional linear career paths. CTC posits that career development is characterized by complexity, uncertainty, and non-linearity. Therefore, setbacks, disruptions, and chaotic periods are considered influential and meaningful in one's career journey. Counsellors can help individuals embrace the complexities of their career development through building resilience and learning from setbacks. CTC emphasizes the importance of self-reflection, perception of the self as in control, and the construction of a unique career story. This emphasis helps client's embrace uncertainty. Career counsellors can help clients shift their focus from controlling outcomes to building adaptability and problem-solving skills. When clients feel confident in their ability to navigate uncertainty, they are more likely to seek careers that align with their desires instead of ones they perceive as predictable.

Conclusion

Although individuals who have experienced a mental disorder face unique career barriers that hinder their career pathways, they also possess unique strengths that can be recognized and promoted. I believe it is imperative that career counsellors adopt a strengths-based approach to leverage these qualities when exploring career pathways so that these individuals can achieve careers that are meaningful to them. Emphasizing their strengths and unique perspectives not only benefits them individually but also contributes to a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Recognition of the potential of these individuals requires a shift in societal attitudes and fostering a culture of acceptance. It is through this collective effort that we can truly harness the talents and contributions of all individuals.

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The *Canadian Journal of Career Development* is a peer-reviewed publication of multi-sectoral career-related academic research and best practices from Canada and around the world.

This Journal was made possible through the generous contributions of The Counselling Foundation of Canada, CERIC, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and support by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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Cette revue est rendue possible grâce aux généreuses contributions de The Counselling Foundation of Canada, du CERIC, l'Université Mémorial de Terre-Neuve, et financée par le Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada.

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