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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Editor Dr. Robert Shea

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Welcome to Volume 18, Issue 2 of the Canadian Journal of Career Development. The next three years brings new changes to the Journal. This year, we are honoured to be awarded a three year Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant. The grant will allow us to create a modern and functional website, purchase submission and reviewing software that will streamline all processes, and continue to provide high quality articles to our readers.

This current issue contains five articles which focus on different areas of career development. The first article by author Duygu Biricik Gulseren is international in focus. She looks at university students from Turkey and tested predictors of career regret using the Social Cognitive Career Theory satisfaction model. Her results will be interesting to career counsellors looking for a method to identify clients who are at risk of career regret and researchers who may want to participate in future international research.

Our second article looks at a topic that has never been addressed in our Journal to date. Author Trevor Gerhardt provides us with a look into the Church of England and the professional identity and career development of the clergy. This is an area of professional career development that is normally not viewed by those outside the church walls.

'From Knowledge to Wisdom: Indigenous Women's Narratives of Doing Well with Career Decision Making' is a timely article that addresses a much under researched topic. In this article author Alanaise Goodwill and co-authors open the window to show how Indigenous women are choosing their careers and how they are making these decisions. More research on the career needs of the Canadian Indigenous population must be done. Our Journal is proud to be able to publish this article.

The fourth article, addresses the effect of a counsellor-free career intervention. The tool the authors examined was the online Self-Directed Search Form (Fifth Edition) and how it impacted undergraduate students career decision making based on their readiness to make this decision. Their findings indicate that this could be a useful tool for universities and counsellors to assist students who are unsure of their career path.

Finally, our last article addresses a narrative based career management course for engineering graduate students. The authors look at the outcomes and benefits of a graduate level career management course.

In closing, I would like to thank our authors, readers, and funders for their continual support of this Journal. I also extend thanks to our peer reviewers for taking on the task of providing insightful, in-depth, and timely reviews of every article submitted. This year we had a surge in submissions and we anticipate a continual increase in the coming years.

Happy reading!



Rob Shea
Editor-in-Chief

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Career Regret among University Students from Turkey: A Test of the Social Cognitive Career Theory

Duygu Biricik Gulseren
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Abstract

Drawing on the Social Cognitive Career Theory satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008), the current study aimed to test the predictors of career regret among university students. Survey data was collected from 180 university students from Turkey. The results of the multiple serial mediators model (Model 6) test using PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2018) showed that higher levels of negative affect was associated with career regret because of low career self-efficacy and outcome expectations from one's career. This study has extended the Social Cognitive Career Theory satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008) by testing career regret as an outcome. Using the findings of this study, career counsellors can identify clients who are at risk of developing career regret and work on enhancing their self-efficacy as well as outcome expectations to minimize future career regret.

Keywords: career regret, Social Cognitive Career Theory, university students

The topic of regret is a popular topic of conversation both in the media and daily conversations; however, despite its popularity in daily life, researchers have not paid much attention to this topic. Regret is defined as "a more or less painful judgement and state of feeling sorry for misfortunes, limitations, losses, shortcomings, transgressions, or mistakes" (Landman, 1993; p.4). It can

manifest itself after any number of possible decisions. However, their importance can vary based on their intensity and length (Gilovich & Medvec, 1995). For example, regret due to wearing uncomfortable shoes to a meeting is probably less intense and has shorter term outcomes compared to the regret due to undergoing an irreversible medical procedure.

A meta-analysis of eleven studies indicated that career-related regret (i.e. education and/or work) is the most common type of regret among Americans (Roese & Sumerville, 2005). Researchers have given some thought to the topic of career regret (e.g. Santra & Giri, 2017; Schieman, Pearlin, & Nguyen, 2005; Wrzesniewski, Tosti-Kharas, & Landman, 2006). These studies answered important questions such as what career regret is and why understanding career regret is important. Despite these efforts, career regret research is still at an immature stage (Sullivan, Forret, & Mainiero, 2007) and our knowledge regarding the causes of career regret is still limited. So far, only Sullivan et al. (2007) questioned *why* people experience career regret; however, their efforts were only able to be exploratory due to the lack of a sound theoretical framework of regret. Understanding what causes career regret is a crucial step in minimizing or avoiding the experience of career regret. Drawing on the Social Cognitive Career Theory satisfaction model (SCCT; Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008) the aim of the current study was to understand why and how university students

experience career regret. More specifically, the current study examines how university students' negative affect, career self-efficacy and outcome expectations are related to their career regret.

Career Regret

Regret has unique characteristics. First, making an initial decision is a prerequisite for regret (Connolly & Zeelenberg, 2002). People engage in counterfactual thinking (i.e. thinking what the alternatives might have been; Galinsky, Liljenquist, Kray, & Roese, 2005) and compare the outcomes of their decisions with possible outcomes of alternative decisions. Regret occurs if this comparison results in an undesirable conclusion (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007). Second, regret is an emotion that is shaped by cognitions. The intensity of regret experienced by individuals depends on their perception of the alternatives (Wrzesniewski et al., 2006). For example, if a person does not imagine a career alternative with better outcomes, he or she will not experience regret; therefore thoughts play a substantial role. Third, actions or inactions can cause regret (Gilovich & Medvec, 1995). For example, people can regret making a purchase for a not so useful item or not purchasing a well-priced one. Last, regret mandates retrospective thinking (Schieman et al., 2005). People feel regret only for the decisions they have made, but not for future decisions.

The topic of regret received a lot of attention in different fields. For example, Chen, Teng, Liu, and Zhu (2015) studied consumer regret, Ghidini, Sekulovic, and Castagnetti (2016) examined parental regret regarding the medical decisions of their children, or Sadatmahalleh, Ziaei, Kazemnejad, and Mohamadi (2018) investigated regret as a result of people's fertility-related decisions. Although regret can be experienced after decisions are made in every possible domain of life, specific types of regret can be more painful than others depending on the reversibility of their outcomes. Career choices are one of life's costly decisions; hence career regrets are rather painful.

A few studies documented the negative consequences of career related regret. For example, Wrzesniewski et al. (2006) found that career regret lead to absence from work via lowered job and life satisfaction. Similarly, Santra, and Giri (2017) collected data from 367 IT professionals from India and observed that career regret was related to job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Furthermore, a small group of researchers pondered the demographical causes of career regret. For instance, Schieman et al. (2005) explored the relationship between gender, education, and occupational regret¹ from a sociological perspective and found that women and people with low levels of education were more likely to experience occupational regret in later ages. In a similar vein, Sullivan et al. (2007) studied the relationship between downsizing and career regret. They found that people who were laid off experienced career choice regret more than those who kept their employment. Lastly, only

¹ Authors used the term occupational regret to refer to career regret.

one study used career regret as a mediator. In their study with 98 students from China, Li, Hou, and Jia (2015) observed that career regret mediated the effect of social comparison and the certainty of the career decisions. Despite these efforts, all of the aforementioned studies were exploratory in nature and thus lacked theory (Sullivan et al., 2007). Scientific progress requires theories (e.g., Campbell & Wilmot, 2018). The current study fills this gap by employing the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008).

Social Cognitive Career Theory

In the Social Cognitive Theory, Bandura (1982; 1989; 2011) has proposed that individuals are in a reciprocal relationship with their environments. People observe and evaluate their environments, make sense of them, and behave accordingly. They also contribute to shaping their environments (Bandura, 2011). Self-efficacy, which is defined as people's belief in their capabilities of achieving something, lies at the core of the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1977, 1989). According to this theory, people choose actions over which they feel personal control and expect positive outcomes. For example, people choose to engage in regular physical exercise if they believe they can do it and that doing it will lead to positive results.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), which was developed based on the basic premises of the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1989), has made specific propositions about the career interests (i.e. the interest model), career goals (i.e. the choice model), performance and persistence in their careers (i.e. the performance/persistence model),

and feelings of satisfaction (i.e. the satisfaction model; Sheu & Wang, 2019). The theory makes a prediction regarding career-related outcomes via personal predispositions, cognitive variables, and contextual factors (Sheu & Wang, 2019). Lent et al. (1994) suggested that when people feel efficacious in a particular field and have positive outcome expectations from that field, they show an interest in that field. For instance, a student who believes that she or he is good at solving complex mathematical problems may choose to be a computer scientist if she or he thinks being a computer scientist will bring good opportunities in life. This is an important theory in the field of vocational behavior because it has made more specific predictions compared to the established person-environment fit theories such as Dawis and Lofquist's (1984) or Holland's (1997). It also includes career interests and goals as intermediate steps (Lent et al., 1994).

