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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Editor Dr. Robert Shea

ARTICLES

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Volume 17, Number 1 2018

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK *Dr. Robert Shea, Founding Editor*

The start of a new year signals the launch of a new issue of the *Canadian Journal of Career Development*. This 2018 issue heralds our seventeenth year publishing the journal. Wow where does the time go!

Those seventeen years have allowed us to disseminate the great work of career researchers in Canada and around the world. In that time, we have stayed true to our cover design – the Inukshuk. A symbol that for me has come to personify career development. The Inukshuk for me is a beacon … a guidepost that shows the way for others who come after … and asks for nothing in return. I believe this is a wonderful symbol for us as career practitioners, educators, researchers and counsellors. However, with this issue we have decided to deviate from that design and image. The decision did not come easy. It took a significant amount of thought and discussion but we have chosen the image you see on this front cover. We believe it is an exciting look. A look full of colour, movement, and energy. A look that while quintessentially Canadian speaks to the seasons of our lives, the individuality that permeates our career work, and the beauty that resonates from the work we do. Some of that amazing work is highlighted within this issue of the *Canadian Journal of Career Development*.

The work of Michael Hennessey and Jeffrey Landine will take the reader on a thoughtful journey that speaks to the social factors that influence career aspirations of Indigenous adults in New Brunswick. I look forward to the day when we can highlight a special issue of the journal that provides a window into the cutting-edge research and stories of our Aboriginal peoples who have a significant career story to tell.

The world of our postsecondary student's career development continues to unfold. While postsecondary students have been the focus of career researchers for many years, I continue to be amazed at the amount of information we still do not know. This article by Matthew Kalichuk and Alexander Wilson continues that voyage of discovery. This window provides insight into the employment outcomes of thirty five (n=35) postsecondary graduates with learning disabilities. This article also allows the reader insight into how these students navigated the workplace and specifically the need for workplace accommodations.

In their article entitled *Emerging Adults' Unintended and Unpredicted Work-Life Pathways in a Rural Coastal Community*, Breanna Lawrence and Anne Marshall provide a window into the challenges and opportunities for individual's work-life transition in a small coastal community. The opportunity to work and live in a rural coastal community is a gift yet has its own challenges. This article provides a research lens of the experiences of those who have lived this experience. With the continuing migration of individuals between urban and rural communities, this research is timely and helpful for future researchers and practitioners with clients who are considering the opportunity to live and work in a rural community.

Francis Milot-Lapointe, Réginald Savard, and Sylvain Paquette provide an in-depth article on labour market information (LMI) entitled *Effect of Labour Market Information (LMI): Comparison Between Independent and Assisted Use of LMI.* I believe the reader will gain significant insight into the use of LMI with a counsellor and without help.

The final section in this issue is reserved for graduate student research. Research that is in progress or research that has occupied a part of a graduate student's program of study. As our recent special issue of the Journal indicated – there is significant interest in the current and past research conducted by Canada's emerging scholars and scholar practitioners. The Journal seeks to provide a forum for these emerging researchers and their mentors. In this issue we have two articles that deal at two different levels with the experience of our international students and immigrants. The first is an article entitled *The International Students' University to Work Transition: Research-in-Brief* authored by Jon Woodend and Nancy Arthur. The second is entitled *Language and Identity from the Perspective of a NNES ESL Immigrant Teacher* by Laura Brass. I hope you take the time to read both!

In conclusion, I hope you enjoy the new cover art and the wonderful research between the covers of this our seventeenth issue. As always, I am indebted to the work of the authors and their choice to have the CJCD be their chosen vehicle of dissemination. To my associate editor Diana Boyd who has just recently given birth to a new baby (maybe a future author) and Dawn Roche who has stepped in to help guide the Journal while Diana is on maternity leave thank you both for your wonderful support and guidance!

Happy reading!

The Effect of Social Variables on the Career Aspirations of Indigenous Adults in New Brunswick

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Abstract

A recent survey of Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick by the Joint Economic Development Initiative Inc. (JEDI) collected data regarding social factors that influence career aspirations. These social variables included: gender, marital status, education level, social welfare dependency, and mobility. These variables were analyzed for their significant differences with career aspirations, measured by O*Net Job Zones. A final data set of 202 survey respondents was used for data analysis. The results aligned with Gottfredson's theory of compromise and circumscription as preparation showed a significant effect with career aspirations. Factors outside of that framework, including marital status, gender, social dependence, and mobility, were also analyzed. The findings showed that women participants had greater career aspirations than men, and that less mobile participants had higher career interests. Implications for Indigenous career development theory, future research, and career counselling are discussed.

Résumé

Un sondage effectué récemment auprès des Peuples Autochtones du Nouveau-Brunswick par l'organisation Joint Economic Development Initiative Inc. (JEDI) a recueilli des données à l'égard des facteurs sociaux qui influencent les aspirations de carrière. Ces variables sociales incluent : le genre, l'état matrimonial, le niveau d'éducation, la dépendance envers l'assistance sociale et la mobilité. Ces variables ont été analysées afin d'identifier des différences significatives à l'égard des aspirations de carrière mesurées par O*Net Job Zones. Un ensemble final de données de 202 répondants a été utilisé pour l'analyse des données. Les résultats s'alignent avec la théorie de Gottfredson du compromis et de la circonscription puisque la préparation a démontré un effet significatif envers les aspirations de carrière. Certains facteurs externes à ce cadre, incluant le statut matrimonial, le genre, la dépendance envers l'assistance sociale et la mobilité, étaient également analysés. Les résultats ont démontré que les femmes qui ont participé possèdent de aspirations de carrières plus élevées que celles des hommes, et que les participants moins mobiles avaient des aspirations de carrière plus élevées. Des implications à l'égard des théories du développement de de carrière des autochtones, les recherches futures et l'orientation professionnelle sont discutées.

Keywords: Canadian Indigenous peoples, career aspirations

Introduction

Indigenous peoples living in New Brunswick are a part of a national population that is young and growing rapidly (Kelly-Scott & Smith, 2011). In contrast, the Atlantic provinces face the reality of an aging workforce and a looming skills shortage (Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, 2013). While this represents an opportunity for Indigenous youth and adults to fill the void in the workforce, employment statistics show that significant challenges also exist. Indigenous employment rates in New Brunswick significantly lag behind those of the non-Indigenous population (Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training, and Labour, 2013). Career aspirations have been identified as a key predictor of career attainment (Schoon & Polek, 2011). Considering the lower employment rates of Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick and the importance of having career aspirations to employment, we were interested in exploring the influence that a number of relevant social variables had on the development of career aspirations in Indigenous adults in New Brunswick.

Theoretical Framework

Rojewski (2005) defined career (occupational) aspirations as "expressed career-related goals or choices" (p. 132). Benjamin, Domene and Landine (2014) described career aspirations as "the process by which young people determine their goals while they are transitioning into adulthood" (p. 49). While this topic "has probably received as much attention as any other career-related concept" (Rojewski, 2005, p. 131), many prevalent career development theories have not fully defined the concept. This study used Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise as a theoretical framework to conceptualize career aspirations through a social psychological lens.

Gottfredson's (1981) theory links career aspirations with internal and external factors such as self-concept, social class, intelligence, and gender. As individuals emerge from childhood, a process of circumscription and compromise occurs, in which childhood career aspirations are discarded and replaced by careers deemed more accessible. Theoretically, individuals filter their aspirations based on the perceived prestige, preparation requirements, employment opportunities, and the congruence of the career with their self-concept and personal view of gender roles (Junk & Armstrong, 2010).

Gottfredson (1996) amended her theory after finding conflicting research results, to "include a set of conditional priorities for the compromise process based on the severity of the compromise being made" (Junk & Armstrong, 2010, p. 581). For major compromises, defined as a choice between two equally unacceptable careers, gender role becomes the most important factor in career decision-making. Minor compromises do not challenge the individual's views regarding gender roles and prestige. In these cases, the person's interests will be the most influential factor in the career decision-making process (Junk & Armstrong, 2010). Existing research has shown at least partial support for Gottfredson's theory in populations in North America (Cochran, Wang, Stevenson, Johnson, & Crews, 2011; Junk & Armstrong, 2010) and South Korea (Hwang, Kim, Ryu, Heppner, 2006). To our knowledge, there is no research examining Gottfredson's theory in relation to Indigenous peoples living in Canada that has been published. Gottfredson's theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for this research because it presented the most comprehensive theory of career aspirations that could be used to conceptualize the outcome variable of the current research. This theoretical model may not apply to Canadian Indigenous peoples in Canada, but an Indigenous model of career aspirations has not yet been developed to use in research. This research assessed some aspects of Gottfredson's theory for its application to Indigenous peoples living in New Brunswick.

Influences on Career Aspirations

Based on research in Thailand (Koul, Lerdpornkulrat, & Chantara, 2011), Britain (Schoon & Polek, 2011), the United States (Perry, Przybysz, & Al-Sheikh, 2009), and Atlantic Canada (Tucker & Fushell, 2013), a gender gap has shown high career aspirations among women. This is supported by Howard et al. (2011), who stated, "Native American youth – especially boys and youth from low SES backgrounds – were more likely than their peers to identify occupations of lower prestige, requiring less education, and yielding lower incomes" (p.108). However, the realization of these women's aspirations is affected by cultural and social factors. Unique cultural and social factors also exist between Canadian Indigenous communities in Canada (Alfred, 2009; McCormick & Honore, 1995), therefore the relationship between gender and career aspirations in the Indigenous communities in New Brunswick was expected to be equally unclear and not easily explained using similar research results from other Canadian communities.

Preparation requirements (i.e. training and education) for a career have also been considered in relation to Indigenous employment. Indigenous educational attainment rates trail the rest of the province: 34.5% of the population will not complete high school, compared to 24.6% of the non-Indigenous population; 16.4% will complete a college diploma, compared to 18.8% of the non-Indigenous population; and, 8.7% will attain a university degree, compared to 15.5% of the non-Indigenous population (Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training, and Labour, 2013). Employment and education are correlated, as a recent study by TD Bank found, stating that, "higher levels of Aboriginal educational attainment do translate into higher income levels and better labour market outcomes" (Fong & Gulati, 2013, p. 1). This confirms previous research in Canada that showed a direct link between education attainment and employability of Indigenous peoples (Bruce, Marlin, & Doucette, 2010; White, Maxim, & Gyimah, 2003). As Indigenous people become more educated, their rate of employment increases. Offet-Gartner (2008) found that education was perceived as a key to unlocking the door to career opportunities for Indigenous women in Western Canada. Indigenous youth in Alberta are willing to work hard and go where they have to in order to realize their career aspirations, however, they "are not lining up at the same starting line" when it comes to education (Bibby 2010, p. 59). Roness and Collier (2010) confirmed the importance of education in building Indigenous workforce participation in Atlantic Canada. While the existing research defines a relationship between education and employability, little is known of the relationship between education and the career aspirations of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Social welfare dependency is a term that has been used in the literature to refer to those who are receiving any form of income assistance from the government (Andersen, 2015), such as employment insurance or social assistance. According to the literature, social welfare dependency may have a limited effect on career aspirations. Kregel (2009) found that socially dependent individuals in the United States "engaged in employment goals, vocational training, or job-seeking activities", but faced barriers to achieving their aspirations, such as, disability and fears over loss of benefits (Kregel, 2009, p. 3). Ying and Michalopoulos (2001) studied social welfare dependency in New Brunswick, Canada, and also found that health issues and disability hindered the attainment of existing career aspirations for socially dependent people. No literature was found that directly measured the effect of social welfare dependency on career aspiration level; however, low preparation careers are more accessible and offer the least number of barriers for social welfare clients. Therefore, if Gottfredson's theory were applied to social welfare clients, it can be hypothesized that clients who are dependent on social programs (i.e. employment insurance, social assistance) would have lower career aspirations than those who are not dependent on those programs. The research described here explored this relationship in the Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick.

In addition to the career-related factors defined by Gottfredson (1981), marital status and mobility may also play a role in the career aspirations of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Research in the United States found that married individuals generally earn a higher salary, are promoted slightly more often, and have slightly higher levels of career satisfaction (Ng et al., 2005). Recent Canadian research also suggests that romantic relationships play a role in facilitating career decision-making, career advancement and raising income levels (Brosseau, Domene, & Dutka, 2010; Domene et al., 2012; Mitchell, 2014). However, the potential relationship between marital status and career aspiration remains unexplored within the Indigenous population in Canada.

Turcotte and Weeks (2014) discussed how labour mobility in the trades is being used as a strategy to reduce regional labour market strains. In their research, they did not find differences in rates of mobility based on participants' education levels. Delisle and Shearmur (2010) found that Canadian university graduates consider movement within a certain region to be less of an obstacle than their non-university counterparts. However, both groups are less mobile across large distances. Their research focused on the relocation patterns of Alberta residents and the general Canadian population, and these results do not necessarily apply to the Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick. Arkwright-Alivisatos (1997) found that role models and family, as well as a desire to benefit their own community, were positive influencers on career achievement for Indigenous adults in Atlantic Canada. This finding has been confirmed by more recent research, which revealed that community attachment was a factor in the employment outcomes of Indigenous peoples in Atlantic Canada (Bruce, Marlin, & Doucette, 2010). Indigenous peoples in Atlantic Canada are generally unwilling to relocate and work outside of their community. This could indicate that mobility is also a limiting factor on the career aspirations of this population.

Present Study

The present research added to the emerging body of Indigenous career development literature by examining the effect of social variables on the career aspirations of New Brunswick Indigenous adults in New Brunswick. Career development amongst Indigenous peoples in Canada is an area of study in which several questions remain (Spowart & Marshall, 2015). Spowart and Marshall (2015) recently conducted a qualitative study of supports, challenges, and obstacles that Indigenous men faced in British Columbia, and found that participants' culture and relatives had a significant impact on their career success.

McCormick and Amundson (1997) developed the First Nations career-life planning model, which focused on key components in career exploration, such as: connectedness, balance, needs, roles, gifts, skills, and values. This model was tested on Indigenous youth in British Columbia, and was effective as a career exploration tool with this group (Neumann et al., 2000). As a career exploration tool, there was little to be gleaned in regards to career aspirations; however, similar themes related to community connectedness may emerge in the present study.

In addition to this research, other relevant studies have revealed the presence of career goal-setting in American Indians (Juntunen et al., 2001); family and financial strains as a limiting factor to career aspirations of Navajo Indian high school graduates (Jackson & Smith, 2001; Hoffman, Jackson, & Smith, 2005); and, geographic isolation as a barrier to transitioning from post-secondary education into the labour market (Merrill, Bruce, & Marlin, 2010).

There are unique factors that differentiate the Indigenous population in New Brunswick from Indigenous Nations in Western Canada or the United States, such as a smaller population, a different economic climate, and a distinct cultural heritage. Arkwright-Alivisatos (1997) conducted research on aspects of career development in the Indigenous population in Atlantic Canada and found that role models, family, and community attachment aid their career development process. Recent non-academic literature also draws attention to the role of career awareness and community attachment in career development (Bruce, Marlin, & Doucette, 2010; Dragonfly Solutions, 2011; Roness & Collier, 2010); however, this has not been explored in depth in regard to the Indigenous population in New Brunswick. While there has been some career development research conducted in Atlantic Canada, there are also major gaps in the literature with regard to this population, and a lack of quantitative analyses to identify statistically significant differences in the career aspirations of Indigenous adults in the region. The current research sought to correct these deficits in the literature.

The current study examined the relationship between career aspirations and social variables addressing the research question: How does gender, marital status, education level, mobility, and social welfare dependency affect career aspirations for Indigenous peoples living in New Brunswick?

Methods

This study used a secondary analysis of an existing, anonymized data set using a cross-sectional design to assess factors that relate to career aspirations in a sample of Indigenous people in New Brunswick (n = 292). The study was designed to identify significant differences in the career aspiration levels of sub-groups of Indigenous adults from New Brunswick through a series of t-tests and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Castellano (2004) proposed guiding principles for research with the Indigenous communities in Canada, including the following principle: “Aboriginal Peoples have an inherent right to participate as principals or partners in research that generates knowledge affecting their culture, identity, and well-being” (Castellano, 2004, p. 109). This was reiterated by Ermine, Sinclair and Jeffery (2004), who expressed the need for Indigenous ownership and control of any research with Indigenous peoples. The Joint Economic Development Initiative Inc. (JEDI), an Indigenous non-profit organization, in collaboration with the nine Mi’gmaq and six Wolastoqiyik communities of New Brunswick, performed the original survey development and implementation. Therefore, the necessary condition of Indigenous participation in all phases of the research exists, including the analysis that was completed by an Indigenous researcher from one of the surveyed communities in New Brunswick (Ermine, Sinclair, & Jeffery, 2004).

The results of the research conducted by JEDI will benefit Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick through advocacy that influences government, First Nations, and post-secondary institutions to enhance education, training and career development services for Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick. Data used in this research has been anonymized in order to protect and respect the privacy of individual survey participants. The present research was aligned with the Tri-Council Policy Statement regarding Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

Participants and Data Collection

In April 2014, various partners, including Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat (AAS), Irving Shipbuilding, New Brunswick Aerospace and Defense Association, Saint John River Valley Tribal Council, Mawiw Tribal Council, North Shore Micmac District Council, New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council, and New Brunswick Building & Construction Trades Council, engaged the Joint Economic Development Initiative Inc. (JEDI) to develop a provincial Shipbuilding Aboriginal Engagement Strategy.

This strategy was intended to maximize the economic benefits to the Indigenous community of New Brunswick stemming from the $30 billion shipbuilding contract that was awarded to Irving Shipbuilding Inc. in 2013. In September 2014, the JEDI hired researchers from each Indigenous tribal council in the province to collect survey data at the community level. The survey was also made available online from April to October 2015. A human resources database was compiled from the data collected from September 2014 to October 2015, allowing JEDI to form a picture of the Indigenous work force in the province as it related to the Irving Shipbuilding project. The JEDI granted access to the data, in anonymized form, for the present study. The results of the analysis remain the property of JEDI and have been published with their permission.