Career-Related Self-Efficacy and the Satisfaction Model

Career-related self-efficacy, which is a focal variable of the SCCT, is an umbrella term used to refer to the cognitive appraisal of one's ability to perform a career-related behaviour well. Thus, a behavioural domain such as decision-making or career change must be defined before assessing self-efficacy (Betz & Hackett, 2006). Initially, Betz and Hackett (1981) identified two specific types of career-related self-efficacy. These were: (1) occupational entrance efficacy and (2) occupational self-efficacy. The first one was concerned with the efficacy to obtain necessary qualifications to enter an occupation, such as having a high grade point average in order to be admitted to

a medical school. The second one pertained to the ability to fulfill the duties of an occupation, such as learning all the laws and regulations in an administrative occupation (Betz & Hackett, 1981). Later on, researchers pinpointed other types of career-related self-efficacy such as career decision-making self-efficacy (i.e. the belief that one can make satisfying career decisions; Taylor & Betz, 1983), academic self-efficacy (i.e. the belief that one can perform well in academic courses; Huang, 2013), or college-going self-efficacy (i.e. the belief that one can attend and will be able to persist in college; Gibbons & Borders, 2010).

Different types of self-efficacy can be important for different models of the SCCT. For example, career decision-making self-efficacy (Taylor & Betz, 1983) is central to the choice model of SCCT because the outcome of interest in the model is career-decision making (Lent & Brown, 2008). The current study focused on the satisfaction model of the SCCT, which utilizes the construct of occupational self-efficacy (e.g., Hirschi, 2014; Spurk & Abele, 2014) and is defined as the competence people feel toward fulfilling the duties and overcoming the challenges of their chosen field (Rigotti, Schyns, & Mohr, 2008). Because occupational self-efficacy is the only career-related self-efficacy used in this study, the terms career self-efficacy and occupational self-efficacy will be used interchangeably in the rest of the article.

The original SCCT (Lent et al., 1994) explained how people's interests, goals, and behaviors were developed by environmental factors and cognitive processes, but it was silent about the well-being of individuals as a result of these decisions. Later on, Lent and Brown (2006; 2008) built the satisfaction model

of SCCT and explained how work satisfaction forms. The satisfaction model of SSCT (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008) suggested that people's personality characteristics (i.e. positive affect, negative affect, extraversion, neuroticism, and conscientiousness) influence their cognitive processes (i.e. self-efficacy and outcome expectations), career goals, work conditions (e.g., working in a job which fits a person's values, style, and personality; Dawis, 2005), and the extent to which they participate in goal directed activities. As a consequence of these steps, people experience higher levels of work satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Quite a number of studies utilized the SCCT satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008). For instance, Duffy and Lent (2009) tested the full SCCT satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008) using data collected from 366 teachers from the USA. They found a good fit of the overall model. The results of the structural path analysis displayed that work conditions, self-efficacy and positive affect had direct associations with work satisfaction whereas goal support had indirect association via goal progress, work conditions, and self-efficacy. Similarly, Lent et al. (2016) followed 908 university students in the USA during their university lives to test the full SCCT satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008). Data supported the SCCT satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008). They found that persistence intentions, satisfaction with the major, self-efficacy and social support at the end of the first year predicted persistence scores in the third year. Additionally, self-efficacy at the end of the first year predicted grade point average in the third year.

Researchers have also tested specific aspects of the theory. For example, Wang (2013) looked at the relationship between self-efficacy and performance, and found that students who entered in a science technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields had high levels of mathematic self-efficacy beliefs and high grades from mathematics and science courses in the 12th grade. In another study, Schooreel, Shockley, and Verbruggen (2017) demonstrated that home to career interference, defined as the negative effect of family decisions on one's career, caused decreased career satisfaction among a group of Belgian employees working at the telecommunications industry because they had low levels of career self-efficacy. Troesch and Bauer (2017) also examined the relationship between the path of teaching as a second career, self-efficacy beliefs, and job satisfaction among teachers. Their findings indicated that when the effects of age and gender are controlled, teachers that are in their second career had higher levels of teaching self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

Previous studies indicated that trait affect and well-being outcomes are related through cognitive appraisals. For example, Duffy and Lent (2009) found that teachers with positive affect had high levels job satisfaction both directly and indirectly through increased self-efficacy. In another study, Lent et al. (2013) found that the relationship between positive affect and work satisfaction were mediated by both self-efficacy and outcome expectations among a group of American university students. Lastly, Conklin, Dahling, and Garcia (2013) observed that self-efficacy and outcome expectations are also positively related.

Although they are conceptually different (Beike, Markman, & Karadogan, 2009), dissatisfaction is the closest construct to regret in the nomological network (Tsiros & Mittal, 2000). As one can see from the review of the previous studies, the SCCT could make specific predictions to why, how and when people will experience career satisfaction or lack thereof. People generally experience dissatisfaction and regret simultaneously (e.g., Bui, Krishen, & Bates, 2009; Tsiros & Mittal, 2000). The SCCT also links cognitive processes to emotional outcomes (Sheu & Wang, 2019). Career self-efficacy is cognition (Betz & Hackett, 2006) and career regret is a cognition-triggered emotion (Wrzesniewski et al., 2006). Therefore, the SCCT would be an appropriate start to understand the career regret.

The Context of the Study

The current study utilized data collected from a sample of students in Turkey. Hofstede's (2011) framework, which he developed in order to compare different national cultures, would be helpful in understanding the cultural context of Turkey. In his seminal work, Hofstede (2011) characterised national cultures in four dimensions (i.e. collectivism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance). Collectivism refers to the degree to which group decisions dominate over individual decisions (Hofstede, 1980). Similarly, masculinity is concerned with preference towards financial gain, achievement and competition rather than towards social harmony (Hofstede, 2011). In cultures of uncertainty avoidance, ambiguous situations create anxiety among people (Hofstede, 1980). Finally, power distance refers to the unequal distribution of power

between people in the higher and lower levels of a hierarchy (Hofstede, 2011).

Located in both Asia and Europe, Turkish culture is classified as a culture of collectivism and masculinity with high levels of uncertainty avoidance and power distance (Hofstede, 1980). Collectivism reflects high levels of family involvement in the career decision making of students (Aycaan & Fikret-Pasa, 2003). Similarly, the masculinity norms reflects that students often end up choosing majors in which they can have the highest level of financial success (Karakitapoglu-Aygun, Arslan, & Guney, 2008). High levels of uncertainty avoidance motivates them to choose careers in which they can have the highest job security possible (Karakitapoglu-Aygun et al., 2008). Lastly, because of high power distance orientations, they are more inclined to choose careers where they can exert power over others (Aycaan & Fikret-Pasa, 2003).

The effects of the national culture on the educational system is obvious in Turkey. The system requires students to make an initial career decision about their career tracks before starting high school. Students have options to choose to attend different schools: these include academic, vocational and technical or religious high schools. If the academic path is chosen, they also need to select either a (1) science, (2) Turkish literature and mathematics, (3) social sciences, or (4) languages track. These initial choices are important career decisions because the type of high school students graduate from influences their chances of being admitted into an undergraduate program. Moreover, changing one's track is costly as students take different courses in each track; if students decide to switch to

another track, they are expected to have the knowledge of the all of the courses covered so far.

Citizens of Turkey with a high school diploma have to take a nation-wide standardized exam in order to be admitted into a four year undergraduate program in a university. Candidates fill out a form listing the undergraduate programs they wish to enter in their order of preference. The student selection and placement centre (*Ogrenci Secme ve Yerlestirme Merkezi* [Student Selection and Placement Centre], 2016) collects these forms and announces the program in which candidates have been admitted based on their exam scores and preferences. Candidates receive bonus scores if they choose a major that is compatible with their high school background (Tezic et al., 2007). Given the highly competitive nature of the national placement examination, many students cannot afford to turn down the bonus score. Thus, they end up choosing a major based on their high-school specialization (Korkut-Owen, Kepir, Ozdemir, Ulas & Yilmaz, 2012). This increases the importance of the career decision made at the age of 14. Major career changes are highly costly after this point (Koseleci, 2015).

Only one published study tested the SCCT satisfaction model using a Turkish sample. Buyukgoze-Kavas, Duffy, Guneri, and Autin (2014) examined the predictors of job satisfaction among teachers in Turkey. They found that positive affective trait, work related goal progress, perceived organizational support, and teacher self-efficacy were all positively related with job satisfaction. The strength of the relationships between goal progress, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction were also dependent on the type of school (i.e.

elementary or secondary) where the teachers taught.

Building on the SCCT satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008), the current study attempted to identify predictors of career regret. Negative affective trait, career self-efficacy, outcome expectations and career regret were the variables of this study. I expected that career self-efficacy and outcome expectations students had from their majors would mediate the negative affect and career regret link. Students with negative affect would have a tendency to underestimate their abilities; hence they would have low levels of self-reported career self-efficacy. Similarly, students with negative affective dispositions would be so despondent that they would have low expectations from their careers. Moreover, students with low career self-efficacy would be also have low outcome expectations because they would not trust in their capability to be successful. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Negative affect will be positively associated with career regret.

H2: Career self-efficacy will mediate the relationship between negative affect and career regret.

H3: Outcome expectations will mediate the relationship between negative affect and career regret.

H4: Career self-efficacy and outcome expectations will be positively associated.

Methods

Participants

A total of 180 Turkish-speaking university students (62% female, 32% male, 6%

unspecified) from a medium size, non-profit private university in Turkey participated in this study. Participants' age ranged between 18 and 28. The mean age was 22.3 years with a standard deviation of 1.4 years. Participants were registered in a mandatory introductory level Psychology course, the majority (76%) of participants were enrolled in the faculty of administrative sciences and economics, 14%, from the faculty of engineering, 8% from the faculty of social sciences and humanities and 2% from the faculty of sciences. Students were compensated for their participation in the study with a bonus credit.

Measures

Negative affect.

Bradburn's (1969) affect balance scale's negative affect items were used to measure participants' positive and negative affect during the time of the study. The scale is composed of 10 items in total, the last five items measuring negative affect. Response options ranged from 1 (never) and 5 (always). Sample items included: "To what extent did you feel depressed or unhappy in general?" Ormel (1983) reported .72 as the Cronbach's alpha score of this scale.

Career self-efficacy.

Rigotti et al.'s (2008) occupational self-efficacy scale was used to measure career-related self-efficacy of the university students. The scale consisted 6 Likert-type items. The response options ranged between 1 (not all true) to 5 (completely true). A sample item was: "Whatever comes my way in my job, I can usually handle it." The Cronbach's alpha score was reported between

.86 and .90 across five samples (Rigotti et al., 2008).

Career outcome expectations.

Participants' career expectations upon graduating from university was measured using a modified version of Bieschke's (2000) revised research outcome expectations scale. The original items were contextualized in the career domain. The scale consisted of 8 items. Response options ranged from 1 (totally disagree) and 5 (totally agree). A sample item was: "Studying in this field will enhance my job/career opportunities." The Cronbach's alpha score was reported at .89 (Bieschke, 2000).

Career regret.

A modified version of Wrzesniewski et al.'s (2006) occupational regret scale was used to measure students' career regrets. The original scale consisted of 6 items. Two items were dropped because of poor factor loadings (i.e. less than .4; Hinkin, 1998). This increased the Cronbach's alpha score from .47 to .73. The word "work" was substituted with "careers" to make it more applicable to the aim of the study. The final scale consisted of 4 Likert-type items. Response options ranged from 1 (totally disagree) and 5 (totally agree). A sample item was: "If I had to do it all over again, there are very few things about my work life that I would change."

Demographic variables.

Demographic data regarding participants' age, sex, and major were collected to control for a possible confounding effect.

A Turkish translation of the scales

were distributed to the participants. To ensure the accuracy of the translation, scales were translated and back translated by the author and a bilingual translator.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Zero Order Correlations

Correlational analyses showed that self-efficacy, career outcome expectations, career regret, and self-concept clarity were all significantly correlated with each other. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and inter-correlations of these variables.

Assumption Testing

An initial data screening and exploratory analysis demonstrated that all of the study variables (i.e. negative affect, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career regret) had skewness values between -1 and 1 and kurtosis values between -2 and +2. Therefore, data

satisfied the normality assumption (George & Mallery, 2010). Second, assumption of multicollinearity was checked. Results yielded an average variance inflation factor score of 1.2 which was below a cut off score of 10 (Ryan, 2008). Therefore, the multicollinearity was not a threat for further analyses. Lastly, Harmon’s single factor test was used to check for a possible common method bias. The results illustrated that the single factor explained 34.8% of the total variance which was less than the majority (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Therefore, the common method was not a threat for the accuracy of further analyses.

Model Testing

The hypotheses were tested using a serial multiple mediator model using a regression based approach (Hayes, 2012). Running these analyses simultaneously corresponds to Model 6 in PROCESS macro for SPSS in version 3 (Hayes, 2018). In Model 6, the relationship between the independent and the

dependent variables is tested through two mediators that are causally related. The first mediator partially mediates the relationship between the independent variable and the second mediator. Similarly, the second mediator partially mediates the relationship between the first mediator and the dependent variable. Lastly, first mediator variable is related to the second mediator in this model. All of the variables were mean centered and bias corrected with 95% confidence intervals obtained with bootstrapping with 5,000 bootstrap samples (Aiken & West, 1991). Table 2 presents the regression coefficients, and 95% confidence intervals of all study variables.

Four hypotheses were tested using regression analyses. Hypothesis 1 stated that a “negative affect will be positively associated with career regret” Using negative affect as the independent variable and career regret as the dependent variable, this hypothesis was supported ($B = .21$, $LLCI = .09$, $ULLCI = .33$). As anticipated, students with higher levels of negative affect were more likely