The number of survey participants available for analysis was n = 292. However, due to the patterns of missing data, the number of participants for the t-tests ranged from n = 193 to n = 201, and the number of participants for the ANOVA was n = 200. All of these sample sizes meet the power requirements to conduct t-tests on dichotomous variables and a one-way ANOVA. Power calculations with an alpha of .05, anticipated power of .80 and a medium effect size revealed that the minimum sample size for the t-tests was 34 and the minimum sample size for the one-way ANOVA was 180.

Measures

Career aspirations. In this research, the outcome (dependent) variable was career aspirations, operationalized using the O*Net Job Zone levels. O*Net is the primary source of occupational information in the United States, containing the characteristics of over 1,000 occupations in a hierarchical model (Levine, 2003). The Job Zones in O*Net "indicate level of training, education, and experience required to gain employment in the various O*NET occupation:" and the levels are assigned a numerical standing ranging from 1 to 5 (Levine, 2003, p. 81). A score of one is an aspired occupation that requires little or no preparation (in terms of training and education), while a score of five is given to career aspirations that require completion of graduate school along with an abundance of skill, knowledge, and experience in the workplace. While these Job Zones are often not useful in cross-industry analysis, they demonstrate usefulness as "prediction tools within the realms of occupational aptitude and training/education/experience (i.e. Job Zone) requirements" (Levine, 2003, p. 83). They have proven to be an effective measure of career aspirations in the United States, Australia, and Canada (Watt et al., 2012).

The outcome variable was coded based on the occupations reported in response to the question: "What career are you interested in?" Participant responses were coded on a scale from 1 to 5, based on their place in the O*Net Online Job Zones. Vague responses that did not indicate specific occupations were coded as missing data.

Independent variables. All independent variables were coded from participants' self-reported responses to relevant survey questions. The six independent variables that were examined are:

1. **Gender:** A dichotomous variable consisting of two distinct answers: male (1) or female (0).
2. **Marital Status:** A dichotomous variable with numbers representing: single (1) or not single (0).
3. **Social Welfare Dependence:** A dichotomous variable consisting of two responses: Yes (1) or No (0).
4. **Willing to Relocate:** A dichotomous variable consisting of two distinct answers: Yes (1) or No (0).
5. **Highest Level of Education Achieved:** This categorical variable originally consisted of five groups: less than high school (1); high school diploma or equivalent (2); community college diploma, vocational school (3); university degree (4); graduate degree or above (5). However, there were no participants with an education level of "5" in the final sample.

Procedures

Survey responses were coded by the researchers. A series of independent samples t-tests explored how each of the dichotomous independent variables relates to the outcome variable, career aspirations. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore the relationship between education and career aspirations.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Prior to testing the hypotheses, it was necessary to conduct preliminary analyses to determine whether the variables met the assumptions for conducting t-tests and ANOVAs. The outcome variable was reviewed for outliers and all scores fell within three standard deviations of the mean. Probability-probability (P-P) plots indicated a normal distribution of the outcome variable. Furthermore, central limit theory indicated that the sample size was sufficiently large that normality could be assumed (Field, 2013). Furthermore, the non-significant Levene's test results suggested that the assumption of heterogeneity of variances had been met.

Hypothesis 1: An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare career aspirations of male (n = 132) versus female (n = 69) participants. On average, males reported lower career aspirations (M = 2.73, SE = .068) than females (M = 3.13, SE = .103). The difference, -.396, was significant t(199) = -3.300, p = .001; and represented a small effect size, d = -.463. These results supported Hypothesis 1 and suggest that Indigenous women have slightly, but significantly, higher career aspiration levels than their male counterparts.

Hypothesis 2: An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare career aspirations of single (n = 166) and not single (n = 32) participants. On average, single participants did not have significantly different career aspirations (M = 2.90, SE = .064) than those who were not single (M = 2.78, SE = .154). The difference, .122, was not significant t(196) = .767, p = .444; and represented an effect size of d = .140. These results failed to support Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3: An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the career aspirations of participants who were dependent on social welfare (n = 126) and those who were not (n = 76) at the time of the survey. On average, those who were socially dependent reported lower career aspirations (M = 2.75, SE = .069) compared to those who were not socially dependent (M = 3.07, SE = .100), and the difference, -.312, was significant t(200) = 2.642, p = .009. Social welfare dependency demonstrated a small but significant negative effect size of d = -.368. These results support Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4: An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare career aspirations of participants who were willing to relocate (n = 171) compared to those who were not (n = 26). On average, those who were willing to relocate reported lower career aspiration levels (M = 2.82, SE = .061) compared to those who were not willing (M = 3.19, SE = .167). This difference, -.368, was significant t(195) = -2.167; and represented an effect of d = -.433. Although these results were significant, they are in the opposite direction to what was hypothesized, and suggest that willingness to relocate has a significant negative effect on career aspiration levels.

Hypothesis 5: A one-way analysis of variances (ANOVA) was conducted to compare career aspirations of participants, conceptualized by O*Net Job Zone level, to the different levels of education actually completed by participants. There was a significant effect for education on career aspirations, F(3, 196) = 8.664, p = .000, ω2 = .117. Hochberg's GT post hoc test scores indicated that those with a high school diploma or less had significantly lower aspirations than those with some form of post-secondary education (PSE). In addition, there is no significant difference between people with less than high school versus people with a high school diploma and no significant difference between people with a college versus university degree. These results support Hypothesis 5 and suggest that education level has a medium to large effect on career aspirations, with the division being between those who had completed some form of post-secondary education and those who had not completed some form of post-secondary education (Table 1).

Discussion

To summarize the results, gender demonstrated a small effect on career aspirations. Current education level was hypothesized to have a significant effect on career aspirations, and this result was confirmed in the analysis. This represents a medium to large positive effect, meaning that as the education level of respondents increased, the education level of the career aspired to also increased. Specifically, the career aspirations of post-secondary education graduates were significantly higher than those with no post-secondary education. Participants currently in a romantic relationship were hypothesized to have higher career aspirations than the single participants. This hypothesis was not supported by the analysis; generally speaking, single and non-single respondents had similar career aspiration levels. Social welfare dependency was hypothesized to demonstrate a negative effect on career aspirations. The analysis revealed that those who were not currently dependent on social welfare programs aspired to careers that required more preparation (i.e. training and

Table 1
Post-hoc test: Hochberg's GT

(I) Level of Education Completed	(J) Level of Education Completed	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Less than high school	High school diploma or equivalent	-.196	.135	.617
	Community college diploma, vocational school	-.578*	.151	.001
	University degree or above	-1.004*	.248	.000
High school diploma or equivalent	Less than high school	.196	.135	.617
	Community college diploma, vocational school	-.382*	.140	.041
	University degree or above	-.808*	.242	.006
Community college diploma, vocational school	Less than high school	.578*	.151	.001
	High school diploma or equivalent	.382*	.140	.041
	University degree or above	-.426	.251	.431
University degree or above	Less than high school	1.004*	.248	.000
	High school diploma or equivalent	.808*	.242	.006
	Community college diploma, vocational school	.426	.251	.431

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

education) than current dependents. Participants willing to relocate were hypothesized to have higher career interests than those who were not mobile (measured by their willingness to relocate). This was disproven by the data. Instead, those who were unwilling to move actually had higher career aspirations than those who were willing to move, although the effect size was small.

The findings of this research are intriguing in the context of Gottfredson's (1981) theory of circumscription and compromise. Gender, social welfare dependency, and education had significant effects on the career aspirations of the participants. The largest effect that emerged was the effect of education level on career aspirations, particularly in regard to PSE attainment. Social welfare dependency was a limiting factor in relation to career aspirations. This finding aligns with Gottfredson's theory as careers that require less preparation are viewed as more accessible for those participants dependent on social welfare. Additionally, gender and career aspirations were significantly correlated as women tended to aspire to careers that require slightly more preparation than males, confirming the literature that suggests women aspire to careers that require more long-term preparation than men (Howard et al., 2011; Koul, Lerdpornkulrat, & Chantara, 2011; Perry, Przybysz, & Al-Sheikh, 2009; Schoon & Polek, 2011; Tucker & Fushell, 2013). The underlying cultural factors that influence this finding, such as gender roles in First Nations, should be explored in future research (Alfred, 2009; McCormick & Honore, 1995).

Apart from the variables connected to Gottfredson's (1981) theory, the results here seem to contradict previous research suggesting that mobility was a hindrance to career development in Indigenous peoples in Atlantic Canada (Bruce, Marlin, & Doucette, 2010; Roness & Collier, 2010). Nearly 85% of respondents indicated a willingness to relocate, but willingness to relocate decreased as career aspirations increased. Although this result was the opposite of what was hypothesized, it does seem to align with another aspect of the existing literature. In general, Indigenous peoples living in Atlantic Canada value giving back to their community (Arkwright-Alivisatos, 1997). Arkwright-Alivisatos (1997) referred to "the narrow path", indicating that community is a key factor in limiting career aspirations to those occupations which are perceived as giving back to the community, such as social work, teaching, nursing, and policing (p. 69). Each of these careers requires a high level of preparation (i.e. more training and education) and is classified in higher Job Zones. Therefore a lack of mobility may negatively influence employment outcomes while positively influencing career aspirations. The desire to give back to the community might explain the results, but worker mobility should be explored more thoroughly to determine specific factors that affect Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick. Finally, the results suggested no statistical relationship between marital status and career aspiration level, confirming the existing literature (Brosseau, Domene, & Dutka, 2010; Domene et al., 2012), which also found no significant association between these two variables.

Implications for Career Counselling

The results of the current study confirmed the importance of preparation for future careers, as education had a medium-to-high sized effect on career aspirations. This is an important finding, especially for guidance counsellors working with Indigenous students in schools. A strategy of encouraging Indigenous youth to advance their education beyond high school and into post-secondary (e.g., trades, community college, and university) is likely to result in higher career aspirations for future generations, leading to greater employment outcomes. However, the distinction between different types of PSE appears to be less important. No significant difference was found between the career aspirations of participants who completed community college/vocational school and the aspirations of participants who had completed a university degree. For practitioners working with adults in Indigenous communities (e.g., employment and training officers, education directors), it is important to note that adult clients will benefit from opportunities to advance their education through GED programs, specialized training, and the completion of post-secondary diplomas and degrees. The message here for practitioners is that they should encourage clients to pursue their educational options and provide information regarding the educational requirements for individual career aspirations.

Willingness to relocate has historically presented a challenge for Indigenous career development in Canada. Numerous studies have stated that community attachment is a key factor in Indigenous career decision-making (Arkwight-Alivisatos, 1997; Bruce, Marlin, & Doucette, 2010; McCormick & Honore, 1995; Roness & Collier, 2010). The results of the current research were intriguing, as 85% of participants reported a willingness to relocate for work. One mitigating factor that might explain this phenomenon is that the survey data was collected with a regional connection to shipbuilding (an industry that is not located in any of the Indigenous communities that were surveyed). Therefore, career counsellors and employment and training officers should consider career opportunities across Atlantic Canada while working with clients. Another explanation for the relocation findings could be in relation to the marketing of the survey to the communities. The survey process was implemented to connect people with employment opportunities, making it attractive to participants who were actively interested in employment and omitting those who were already employed or who were not actively seeking work. Neither of those groups would likely be willing to relocate, but the group for which this survey was designed was likely willing to do so out of motivation to find work.

Dependence on social programs was found to have a significant negative effect on career aspirations. This is informative for career counsellors working with clients who are recipients of both short-term (EI) and long-term (social assistance) social programs. Dependency on these programs does not indicate a lack of career aspirations (Kregel, 2009); however, it may limit those clients' aspirations to careers that require less preparation. The First Nations Career Planning Model (McCormick & Amundson, 1997; McCormick et al., 1999; Neumann et al., 2000) should be used in working with these clients to explore realistic career goals and outline a plan of action to achieve those goals.

Implications for Indigenous, Federal, and Provincial Governance

The results of this research demonstrate a willingness on the part of Indigenous peoples to participate in the Atlantic Canadian workforce. The Indigenous workforce surveyed in this study aspired to having careers and was willing to relocate to achieve their career aspirations. Post-secondary educational achievement, mobility, and gender were identified as significant factors influencing career aspirations in this population. Strategic investments to support Indigenous peoples to attain post-secondary education, transition into the workforce, and relocate for career advancement will result in improved employment and social outcomes for Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick.

Limitations

The current study used archival data, which limited the scope of the research to the data that was available in the survey and did not allow the exploration of additional variables that the literature suggested could be important. Some factors that have been shown to influence career aspiration level in other populations (i.e. age, community affiliation, disability) and may have been important to examine for Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick could not be included because the required data was not collected as a part of the existing survey process.

Additionally, the quality of responses to some of the survey questions limited the effectiveness of the research in fully exploring the factors related to aspiration. For example, some participants gave clear indication of their career aspirations while others were more vague. Those vague responses were omitted from the analysis, which means that the results do not generalize to individuals without clear career aspirations. The generalizability of the results is also questionable because the survey was related to the shipbuilding industry, potentially discouraging participation from those with education and training in other sectors. This could be the reason that no individuals with graduate degrees or above participated in the survey. This also may have encouraged some participants to respond in a way that could make them attractive to the shipbuilding industry (e.g., stating that they would be willing to relocate to where such employment is located; naming career aspirations that are consistent with shipbuilding).

The measure of career aspirations, O*Net Job Zones, is a measure designed for the United States (Levine, 2003). There may have been some careers included where preparation requirements differ between the United States and Canada, and this could have skewed the data slightly, depending on certification differences between countries. This skewing is likely not drastic enough to significantly influence the results, as evidenced by Watt et al. (2012) who used the same measure to compare the career aspirations of populations in Australia, the United States, and Canada.

Finally, Gottredson's theory of circumscription and compromise has been tested in the United States, Canada, and South Korea, but unique cultural aspects of Indigenous communities may limit its validity in this context (Cochran, Wang, Stevenson, Johnson, & Crews, 2011; Hwang, Kim, Ryu, Heppner, 2006; Junk & Armstrong, 2010; McCormick & Honore, 1995). One of the outcomes of the research was to test Gottfredson's theory in an Indigenous context. The results confirmed the effect of preparation and education on career aspirations in Indigenous communities; however, further research is required to confirm this finding and test additional elements of Gottfredson's theory in an Indigenous context.

Future Research

Future research topics must be determined in consultation with the Indigenous community, but could include: factors that facilitate greater educational attainment, Indigenous culture and gender roles, the effect community attachment has on career aspirations and development, and successful counselling strategies for increasing Indigenous educational and career achievement. Consultation with communities may reveal different priorities than those listed here. Such consultation is necessary in building collaborative research directions whereby Indigenous peoples in Atlantic Canada can continue to research our selves "back to life" (Castellano, 2004, p. 98).

There is a dearth of knowledge about the factors that influence career aspiration level in the Indigenous population of Atlantic Canada, and New Brunswick specifically. The current study represents a starting point for research on this topic. Additional research should thoroughly explore the application of Gottfredson's (1981) theory of compromise and circumscription to Indigenous peoples to address questions as to whether or not this is an appropriate lens for understanding their career aspirations. It would also be informative to explore the interconnectedness of Gottfredson's theory of career aspirations and the First Nations career-life planning model (McCormick & Amundson, 1997; Neumann et al., 2000).

The findings of this research determined that women participants had higher career aspirations than males. This needs to be explored more fully to determine the cultural factors and gender roles that underlie this finding, and explore strategies to advance the career aspirations of Indigenous men and women in New Brunswick. Mobility is another area of research focus for future consideration. The findings of this research were unexpected, and further research is needed to confirm these findings and determine factors that impact worker mobility and career aspirations in Indigenous peoples living in New Brunswick. Additional factors that have been shown to effect career development (age, social status, disability) were neglected in this analysis due to the archival data set. Additional research is required to measure the impact of these and other additional variables, including those related to revitalization and self-determination, on the career development of Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick.

The career aspirations of Indigenous students in New Brunswick are also in need of further investigation. Research conducted in Australia found that "Indigenous students tended to set their schooling and post-schooling aspirations at lower levels compared with their non-Indigenous peers" (Craven et al., 2005, p. 142). Numerous challenges to higher career aspirations were faced by the participants in that study, including knowledge of career opportunities, lack of family support, awareness of what education or training is needed to pursue their career aspirations, better education facilities, local job opportunities, and employer attitudes towards indigenous people (Craven et al., 2005). These factors may also affect the Indigenous students of New Brunswick. The present research explored the career aspirations of Indigenous adults. In contrast, future research should explore the career aspirations of Indigenous students and could compare them with non-Indigenous students in New Brunswick.

The findings regarding social welfare clients can also inform future research. Social welfare dependency had a significant negative effect on career aspirations. Future research should explore the underlying factors that limit employment and career outcomes for these clients. It should also provide recommendations for overcoming barriers to career development. This data could have a great impact on the provincial economy, as clients are empowered to succeed and become less dependent on social welfare.

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Employment Outcomes of Canadian Postsecondary Students with Learning Disabilities

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Abstract

The employment outcomes of 35 Canadian postsecondary graduates with learning disabilities (LD) were investigated. It was found that 67.7% of respondents were working full-time, earning salaries comparable to those in the general population of college graduates without LD. While 56.9% of respondents indicated that their work was affected by LD, only 47.1% had ever disclosed their LD in the workplace or requested formal workplace accommodations (11.8%). Most respondents reported employing the use of compensatory strategies in order to overcome obstacles presented by their LD. High ratings of job satisfaction and high perceptions of employment self-efficacy were reported. Implications of the findings in terms of successful individuals with LD and effective transition planning are discussed, as well as limitations and directions for future research.

Abstrait

Les résultats du taux d'emploi de 35 diplômés du niveau postsecondaire canadien ayant des troubles d'apprentissage (TA) ont été étudiés. Il a été constaté que 67,7 % des répondants travaillaient à temps plein, gagnaient des salaires comparables à ceux de la population générale des diplômés du collégial sans TA. Alors que 56,9 % des répondants ont indiqué que leur travail a été affectée par leur TA, seulement 47,1 % avaient déjà révélé leur TA dans le milieu de travail ou avaient demandé des accommodations pour leur travail (11,8 %). La plupart des répondants ont déclaré avoir employé l'utilisation de stratégies compensatoires en vue de surmonter les obstacles présentés par leur TA. Des pourcentages élevées de satisfaction au travail et des perceptions élevés d'auto-efficacité au travail ont été signalés. Les implications des données d' individus qui réussissent avec des TA et la planification efficace de la transition sont discutés, ainsi que les limitations et les directions pour la recherche future seront présentées.