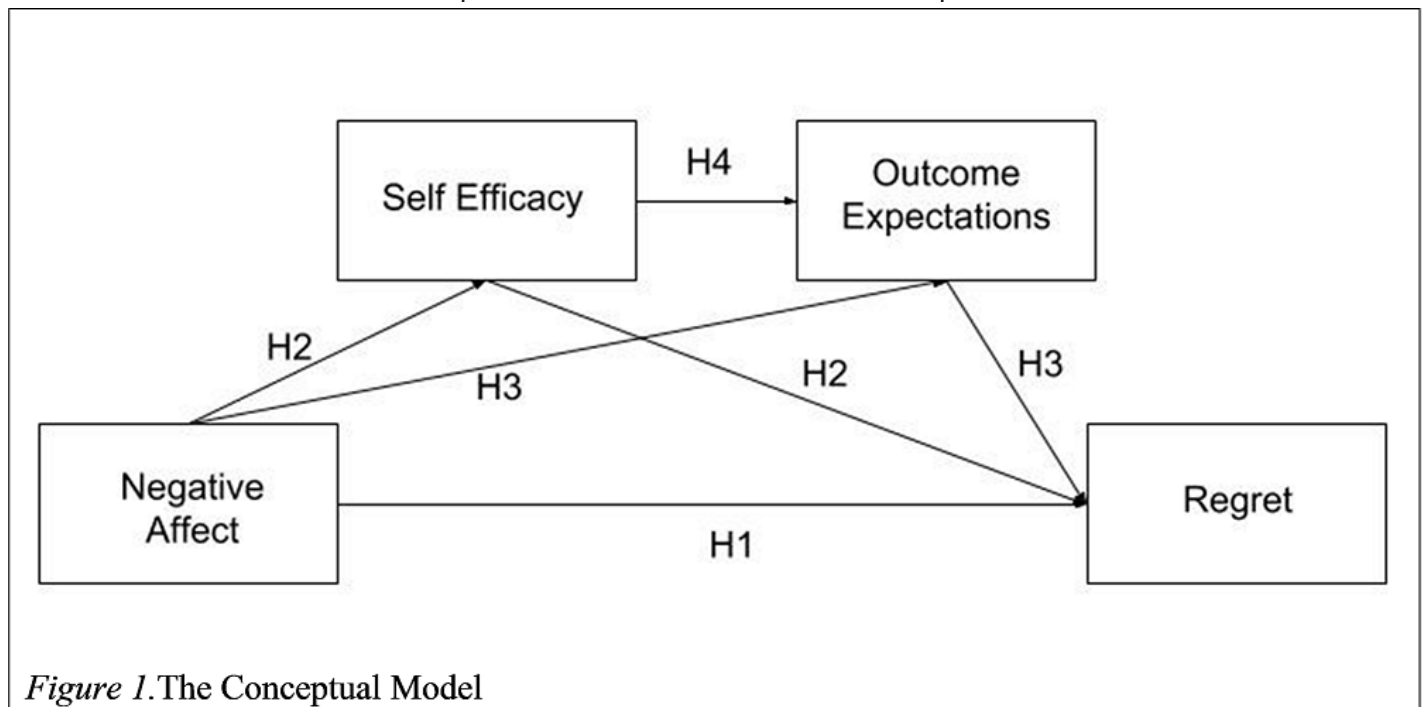


Figure 1. The Conceptual Model

to experience career regret ($B = .21$, $LLCI = .09$, $ULLCI = .33$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported. Negative affect and career self-efficacy as well as career-self efficacy and outcome expectations were found to be negatively associated ($B = -.30$, $LLCI = -.44$, $ULLCI = -.16$ and $B = .61$, $LLCI = .47$, $ULLCI = .74$ respectively). However, no significant relationship was found between negative affect and outcome expectations ($B = -.01$, $LLCI = -.14$, $ULLCI = .12$). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. Outcome expectations and career regret was found to be negatively related ($B = -.14$, $LLCI = -.14$, $ULLCI = -.26$), but career self-efficacy and career regret was not significantly related ($B = .12$, $LLCI = -.02$, $ULLCI = .26$). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was also partially supported. Negative affect and career regret were found to be positively associated ($B = .21$, $LLCI = .10$, $ULLCI = .32$). Lastly, career self-efficacy and outcome expectations were positively related ($B = .21$, $LLCI = .10$, $ULLCI = .32$). Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Discussion

This study aimed to test three predictors of career regret among university students. The analysis of the data collected from a sample of university students from Turkey indicated that negative affect is a predictor of career regret. In addition, this relationship is mediated by career related self-efficacy and outcome expectations. In other words, people with negative affect are more likely to experience career regret because of their dispositional tendency to disregard the possibility of achieving success and having meaningful career outcomes.

All of these findings pointed in the expected direction except for two. Drawing on the SCCT satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008), both self-efficacy and outcome expectations were expected to partially mediate the link between negative affect and career regret. However, the findings presented that negative affect was related to outcome expectations only via lowered self-efficacy. Similarly, self-efficacy was related to career regret only

because of heightened outcome expectations.

The full mediation between negative affect and outcome expectations via self-efficacy can be explained by the interactive quality of self-efficacy. Negative affect has been described as a dispositional characteristic (e.g., Vedhara et al., 2015). In contrast, career outcome expectations are mostly affected by social and economic factors such as availability of employment opportunities. Hence, individuals' traits may not be sufficient to predict their expectations directly. Self-efficacy is a type of cognitive appraisal which occurs as a result of one's assessment of the compatibility of their personal resources and the demands of a situation (Bandura, 1982; Lent & Brown, 2006). Thus, it is a linking mechanism that connects situational factors and dispositional factors. Because it is influenced by the situation, it is a dynamic variable. Additionally, due to its reflective nature, self-efficacy has a potential to result in changes in individual outcomes.

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) might be useful

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Inter-correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 – Negative affect	2.50	.80	1					
2 – Self efficacy	3.80	.82	-.26**	1				
3 – Outcome expectations	4.00	.82	-.19*	.59**	1			
4 – Career regret	3.10	.56	.28**	.00	-.15	1		
5 - Age	20.33	1.41	.07	-.15*	-.14	.17*	1	
6 – Sex	-	-	-.02	.04	-.05	-.02	.16*	1
7 – Faculty	-	-	.05	-.19*	-.06	.06	.29**	.00

P* <.05, p**<.01

explaining the full mediation between self-efficacy and career regret via career outcome expectations. Bandura (1989) proposes that depending on the costs associated with the independent variable, the interplay of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and outcome might differ. When the outcomes are relatively less important, people with high self-efficacy can choose to perform a particular behavior regardless of expected consequences of that action. Nevertheless, when the outcomes are associated with high costs, self-efficacy can be insufficient to lead the behavior because the consequences of the action would matter to the person (Lent et al., 1994). Career decisions which are precursors to career regret have serious and mostly irreversible consequences (Wrzesniewski et al., 2006). Individuals would not want to make a career decision without considering its outcomes. Therefore, high levels of self-efficacy can lessen career regret if they lead to enhanced outcome expectations.

Practical and Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study suggest that people with negative affective traits are more likely to experience career regret. In other words, people with negative affect are more likely to experience career regret because they are less likely to believe in their abilities to achieve success and have meaningful career outcomes. Traits are stable characteristics and they are largely affected by inborn factors such as genes (e.g., Sommer et al., 2010). Identifying individuals who are at risk of experiencing career regret is one of the practical implications of this study. The findings of this study underline the importance of the assessment

process with the client. Career counsellors can assess the personality of their clients and provide them with feedback prior to working on career-related issues. Through standard measures and interviews, counsellors can identify clients' affective dispositions and talk to them about the relationship between negative affectivity and career regret. Similarly, identifying clients' affective predispositions can help counsellors determine the length and focus of the counselling process. For example, a client who has a high level of negative affectivity might need to work more on their career decision-making process to avoid future regrets than a client with positive affectivity.

Although intervening on personality might not be possible, the buffering factors such as career self-efficacy and career outcome expectations are more conducive to change. Using the findings of this study, counsellors can on their career self-efficacy and outcome expectations in their sessions. The Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977) identified four ways that individuals increase their levels of self-efficacy. These are (1) through positive experience, (2) encouragement and positive feedback from external sources, (3) observing others, and (4) managing anxiety and other types of emotional arousal. Clients and counsellors can utilize each of these methods to cultivate self-efficacy. For example, internship programs where clients can find an opportunity to observe that they are capable of performing particular tasks can be helpful. Similarly, mentorship programs where clients are matched with mentors from their career of interest can be encouraging.

This study also advances SCCT satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008) in a unique way

by integrating the concept of career regret come. It suggests that career regret which is an emotion that can only be experienced after a person makes a career decision as a possible variable of SCCT satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008). SCCT makes concrete propositions about the influences on one's career and work satisfaction. Studies that used SCCT satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008) examined several outcomes such as job and life satisfaction (e.g., Lent et al., 2011), career choice satisfaction (Eun, Sohn, & Lee, 2013), and academic satisfaction (e.g., Flores et al., 2014). However, regret is more than the lack of satisfaction (Wrzesniewski et al., 2006). Several studies suggested that regret might be linking mechanism between outcomes expectations and satisfaction in a given domain (e.g., Van Dijk & Zeelenberg, 2002; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007). In light of these findings, career regret could be included in the SCCT satisfaction model (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008).

Limitations and Future Studies

Like all other studies, the current study also has limitations. One of these shortcomings is the cross-sectional and self-reporting nature of this study. Although the results are suggestive of a possible relationship between negative affect, career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career regret, they only provide a snapshot taken at a single point in time. The causal inferences are made under the guidance of SCCT, but more robust methods such as true longitudinal studies can give a better idea about the direction of the relationships. Additionally, although common method bias was not found to be a threat for this study, future research can provide

Table 2

Effect of Independent Variables and Mediators on Career Regret

			IV = NA	IV = SE	IV = OE
Direct Effects	Direct Effect of IV on SE	B	-.30		
		LLCI	-.44		
		ULCI	-.16		
	Direct Effect of IV on OE	B	-.01	.61	
		LLCI	-.15	.46	
		ULCI	.12	.74	
	Direct Effect of IV on CR	B	.21	.12	-.14
		LLCI	.09	-.02	-.25
		ULCI	.33	.25	-.02
Indirect Effects	Indirect Effect of NA on CR via SE	B	-.04		
		LLCI	-.08		
		ULCI	.01		
	Indirect Effect of NA on CR via OE	B	.00		
		LLCI	-.02		
		ULCI	.02		
	Indirect Effect of NA on CR via SE and OE	B	.02		
		LLCI	.00		
		ULCI	.06		
Total Effect	Total Effect of NA on CR	B	.20		
		LLCI	.09		
		ULCI	.31		

Notes. IV= Independent variable, NA= Negative affect, SE=Self-efficacy, OE= Outcome expectations, CR= Career regret, LLCI = Lower limit confidence interval, ULCI = Upper limit confidence interval.

an analysis of data collected from multiple parties. Lastly, the sample size of the current study was limited to 180 people. Future studies can utilize larger samples to make better generalizations of the findings. Similarly, the findings of this study are limited to a student sample from Turkey. Testing the same relationships using similar samples from other cultures should be the next step in order to improve the generalizability of the findings. Researchers might observe different relationships as the national culture might have affected the results.

Another possible area for future investigations is the effect of demographical variables on self-efficacy and career regret. Bivariate correlations demonstrated significant correlations between age, self-efficacy, and career regret. Similarly, there is a strong correlation between faculty and self-efficacy. Exploring the role of age and students' major in career self-efficacy and career regret in more detail could be an interesting study to pursue as well.

The current study approached the topic of career regret through a Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent & Brown, 2006; 2008) lens. However, the nomological network of career regret is not limited to the variables tested in this study. Prospective studies could examine the role of career decision-making and career resilience in career regret. These findings could be particularly useful in linking the topic of career regret to the existing career literature. Similarly, these studies can allow future interventions to prevent career regret. For example, Waddell and colleagues (Waddell, Spalding, Navarro, & Gaitana, 2015; Waddell, Spalding, Navarro, Jancer, & Canizares, 2015; Waddell et al., 2015) conducted a longitudinal randomized control intervention study

with nursing students and found increased career resilience and career decision-making self-efficacy levels in the intervention group. Their intervention involved activities that allowed participants to identify their strengths and weaknesses, set career goals, and develop career plans. Future studies could suggest interventions to reduce career regret by enhancing career, resilience, and self-efficacy.

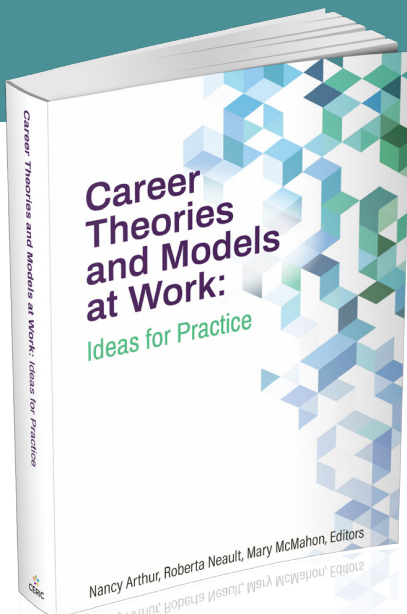
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Professional Identity and Career Development: A Descriptive Analysis of the Church of England

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Abstract

Academic Programme Directors can be identified within non-traditional Higher Educational (HE) contexts such as the case study of the Church of England. The purpose of this paper is to explore the professional identity and career progression of such Academic Programme Directors. A descriptive analysis was conducted of all the Curacy/Academic Programme Directors in the Church of England. This was done to evaluate whether HE organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) as a means of professional identity existed and whether this influenced HE career development. The data from this case study revealed that a HE professional identity is not a priority due to the priestly identity and career development taking precedence. The case study of a non-traditional HE context is an example of competing identities. Conflicting and competing identities within HE may lead to a low OCB which may lead to high turnover intentions.

Keywords: Higher Education Professional Identity, Organisational Citizen Behaviour, Church of England, Organisational-Professional Conflict, Developmental Perspectives, Collaborative Partnerships.

Priests were one of the first professions with a strong link to 'Higher Education' (HE). Crook (2008, p.11) cites the churchman, "educated in cathedral schools", as one of the prominent professions as

far back as the middle ages along with physicians and lawyers (Williams, 2007; Bailey, 2011). Reformation among many clergy renewed the "emphasis upon the importance of the minister being trained and educated" (Redfern, 1999, pp.41-42). The result of the Reformation was that the minister should be a person of education, able to proclaim an intelligible faith in the vernacular. The status and education of the parish clergy made them natural magistrates, overseers and teachers. In the mid to late 18th and early 19th centuries, "the typical clergyman was [also] a member of the landed gentry" (Heywood, 2011, p.2) and in this role further consolidated their roles as the magistrate and registrar. However, Russell (1980, p.3) argues that there is a fundamental distinction between the theological and historical-sociological understanding of the terms priest and clergyman. Priest is the theological definition linked to vocation, while clergyman is the occupational role linked to professionalism. Such a two-tier distinction or dichotomy of vocation and occupational role could influence how professionalism is viewed in a context such as the Church of England and HE academics working within the Church of England. The latter question poignantly is the focus of this paper, as to how the Church of England context, and others of a similar nature, may influence the professional identity and career development of Higher Education (HE) academics in their role as Academic Programme Directors. Within the Church of

England, Longden (2012) found that there is a reframing of curacy (priests in training) away from the model of assistantship (associated with professionalism) towards the model of apprenticeship (associated with vocation). Such a context has implications on what Cohen & Kol (2004) discuss regarding Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB). According to them, employees function effectively when they can act according to the reason they joined the organisation in the first place, can perform in these prescribed roles in a dependable manner and undertake innovative and spontaneous activities beyond the prescribed role requirements. The similarities between OCB and professionalism will be explored later.

This paper explores the role and influence of professionalism within the Church of England's training and education of their priests, particularly the latter phase called curacy. The research conducted in this paper was prompted by a statement made by Worsley (2014, p.132) that Curacy /Academic Programme Directors (C/APDs) in the Church of England can be more than just facilitation, management and enforcement. This statement relates explicitly to academic professional identity, OCB and career development. To understand this non-traditional HE context, a historical analysis was conducted of the Church of England, its training processes and its professional identity/struggle. This historical analysis is triangulated with a descriptive analysis of all Curacy Programme Directors and the authors autobiographical

experience. A descriptive analysis of the profiles of all Curacy Programme Directors informed the authors professional identity and career development (i.e. OCB). Findings are applicable to other collaborative partner programmes with HEIs internationally in terms of how they encourage professional identity among Academic Programme Directors, how they foster OCB and so contribute to HE career development.

The Church of England: A Case Study

The Church of England, as the state church, has 41 dioceses, excluding the dioceses of Europe, and Sodor and Man. These dioceses act as administrative areas, each under the supervision of an appointed diocesan bishop. Each of these dioceses, through their local parishes, recommends people towards HE training for ordained ministry, who, if accepted, are called ordinands. Once the initial training is completed (called Initial Ministerial Education years 1-3 or phase 1), these ordinands are ordained as curates and begin what is called curacy (called IME 4-7 or phase 2). Each diocese therefore trains curates and appoints a Curacy Programme Director. Before the common suite of awards which started in the academic year of September 2014, only eight of the 41 dioceses had a curacy shaped around a university validated award (about 20%). A further four dioceses allowed curates the option of pursuing an academic award during curacy if they so choose (about 9%). That means most dioceses did not have a further higher-educational-validated award as part of their curacy programme (about 71%) (Gerhardt, 2015). Hence the designation in this paper of Curacy/

Academic Programme Director (C/APD) as not all Curacy Programme Directors are Academic Programme Directors.