Employment Outcomes of Canadian Postsecondary Students with Learning Disabilities

Over the past three decades a large body of research has documented the experiences of students with learning disabilities (LD) within the primary to secondary (K – 12) school system, as well as during the postsecondary (college and university) years. Individuals with LD experience difficulties with learning and academic skills despite having average or better intelligence, and typically manifest as impairments in reading, writing, and mathematics (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, 2015). Approximately 2.3% of Canadians report having a learning disability (Bizier, Till, & Nicholls, 2015). While an increasing knowledge base has provided insights into the adult outcomes of secondary students with LD (e.g., Holliday, Koller, & Thomas, 1999; Levine & Nourse, 1998; McLaughlin, Speirs, & Shenassa, 2014; Seo, Abbott, & Hawkins, 2008), less research has documented the outcomes for postsecondary students with LD as they transition into adulthood and employment. Because increasing numbers of students with LD are enrolling in postsecondary education programs and earning degrees (Newman et al., 2011; Sanford et al., 2011), it is important to gain an understanding of the outcomes these individuals experience as they transition from postsecondary programs into the workforce. This information would assist postsecondary disability support providers and career counsellors to effectively prepare students for their transition from an academic setting into employment environments.

Research examining the employment outcomes of high school graduates with LD suggests that while they gain employment, they are often found to be underemployed or employed in traditionally low-paying, low-skill work and earning less than postsecondary graduates with LD (Murray, Goldstein, Nourse, & Edgar, 2000; Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009). Small-scale studies of postsecondary graduates with LD often paint an encouraging, although at times inconsistent, picture with respect to employment outcomes. In following 56 college graduates with LD, Adelman and Vogel (1990) found that most graduates with LD were employed in skilled labour industries such as business and education. Many were effectively using compensatory strategies (e.g., time management, use of assistive technology) to overcome language and processing difficulties that affected their work. Similarly, Greenbaum, Graham, and Scales (1996) surveyed 49 adults with LD that had attended university. They found a high percentage of these (83%) were competitively employed in jobs that offered opportunities for advancement and promotion, with 94% of participants indicating that they were satisfied with their job. In a further study, a follow-up of 55 college graduates with LD found that they reported significantly less satisfaction with pay and promotion opportunities, as well as significantly lower ratings of overall job satisfaction than their non-LD peers (Witte, Philips, & Kakela, 1998).

Such early studies of the employment outcomes of college graduates with LD often utilized small, homogeneous samples or different methodologies, often yielding inconsistent results and making it difficult to generalize their findings to the LD population as a whole. More recently, large-scale quantitative follow-up studies of postsecondary graduates with LD from several institutions across the United States have yielded a rich data source to assess the employment outcomes of postsecondary graduates with LD (Madaus, Foley, McGuire, & Ruban, 2001; Madaus, Foley, McGuire, & Ruban, 2002; Madaus, Ruban, Foley, & McGuire, 2003; Madaus, 2006; Madaus, 2008; Madaus, Zhao, & Ruban, 2008). In a follow-up survey of 500 graduates with LD, Madaus (2006) found that employment rates exceeded those of non-LD adults who have not completed high school or graduated from college. Levels of income and benefits also were comparable to those found in the general workforce. Additionally, high levels of employment satisfaction were reported among the sample, along with strong feelings of *employment self-efficacy* (defined as feelings of confidence in one's ability to perform work-related tasks or behaviours successfully), which were found to be highly predictive of job satisfaction (Madaus et al., 2008).

While such research provides insight into the transition to employment outcomes for postsecondary students with LD in the United States, what is less well known is whether these results are representative of the employment outcomes of postsecondary students with LD in Canada. To date, three qualitative studies on LD and employment have been conducted in Canadian samples. Shessel and Reiff (1999) found Canadian employees with LD experienced work dissatisfaction due to a lack of appropriate accommodations in the workplace. Similarly, Price, Gerber and Shessel (2002) found a lack of reasonable work accommodations made available to employees with LD due to a lack of self-advocacy. Finally, a comparison of the work experiences of employees with LD in the U.S. and Canada revealed that both Americans and Canadians generally have positive work experiences, with opportunities for advancement and promotion (Gerber, Price, Mulligan, & Shessel, 2004).

While these studies provide a useful snapshot of the experiences of some Canadian adults with LD in the workforce, only a limited amount of quantitative data is available regarding the employment experiences of adults with LD in a Canada. In 2011, Holmes and Silvestri [2011] examined the employment experiences of 98 postsecondary graduates with LD in the Canadian province of Ontario. They found that 69.1% of respondents reported being employed either full- or part-time and expressed high levels of job satisfaction, despite 71.9% indicating that LD impacted performance in the workplace to some degree.

Thus, the current study sought to extend the Canadian literature base by conducting a follow-up survey of postsecondary students with LD in Canada. The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the employment outcomes of postsecondary students with LD in Canada?
2. How do Canadian postsecondary students with LD rate their employment experiences in terms of job satisfaction and feelings of employment self-efficacy?
3. At what rate do Canadian postsecondary students with LD self-disclose their disability or ask for accommodations in the workplace?

Determining the employment experiences of adults with LD in

Canada will be helpful to educators and providers of support services in designing programs that will effectively aid students with LD make a smooth transition from postsecondary settings into the workforce.

Method

Participants came from a pool of 98 students with LD that had attended a small liberal arts university in Eastern Canada. All potential participants had received services from an on-campus support centre for students with LD. In order to be eligible to receive support services, students were required to have a thorough psychoeducational assessment conducted by a qualified psychologist that confirmed the presence of a LD.

Data was obtained by asking participants to complete an online survey form that they could access via computer over the Internet. Since most potential participants had valid email addresses, an Internet-based survey was favoured over a traditional mail-based survey based on evidence that the response speed and completion rates for Internet-based surveys are higher than for written mail-based surveys, while still maintaining similar response rates (Kongsved, Basnov, Holm-Christensen, & Hjollund, 2007; Truell, Bartlett, & Alexander, 2002). Names and contact information of potential participants eligible for the study were compiled from the records of the campus support centre. Potential participants were invited to participate in the study via several waves of email invitations over the course of seven months. Data collection was completed in October of 2007. Of the 98 individuals that were invited to participate in the study, 41 responded by completing the survey, yielding a response rate of 42%. Upon review, it was determined that 6 respondents did not graduate from a postsecondary institution and were removed from the analysis.

For the purposes of extension and replication of previous research, the survey instrument used in the study was adapted from that developed by Madaus et al. (2001), which contained three main sections. The first section consisted of respondent demographic information, educational experiences, employment information, career experiences, and work experiences in relation to LD. The second and third sections were comprised of job satisfaction and employment self-efficacy scales, respectively, in which respondents rate their perceptions on a 5-point Likert scale. The internal consistency of the Job Satisfaction scale is .90 and .94 for the Employment Self-Efficacy as reported by Madaus et al. (2008).

Results

Participant Characteristics

Of the 35 postsecondary graduates who responded, 20 were male and 15 were female. In terms of demographic variables the majority of respondents reported being White/Caucasian (94.3%). The majority of participants were currently living in North America (80%) with most residing in the Canadian provinces of Ontario (40%), Nova Scotia (11.4%), and British Columbia (8.6%). One participant reported having attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder in addition to LD. All participants indicated that English was their first language.

Educational Experiences

Over half of respondents reported that their LD was first identified while in elementary school (61.8%), followed by being diagnosed after high school (14.7%) or during middle or high school (11.8%). Over two-thirds of respondents (76.5%) indicated that the availability of LD support services influenced their decision to attend the post-secondary institution in question and almost all respondents (97%) graduated from the same institution. Year of graduation covered a period of 20 years, with a mean of 6.1 years (SD = 4.01) since graduation at the time of survey. The majority of graduates completed a Bachelor of Arts degree (75.8%), followed by Bachelor of Commerce (12.1%), Bachelor of Science (6.1%), Bachelor of Fine Arts (3%), and Bachelor of Music (3%). While graduates reported pursuing a wide variety of major fields of study, the most common majors were Geography (25%) and History (22%), and Marketing (9.4%). Approximately 41.2% of respondents indicated that they went on to graduate from an additional postsecondary institution to pursue degrees in education, law, or technical diplomas, for example. While the highest degree obtained reported by the majority of respondents was a bachelor's (75.8%), some went on to complete master's (9.1%), or doctorate-level (3%) degrees.

Employment and Career Outcomes

At the time of questionnaire, 67.7% of those responding indicated that they were employed full-

Type of employment	N	%
Education	8	30.7
Business	6	23.1
Technology	4	15.4
Factory/Industry	3	11.5
Provincial/State/Local Government	1	3.9
Social Services	1	3.9
Other	4	15.4

Table 1. Current employment industries reported by respondents

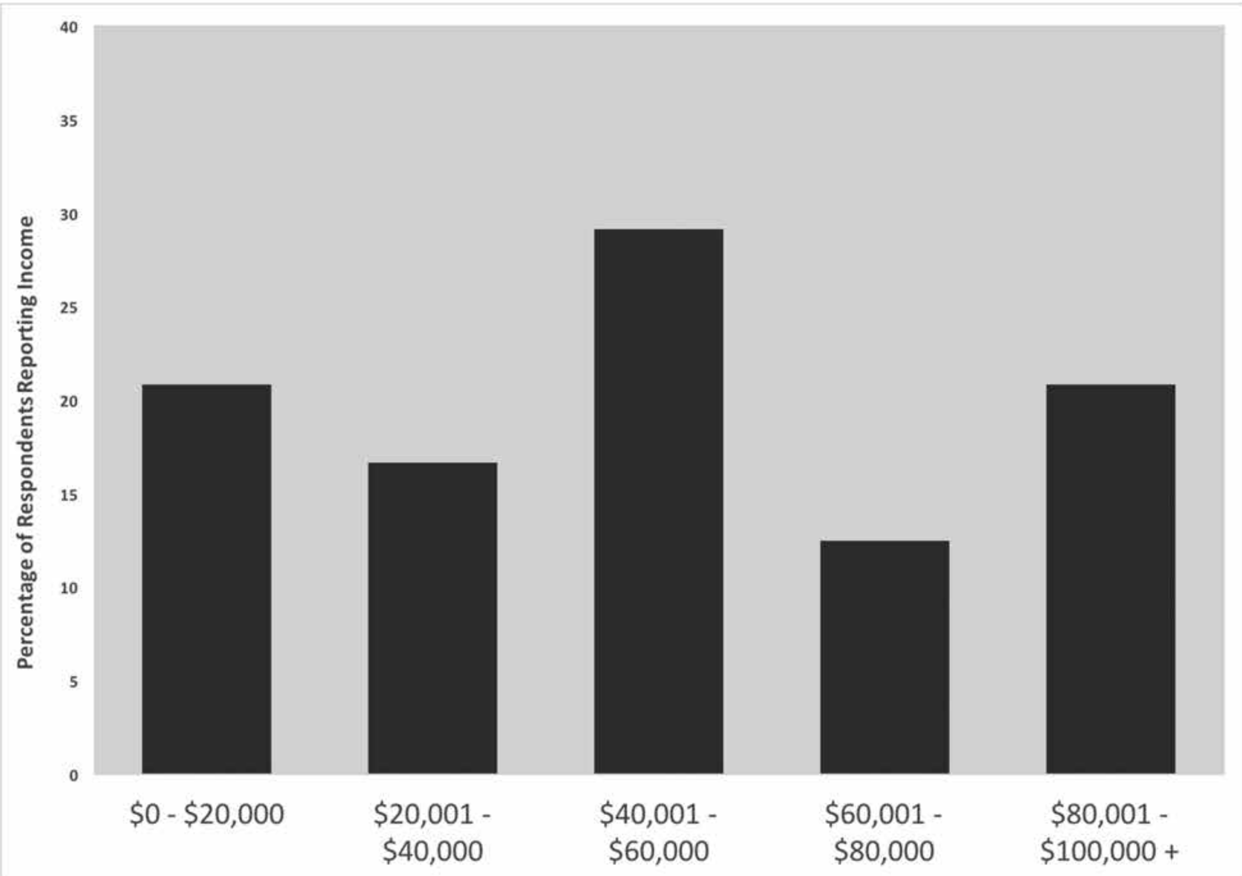

Figure 1. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Income Categories.

time (35 or more hours per week), with 8.9% indicating they were employed part-time (21 – 34 hours per week) and 23.5% reported being unemployed. When asked why they were employed part-time, responses included caring for children, working part-time while searching for full-time employment, or caring for the household. Interestingly, 87.5% of those respondents who were not employed at the time of the survey were not seeking employment. The most common reasons cited for not seeking employment were because they were pursuing further education (71.4%), or were caring for a child or family-member (28.6%).

Respondents reported having an average of 2.8 jobs since graduation (SD = 1.9). Over half of the participants had held their current job for 1 – 2 years (30.8%) or less than 1 year (42.3%). The most common industries that employed respondents reported working in were education (30.8%), business (23.1%), technology (15.4%), and factory/industry (11.5%). See Table 1 for a complete list of employed respondents' industries. The most common salary range for employed respondents was $10,001 - $20,000 (n = 4), $30,001 - $40,000 (n = 4), and $40,001 - $50,000 (n = 4), representing 50% of respondents who reported their income. The distribution of salary range is depicted in Figure 1. Over half of all employed respondents indicated that they received full benefits from their employers (61.5%), with 19.2% receiving partial benefits, and 19.23% reporting no benefits at all. Over a quarter of respondents (26.5%) indicated that they had been laid off from a job before, the most common reason being company downsizing or budget reductions (n = 6). Only one respondent indicated that they were laid off for performance-based reasons.

Impact of Learning Disabilities and Self-Disclosure in the Workplace

Over half of respondents (55.9%) indicated that their LD impacted their work in some way. When asked how often their work was affected, 32.4% indicated that their work was affected occasionally, while 11.8% felt that LD affected their work frequently. The most common areas affected were reported to be in writing skills (38.2%), rate of processing information (23.5%), time management (20.6%), organizational skills (14.7%), oral communication skills (14.7%), mathematics computation (14.7%), and reading comprehension (11.8%). See Table 2 for a complete list of workplace skills affected by respondents' LD.

While over half of the respondents felt that their LD affected their work in some way, only 11.8% ever asked for formal workplace accommodations. Respondents reported utilizing a variety of strategies and accommodations in order to overcome the challenges of their job. See Table 3 for a complete list of strategies and accommodations utilized by respondents.

In terms of self-disclosure, 47.1% of respondents indicated that they had disclosed their LD in the workplace, most commonly disclosing to supervisors (41.2%), and co-workers (20.6%). The most common reasons cited for self-disclosing was to make either their supervisors (29.4%) or their co-workers (17.7%) aware of their LD. Of those who did not disclose, the most common reason was that they felt there was no need to disclose their LD (45.2%). However, some chose not to disclose because they did not want to it to affect their relationships with supervisors (25.8%), co-workers (16.1%), and clients (12.9%), or felt it might affect their job security (16.1%). Of the group of respondents who did choose to disclose their LD, 15.4% reported experiencing negative effects as a result of self-disclosure, although respondents did not provide any additional information when asked for specific examples of negative outcomes they experienced.

Employment Satisfaction and Self-Efficacy

Respondents reported high levels of employment satisfaction (M = 4.12, SD = .85). The mean scores from the Employment Satisfaction Scale ranged from 3.65 to 4.47 on a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents felt they worked well with their colleagues (M = 4.47, SD = .62), that their work was valued by their employer/supervisor (M = 4.38, SD = .74), and they worked in a job that gives them a feeling of accomplishment (M = 4.17, SD = .90). Respondents also felt their employment allowed them to learn new skills and provided them with an appropriate amount of independence (M = 4.23, SD = .81).

Respondents also reported having a strong sense of employment self-efficacy. The mean scores on the Employment Self-Efficacy Scale ranged from 3.61 to 4.67 on a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents felt that they were able to interact well with their co-workers (M = 4.67, SD = .54), take the initiative for carrying out

Area Impacted	N	%
Writing Skills	13	38.2
Rate of Processing Information	8	23.5
Time Management	7	20.6
Organizational Skills	5	14.7
Mathematics Computation	5	14.7
Oral Communication	5	14.7
Reading Comprehension	4	11.8
Social Interactions with Colleagues	3	5.9
Social Interactions with Supervisors	2	5.9
Other	2	5.9

Table 2. Workplace skills impacted by respondents' LD.

Strategy/Accommodation	N	%
Goal and priority setting	21	70.0
Time management	18	60.0
Arrive early at work	18	60.0
Use of proofreaders	16	53.3
Support from family/significant others	10	36.7
Quiet work environment	10	33.3
Staying late	10	33.3
Time outside of work	10	33.3
Assistive technology	9	30.0
Problem solving/brainstorming	9	30.0
Use of graphic organizers	3	10.0
Self-advocating	2	6.7
Positive attitude	1	3.3
Delegation of difficult tasks	0	0.0

Table 3. Compensative strategies and accommodations utilized by respondents in the workplace.

an important project (M = 4.49, SD = .67), make good use of their strengths, skills, and abilities (M = 4.46, SD = .62), exercise leadership in the workplace (M = 4.42, SD = .66), and assume challenges related to their job (M = 4.36, SD = .55).

Discussion

This study sought to examine the employment outcomes of postsecondary students with learning disabilities in a Canadian sample. While some studies have examined employment outcomes of postsecondary students with LD (e.g., Adelman & Vogel, 1990; Greenbaum, Graham, & Scales, 1996; Witte, Philips, & Kakela, 1998), limited research has been conducted in the Canadian population (Gerber, Price, Mulligan, & Shessel, 2004). Additionally, the majority of these studies are not uniform with respect to research design and methodologies. Therefore, this study utilized measures previously used in a large-scale follow-up of university graduates with LD in the United States (Madaus, 2006) so as to have a point of reference for comparison in a Canadian sample.