People who seek to become ordained priests in the Church of England are recommended by their priest to the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO). The DDO recommends the candidate to the Bishops' Advisory Panel (BAP) and selection conference for further scrutiny (Grundy, 2003, pp.18-25). Candidates are evaluated on nine selection criteria. The successful candidate becomes an ordinand, recommended for theological training, and engages in formal education at a Church of England recognised Higher Educational Institution (HEI) under further scrutiny of the selection criteria, now as learning outcomes. This period of study at a suitable HEI prior to ordination is compulsory with the expectation of at least a Diploma in Theology as an academic award (Ministry Division, 2006). These academics (a large proportion ordained priests) are employed directly by the HEI, will therefore have access to research funding, academic conferences and develop as academics in active research and publication. The 2nd phase of training called curacy is not so straightforward.

According to Grundy (2003), the most important change at ordination is that you become a public figure. As part of the ordination, in the Declaration and Oaths, the ordinand declares their understanding of the Church of England, its history, its heritage and its doctrine and promises to lead worship only in the forms allowed by canon law, to give allegiance to the sovereign and canonical obedience to the bishop (Perham, 2014). The now ordained curate, placed within a parish, works under the supervision of a training incumbent for a further 3-4 years.

Oversight of the process is done by a Curacy Programme Director, 80% not directly linked to HE. In cases where the curates engage in further academic study (20%), the Curacy Programme Director often is also the Academic Programme Director. This was the context of the author for seven years. He is now a senior lecturer in a business college. During this curacy process evidence is gathered by the Curacy/Academic Programme Director regarding the curate's capability to be an ordained a priest, based again on seven formational criteria. At the completion of curacy, having been signed off as 'fit to practice', the curate is now free to apply for a post nationally. These are not always guaranteed, and curates go through an application process involving an interview. 'Fit to practice' is the term used to refer to the assessment at the end of curacy (AEC). This process is an example of professionalism. Figure 1 below illustrates this process (Grundy, 2003, p.25):

Most Curacy/Academic Programme Director (C/APD) posts are a dual role. For example, the role may be that of a parish priest and C/APD. Other roles may be a DDO and C/APD. Some posts are one post as IME 1-7 director. In the case for the author, my post was a Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) advisor and C/APD. He was not an ordained Church of England priest and was directly employed by the Diocese. He was however, an associated tutor with the validating Higher Educational Institution(s). At the start of the post, he had a MA in Learning and Development and during the post completed a Doctorate in Education, partly funded by the diocese. These contributed to his OCB.

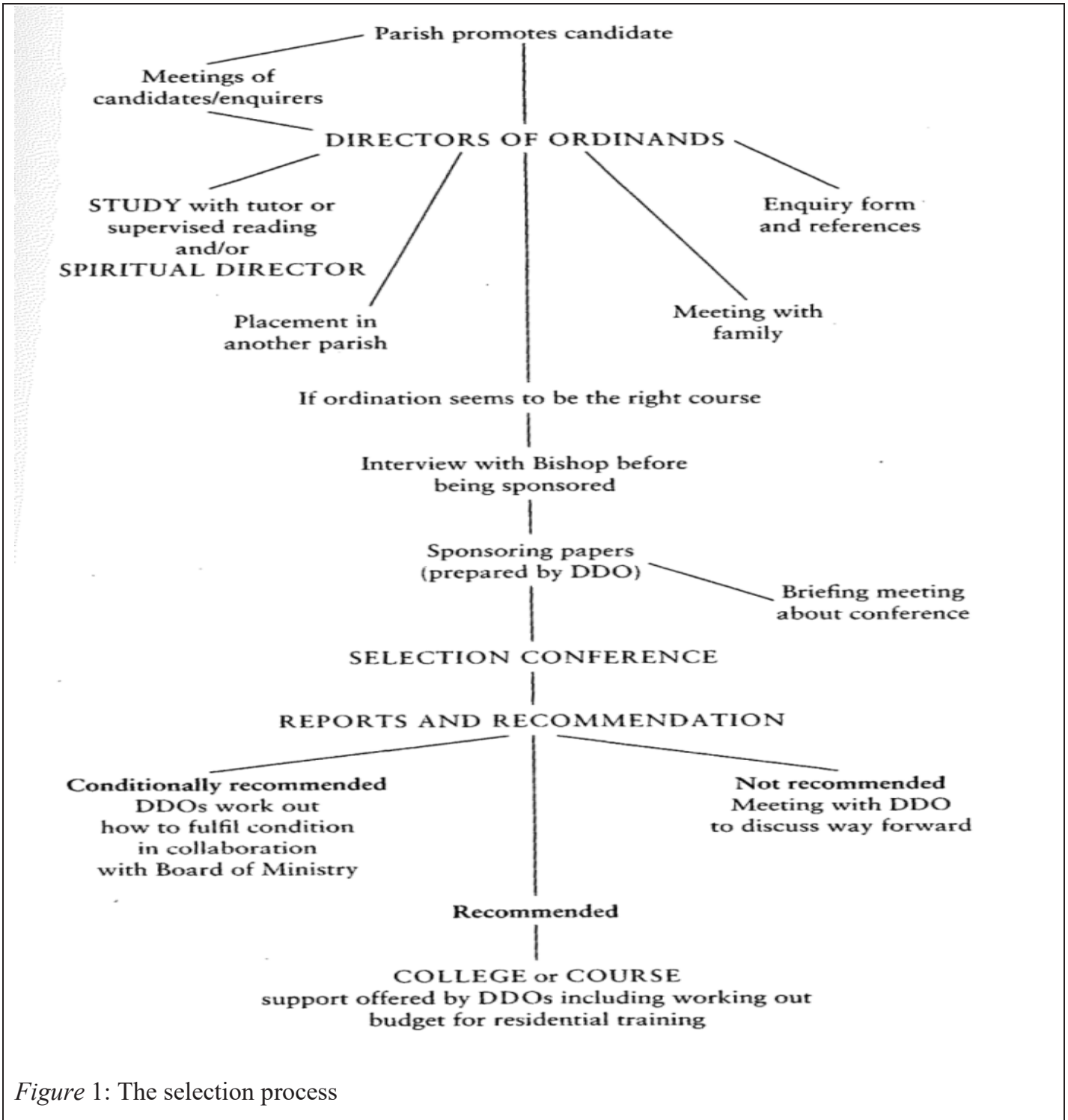


Figure 1: The selection process

The training process of becoming a priest is quite unique within a quite unique context (i.e. the Church of England). Ross-McNairn reflecting on his curacy training states, “it [curacy] contrasted sharply with my previous experience of professional training [a commercial property solicitor and infantry

officer]” (2014, p.6). Harvey, another curate states, “I had become public...I am the Church of England in some people’s eyes” (2014, pp.28-29). The Church of England priest becomes “an icon, a curtain-raiser” adds Gribben (2001, p.27). Palin confirms, “I had taken on public life” (2014, p.74). Kean concludes,

“My reflection is that when we are newly ordained we can feel vulnerable...because we are growing into and learning about our new public role” (2014, p.55). As Merrill and West (2009, p.61) found, “the construction of an agentic self, had to do with individuals taking some control, and finding resources, for

potentially radical questioning of how they may have been labelled or constrained". This ability or skill is vitally important in the formation of the professional and the profession and curacy, could enable such an 'agentic self' context, for the curate but also for the C/APD.

In the diocese that employed the author, placement curates completed a total of six modules over three years. As part of the curacy structure, each curate had a study day per week. A fear expressed by diocesan bishops and training incumbents alike is that 'the academic tail wags the curacy dog' (Gerhardt, 2015). This is a fear that the validated award controls the broader curacy process. However, not all curates are registered for the validated academic award. Based on the experience of the author in this diocese, academia was not viewed by all as a benefit. The possible reasons for this are explored as a historical analysis.

Historical Analysis of Professionalism within the Church of England

Russell (1980, p.9) defines profession in its original Latin *profiteri* as "to declare publicly". Such a profession involves the sense of calling encapsulated by the word vocation and means that work is as an end in itself and not merely a means to an end. "We get the word vocation from the Latin word for calling" (Dewar, 2003, p.6). Vocation is understood as "such a direction of life activities as renders them perceptibly significant to a person because of the consequences they accomplish, and also useful to his associates" (Dewey, [1916] 1966, p.307). Professionalism also has a sense of autonomy where professionals are free to make decisions about their work without the threat of external

pressures (Snizek, 1972). The Hall professional scale (Hall, 1968) consists of five dimensions, namely, the use of the professional organisation as a major reference; a belief in service to the public; self-regulation; a sense of calling; and autonomy. These characteristics resonate with the role of the priest and should with the role of the C/APD. The common characteristics of a profession, according to Russell (1980, p.13), are specialised skills and training often in theoretic esoteric knowledge requiring a long period of education and socialisation often through a University; control exercised in and over recruitment, training, certification and standards of practice; the formation of a professional association with well organised disciplinary powers to enforce a code of ethical practice; autonomy of role performance and altruistic service (associated with vocation). These resonate with what is required for OCB and relate to organisational commitment (Seijaaka and Kaawaase, 2014).

The industrial revolution accentuated the notion of professionalism, by making a profession a specialised branch of socially useful knowledge (Heywood, 2011). What emerged was a differentiation between industry and profession. The former provided returns for shareholders, whereas, the latter was measured by the service they performed (Crook, 2008). "Professionalisation is a process by which occupational groups legitimate and sustain social status through appeal to specialised knowledge which they possess, utilise and transmit" (Williams, 2007, p.433). Traditional professions retain a high degree of internal control over their members, their own code of ethics to govern and place boundaries on its practice, guarded entry, expulsion or exclusion for those breaching rules, great deal of

autonomy in judgement and authority (Swinton, 2011).

Professionalisation has developed with the Church of England, especially in its attempt to retain self-regulation and sustain social status. The professional person became an acknowledged authority in an area of human knowledge which was socially important but of which most people were ignorant. The clergyman, protected by law as the one who will officiate over public worship, (Russell, 1980) is an example of this socially important status. With the decline of those who would attend such public worship in the 19th century, the role of the clergyman was under threat, especially as the religious activity became more privatised centred on the church building. The clergy responded by raising standards of the public worship so as to "assert their authority over everything that happened in the church building" (ibid, p.71). This assertive control was evident in duties involving marriage and funerals, which at that time took place within the church building and over which the clergyman officiated, including the preaching of the sermon. In a society largely illiterate, the sermon conferred on the clerical profession a particular power and status. The transition to this model of professionalism among clergy was complicated by a lack of control over recruitment and deployment further complicated by a disparity in income. It does however, highlight the dominance of the clerical role as a professional identity.

Research done by Hall in 1968 sought to develop "an attitude scale to measure the degree of professionalism among practitioners of various occupations" (Snizek, 1972, p.109). The question posed by Snizek, is whether the Hall scale measures attitudinal or structural

characteristics in terms of professionalism? The former argues Snizek (1972, p.109), “denotes the degree of professionalism characteristic of an occupation”. This is an important distinction in contrast to what Russell argues that clerical professionalism only denotes the structural characteristics and not the attitudinal or vocational characteristics. Questions are raised as to whether these five dimensions all apply to clergy and whether there should be other dimensions not included. The research by Snizek was carried out in England in 1972 and 1973 among Methodist, Roman Catholic and Church of England clergy. One major outcome from the research was that the belief in service to the public i.e. altruism, was the only dimension significantly loaded in all the dimensions. In other words, at that point in time, clergy saw their role predominately as a service to the public. The research results raised more questions than answers (Bryman, 1985) highlighting the complexity regarding clerical professionalism. The major question by Snizek, as expressed by Bryman is “whether clergy do constitute a profession or whether they realistically only represent a particular generic type making them a category of professional style rather than a profession per se” (ibid, p.258). This is important to determine their attitude to professional development, especially in others such as C/APDs. Lamont concurs when she writes that “there is a need for greater awareness and professionalism” among clergy in general (2011, p.101).

The concept of vocation is paramount, reflected in the title of the Church of England magazine, *Vocations*, aimed at raising interest in ordained ministry (www.callwaiting.org.uk). If there is a distinction

between priest and clergyman, has the development of the one (vocation) been at the detriment of the other (occupational role/professionalism)? A tweet by Westcott House theological training college, “vocation become[s] secularised and tied to professionalism. Changes in organisation of civil society – in the name of efficiency #priesttoday” (@Westcott House, 2012), seems to suggest the opposite, that the development of the occupational role has been detrimental to vocation. Billings (2010, p.73) illustrates, “clergy became social workers in the 1960s, political activists in the 1970s, community workers in the 1980s and counsellors in the 1990s”. The changes in society caused confusion for clergy in terms of their role in society and led to the professionalisation of ministry as they reduced the areas of clerical involvement, giving way to others better qualified. This impacts upon the protection of the clerical identity over other identities such as the academic.

However, recent changes brought professionalism back into emphasis. “Changes in Church of England legislation, including The Clergy Terms of Service Measure and The Clergy Discipline Measure have brought the need for enhanced attention to assessment at the end of the curacy” (Training Incumbent Handbook, 2014/15, p.4; Church of England, 2006). The assessment at the end of curacy placed the spotlight on curacy training, especially as to whether curates were being competently trained in local dioceses in order to be nationally deployable meeting the national requirements for IME 4-7 (See Ministry in the Church of England, available from <https://www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/ministry/ministerial-education-and-development/initial-ministerial-education>.

aspx.) Each curacy programme director had to develop an appropriate assessment process in this regard based around learning outcomes on the formation criteria.

Common Tenure, which replaced free-hold, was a response by the Church of England to the government and secular legislation trying to regulate the employment of ministers of religion. The 1999 Employment Relations Act gave government the power to confer ‘Section 23 rights’ on what it calls ‘atypical workers’ in reference to the terms and conditions of service which resulted in the proposed Ecclesiastical Office legislation (Rooms and Steen, 2008, pp.3-4). Common tenure attempts to define the clerical role, particularly as this role relates to employment rights and not land rights as in the past i.e. patronage. Clergy without freehold, hold office by virtue of the bishop’s license and are known as licensed (or ‘unbeneficed’) office-holders. Without the protection of the freehold, nor contractual rights of employment, Common Tenure offers them a new way of holding office which involves grievance procedures, procedures for removal from office and compensation for loss of office in the event of pastoral reorganisation. Common Tenure can be seen in meritocratic appointments and promotions based on ‘met outcomes’ and ‘self-regulation’ of clergy (Williams, 2007, p.434). This is important because it is a form of professionalisation redefining the clerical role and it is a development that was initially prompted by government rather than the Church of England.

In 2003, the new Clergy Discipline Measure was added to the historical material governing clergy creating a code of professional conduct called Guidelines for

the Professional Conduct of Clergy (Church of England, 2003). Furthermore, under Common Tenure, curacy becomes a time limited post for the purpose of training. The capability of the curate in training needs to be assessed so that bishops can with reasonable confidence place clergy in appropriate permanent common tenure posts (Church of England, 2010). This process of assessment is called the Assessment at the end of Curacy (AEC) and is based on a set of nine Learning Outcomes (Church of England, 2010). This means that the traditional role of the training incumbent as supervisor (a relationship of trust) has now also become a role of assessor. Edwards (2012, p.63) sums it up as “the managerial vs. pastoral hat”. Self-regulation in professionalism is a notion of colleague control because of the specialised knowledge required in that profession, not allowing ‘outsiders’ but only colleagues to judge that profession’s work (Snizek, 1972, p.110) which is what Common Tenure creates together with the Clergy Discipline Measure (Rooms and Steen, 2008). Not all are in favour of these developments as illustrated by this article ‘Shepherd and Judge: A theological response to the clergy discipline measure’ (Papadopoulos, 2007) because it places the Bishop solely in a position as judge and not also as shepherd, “laying aside his mitre and donning the wig” (Hill, 2010, p.255). How professionalism and the link to education and the academic within the Church of England will now be historically analysed.