Compared with previous research, the full-time employment rate of 67.7% postsecondary students with LD in the current sample was consistent with that observed by studies conducted in U.S. samples (83%; Greenbaum et al., 1996; 75%; Madaus, 2006). While the rate of unemployment in the current sample was higher than that observed by Madaus (2006), the majority of those unemployed in the current sample were not seeking employment due to other responsibilities such as caring for family responsibilities or completing additional education, rather than not being able to find suitable employment. Indices of job stability were also similar between Canada and the U.S., with 26.5% of respondents in the Canadian sample reporting ever being laid off from a job, compared to 24.2% among U.S. graduates with LD (Madaus, 2006). The primary reason cited for of lay-offs in the Canadian sample was related to company downsizing or budget reductions and not as a result of poor performance or lack of ability.

As can be seen from Figure 1, the annual earnings of respondents in the current study are consistent with those in the general Canadian population. The median income range in the current study was $40,001 - $60,000 compared to the median salary of $40,362 for university graduates without disabilities holding a bachelor's degree in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006). In terms of receiving benefits, 80.7% of respondents in the Canadian sample reported receiving either full or partial benefits, which is comparable to rates reported by Madaus (85%; 2006).

As was reported by Madaus et al. (2008), and consistent with previous research of postsecondary students with LD (e.g., Adelman & Vogel, 1990; Greenbaum et al., 1996; Gerber et al., 2004), respondents in the Canadian sample reported high levels of job satisfaction. Canadian respondents particularly felt that they worked well with their colleagues, had a sense of accomplishment in their work, and that their work was valued by their employers or supervisors. Since Madaus et al. (2008) found that feelings of employment self-efficacy were highly predictive of job satisfaction, it came as no surprise that participants in the current study also had strong feelings of employment self-efficacy. Respondents felt strongly that they were able to interact well with co-workers, work effectively with colleagues, and exercise leadership in the workplace. These feelings of having a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction with one's job represent what social cognitive learning theorists refer to as *self-evaluative outcome expectations* (Bandura, 1986). The theory suggests that individuals may indeed have confidence in their ability to perform a given task (i.e., self-efficacy) but in the absence of a feeling of pride or accomplishment that accompanies accomplishing a given task (i.e., self-evaluative outcome expectations), individuals may not choose to engage in that task (Panagos & DuBois, 1999). It would appear that many of the respondents in the current study have achieved both feelings of self-efficacy and positive self-evaluative outcome expectations, creating high levels of job satisfaction.

Overall respondents strongly felt that they were able to make good use of their strengths, skills, and abilities. Helping students with LD learn how to exploit their strengths while minimizing their weaknesses has been identified as a goal of effective transition planning (Cummings, Maddux, & Casey, 2000). Respondents in the current study may have achieved a degree of what researchers have termed as goodness of fit. In a study of 46 highly successful adults with learning disabilities, Gerber, Ginsberg, and Reiff (1992) identified *goodness of fit* as finding environments where skills and abilities can be optimized. Many of the highly successful adults in the study had sought out or specifically created work environments that gave them the flexibility they needed and allowed them to capitalize on their strongest attributes. Adelman and Vogel (1990) reported that some graduates with LD had changed jobs as a compensatory strategy, in order to find a better fit for their skill set. Given that 73.1% of participants in the current study reported that they had been in their current job for 2 years or less and had held an average of 2.8 jobs since graduation, it is possible that some respondents had also changed jobs as a compensatory strategy in order to find a good fit for their strengths in the workplace. A focus of future research could include an investigation of how adults with LD achieve *goodness of fit* in the workplace to optimize performance and success.

Another factor of success that emerges out of the current study is the use of self-regulatory strategies. While over half of respondents (55.9%) reported that their LD impacted their work in multiple domains, many respondents made use of a variety of compensative strategies to overcome obstacles (see Table 3). Gerber et al. (1992) referred to *learned creativity* as various strategies, techniques, and other mechanisms devised by highly successful adults with LD to enhance their ability to perform well. Self-regulation strategies, such as goal setting and managing time were among the most utilized strategies reported by respondents in both Madaus (2006) and in the current study, suggesting that making use of these strategies minimized areas of weaknesses. This may have made it unnecessary for some individuals to request formal workplace accommodations, which only 11.8% of respondents in the current study reported doing.

A trend that emerges from not only the current study, but also from other studies examining the employment outcomes of adults with LD, is a significant lack of self-disclosure and failure to request accommodations in the workplace. While over half of respondents felt that their LD affected their work in some way, only 47.1% of respondents reported ever self-disclosing their LD in the workplace in the current study. Madaus (2006) reported a self-disclosure rate of 55%, with only 12.4% having ever requested accommodations. Greenbaum et al. (1996) observed a similar reticence, with only 20% disclosing during the job application process, and 43% after being hired. Witte et al. (1998) reported that only 5% of graduates with LD self-disclosed or requested workplace accommodations. Similarly, Gerber et al. (2004) found that the majority of both American and Canadian adults with LD did not self-disclose or request accommodations prior to or during the course of their employment.

The most common reason respondents gave for not choosing to self-disclose their LD in the current study and in Madaus (2006) was that they felt no need to do so (45.2% and 61%, respectively). However, fear of discrimination emerges as a primary reason for lack of self-disclosure in other studies (Greenbaum et al., 1996; Gerber et al., 2004) and it is echoed in the current study with similar rates compared to Madaus (2006). Respondents in these studies expressed concern that self-disclosure may affect important relationships in the workplace or might affect job security, even though self-disclosure entitles one to rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act in the U.S. and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada (Gerber et al., 2004). This suggests that perhaps there is still a general lack of knowledge about LD among employers and among individuals with LD with respect to their rights under legislation as a person with LD. Future research would do well to delineate under which conditions individuals with LD are most likely to self-disclose and what methods most effectively educate employers and human resource personnel as to the issues and misconceptions surrounding LD.

Limitations of the current study pose restrictions to the generalizability of these findings. First, as with previous investigations of the employment outcomes of postsecondary students with LD, the current sample represents a small, homogenous sample that makes it difficult to generalize the findings to the LD population as a whole. There is a need for a larger scale study to establish the certainty of the reported results. However, it should be noted that many of the findings and incidence rates of the current study are consistent with those reported by Madaus (2006) and Madaus et al. (2008) in a nationwide sample of 500 graduates with LD in the United States. Additionally, the findings of the current study may be overly optimistic due to response bias on the part of respondents. It was noted both by Adelman and Vogel (1990) and Greenbaum et al. (1996) that those students who had graduated from one of the institutions affiliated with the respective studies were more likely to participate in the studies than those who had not graduated. Of those who responded to participate in the current study, 97% had graduated from the institution in question. Thus, it raises the issue of whether those students who were most successful and had the most positive educational experiences were more likely to agree to participate in the study. A further directive to undertake in future research would be to recruit those who did not complete their degree program or felt less indebted to the institution for one reason or another.

Despite these limitations, the overall employment outlook for postsecondary students with LD appears to be encouraging. Many of these adults are gainfully employed in jobs that provide competitive compensation, and allow opportunities for growth and promotion while providing a fair measure of satisfaction and feelings of accomplishment. Researchers and educators are encouraged to make further investigations into the employment outcomes of postsecondary students with LD, as well as the factors and variables that lead to successful employment outcomes, so that appropriate transition planning may be put in place such that all adults with LD can make a smooth transition from the demands of postsecondary studies to the demands of the workplace.

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Emerging Adults' Unintended and Unpredicted Work-Life Pathways in a Rural Coastal Community

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Abstract

The transition from education to the world of work has changed significantly in recent years. Social and economic changes have impacted work-life transitions, particularly for emerging adults in rural and small communities. Much career development research has identified the needs of urban people; however, the needs of young people in non-urban areas have largely been omitted. Following up findings from a youth sample in a previous bi-coastal research project, this qualitative study explored the work-life pathways of young adults from a small coastal community in British Columbia, Canada. Using semi-structured interviews, participants described the impact of economic and employment changes experienced in their community on their work and life options and choices after high school. They described struggles with frequent moving, economic hardships, changes in employment, and adjustments to career aspirations. On the positive side, they also identified supportive families, community involvement, passion for their surrounding environment, and positive future outlooks. Supports to facilitate young adults' successful work-life transitions are discussed.

Young Adults' Unintended and Unpredicted Work-Life Pathways in a Small Coastal Community

Globalization of the world's economies has significantly changed the nature of working life over the last few decades. Patterns of young people's work-life transitions have changed, becoming more protracted and complex (Blatterer, 2007). Today's growing unemployment, shrinking labour force participation, and prolonged education creates complexities and uncertainties for young people (Amundson, 2005). Thus, work-life transitions[1] have transformed to more gradual and individualized processes heavily influenced by changing socioeconomic conditions. For many young adults[2] in industrialized societies, the transition to adulthood is long and gradual. Arnett (2004) has called this period "emerging adulthood" and suggests that it is a "new and historically unprecedented period of the life course" (p. 4). It is a time when young people explore possibilities available to them in love and work as they gradually move toward making enduring decisions.

The work-life patterns and pathways of young or emerging adults in urban settings have received considerable research attention (Amundson, 2005; Jeffrey, Lehr, Hache, & Campbell, 1992; Meece, Askew, Agger, Hutchins, & Byun, 2014). In contrast, young people's process of entering the labour market in small and rural communities has received far less attention. Work-life transition research among urban populations suggests they may have different values and experiences than young adults from rural and small communities (Howley, 2006; Marshall, 2002). However, as Looker and Dwyer (1998) observe, the impact of these contexts is often ignored or assumed to be simply "just one more variable to be entered into a multivariate equation" (p. 9). This "urban assumption," as labelled by Jeffrey et al. (1992, p. 253), has limited understanding of the contextual landscape of work-life transitions for rural and small community young adults. Statistics Canada's (2001) benchmark rural terminology recommendation considers several definitions of "rural" and summarizes associated definitional challenges. For research purposes the "rural and small town" definition is specific to populations living in towns and municipalities outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres (of 10,000 or more). The geographical classification of "rural communities" requires a population density of less than 150 people per square kilometre (Statistics Canada, 2001). Roughly 22 percent of Canada's population is classified as rural and small town (Statistics Canada, 2001).

There is also a paucity of research that follows young adults from rural and small communities at multiple points in their transition to work (Ling & O'Brien, 2013).

[1] Although many researchers and theorists use the term "school-to-work transitions," we use "work-life transitions" because it encompasses the variety of pathways (including reverse transitions from work back to school or returning to the family home) and does not assume there is a single school-to-work transition.
[2] The terms "young people" and "emerging adults" are used interchangeably in this article to describe people aged 19 to 25.

To address these gaps, the present study was designed as a follow-up to a previous research project entitled "Coasts Under Stress" that investigated the impacts of social and economic restructuring in communities on the east and west coasts of Canada (Ommer et al., 2007). Utilizing in-depth interviews, this qualitative study examined the work-life transition experiences, consequential supports and barriers, and future plans of young adults in a small coastal community in British Columbia, Canada. The study focused on four questions: (1) What had been the participants' thoughts and plans back in high school about what they were going to do after graduation? (2) What has happened since the end of high school? (3) What difficulties did they experience moving forward with the plans they made in high school? (4) What has facilitated and/or hindered progress with their plans?

Context and Related Literature

This research is situated within social constructivist work-life development theory, which holds that peoples' life context or life situation strongly influences both their understanding of and their choices about work and lifestyle (Blustein, 2006). A prominent theme in the current movement to contextualize career development is the exploration of the links between interpersonal relationships and the world of work (Blustein, Palladino Schultheiss, & Flum, 2004). The changes taking place in our current work world are significantly affecting the manner in which people live their lives. Blustein (2006) describes core functions that work has the potential to fulfill: (a) survival and power, with power referring to the exchange of work for money or goods and services that sustain one's life; (b) social connection; and (c) self-determination and identity formation such that an extrinsically motivated activity may become internalized and part of a broader set of values, behaviours, and goals. This approach to the psychology of working is understood as concerning the whole person and the combination of physical, social, political, economic, and cultural contexts rather than simply focused work or career choice alone.

Work-Life Pathways

The school-to-work transition period is both a vitally important and challenging developmental task for young people (Fouad & Bynner, 2008; Lapan, Tucker, Kim, & Kosciulek, 2003) and a process strongly influenced by cultural, social, economic, and historical circumstances (Young, Marshall, & Valach, 2007). Horowitz and Brominick (2007) drew attention to the increasing consensus about how social change has transformed the transition to adulthood from a relatively definite, logical pathway to a complex, perhaps fragmented, individualized process dependent on young peoples' abilities to manage various landmark events and transitions. Emerging adults are increasingly required to individualize their work-life pathways to form working and personal relationships, gain educational credentials and employment experiences, and plan for the future in an increasingly complex milieu (Schwartz, Coté, & Arnett, 2005).

Young people often engage in short-term positions, change employment, experience unemployment, and they may undertake postsecondary education more than once (Arnett, 2004). Thus, transition experiences are more prolonged and ambiguous than they were in the past (Goodwin & O'Connor, 2007), when transitions typically involved young people finding a job, getting married, and leaving the parental home in a relatively short period of time (Schwartz et al., 2005). Compared to twenty years ago, transitions have become less standardized and often include reversible pathways, such as transitioning from work back to school, moving back into the parental house from independent living, and changing relationship status (Molgat, 2007). Other examples include switching postsecondary programs, changing housing arrangements, and job loss. Walther and Plug (2006) refer to yo-yo transitions as the shifts back and forth between adolescence and adulthood. They contend that *yo-yo transitions* are not necessarily young people's first choice, but rather result from traditional structures of social inequalities and other circumstances such as family need, financial need, health, and relationship changes.

The changing nature of the labour market has created a precarious economic environment that hinders young people's attainment of some of the conventional markers of adulthood (e.g., financial and living independence and stable employment). Bradley and Devadason (2008) identified four typologies of labour-market-influenced pathways that emphasize the length, complexity, and variability of young peoples' transitions: (a) *shifters* with no chosen career and various changes between types of work and employment statuses; (b) *stickers* pursuing a specific type of work; (c) *switchers* making a major change of direction after a period of time in a specific vocation; and (d) *settlers* pursuing a single vocation after a period of shifting (Bradley & Devadason, 2008). Although Bradley and Devadason did not focus on rural participants, their typologies reflect how changing social and economic conditions significantly impact work-life pathways for young people. Ling and O'Brien (2013) found more jobs held in adolescence related to fewer jobs obtained after transitioning to the workforce after high school. Gaining various work experiences and processing what has been learned from being employed may develop proficiencies needed in career development.

Young Adults and Community Attachment

Bajema, Miller, and Williams (2002) suggest that the aspirations of young people in rural and small communities are vulnerable because of isolation, population size, and community culture. Physical isolation in combination with economic disadvantage can adversely affect educational trajectories and possibilities of mobility (Holland, Reynolds, & Weller, 2007). Howely (2006) contends rural young people both aspire to and expect less postsecondary education overall than do non-rural young people. Small communities provide unique opportunities to develop outdoor skills; however, some young people have expressed concerns about the transferability of such skills into urban settings (Shepard, 2004). Howley's findings suggest rural young people seek higher education within the context of their families' commitment to place, which mediates aspirations. Schools in rural and small communities are often more likely to encourage trades programs rather than post-secondary education (Hutchins & Akos, 2013). These young people are more likely to attend a local college, to enrol in a trades program, and are less likely to pursue postgraduate education (compared to non rural young people). They often aspire to attain education that is relevant and needed in their community (Meece et al., 2014).

Particularly pertinent for rural and small community residents is *place identity* (Gustafson, 2000), a cognitive structure that contributes to identity processes and is often understood as *attachment to community* (Marshall et al., 2007). People who identify with a particular place explore the "Who am I?" question by answering the "Where am I?" question (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). Place identity is personally constructed and developed from subjective experiences within the physical environment. Rural attachment to place is depicted by unique relationships with land, connection with nature, and rootedness in local relationships. Previous research on young adults from coastal communities highlights the significance of how place for many of these residents involves the relationship with land, nature, local history, and knowledge (Cox et al., 2014; Marshall et al., 2007).

There is growing recognition of the struggle that rural and small community young people face between their community attachments and their attainment goals (Johnson, Elder, & Stern, 2005). Studies by Corbett (2005) and Ommer and colleagues (2007) involving communities on Canada's east and west coasts suggest that emerging adults from small coastal communities (and, likely, from rural and northern communities) often face a more restricted set of options and opportunities. Cox and colleagues (2014) suggest that these young adults encounter different decision-making challenges, reflective of their community context, when considering future educational and occupational aspirations.

Coasts Under Stress (CUS) research project. This bi-coastal interdisciplinary research project (see www.costsunderstress.ca) investigated multiple impacts of socio-economic restructuring on the health of people, communities and the environment (Ommer et al., 2007). As part of this project, quantitative surveys, focus groups, and qualitative interviews were conducted with secondary school youth in five coastal communities in British Columbia (Marshall et al., 2007). The results identified problems associated with restructuring such as lower rates of school completion, health problems, reduced recreation and employment opportunities, substance use, depression, and family stress. Assets and strengths include place attachment, community solidarity, resiliency, parental support, family, and cultural identity. Youth in these coastal communities were aware of the impact of social and economic restructuring in their communities, yet, most were optimistic about their futures. One of the recommendations from the research was to follow up with the youth after high school to assess how their plans and aspirations worked out. There are very few follow-up studies that explore young adult transition processes and outcomes in depth (Bernes & Magnussen, 2004; Cox et al., 2014). The present research was designed to address this gap through follow-up interviews with young adult CUS participants five to seven years after they had left high school.

Methodology

Extending the original CUS interview design (Marshall et al., 2007), young adult work and life transitions and experiences were explored through semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Participants' perceptions and understandings of their lived experiences were elicited through research interviews that unfolded much like stories (temporal and situated personal narratives), with interview questions serving as conversational probes. Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) suggest that stories help people to understand others' thinking, actions, and reactions. Stories are not simply individual accounts, but are embedded in social relationships and structures that "provide unique insights into the connections between individual life trajectories and collective forces" (Maynes, Pierce, & Laslett, 2008, p. 3).

Study Location

Participants lived in a small coastal town and in surrounding rural areas on northern Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. The community's economy is largely based on forestry, fishery, agriculture, tourism, and small business. Since the 1990s, restructuring and cutbacks, particularly in forestry and fishery, have resulted in substantial job losses, small business closures, high unemployment rates, and significant out-migration (Ommer & et al., 2007). When the CUS study began in 2001, the area population was over 5,000; however, it had declined by more than twenty percent to less than 4,000 at the time of the present study (Statistics Canada, 2001). The youth and young adult population aged 15 to 24 had dropped over 26% and this demographic was reported to be most affected by employment declines (Statistics Canada, 2001).

Participants and Recruitment

Participants were 3 females and 6 males between the ages of 21 and 25 who had all attended the community's only high school. Initially, recruitment was intended for the 17 participants who had been interviewed about their career trajectories when they were in grades 9 through 11 as part of the Coasts Under Stress study (Marshall et al., 2007). However, five years after data collection, many of the CUS participants and their families had left the community and could not be contacted (the original CUS interviews took place before internet and cellular service were readily available in this somewhat remote area). Three original CUS participants were located and interviewed by telephone. Then, through a process of snowball sampling, these participants helped recruit six additional participants in the same age range who had attended the same high school at the same time. These six "matched" interviews were conducted in person.

Interviews

One-on-one, semi-structured interviews addressing the participants' work and life experiences since high school were conducted, 6 in person and 3 over the phone. Questions loosely followed an interview guide. The order and format of questions were flexibly adjusted to elicit each participant's narrative. Interviews ranged from half an hour to an hour. Combined with brief notes and observations when possible, the interview process allowed the interviewer to explore and comprehend the underlying meanings of the participants' descriptions of their work-life transitions (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

Data Analysis

Analysis involved two phases: within-participants and across-participants. Phase one began with listening to audio-recorded interviews, recording holistic impressions, then transcribing the interviews as close to verbatim as possible. Next, interview summaries were created and core information from each participant was identified (Walker, Cooke, & McAllister, 2008). Work-life stories, following Rhodes' (2000) ghostwriting method were constructed for each participant to honour the holistic and narrative nature of the data. Each participant's unique story included rich descriptions of work-life events and pathways in their own words (Lawrence, 2010); however, due to their length, they are not presented in this article.

The across-participant analysis involved iterative line-by-line readings of all transcripts and inductive labelling of text segments with code words or phrases (Saldana, 2013; Walker et al., 2008). Next, analytic memos were recorded while organizing code words and phrases into meaningful groups or clusters (Braun & Clark, 2006). Groups were examined for overlap and redundancy, resulting in a final list of seven main themes (see below) common across all participants and more specific subthemes. As a final step, the data was integrated with existing research literature.

The qualitative research trustworthiness strategies described by Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) were followed. *Auditability* was achieved through consistent interview recording accuracy, data collection, and analysis procedures. *Confirmability* was addressed through the maintenance of reflexive journals and interview logs. *Transferability* judgments were made possible by gathering comprehensive descriptions and contextual details, and *credibility* was achieved through participants' verification of their work-life stories.

Across-Participant Findings: Seven Themes

Seven main themes were identified from the phase two across-participant interview analysis, together with several more specific subthemes, as summarized below.

- High School Plans and Goals
  - High school goal setting, unintended outcomes, future plans
- Work and Education after High School
  - Frequent changes, high school influences, post-secondary, money
- Moving Away
  - Exploration, city difficulties and values
- Rural Living
  - Nature values and interests, place attachment, changing perspectives and returning, community benefits, community restructuring
- Relationships
  - Family, community adults
- Internal Constructs
  - Learning and motivation
- Hindsight and Insight
  - Responsibility and becoming an adult
  - Regrets

The seven main themes are described below; however, space limitations preclude a thorough discussion of all subthemes. Illustrative verbatim quotes from the participants are included *in italics*.

High School Plans and Goals

In high school, one participant had specific plans about completing her undergraduate degree and returning home to live and work and another planned to complete his apprenticeship and trade ticket and also remain in the community. The other seven participants described more general plans and vague goals. One young man said: I *just wanted to start working. . . I didn't have any idea of what I wanted to do with my life. . . . I seemed to care more about having a pick-up truck and stuff*. From a social cognitive career theory (SCCT) framework, Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1996) contend that young people's primary interests are likely to prompt corresponding choice-goals (e.g., those with entrepreneurial interests are likely to pursue a business career); specific goals, in turn, promote choice-relevant actions (e.g., applying for an entrepreneurship training program). When looking back, many of the participants described having broad and general interests in high school; most did not form specific choice-goals or determine goal-related relevant actions (although all would have participated in a mandatory career development curriculum). Participants often discussed a career planning class that they did not find helpful while in high school. Nonspecific plans were common, such as *travel after high school*, and appeared to result in "unintended outcomes," as discussed in the next theme.

Work and Education after High School

After leaving high school, seven of the nine participants had either attended a postsecondary institution (college, university, or trades training), wanted to gain further education, or were currently enrolled. All of the participants who attended university or college changed their interests and programs. The two who did not, started (or continued) working. Some participants were employed in the local fishery or forestry industries. One young man noted: *Around here you normally get jobs around seventeen dollars an hour processing at the fish plant. . . . So that's not too bad when you are just out of high school and you are not really sure what you want.*

Most young people express the goal of college or university attendance and identify a range of career goals, many at the professional level (Corbett, 2005; Kenny et al., 2007; Howley, 2006). However, participants suggested that working at jobs at higher than minimum wage without required specific educational credentials was somewhat *binding*. This suggests it felt difficult for some participants to leave a job that provided regular *decent paychecks* and to pursue interests and educational aspirations that, while they may have been more personally fulfilling, felt more ambiguous, uncertain, and hence, *bound* to their current job because of the decent paycheque.

Participants not in college or university were particularly interested in trades training or working in small businesses close to their community. However, many described feeling conflicted because of the emphasis during high school on attending university. One participant commented on the pressure to go to university: *When you are going to high school everybody's* [teachers and parents] *teaching you about going to university and getting out of town*. Another participant commented on exploring different postsecondary avenues: *I've noticed more people that want to take trades courses as their goals, instead of going to university and taking academics*. Previous research has noted rural-urban differences become noticeable when it came to the decision to aim for a university rather than college education (Cartwright & Allen, 2002).

Marshall's (2002) and Corbett's (2005) research suggests that schooling in coastal communities has several challenges for adolescents and those who educate them. To the extent that schools focus on postsecondary schooling, the emphasis tends to be on university preparation; however, more rural than urban young people go to some other form of postsecondary schooling (e.g., trades programs). Corbett (2005) argues that the emphasis on university preparation differentially disadvantages rural youth. In the United States, Hutchins and Akos (2013) found rural schools were more likely to have high school transition programs that encouraged trades rather than postsecondary. Overall, Ling and colleagues (2012) suggest there is a potential for career practitioners to ensure the career success of all young people making the transition into the workforce, not just university-bound young people.

Many participants were not currently doing what they had thought and hoped in high school they would be doing. The subtheme of **unintended outcomes** was common for all participants. For example, one participant had hoped to be an electrician. Seven years after leaving high school halfway through grade 12, he was on employment insurance and struggling to find work. *So I totally screwed up my life in the beginning there. I found out that math wasn't my strong suit and I hate math*. This story and those of other participants are examples of what Molgat (2007) calls "reversible transitions." Choices are made that are not young people's first choices, but rather are a result of contextual influences (e.g., family need, health, financial need). Many of the study participants described feeling not well prepared for these unintended events and outcomes. Holland et al. (2007) contend that this struggle to maintain an educational route is the intricate interplay of agency, structure, resources, resourcefulness, contingency, and social policy. Contemporary transition experiences are often prolonged and destandardized for both rural and urban young people. However, rural communities differ from urban centres due to their access to resources. Compared to urban centres, rural communities are more often described in terms of what they lack, particularly regarding access to various private and public facilities and services (Looker & Dwyer, 1998). The aspirations of young people in rural communities are vulnerable to the social influences of their community due to isolation, population size, and community culture (Bajema et al., 2002). Physical isolation in combination with economic disadvantage can adversely affect educational trajectories and possibilities of mobility (Holland et al., 2007).

Participants' work histories were dynamic and complex. **Frequency changes** subtheme included changing jobs or returning to jobs they had worked at in high school was not uncommon. These rural youth were not immune to the local economic restructuring and several were impacted by layoffs. One young man described a pattern that is common in small and rural communities: *I started off-loading fish boats in high school at 16 and did that for a couple years after I graduated and then escaped to go logging. But then I got laid off so I had to go back to off-loading fish boats. Then I escaped from off-loading fish boats again to go work at this rock crushing plant . . . got laid off from that so then I had to go back to off-loading fish boats*.

Participants' stories reflected the influence of the precarious labour market in their community. Many experienced periods of unemployment and multiple changes among types of work and employment statuses; their stories were reminiscent of Bradley and Devadason's (2008) shifters and switchers typology moving in and out of the labour market and between numerous temporary, low-paid, and low-status types of work. Schoon and colleagues (2007) conclude that over the last three decades young peoples' transitions have been increasingly associated with rising risks of unemployment because of rapidly changing economic and social contexts.

The **financial concerns** subtheme indicated that money was a significant factor that influenced work and educational decisions. Leaving education early to work to make money was a common theme. Many participants expressed concerns about attending postsecondary, accruing debt, and working at low-paying jobs. They had hoped to save money before returning to school; however, once they started working, most found it difficult to save. Going into debt or already having debt was a significant barrier to education. For example, when asked about his plans to return to school, a young man said: *I am stuck working right now until I figure out how to go back to school. . . . I am just getting by*. Few participants had financial support from their families, and this delayed participants' entry into postsecondary programs. Consistent with research by Fouad and Brown (2000) and Lehmann (2005), the influence of economic variables on educational and occupational attainment continues to persist over time.

Rural Living

Several major employers have laid off hundreds of workers on northern Vancouver Island since the 1990s (Marshall, 2002). Resource-based industries have been particularly affected. One participant commented: *Between economic times and a lot of job losses, people still manage to keep busy and working, but a lot of people are getting screwed over with their jobs, getting laid off*. Given that resource industries are expected to continue experiencing difficulties and decline, it is important that young people in resource-based communities be prepared for different work (Marshall, 2002). Multiple options are prudent.

Participants expressed their sentiments about the beauty of their surroundings and their interest in the outdoors. A young man said: *The simplicity* [draws people back here] *more than anything, just quieter. . . . You can go away, hike your own trail, you can go away, get a lake to yourself*. Many participants with these strong outdoor/nature interests found urban living less desirable. Looker and Dwyer (1998) maintain that nature, calmness, and tranquillity are more positively valued in rural areas than in urban ones, as are physical space and a "clean environment." Rye (2006) also found that many young people perceive rural living as idyllic.

All participants commented in more depth on the positive aspects of their lives, rather than on the problematic (such as limiting work choices), which may have influenced their career decisions. **Place attachment** subtheme recognized that all participants expressed appreciation for their rural community, especially with regard to raising families. A young man said: *Once you grow up in a small town, I think you're always a small town person at heart. I always say once you live here, you'll always come back*. This result is contrary to Jamieson's (2000) finding that some of those who stay in their rural community expressed embitterment. However, consistent with past research (e.g., other findings in Jamieson, 2000; Marshall, 2002), the majority of the participants who left still expressed feeling tied to their rural community. Marshall (2002) and others (e.g., Cox et al., 2014) have found that preference for place is a factor in career decision-making.

Participants commented on how their perspectives on rural living had changed since high school, often changing to a more positive outlook on rural living. While in high school participants reflected on the strong desire to leave their community, seven of the nine participants expressed their hopes to continue living on or move back to Vancouver Island. A young man said: *In high school we all would say how much we hated our town and we wanted to get away, but you realize once you move away—I definitely like smaller communities*. Changing perspectives underscore the importance of longitudinal and follow-up research. Even a few years' life experience seems to have resulted in some significant shifts in participants' priorities.

Moving Away

Eight of the nine participants discussed moving away from their community within the past five years (even if only for a short or temporary period). After high school, many participants were keen to leave the small community where they grew up. *Getting away* and *exploring other places* were the primary reasons for leaving. Garasky (2002) contends that it is the limited economic outlook for the local community that often motivates young rural people to move away from their home communities.

Frequent relocation was also common among participants who had moved away. One participant scoffed as she said: *I have moved so many different times. . . . But I have a place now that I have been for seven months, which is good*. Participants who had moved away usually lived in cities where either siblings or extended-family members lived. Holland et al. (2007) emphasize the importance of sibling relationships and family networks and the consequential pull of family loyalty to different places.

Participants who had moved discussed their desire to explore and see new things when living in new places. A young man said: *I am used to a small puny town, and then I go to the city that is like a huge jungle. I was lost, but it was still an experience that I was loving it*. Arnett, Kloep, Hendry, and Tanner (2011) maintain that young adults often try out different ways of living and different options available in their work and personal lives.

Eight of the nine participants had experienced living in a city. **City difficulties and values** subtheme captured how many participations spoke of the difficulties they experienced, such as cost of living. Participants regarded the city as a place with more options but also more crime and fewer community ties. A young man said: *Trying to follow the rules down there and trying to make sure I was able to take care of myself in the city was hard*. Consistent with Looker and Dwyer's (1998) findings, those who moved to urban centres also encountered dissatisfaction with public transportation, the time it took to travel to work or school, and increased difficulties managing finances.

Relationships

Relationships with family and adults living in the rural community were described as supportive factors by eight participants. These participants felt closely connected to and supported by family and many community members. Similar to Shepard's (2004) findings, participants described their families as offering emotional and financial support as well as transmitting moral values. Although not described explicitly as "role models," adults from the community were described as sources of motivation and information. A young woman said: *There was this lady that I worked with—she has always been a really good person to talk to. She knows everything that I have been through, and she always pushes me forward. She says, just do it, do it!* Research has shown that the availability of work-based learning, encouraging adults, and overall support from a variety of sources can enhance career development and positively influence transition experiences (Lapan, Aoyagi, & Kayson, 2007; Phillips, Blustein, Jobin-Davis, & White, 2002). Participants highlighted how encouraging adults working in their community were and that these adults were particularly influential and helpful people to discuss career plans with. Several participants felt workplace, older adult mentors understood their values, desire to remain in the community, and aspirations more so than past or present teachers who they felt pressured young people to leave the community to pursue options such as postsecondary. This is unique to a small community that does not have local postsecondary institutions.

Internal Constructs

All nine participants described some personal attributes and qualities as supportive factors in their work-life transitions. Participants described work-related personal qualities, such as work ethic, work experience, problem solving, and being *overall employable*. Specifically cited internal constructs were positive attitudes and motivation.

Participants discussed learning from the difficulties they encountered during transitions that were not straightforward. One participant commented: *The whole adult life, just learning to cope with other adults and trying to be responsible, is really important, I've found*. Similar findings were described in Bradley and Devadason's (2008) study. Those researchers discussed "internalized flexibility" as involving an internalized discourse of adaptability and optimism about lifelong learning. Similarly, Bramston and Patrick (2007) described positive attitudes despite negative transition experiences as an effective coping mechanism.

Most frequently, when participants explained supportive factors, they described **personal motivation** subtheme as a means of overcoming hurdles experienced during transitions. A young man who felt unsupported and undervalued in high school exclaimed: *I pushed and I showed everybody that I can be better. So you just have to have your own ambition and want and desire to make something better out of your life*. In Devadason's (2007) study, when young adults retrospectively described how they overcame setbacks during transitions, hurdles were seen to ultimately strengthen young peoples' determination to succeed. This finding is similar to results described in youth resilience research, which focuses on the assets and resources that enable youth to overcome the negative effects of risk exposure or avoid the negative trajectories associated with risks. Resiliency researchers (e.g., Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005) view assets as positive factors that reside within the individual, such as competence, coping skills, and self-efficacy.

Hindsight and Insight

All of the participants described more than one work-life possibility and several were moving toward making enduring decisions. Many participants discussed responsibilities; for example, a young man said: *I got a taste of reality, just trying to stay afloat and learn what it takes to be in the real world*. Although participants were generally optimistic about lifelong learning and their future plans, they also reflected on what they might have done differently. A young man said: *I would have rather just found some way, some way to just go to school right away. . . . I regret taking time off. It's kind of got me stuck*. Some participants were in serious or marital relationships, owned homes, or were operating small businesses—considered by Arnett (2004) to be stable commitments in Western contexts. The relative freedom and large range of social options during emerging adulthood were evident among the participants.

Many participants emphasized personal fulfilment and happiness. A young man enthusiastically described his future: *Like every young person, I want to travel, to explore, to find myself, and to be happy*. Some participants commented on continuing their current work or education but were unsure about the future. Participants had many unspecified, although hopeful, goals. For example, one participant described his future plans at age 23: *Keeping going with my business and stuff so I can be on the beaches of Mexico and not worry about nothing*. Other participants lacked focused or specific future plans, perhaps a reflection that they were exploring underlying identity questions (e.g., What kind of work am I good at? What kind of work would I find satisfying for the long term?). Participants' descriptions about their plans suggested that they viewed the future as having numerous options. Arnett and colleagues (2011) maintain that emerging adulthood is a period of high hopes and great expectations during which young people are positively future oriented.

Many participants were in the process of making future plans based on the kind of work that would be the most satisfying for the long term and congruent with their notions of a realistic and fulfilling lifestyle. One participant said: *I want to grow a business, but I also want Saturdays and Sundays where I can head out to the west coast for the weekend and surf. I would rather go surfing than make six hundred bucks working that weekend*. These findings underscore the necessity of career exploration activities that prompt young people to investigate the social and "life" implications of different types of work.

Discussion

These nine young adults experienced many of the supports and barriers described in studies of school to work transitions for youth in rural and small communities affected by restructuring (Meece et al., 2014); unpredicted and unintended work-life patterns were experienced as meandering, gradual, and individualized. Identity was continuously reformed, and redirected through various experiences. Exploring interests and abilities was the most evident feature of emerging adulthood, as suggested by the frequent changes in work and education among the young adults in this study. As Arnett and colleagues (2011) and Konstam (2007) maintain, emerging adulthood is potentially a time to enhance agentic abilities and strengths and master obstacles presented in the social environment.

Participants commented on the impacts of social and economic restructuring in their community. Some participants discussed structural inequalities related to pursuing higher education, while others observed that the population of their small community was in decline without commenting in detail on the effects of this decline. Strongly tied to "place," the young adults in this study expressed positive sentiments about the community in which they had grown up and passion for the beauty of their surroundings. Among these coastal young people, place identity contributed to identity processes and, consequentially, work-life planning.

Findings from this study contribute to understanding work-life transitions as perceived by rural and small community young adults, a population whose experiences have historically been neglected by vocational researchers. This study illuminates the unintended outcomes, positive future aspirations, and supports and barriers experienced by the participants. The study's major limitation was related to recruitment of participants. Findings are limited due to the difficulties in locating the original CUS participants. Participants retrospectively described their goals and experiences from the end of high school. Although the new participants attended the high school and reported similar experiences, these new participants did not have the CUS interview as youth. Moreover, interviewing until the themes were "saturated" would have strengthened the study. While the interviewer travelled to the community to conduct several interviews, other interviews were conducted over the telephone because the participants were living in different geographical areas. Noticeably, the telephone interviews were significantly shorter and less detailed than the in-person interviews. As with all qualitative studies, the findings must be viewed with recognition of the boundaries of the study; they are not intended to be generalized beyond the participants' context. However, while they are less applicable to urban young people, the findings could be representative of young adults from rural and small Canadian communities.

Implications for Theory and Research

The study of working is embedded in complex layers of social, cultural, and political meanings (Blustein et al., 2004). Young and Valach (2004) posit that within the last decade, qualitative research in career development has shifted from the margins into the centre of contemporary inquiry. Qualitative research has been pivotal in expanding the horizons of issues and problems within vocational psychology (Blustein et al., 2004).

Although existing studies have sought to describe various pathways influenced by the labour market, fewer studies describe how rural young people manage the hurdles and setbacks of complicated transition pathways. Interestingly, participants in this research rarely described "barriers" even though they described "unintended outcomes." Further in-depth research into experiences of work-life barriers would provide information about (a) what personal barriers are experienced; (b) strategies to successfully manage these barriers; and (c) how high school educators might help prepare youth for unintended outcomes. However, Swanson and Woike (1997) suggest that the barriers construct lacks a firm theoretical framework into which research findings can be incorporated; therefore, constructs other than barriers may be more empirically useful.

In this study there were obvious linkages between work and nonwork issues. Of note within the stories were "blurred lines" between work (or education) and nonwork issues. Blustein (2006) posits that this distinction is fading because changes taking place in our current work world are significantly affecting the manner in which people live their lives. For example, delaying education and taking an absence from work are clear indications that other life interests and/or pressures may be prioritized over work and education. Future research could further investigate the impact of significant psychological events, periods of grief, depression, or divorce and how such events influence emerging adults' career development. Longitudinal studies are challenging but extremely valuable for theory and research. Following a group of people from youth through adulthood, over years if not decades, provides considerable insight into the changing nature of work-life pathways. Moreover, comparing the differences between urban and rural peoples' work-life pathways over time could be an important future research investigation.

Implications for Practice

Counselling psychology is well known for articulating the central role that work plays in human development (Worthington & Juntunen, 1997; Savickas, 1993). The findings of this study have implications for high school and emerging adult counselling practice and provide valuable information for career educators and policy developers. This study's major theme of life planning highlights the importance of planning and goal setting to young people's work-life transitions. Counsellors, educators, and parents need to pay particular attention to students' goals at the end of high school. Helping students learn how to create steps for small and large goals is important for transition planning. Goal setting is also useful for other life issues, not just simply education and work. Demonstrating goal-setting strategies and following up on measurable steps is strongly recommended for counsellors working with adolescents or emerging adults on work-life issues.

Counsellors must pay particular attention to young peoples' preference for place, which may have specific outdoor/nature elements in rural and small communities. Moreover, counsellors must understand the economy, political power structures, value systems, and changes occurring within the region (Corbett, 2005; Marshall et al., 2007). The community's context is central to helping rural emerging adults explore work-life options. Several participants in this study suggested more community and educational role models and mentors are needed to provide information about the world of work and to provide personal guidance and support. Contact with slightly older people could assist emerging adults prepare for the inevitable changes and unintended outcomes that almost all will experience. Participants echoed the need for helping young people to consider multiple options outside and within their communities as a critical role, for example, demonstrating that postsecondary education can take many forms, not just the university pathway. This study's major findings underscore the position that family is important in the process of career development. As such, work exploration and planning should involve family members and other significant adults who share knowledge regarding higher education and career pathways.

Final Comments

Overall, the participants in this study frequently moved for work or education and also returned to their community for work; they did not demonstrate "stable careers." Undoubtedly, technology and globalization of the world's economies are changing the personal experience of work and careers. Savickas, Van Esbroeck, and Herr (2005) speculate that "this globalization of economies affects where work can be found and who has access to it. . . . An increasing number of world workers are seeking educational and vocational guidance for themselves and their families" (p. 78). The findings of the study highlight the need for the development of career counselling resources to support young adults in rural communities to prepare for a wide variety of work-life pathways and unintended outcomes. Attachment to place may mediate work-life goals, particularly for rural young people. Practitioners must consider work-life career development planning within the context of rural families' commitment to their rural and small communities.

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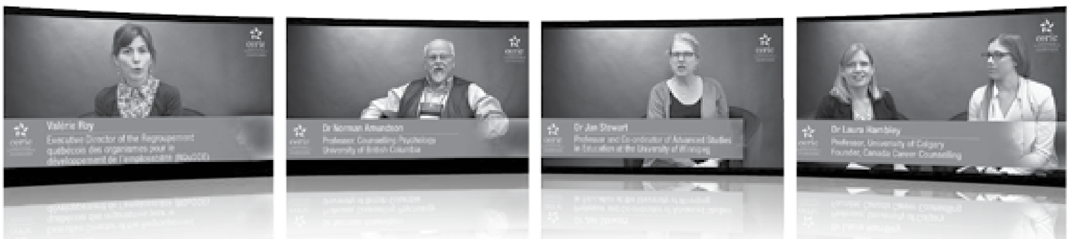

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Effect of Labour Market Information (LMI): Comparison Between Independent and Assisted Use of LMI

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Abstract

According to a large meta-analysis (Brown and Ryan Krane, 2000), labour market information (LMI) is a critical ingredient in achieving career goals of individuals. This study aims to assess the effect of LMI use, with and without the help of a counsellor, taking into account the possible presence of differential effects according to client consultation needs (career choice or job search). Clients (n = 203) in job centres in New Brunswick and Saskatchewan were assigned randomly to two delivery modes: the independent self-help (use of LMI without help) or the assisted self-help (use of LMI with help of a counsellor). The results suggest that the LMI effect over time, although it is significant in both groups, is more important when participants are assisted by a counsellor. At the clinical level, this effect is moderate (Cohen, 1988). This result does not differ significantly according to the client consultation needs.

Résumé

D'après une importante méta-analyse (Brown et Ryan Krane, 2000), l'information sur le marché du travail (IMT) est un ingrédient critique à l'atteinte des objectifs de carrière des personnes. La présente étude a pour but de vérifier l'effet de l'utilisation de l'IMT, soit avec l'aide d'un conseiller ou sans son aide, et ce, en tenant compte de la possible présence d'effets différentiels liés au besoin de consultation des clients (choix de carrière ou recherche d'emploi). Pour ce faire, des personnes (n = 203) consultant dans des Centres d'emploi situés au Nouveau-Brunswick et en Saskatchewan ont été assignées de manière aléatoire à une méthode autonome (utilisation de l'IMT sans l'assistance d'un conseiller) ou assistée (utilisation de l'IMT avec l'assistance d'un conseiller). Les résultats suggèrent que l'effet de l'IMT dans le temps, bien qu'il soit significatif chez les deux groupes, s'avère plus important lorsque les participants sont assistés par un conseiller. Sur le plan de la signification clinique, cet effet est de taille moyenne (Cohen, 1988). Ce résultat ne diffère pas significativement selon le besoin de consultation des participants.

Introduction

Labour market information (LMI) is an important component of the personal career development process (Gati and Tal, 2008; Gysbers, Heppner and Johnston, 2014; Patton and McCrindle, 2001; Sampson, Reardon, Peterson and Lenz, 2004; Savickas, 1999). In fact, "la cueillette d'information augmente la connaissance de soi et aide à prendre conscience des choix de formation et de carrière qui conviennent le mieux" (Savickas, 1999, p. 61) [*gathering information helps individuals become more self-aware and understand which training and career choices are most suitable*]. One major meta-analysis (Brown and Ryan Krane, 2000) reports that labour market information is one of the five essential ingredients in meeting personal career goals. This component appears to be all the more important as obtaining labour market information is often a need and a request explicitly expressed by clients (Masdonati, Perdrix, Massoudi and Rossier, 2014; Multon, Wood, Heppner and

Gysbers, 2007; Rochlen, Milburn and Hill, 2004). Although large quantities of LMI are available, it is often inaccurate, biased and therefore of questionable quality (Gati and Levin, 2015). According to a literature review (Savard, Michaud, Bilodeau and Arseneau, 2007), setting aside its quantity, quality and accessibility, LMI has a significant effect on career development only inasmuch as it is provided by a counsellor. In these authors' opinion, it could be argued that the counsellor plays an important role in helping individuals be more receptive to new information that is potentially useful to their career development process. Based on the findings of a study by Foskett and Hemsley-Brown (1999), it could also be argued that such assistance is important because many people are unaware of information relevant to their career development when it is not directly relevant to their own interests. This could be due to the fact that individuals tend to take an interest in information based on factors of desirability (Baltz, 1995) and selective open-mindedness, focusing on information that reinforces things they already know (Bougnoux, 1995).

Accordingly, although individuals have ready access to computerized LMI tools designed to provide information that is useful to their career development, Amundson (2000) believes that "ces outils ne sont efficaces que s'ils sont intégrés dans des relations de counselling positives" (p. 45) [*these tools are effective only if they are incorporated into positive counselling relationships*]. From this perspective, according to Savard et al. (2007), it is also possible "que l'information en soi n'est pas suffisante pour guider les individus dans leur orientation. Sans accompagnement adéquat, ils ne sont pas en mesure de considérer tout l'information nécessaire pour faire un choix éclairé" (p. 166) [*that the information itself is insufficient to guide the individuals on their [career] paths. Without adequate support, they are unable to consider all the information they need to make a well-informed choice*]. Similarly, in our fast-changing world of work (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013), every individual has his own career path and there "peut y avoir des besoins différents de clarification de l'information et des questions différentes relative à leur propre situation" (Savard et al., 2007, p. 163) [*may therefore be differing needs regarding information to be clarified and different questions about their own situations*]. This also highlights the importance of supplying personalized information that reflects the individual's needs and personal situation (Savard, Gingras and Turcotte, 2002), both in choosing a career and finding employment.

In view of the preceding, although previous studies suggest that LMI has a positive effect on career development and that that effect is maximized when information is passed on by a counsellor, Savard et al. (2007) point to several methodological shortcomings related to internal and external validity that considerably limit the scope of that finding. First and foremost, previous studies did not isolate the effect of LMI use from those of other career counselling intervention components not directly related to LMI (for instance, self-awareness questionnaires and activities to explore and clarify interests, values and aptitudes); this is critical if we are to ascertain whether the effects observed on career development stem from LMI use rather than other career counselling intervention components. In addition, previous studies did not consider the influence of clients' individual consultation needs (career choice or job search) in coming to this finding. Furthermore, most of these studies are over 20 years old, and therefore do not reflect clients' greater accessibility to LMI, in particular via the Internet.

Study Objectives

In light of the methodological shortcomings mentioned earlier, this study aims to assess the effect of LMI use, with and without the help of a counsellor, taking into account the possible presence of differential effects related to client consultation needs (career choice or job search).

More specifically, the study has two main objectives:

First objective: Determine to what degree the assisted self-help method increases the effect of the client's LMI use compared to the independent self-help method.

Second objective: Analyze the presence of differential effects with the assisted self-help method compared to the independent self-help method, according to client consultation needs (career choice or job search).

Method[1]

Participants

A total of 228 people took part in the study. However, 20 of them discontinued their participation and 5 did not fill out the questionnaires in their entirety. The client sample used for this study therefore includes 203 people, namely 104 women (51%) and 99 men (49%) between 19 and 64 years of age (M = 41 years) who sought assistance at employment centres in New Brunswick or Saskatchewan. One hundred and twenty people in the sample live in New Brunswick, 71 (57%) of whom speak English as their primary language and 52 (43%), French. The 83 people who live in Saskatchewan all speak English as their primary language. A total of 24 people (12%) reported not having completed a high school diploma, while 23 (11%) completed a high school diploma, 35 (17%) have completed a vocational program, 49 (24%) have a college-level diploma, 34 (17%) have completed a bachelor's degree, 5 people (2%) have a master's degree and 33 people (16%) did not indicate their level of education. At the start of the study, 157 people out of the total of 203 participants (77%) were unemployed, 26 (13%) held part-time employment, 19 (9%) held full-time employment, and a single person did not indicate an employment status.

Instrument

To measure the effect of LMI, a self-administered questionnaire based on the Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development (CRWG) evaluation framework was prepared specifically for this study (see Baudouin, Bezanson, Borgen, Goyer, Hiebert, Lalande et al., 2007). For the purposes of this study, several CRWG researchers agreed on items that were the best match for the evaluation framework. The questionnaire consists of 14 items (ranked according to a five-point Likert scale graduated from 0 to 4) which are divided into three categories of effects clients may experience following their participation in interventions: changes in *knowledge*[2] pertaining to LMI (4 items), changes in *skills*[3] in using LMI (5 items), and changes in *personal attributes*[4] (more specifically in regard to confidence and optimism) (5 items). A high score in these three categories suggest superior LMI knowledge and skills as well as greater levels of confidence and optimism.

The analysis of the items and questionnaire's structure was based on the data collected from this study. The correlation between each item and the total score for the subscale to which it belongs are stronger than the correlation with the total score for the two other subscales. Nevertheless, an exploratory factor analysis with oblique rotation suggests that a single factor accounts for 57% of the variance in the results. In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is 0.947, considered to be excellent (Field, 2009; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). For this reason, only the combined reading score is considered. This score provides an estimate of the effects related to LMI knowledge and skills and an estimate of confidence and optimism levels regarding the achievement of career goals

The questionnaire has an internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.94 for the combined score, signifying high reliability (Bernaud, 2014). This coefficient is the same for participants who completed the English version as for those who completed the French version. In keeping with the CRWG's effect indicators, one dichotomous-response (yes/no) question was also added to gauge the LMI effect on the pursuit of subsequent career-choice or job-search steps. More specifically, the added question ascertains whether clients have a plan of action for using the documents and information resources acquired in the course of the study.

Procedure

The study lasted approximately three months. The researchers began by conducting interviews with the counsellors, the people responsible for delivering client services, to establish a standard protocol for evaluating initial employability that is also able to identify the consultation need (career choice or job search). Next, separate LMI binders were developed to address career-choice and job-search needs.

Special care was taken in developing the binders to ensure that LMI use is the factor responsible for the changes observed in clients. The career-choice binder provides valuable LMI resources designed to expand knowledge of various professions and the labour market in general and to assist in preparing a plan

[1] This article is based on data from two research reports with the same purpose. Anglophones data (Hiebert, 2012) and French data (Savard and Paquette, 2012) were merged to increase the power of statistical analysis and derive more valid results.

[2] Sample item: I am aware of the existence of paper or Internet records that may help me find career/employment options.

[3] Sample item: I am able to find the information that can help me make progress toward my career/employment goal.

[4] Sample item: I am optimistic about the future and confident that I will meet my career goal.

of action. It also contains tips on accessing these resources, guidelines for interpreting information and matching it to personal characteristics, and suggestions for incorporating the information into a plan of action. For its part, the job-search binder provides specialized LMI resources designed to help users with preparing for their search (e.g., resumé drafting), conducing the search (e.g., networking) and starting a new job (e.g., working conditions). It also contains tips on accessing these resources, guidelines on interpreting the information and suggestions for incorporating the information into a plan of action.

Subsequently, participant selection was carried out in a deliberate fashion. Clients visited employment centres for assistance with their career choice or job search and underwent an initial interview to assess their employability in keeping with the centre's regular practices. Those identified as having consultation needs related to career choice or job searches were offered an opportunity to take part in the study. The nature of the research and a description of what was expected of them, the counsellors' role and the requirements for receiving the $100 participation fee were explained. Clients who volunteered to take part then signed a form confirming their free and informed consent, after which they were assigned randomly and alternately to either the independent self-help method (using LMI binders without a counsellor's help) or assisted self-help method (using LMI binders with a counsellor's help) and, in deliberate fashion, to the type of intervention suited to their consultation need, namely career choice or job search.

Next, all clients received a LMI binder to help them with the ensuing steps, regardless of the method to which they were assigned. For the assisted method, clients took part in two information and consultation sessions lasting 20 to 30 minutes each. The sessions were held in two phases. In the first phase, the counsellor reviewed the client's goal and the steps to achieve it. In the second phase, the counsellor provided information and advice regarding LMI. That guidance aimed to ensure that clients were able to find the resources they needed, that they were processing and understanding the information properly, and that they were able to draw connections between LMI and information about themselves.

Research Plan

This study used a factorial design involving two time levels (before and after the intervention). A *post-pre-evaluation* assessment approach was used since it provides a means of evaluating changes self-reported by clients in regard to their knowledge, skills and personal attributes in a single measurement time, meaning that they completed the post-test and pretest questionnaires during the same evaluation. For the pretest, they completed the questionnaire referring to the knowledge, skills and personal attributes that they believed they possessed at the commencement of the study, while for the post-test, they based their answers on the knowledge, skills and personal attributes they believed they possessed at the time of the evaluation. The *post-pre evaluation* took place four weeks after the study ended. This type of evaluation aims to address problems that may arise as a result of the traditional pre-post approach which, in this research context, could produce an inaccurate evaluation of the intervention's effects (Rockwell and Kohn, 1989) because the pretest results are often overestimated. (Drennan and Hyde, 2008; Pratt, McGuigan and Katzez, 2000). This may be attributed to the fact that the participants, at the start of the experimentation phase, do not possess all the knowledge they need to properly answer the questions asked at the outset of the intervention program, which can invalidate the very idea of a pretest. From this perspective, asking the post-test and pretest questions at the end of the intervention program ensures that study participants have the necessary knowledge to adequately answer the questions and use the same frame of reference for both evaluations (Drennan and Hyde, 2008).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

T-tests for independent samples were performed to confirm the equivalency of the comparison groups. A first t-test suggests that there are no statistically significant differences ($t = 0.594$, NS) between the pretest combined scores for participants assigned to the assisted method ($M = 23.19$; $SD = 11.5$) and those of participants assigned to the independent method ($M = 24.02$; $SD = 11.1$). A second t-test suggests that there is a statistically significant difference ($t = 5.49$; $p < 0.01$) between the pretest combined scores for participants who consulted for a job-search-related need ($M = 19.87$; $SD = 10.37$) and those of participants who consulted for a career-choice-related need (M = 28.02; SD = 10.74). This means that at the commencement of the study, participants who consulted for a job-search-related need report a higher level of LMI knowledge and skills as well as greater levels of optimism and confidence, as shown by their combined scale scores.

Combined Scale

To address the study's two objectives, a repeated measures analysis based on three factors, namely measurement time (before and after), the assigned method (independent or assisted) and the intervention received according to consultation needs (career choice or job search), was performed with the combined score as the dependent variable. The results presented in Table 1 show that scores over time (T) are considerably higher after the intervention than before it (F = 796.11; $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.785$). In terms of its clinical significance, this effect is substantial (Cohen, 1988).

The main effect of the method (M) is non-significant (F= 0.52, *NS*). This means that when considering scores without regard to measurement time, the means for either group do not differ significantly. Nevertheless, the time (T) × method (M) interaction is significant (F = 9.15; $p < 0.01$, η^2 = 0.052), meaning that the LMI effect over time, although significant in both groups, is greater when clients are assisted by a counsellor. In terms of its clinical significance, this effect is moderate (Cohen, 1988). In this sense, and in regard to the study's first objective, this result suggests that the assistance of a counsellor significantly increases the effect over time of the participant's LMI use in terms of the combined score, when compared to independent LMI use.

Moreover, we see that the primary effect of the career-choice or job-search intervention (I) is significant (F = 25.05; $p < 0.01$, η^2 = 0.12), indicating that regardless of measurement time, participants who undergo the job-search intervention obtain higher scores than those who undergo the career-choice intervention. In terms of its clinical significance, this effect is major (Cohen, 1988). Moreover, the significant time (T) × intervention (I) interaction (F= 13.32; p < 0.01); η^2 = 0.06) suggests that the

	Career Choice			*Job Search*			*Total*									
		Before	*After*		*Before*	*After*		*Before*	*After*	*F*						
Method	*n*	M (*SD*)	M (*SD*)	*n*	M (*SD*)	M (*SD*)	*n*	M (*SD*)	M (*SD*)	T (*p*)	M (*p*)	I (*p*)	T x M (*p*)	T x I (*p*)	M x I (*p*)	T x M x I (*p*)
Independent	63	21.49 (11.01)	42.05 (10.71)	46	27.52 (10.40)	44.54 (8.65)	109	24.04 (11.12)	43.10 (9.93)	**796.11** (< 0.01)	0.52 (0.47)	**25.05** (<0.01)	**9.15** (<0.01)	**13.32** (<0.01)	1.62 (0.20)	1.64 (0.20)
Assisted	46	17.65 (9.06)	44.63 (8.19)	48	28.50 (11.14)	48.13 (5.72)	94	23.19 (11.50)	46.41 (7.22)							
Total	109	19.87 (10.37)	43.13 (9.77)	94	28.02 (10.74)	46.37 (7.48)	203	23.65 (11.26)	44.64 (8.91)							

Table 1: ANOVA Comparing Before and After Combined Mean Scores by Intervention Type and Using Two Methods.

	Method	*Yes*	*No*
Do you have a plan of action that will help you use the documents and information resources that you obtained?	Independent (n = 108)	84	24
	Assisted (n = 94)	88	6

One piece of data is missing in the independent method.

Table 2: Plan of Action

LMI effect over time, although significant for participants who took part in both types of interventions, is greater when they took part in the career-choice intervention. In terms of its clinical significance, this effect is moderate (Cohen, 1988). This result must be interpreted with caution because preliminary analyses show that the combined scores of participants who undergo the career-choice intervention is lower at the outset of the study, suggesting that the two groups are not equivalent.

The method (M) × intervention (I) interaction is non-significant (F = 1.62, *NS*), indicating that regardless of measurement time, the scores of individuals who took part in the career-choice and job-search intervention do not differ significantly, regardless of the method used (independent or assisted). In this respect, and in regard to the study's second objective, the time (T) × method (M) × intervention (I) interaction is also non-significant (F = 1.64, NS). This finding means that the LMI effect over time, which was seen to be greater for participants assigned to the assisted method, does not differ significantly depending on the intervention received (career choice or job search). It therefore appears that the assisted method contributes to a greater LMI effect over time and that this effect does not vary according to the intervention received.

Plan of Action

To address the study's two objectives, analyses were performed to determine to what extent the assisted method of LMI use, in comparison to the independent method of LMI use, affected the likelihood of the participants having a plan of action at the study's conclusion. First, Table 2 shows that of the 94 participants assigned to the assisted method, 88 felt that they had a plan of action at the study's conclusion while 6 did not. For the 108 people assigned to the assisted method, 84 felt they had a plan of action while 24 did not. Overall, then, 94% of participants assigned to the assisted method and 78% of participants assigned to the independent method felt they had a plan of action at the study's conclusion. A Khi-2 test indicates that there is a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 9.97$, $p < 0.01$) between the method assigned (independent or assisted) and the likelihood that the participant had a plan of action at the study's conclusion. In regard to the study's first objective, it is therefore apparent that participants assisted by a counsellor are more likely to have a plan of action at the study's conclusion. At the clinical level, the phi index (0.002) indicates that this relationship is weak. In relation to the study's second objective, it is important to note that the intervention conducted (career choice or job search) has no significant relationship with the likelihood of having a plan of action.

Discussion

Summary of Findings

Based on the results reported herein, there is reason to believe that LMI use offers clients substantial benefits. Indeed, there is a considerable increase in the effect of the combined score, which measures an individual's knowledge of LMI, skills in using LMI, and confidence and optimism levels regarding the likelihood of achieving his career goals. It is important to remember that the factor analysis of the questionnaire under study did not make it possible to distinguish between the three categories. Nevertheless, this study is distinguished by the fact that LMI use is isolated from other career counselling components that are not directly related to LMI (e.g., self-awareness questionnaires and activities to explore and clarify interests, values and aptitudes) and that LMI quality control was ensured by means of LMI binders remitted to participants to assist them in reaching their career goals. As a result, this study provides support for the meta-analysis by Brown and Ryan Krane (2000) according to which information on the labour market is a critical ingredient for the effect of career-development interventions.

In regard to the study's first objective, the results suggest that participants who were assisted by a counsellor report a considerably greater improvement in terms of their LMI knowledge and skills along with greater levels of optimism and confidence, as gauged by their combined scale scores. As mentioned above, at the clinical level this difference in the degree of improvement is moderate. The fact that participants were assigned randomly and alternately to the assisted or independent method supports the validity of this finding. In addition, this finding also supports two meta-analyses on career development (Brown and Ryan Krane, 2000; Whiston, Sexton and Lasoff, 1998), which report the moderate effect of career interventions when compared with control groups that did not receive any assistance from a counsellor. Moreover, we should point out that in contrast to these meta-analyses, participants who received no help with LMI use did in fact use the LMI binders. They were actually exposed to the same information, but it appears that the assistance of a counsellor makes a substantial difference in the outcome.

This difference in the degree of improvement between individuals assigned to the independent method and those assigned to the assisted method may be due to factors inherent in research and in the processing of labour market information that are required to achieve their career goals. In regard to research, Gottfredsson (1996) states that the first sources of information consulted are generally those closest and most easily accessible to the individual in question. In this respect, there is reason to believe that the assisted method enabled participants to access sources of information that they would not have used without the assistance of a counsellor. In terms of information processing, a number of researchers suggest that individuals have a limited capacity to process large quantities of information (Amir, Gati and Kleiman, 2008; Kleiman and Gati, 2004; Krieshock, Black and McKay, 2009; Sampson, Lenz, Peterson, and Reardon, 1999). According to Gati and Tal (2008), people process only a limited portion of the information available in a selective and biased manner, and they have difficulty drawing connections between LMI and personal characteristics while taking the full complexity of the LMI into account. Although the LMI binders provide tips on information processing, assistance from a counsellor may make it easier to "decode" that information (Bernaud, Di Fabio and Saint-Denis, 2010). In fact, according to Bernaud, Di Fabio and Saint-Denis (2010), a counsellor can be seen as a "translator-interpreter" of the information. He can help give the information meaning, explain it, put it into perspective and draw connections with the individual's own characteristics (Bernaud et al., 2010). Still in regard to the study's first objective, 78% of participants assigned to the independent method and 94% of those assigned to the assisted method have a plan of action for using the documents and information resources acquired. According to Gysbers et al. (2014), having a plan of action at the conclusion of an intervention is an effective way of enabling individuals to achieve their career goals because it allows them to plan, concretely and in real time, the steps they must take to achieve those goals. In this light, since most participants using both methods report that they have a plan of action at the study's conclusion, there is reason to believe that the LMI binders, which included suggestions for developing a plan of action, played a part in that outcome. Nevertheless, we note that participants assigned to the assisted method are more likely to have a plan of action and, furthermore, that they are less likely not to have one when compared with participants using the independent method. According to Amundson, Harris-Bowlsbey and Niles (2009), the lack of support and follow-up from a counsellor can, for certain individuals, lead to inaction following an intervention. Assistance from counsellors may have played a part in providing such support and follow-up by reminding participants of the importance of actually applying the information gleaned from a plan of action.

Turning to the study's second objective, the method (independent or assisted) does not have any differential effects according to the client consultation need (career choice or job search). This suggests that a counsellor's assistance is important for either of these consultation needs. However, participants in the career-choice intervention report considerably greater benefits than job-search intervention participants in terms of their combined score. As mentioned earlier, the LMI effect on the clinical level is considered to be moderate. This result could be explained by the critical importance of LMI when an individual is comparing different options as part of the career choice process (Gati and Tal, 2008). However, participants in need of a career choice intervention showed considerably lower pretest scores. Accordingly, the difference in improvement levels may be due to statistical regression, a phenomenon caused by instrumentation errors (Creswell, 2014; Heppner, Kivlighan and Wampold, 2008). The result of this phenomenon is that groups of participants with lower pretest scores are likely to report greater changes over the course of an intervention (ibid.).

Still in relation to the second objective, the results suggest that there is no relationship between the career-choice and job-search interventions undergone and the likelihood of having a plan of action at the study's conclusion. This may be due to the fact that executing a plan of action was equally important in career-choice interventions as in job-search interventions.

Implications for Practice

This study has three implications for the career development practice, namely identification of the client's need, the nature of the LMI intervention, and career self-management (Hiebert, 2012; Savard et Paquette, 2012). There is reason to believe that providing accessible, specific information according to the consulting client's need (career choice or job search) contributes to the intervention's success. The LMI binders used in this study contained relevant information geared specifically to the career choice or the job search.

In regard to the nature of the intervention, it seems logical that whatever method (independent or assisted) is used, it will be more successful if it provides for a combination of the following three factors: identifying LMI resources, consolidating lists of LMI resources in a single, easily accessible and easy-to-use format (LMI binders), and suggestions on how that information should be used (Hiebert, 2012; Savard et Paquette, 2012).

In regard to career self-management, the results of this study suggest that participants can manage their own careers when they need minimal help with LMI. To that end, the LMI binders produced as part of this study can be used with certain clients without a counsellor's assistance being required. However, this study shows that the help of a counsellor (two sessions lasting 20 to 30 minutes each) produces even greater benefits for participants in terms of both their combined scores and the likelihood of having a plan of action at the study's conclusion. Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that such assistance allows certain participants to derive more substantial benefits from the LMI. However, the study does not identify which participants could benefit more from the assistance of a counsellor.

Implications for Future Research

To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to establish an intervention protocol designed to isolate LMI use from other career counselling components not directly related to LMI. Although this study suggests that LMI has considerable effects and that those effects are reinforced by the assistance of a counsellor, the results do not suggest that all forms of LMI produce beneficial effects, but rather that the use of a tool like the LMI binders developed as part of this study can do so (Hiebert, 2012; Savard et Paquette, 2012). In this respect, it would seem appropriate for other studies to replicate the same intervention protocol based on the LMI binders developed as part of this study.

Certain improvements could be made in future studies. First, it would be a good idea to measure the effects immediately after the sessions. Since this study measured the effects of LMI use four weeks after the study was completed, the observed effects may not be the result of the LMI interventions conducted.

In addition, future studies could broaden the intervention's scope to include other needs that might potentially be addressed with LMI, such as job retention (Hiebert, 2012; Savard et Paquette, 2012). Moreover, it would be wise to prepare intervention protocols involving more than two support sessions with the counsellor. A meta analysis by Brown and Ryan Krane (2000) suggests that the effect of career interventions is maximized when four or five sessions are held. In this way, it would be possible to determine whether assisted LMI use produces more meaningful effects at the clinical level when participants receive counselling over a longer period.

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International Students' University to Work Transition: Research-in-Brief

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Abstract

International students are increasingly seeking to attend Canadian educational institutions and the Canadian government has signaled its intention to make international students an important part of immigration policy. Yet, international students often face barriers when integrating into the workforce and many decide to return to their country of origin. In this paper we detailed the preliminary findings from the doctoral thesis underway by the first author, including the results from interviews with seven international students who graduated more than two years but less than nine years ago. We used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009) and Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 2014) to conceptualize the study of how former international students transition to the workforce. The findings from this study offered insights into the influences that were important as they navigated immigration issues related to their transition to the workforce. Keywords: international students; university-to-work transition; post-secondary

Introduction

Educational institutions are recruiting greater numbers of international students and immigration policy focuses on retaining them as highly skilled immigrants (CBIE, 2014). The Canadian federal government implemented policies intended to attract educated immigrant workers and address skilled labour shortages (Denton & Spencer, 2009). In Canada and in other countries, such as Australia, international students are considered to be ideal immigrants because they often have international experience and credentials gained in their home countries, as well as credentials and education in the Canadian context (CBIE, 2014; Ziguras & Law, 2006). Presumably, international students should have a relatively easier time integrating into the Canadian workforce, but researchers have found many of the same barriers experienced by other immigrants in securing employment commensurate to their skill level, resulting in un/under-employment (Nunes & Arthur, 2013). Consequently, international students face a unique and complex education-to-employment transition related to their goals of employment and immigration to Canada. Beyond international students' initial adjustment experiences, few studies have explored their career development (Arthur, 2007; 2017). Particularly, there is a major gap in the literature about the resources needed to support their university-to-work transition. As such, the current study investigated the university-to-work transition experiences of international students in order to shed light on complementary avenues for innovating career counselling, which, in turn, may help facilitate a successful workforce transition.

Method

Theoretical Underpinnings

We used Systems Theory Framework (STF; Patton & McMahon, 2014) to conceptualize this study and its findings, as it emphasizes the meanings individuals give to their career decisions, based on their past and present actions, as well as future aspirations. STF considers the cultural, societal, and familial context in which those decisions, actions, and aspirations take shape. For the research method, we selected Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). IPA aligns with STF as we, the authors, conceptualize an individual's understanding of, and action in, the world as resulting from the reciprocal influence of the interaction between personal and contextual factors. Specifically, Smith et al. (2009) noted that IPA synthesizes both descriptive phenomenology (i.e., focusing on the way phenomena subjectively appear to individuals in their lived experience) and hermeneutics (i.e., understanding individuals' mindset and language that mediates these lived experiences). Additionally, IPA is idiographic in that it gives voice to single cases and their unique contexts. Given the focus and strengths of

STF and IPA, we determined the overarching research question was, how do former international students make sense of their university-to-work transition? More specifically, how do they make sense of the role of education and work in their lives through this transition?

Participants

We recruited participants through university Career Services, social media advertisements (e.g., Facebook), and snowball sampling. To-date, we have interviewed seven former international students, including five women and two men, all of whom have been living in Canada for more than two, but less than nine, years post-graduation. We deemed this period as important in order to capture the transition experiences of those who are pursuing permanent immigration to Canada. Areas of country of origin included one from Africa, three from Asia, two from the Middle East, and one from South America. For highest level of education, three participants had a bachelor's degree and four had a master's degree. Fields of study were one each from construction, engineering, and finance, and two each from healthcare, and university administration. We recorded and transcribed the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. Participants chose their own pseudonyms.

Preliminary Findings

According to the analytic focus of IPA (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012), the analytic process involved (a) noting initial impressions, (b) developing emerging themes, (c) looking for connections across themes, and (d) searching for patterns across cases. Although there were many themes that emerged from participants' experiences, one of the key themes highlighted by all participants was their experiences with the immigration process. Participants anchored their experience during the time when they first sought their study permit to become international students in Canada. Participants differed greatly in their expectations of, experiences with, and ways of handling their immigration process, some having greater success than others. They shared in common the experience of being '*othered*' by the immigration process; they were prohibited from fully joining the communities into which they were supposed to be integrating.

Specifically, Olivia recalled her frustration that the study permit limited her ability to work, which impacted her living conditions. Olivia explained that she quickly came to understand that many Canadians had the stereotype that international students were wealthy and she stressed how, in her case, she had worked for years beforehand to save for her education. For Olivia, working was essential to staying in Canada to study and as such she was constantly worried about lacking funds and needing to leave mid-study. Iris noted that it was not until she returned to university to complete a master's degree after working in Canada post-graduation from her undergraduate degree that she found out that she could not re-apply for the post-graduation work permit. As such, since graduating from her master's degree, Iris has been stuck in limbo, unable to work, waiting for her permanent residency application to be processed.

Shaun joined the workforce through the post-graduation work permit and was able to use this time and experience to secure permanent residency and, eventually, citizenship. Yet, Shaun disclosed that regardless of being a citizen, he was one of the first people that his former employer laid off during economic downturn, while his Canadian-born, less educated, shorter-tenured, white-peers remained employed. Shaun reflected on whether he would ever really be considered Canadian or if people would continue to see him as an immigrant. In spite of the challenges found in these experiences, all participants reflected that, now, they could not envision living and working elsewhere. As Amber put it: "I can't imagine going back… the kind of freedom here… you can decide your life. So for me, I was fully integrated and this culture clicked with me… I'm more Canadian now than non-Canadian… I wouldn't recognize the old me."

An overarching interpretation of this dedication to staying in Canada is that these international students did not come to Canada for the single purpose of education; though their experiences, their sense of nationality and belonging transformed. This change in identity seemed to empower participants to persevere through the immigration process in order to remain in Canada.

Implications and Conclusion

As the attention paid to the recruitment of international students increases in Canada and other parts of the world, the need for appropriate, relevant, and helpful career development services for international students will also grow (Arthur, 2017; Nunes & Arthur, 2013). The participants in this study reported facing additional transition barriers to the Canadian workforce due to their precarious immigration status. As such, understanding the experiences of international students who are transitioning from university to work in the current economic setting is crucial to creating appropriate support services (e.g., immigration and career advice). As well, the participants in this study indicated having piece-meal information about the complex Canadian immigration system and wishing they had had greater guidance from knowledgeable sources. This is an area that career practitioners or other university services personnel might be able to address in their work with international students, particularly as university services are typically the point of contact for international students. Although this study provided preliminary insights into the experiences of international students as they move into the workforce, additional research is needed. For example, researchers could examine how international students prepare for employment while they are students, during the immediate years following graduation, and the influences on their decision not to pursue employment and/or immigration in the Canadian context. Research can inform education, workforce and governmental policies that support international students for inclusive integration into the Canadian workforce.

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Language and Identity from the Perspective of a NNES ESL Immigrant Teacher

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Abstract

In the past two decades, the number of highly skilled immigrants has increased dramatically (Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006), contributing to Canada's success in attracting smart, well-educated professionals – English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers included. As such, many diverse languages and minorities co-exist within Canada, a welcoming home to thousands of immigrants and refugees from across the globe. Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's greeting speech to the first group of Syrian refugees, "We get to show the world how to open our hearts and welcome in people who are fleeing extraordinarily difficult situations … You are home. Welcome home" (Trudeau, 2015) is a case in point.

Research has shown that the constant need to ask those who do not fit the perception of *Canadian* where they are from is not necessarily a matter of accepting someone's background and identity; it is more about how people react to learning about an immigrant's country of origin, as if that defines who they are (e.g., Amin, 2001; Cervatiuc, 2009; Fridland, 2015; Greene, 2011; James, & Shadd, 2001; Janusch, 2015; Kelly, 2013; Khayatt, 2001; Ilieva, 2012; Munro, 2003; Parmegiani, 2008; Selasi, 2014; Thiessen, Bascia, & Goodson, 1996).

The purpose of this research was to analyze: (a) the implications of standard English and world Englishes and (b) the interplay between language and identity from a non-native English speaking (NNES) immigrant's perspective; concepts that were explored against relevant studies from the extant literature (e.g., Canagarajah, 2006; Chen, 2012; Cook, 1999; Deutscher, 2010; Gross, 2013; Kachru, 1985, 1990, 1996; Kramsch, 2009; Norton, 2000, 2010, 2012; Medgyes, 1983, 1992, 1994, 2001; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Ochs, 1993; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011; Phillipson, 1992; Rampton, 1990; Ricento, 2005, 2015; Widdowson, 1994).

Background

Standard English

To understand the factors that differentiate between first language (L1) and second language (L2) users, that is, native English speakers (NESs) and (NNESs), we need to consider the concept of standard English. Widdowson (1994) defines it as "the quality of clear communication and standards of intelligibility" (p. 379) and compares it with beverages such as cola and champagne, stating that "there are all kinds of cola, but only one is the real thing. Similarly, there is real English" (p. 378). Because "real" English is referred to as a benchmark of intelligibility, does it mean that the non-standard versions of the Queen's English are unintelligible? (Brass, 2016). Fridland (2015), on the other hand, explains that, "From a purely linguistic standpoint, there is nothing about a standard language that is actually superior; yet, its socially preferred position is constantly seen as a statement about its linguistic superiority" (p. 88). These views echo Canagarajah (2006), who posits that standard English limits "the linguistic acquisition, creativity, and production" (p. 592) among L2 speakers, hence it is outside the classroom where students learn English for communication, negotiation, and real-world needs. Other researchers argue that standard English is both a tool and a weapon against L2 users:

> Those minority-group members who learn the standard … are seen as successfully integrated… But those who don't master the standard - because … they come from a different language background (recent immigrants and their kids) - have a hard road already. And racism against them is too easily hidden behind, and justified by, the criticism that 'they just don't know how to speak correctly.'" (Greene, 2011, p. 52)

World Englishes

Defined as emerging localized or indigenized varieties, world Englishes "are the result of diverse sociocultural contexts and diverse uses of the language in culturally distinct international contexts" (Kachru, 1990, p. 13). Utilizing the three circles paradigm, Kachru (1985) explains the differences between standard English and its vernaculars: inner (i.e., L1 varieties), outer (i.e., ESL varieties), and expanding (i.e., English as a Foreign Language (EFL) varieties). The inner circle includes the native-speaker varieties of English spoken in countries such as the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The outer circle is made up of countries that were colonized by NESs, hence English was introduced for administrative purposes (e.g., India, Jamaica, the Philippines, Singapore, Pakistan, etc.). The expanding circle refers to English being used as a foreign language in countries such as China, Japan, Korea, Russia, Brazil, etc. According to Ricento (2005), world Englishes stem from "a process of transformation rather than one of replacement, in which the ultimate outcome represents an identity that is not exclusively anchored in one culture/language or another" (p. 904).

The distinction between L1, ESL, and EFL varieties has brought about a lot of social change and controversy. From a sociopolitical and linguistic standpoint, English belongs to those who use it and not just to NNESs in the inner circle (Brown, 1995; Canagarajah, 2006; Kachru, 1985). However, not all speakers from the outer and expanding circles think this way, as illustrated by Baxter (1980), who asked a group of Japanese teachers of English, "Are you a speaker of English?" and "Do you speak English?" Almost all of them answered negatively to the first and positively to the second question. Although they used English on a daily basis, the teachers interviewed did not perceive themselves as owners of their L2, which ties into Parmegiani's (2008) observation that "no matter how well a person might come to master an additional language, he or she will still be placed in an inferior position with respect to a native speaker" (p. 110).

Language and Identity

Is the speaker's identity defined by their own perception of themselves or is it how the other speakers see them? Josselson (1983) notes that "identity is the stable, consistent, and reliable sense of who one is and what one stands in the world" (p. 10). Norton (2012), too, answers the question by linking the language learner with the outer world: "Language … is a social practice in which experiences are organized and identities negotiated" (p. 1). Kramsch (2009) is of the opinion that no matter how hard we try, we are always influenced by new experiences and people: "An individual is formed not only through interpersonal relationships with others, but also through intrapersonal changes" (p. 212). While keeping an open eye to the way power within communities promotes or constrains the process of language learning, L2 use can be said to go beyond language acquisition; it pertains to "socialization through the use of language and socialization to use language" (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 163). The language-identity domino effect is succinctly captured by Laozi: "Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habit. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny" (c. 529 BC). Consequently, language is paramount in the interplay between one's individual awareness and social identity (see Figure 1).

Deutscher (2010) and Gross (2013) concur that our L1 shapes the way we think because it obliges us to specify certain information, which differs from language to language. For instance, a simple sentence like "This is my uncle" requires a Chinese speaker to present more information about said uncle, which side the uncle is on, whether he is related by marriage or birth, and how old he is. Comparing futured languages (e.g., English), which have different verb forms to express the past, present, and future, with futureless languages (e.g., Chinese), which use the present simple to describe the events of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, Chen (2012) believes that different languages generate different behaviours and attitudes, asserting that speakers of futureless languages tend to save more money: "When we speak about the future as more

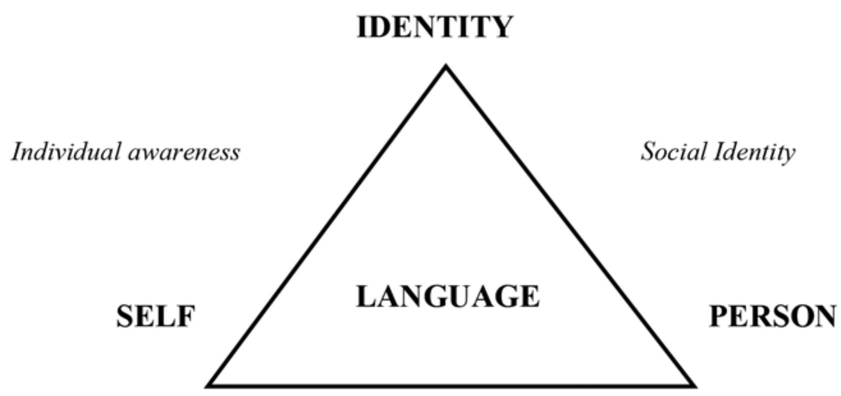

Figure 1: Triangle illustrating the interplay between the concepts of identity, person, and self, with language at its core, inspired from Riley (2009).

distinct from the present, it feels more distant and we're less motivated to save money now in favour of monetary comfort years down the line" (Chen, 2012).

Methodology

Research Design

Grounded theory, a "comprehensive, integrated, and highly structured, yet eminently flexible" (Glasser, 2004, p. 4) methodology, was used to explore the relationship between language and identity, with emphasis on how these concepts contribute to formulating a NNES's individual awareness and social identity. Because grounded theory is not concerned with factual descriptions or people but with concepts that are organized and integrated into hypotheses, its aim is "not to generalize findings to a broader population per se … but to build a theoretical explanation by specifying phenomena" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 421). As a result, the research design can be modified as the researcher collects new data "from whatever source – literature, new data, collegial comments… [Its] goal is conceptual theory abstract of time, place, and people" (Glasser, 2004, p. 10-11).

In grounded theory, the researcher is the author "of a reconstruction of experience or meaning" (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006, p. 26) who analyzes data by constant comparison and stays "sensitive to the data by being able to record events" (Mills et al., 2006, p. 28), which allows for recurring themes to be discovered, filtered, and observed. Grounded theory "works with any data – 'all is data'– not just one specific data" (Glasser, 2004, p. 12), hence the researcher decides what data will be utilized, analyzed, and coded. Making constant comparisons between data collected enabled the researcher to: (a) guard against bias by challenging already formed thoughts against the new data and (b) achieve greater precision and consistency by clustering together similar phenomena (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Participants

Both NES and NNES EFL and ESL teachers (e.g., friends, friends of friends, acquaintances, co-workers, and graduate students) residing in Canada (e.g., Vancouver and Toronto) and Europe (e.g., Romania and Spain) were contacted via email, social media (e.g., Skype, Facebook, ESL Facebook groups, TESL Ontario online platform, and University of Calgary D2L), text message, and through the grapevine. All potential participants were briefly introduced to the research topic, what their participation would entail, and were encouraged to ask further questions. Initially, two individuals responded positively: one former ESL teacher from a private school based in Toronto and one student researcher enrolled in a graduate program at the University of Calgary, Alberta. Time restrictions and family responsibilities were the reasons invoked by the teachers who were not able to take part in the study. Later, however, the participant based in Toronto withdrew from the study, noting her hectic personal and professional schedule, whereas the graduate student did not meet the participant requirement criteria. Four weeks into the thirteen-week graduate course program during which this study was completed, the research design had to be reconsidered from research *with* to research *without* participants. Creswell (2014) calls this an *emergent design*: "The initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and some or all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher … begins to collect data" (p. 235).

Data Collection and Analysis

In grounded theory, data collection and analysis are interrelated. The data collection strategy drew on primary research studies including: (1) computerized bibliographic database; (2) relevant books and journals; (3) review articles; (4) references in books and articles; (5) research journal reflections; and (6) the World Wide Web. The data analysis followed Corbin and Strauss's (1990) *conditional matrix*: It started from broader conditions (e.g., economic conditions, cultural values, political trends, social movements) and moved inward to more specific conditions (e.g., NNES ESL immigrant teachers).

Of the 56 sources revealed by the initial literature search, 12 studies were dedicated to language, 20 dealt with language and identity, 20 were on NNESs and/or ESL teachers, and four on immigrants and immigrant teachers. The articles that focused on NNES L2 learners rather than teachers were excluded, hence the number of relevant articles was narrowed down, which materialized as a shift in focus from second language acquisition (SLA) to language and identity and NNES and ESL teachers. The data generated by independent literature review, public document analysis, and research journal reflections were triangulated. Through open coding, the data was analyzed and interpreted by comparing it against other data for similarities and differences. The hypotheses were constantly revised during research until they became evidence in repeated observations and documents. (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Results

A language cannot be frozen; it is a living thing that changes as its speakers change, which is a sine-qua-non of a language in use as opposed to a dying language (Brass, 2016). The inflexibility of Latin, for instance, led to its losing ground and eventually dying out. English – be it standard or not – is simple and flexible because of the large number of worldwide L1 and L2 users who change the rules and adapt it to fit their needs: "Shedding unnecessary bits of grammatical baggage may be necessary for language to spread in the very long run. Success has its price" (Greene, 2011, p. 130).

Since language is learnt from a very young age, it becomes habit, which in time influences our perceptions, feelings, and experiences: "With such an early and intense drilling, the habit soon becomes second nature, effortless and unconscious" (Deutscher, 2010). If language is indeed learned as habit and as the old adage goes, "Old habits die hard," then changing one's frame of mind may not happen overnight; as a matter of fact, it may never happen: "To change your language, you must change your life" (Walcott, 2011).

Based on differences in grammar and lexis between various languages, some scholars argue that providing details in a language and leaving them out in another speaks to differences in the way L1 and L2 users think (Chen, 2012; Deutscher, 2010; Gross, 2013). The English word "neighbour" makes no reference to gender, whereas its French counterpart has different forms for masculine, "voisin," and feminine, "voisine." Further, the same object has a feminine grammatical gender in German (e.g., "die Brücke," bridge) and a masculine grammatical gender in Spanish (e.g., "el puente," bridge), which may explain why an English, a German, and a French speaker will relate differently to the same animate and inanimate objects, which supports language theorists' argument that L1 influences the way we perceive ourselves and the world around us. Because L2 speakers bring their L1 habits into their target language use, NNESs can never be as proficient as their NES counterparts. Widdowson (1994) attributes this phenomenon to the inexorable difference between L2 and L1 speakers, which lies in the target language unfamiliarity and foreignness, something that L1 speakers cannot possibly experience.

L2 plays an essential role in NNESs' identity formation of new Canadians who try to appropriate their L2 to function successfully in their new country. Identity formation takes place throughout their life, a complex and complicated process that involves a *moratorium phase* when "we … are imagining or experimenting with alternative selves [and] learn who we are by discovering our differences from others" (Josselson, 1983, p. 11-13). The fact that "identity becomes a way of judging ourselves with respect to a typology or set of values that is meaningful to others with whom we identify ourselves" (p. 11) speaks to the interplay between language and identity.

"The most obvious indication that someone is a second-language (L2) user is a tendency to produce speech with a 'foreign accent'" (Munro, 2003, p. 38). *Foreign* is defined in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995) as "not from your own country" (p. 550). Indeed, there are immigrants who speak English with an accent that is perceived as being different from the Canadian accent, a stereotype that labels them as NNESs: "Our language attitudes reflect our feelings about the speakers of a language rather than the language itself" (Fridland, 2015, p. 88). Research has shown that the answer to "Where are you from?" – the most frequently asked question across Canada – has deeper socio-political connotations, which ties into Kachru's (1985) paradigm of English circles (i.e., inner, outer, and expanding) and speaks to a power game that heavily relies on the respondent's country of origin (e.g., Khayatt, 2001 Selasi, 2014).

When foreign-trained immigrants are granted entry to Canada, their education, work experience, language proficiency, age, funds, and adaptability are assessed by a points system under the Federal Skilled Worker program (Government of Canada, 2017). Unless they meet all these mandatory criteria, they are not given the green light. Assuming that NNESs are inferior to NESs because they do not subscribe to the local standards of English borders *linguicism* (i.e., discrimination based on accent) or *smiling racism* (James & Shadd, 2001), which singles out those who do not fit the perception of Canadian: "It is not only a recognition of difference, but also the explicit emphasis on difference to mediate hierarchy based on colour, ethnicity, language, and race" (Khayatt, 2001, p. 81).

Discussion

Language and identity are omnipresent in linguistics, literature, philosophy, music, art, etc.; all equally intriguing and fascinating. The extant literature referenced in this paper speaks to the importance of the issue at hand. Having a different L1 has its own advantages and disadvantages; however, not being a NES should not be perceived as a handicap rather as a difference that can benefit the community at large. Medgyes (1992) states that "what is weakness on one side of the coin, is an asset on the other" (p. 346). By showing differences and similarities between NESs and NNESs and the way they process, understand, and speak their L1 and L2, this paper capitalizes on diversity seen as a strength rather than a weakness.

Given that Canada is a country made up mostly of immigrants, "Canada's population grew by 1.7 million people since the last census in 2011. Immigrants accounted for two-thirds of the increase" (Campion-Smith, 2017), the number of foreign trained skilled immigrants – ESL teachers included – who make Canada their home is steadily growing (CIC News, 2016) and most likely it will continue to increase in the future. This makes it paramount to move away from reducing individuals to labels such as non-natives toward a fair treatment of all Canadian citizens (whether they speak standard English or not, have an accent or not, or are Canadian born, citizens, permanent residents, immigrants, or refugees), genuine acceptance, and integration of people of different languages, accents, and identities.

Given the time constraints and the lack of participants, this research paper has not been finalized yet. Once completed, it could potentially benefit NES and NNES alike by contributing to: (a) a better understanding of what being a non-native ESL immigrant teacher in Canada entails; (b) the integration of foreign-born professionals in the Canadian labour market; and (c) acceptance of and better communication among individuals, regardless of their country of origin and first or second language. To formulate more in-depth ideas with regards to (a) the implications of standard English and world Englishes and (b) the interplay between language and identity from a NNES immigrant's perspective, further research should include: (a) participants (e.g., NNES students, teachers, and other professionals); (b) data collection (e.g., surveys, interviews); and (c) a longer timeframe.

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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.

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