Historical Analysis of Higher Education and The Church of England

Before theological colleges were founded, the only instructions

which clergy received were from books specially written for this purpose, referred to as clergy handbooks. These handbooks were particularly focused on the model of the priest as parson. They were mostly written by parish priests, published between the years 1750-1875 (Russell, 1980). The parson engaged in a wide spectrum of tasks (Tomlinson, 2007), particularly the secular life of the parish in roles such as magistrates or public health officers (Billings, 2010). These manuals however, became unpopular and irrelevant due to their emphasis on the long held parson’s model which was no longer the sociological character of modern towns and cities (Tomlinson, 2007), evident particularly once training in a theological college became a requirement after 1917 (Billings, 2010). In effect, curacy training is now the modern equivalent of ‘clergy handbooks’. Entry to almost all professions was by qualifying examinations. Standards of entry and practice created a new coherence, corporate identity and loyalty. This is evident in the Church of England in “the establishment, in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, of residential training colleges, similar to those of other professions, provided the clergy with the means of regulating the training, and to a certain extent the recruitment, of ordinands” (ibid, p.239). “The medieval association in the West between the learned professions, the church and the university, emphasised the distinction between professional elites and traders and artisans” (Crook, 2008, p.12), evident for example by the fact that before the Reformation, clergy formed an absolute majority in the House of Lords (Russell, 1980). It is interesting to note, at this point, that traders and artisans acquired their skills through apprenticeships, while university education

was for the professionals (Crook, 2008). Caminer (2014, p.16), a husband of a curate, writes in the *Church Times*, that the “fast-growing patina of professionalism expressed in language of human resources” is being “superimposed on old models and largely unchanged thinking and behaviour”. Whether Caminer is suggesting the church needs to catch up with modern society, so to speak or whether he is suggesting these resources are inappropriate is not clear. His comments highlight that the distinction between vocation and occupational role is unhelpful and problematic and that they need to be one identity rather than competing identities. Lamdin and Tilley (2007) acknowledge that curacy is about the transition from student to professional.

The aspiration historically of the Church of England was that clergy needed to be adequately trained and educated, evidence towards the development of a notion of professionalism. This led to the Church of England designating curacy as an intended training post so as to ensure graduated clergy (Longden, 2012). The University of Oxford established an honours theology degree in 1869 and Cambridge, in 1873, introduced an entry examination in theology for candidates seeking ordination which expanded into a single honours degree (Haig, 1984). The Universities Preliminary Examination became a requirement for all ordination candidates in 1874, replaced by the Central Entrance Examination in 1893 (Longden, 2012). Although colleges sought to form ordinands into clergy by way of social education and intellectual input, periods of study were too short and the curriculum too unspecific for specialist training (Tomlinson, 2007). The education thus far, although a symbol of privilege, did

little to enhance professionalism. “They [students attending the University of Oxford in 1167] went to train for the professions and to be inducted into the highest learning available” (Heap, 2012, p.5). At the time of the French revolutions, seven universities existed in the British Isles with a new Anglican college established in 1832 in Durham. This college and others such as Canterbury Christ Church University indicate the continuing aspiration for the Church of England to be involved in higher education. From September 2014, the University of Durham became the sole validating University for the Church of England’s common suite of academic awards.

The Advisory Board of Ministry (ABM) and the ACCM published in 1982 the Occasional Paper 22, *Learning and Teaching in Theological Education* recommended better methods for teaching adults. This report highlighted the need for adult educational specialists relevant to roles such as curacy/academic programme directors. Another Occasional paper in 1987, *Education for the Church’s Ministry*, re-emphasised the need for different pathways and the requirements of appropriate teaching and assessment, taking into account the way adults learn and, even more significantly, the importance of a syllabus appropriate for the education and formation of clergy. The ACCM paper 22, among other things sought to define the process of education not by approaching syllabus content but by asking whether the education being offered was fit for the purpose (Ballard, 2004: 338). The ACCM 22 led to an interim evaluation of colleges and courses and in 1991 published by the ABM Ministry Paper (no.1) *Ordination and the Church’s Ministry*, but lacked any real impact on curacy (Longden, 2012, p.131).

ABM published another Ministry Paper (no.10) in 1995, *Mixed-Mode Training*, and in 1997 (no.15), *Issues in Theological Education and Training*, still addressing urgent improvements in training but still not having any major impact on curacy until the 1998 publication (no.17), *Beginning Public Ministry*, seeking to establish curacy as a full training post and thereby increasing the professional status of the curacy/academic programme director. Its detailed checklist is still used, together with the curacy learning outcomes, as a basis of competency among some curacies. Considering the Burgess report published in the same year, it had much to accomplish. In 2003, Ministry Division published *Formation for Ministry Within a Learning Church* (known as the Hind Report), in which it define curacy as an apprenticeship (Ministry Division, 2003, p.3) and emphasising among many the importance of life-long learning, possibly inspired by the Archbishop’s Council publication in 2001, *Mind the Gap*, addressing issues of continuing ministerial development (CMD). Lamont, reflecting back on her curacy, states that not many engage in any further training after curacy (2011, p.54).

The 2003 Hind Report emphasised that formation should be the overarching concept “that integrates the person, understanding and competence” (Ministry Division, 2003, p.29), re-igniting the vocational complexity already discussed. The expectation is that curacy is not only academic and that further growth in formation and competence must take place. The report encouraged curacy programmes to develop academically accredited programmes (Ministry Division, 2006) and to do so in regional collaborative partnerships (Christou, 2009), again potentially raising the professional profile

of curacy academic programme directors. A review publication of the Hind Report published in 2006 called, *Shaping the Future*, stated that during curacy an academic qualification should be an option but not a necessary requirement (ibid, p.11). However, such accreditation, it was acknowledged, gives an assurance of quality in terms of provision, assessment and consistency (ibid, p.35), continuing to present a strong case for academic accreditation and validation of ministerial training programmes, reflected in the 2003, *Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church* (Ministry Division, 2003). This report also contains the learning outcomes for curacy which originated from the selection criteria following the ‘Report of a Working Party on Criteria for Selection for Ministry of the Church of England’ in 1993. *Criteria for Selection for Ministry* appeared in the ABM Policy Paper 3a (Heywood, 2000). This was reviewed in 2010 in the, ‘Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England’, leading, under Common Tenure, to the Assessment at the end of Curacy, also in 2010.

In response to government changes to funding in higher education, Ministry Division published in 2011, *Formation for Ministry and a Framework for Higher Education Validation*, known as the Sheffield Report. Among aspects discussed in this report, (summary paper GS 1836), it aimed “to provide publicly recognised training of a good standard over which it has more control” (Ministry Division, 2011, p.1) and so as a result, created a single suite of vocational awards validated by one higher educational institution (HEI) which will allow for greater coherence of provision between IME 1-3 and IME 4-7 (ibid). This Common Awards programme started

in September 2014 validated by the University of Durham. *Resourcing Ministerial Education in the Church of England* (2015, pp.2, 6), (paper GS 1979), highlights two important statements, namely, “significant increase in the numbers and quality of ministerial leaders” are required and that “the quality of IME Phase 2 and CMD provision need significant overall improvement”. How this was expressed within the authors context will now be explored.

Curacy/Academic Programme Directors: A non-traditional Context

The dual role of the author was accountable to the Director of Formation and Ministry (his line-manager) who represented the department on Senior Staff, the body that directs all decisions within the diocese. The suffragan bishop had responsibility for curacy training. The potential curates and their appropriate placement within a parish for curacy was discussed at Senior Staff (steered by the suffragan bishop). Once the incumbent of the parish and curate agreed that this match of curate, incumbent and placement was an appropriate and agreed context for curacy training, the author was informed. What agency a C/APD had, to influence and shape the curacy training and the experience of the curate is important in terms of a recognition of their professional status, especially if they were not a priest. In doctoral research by Gerhardt (2015) of two curacies, survey data revealed by a curate that his C/APD, “had no authority to do anything and his job was to refer it on”. Another curate explained, “I am not sure what his [the C/APD] role was”. The curate later refers to the C/APD as “the overseer of the curates” and “training overseer

person”. Another curate refers to the C/APD as the “diocese ‘chap-pie’”. During the interviews of this research, no curates referred to the C/APD at all. What was the actual impact the C/APD had upon curacy? Considering the importance of the role, are C/APDs qualified in adult education, programme management and do they have expertise in curriculum development? Many C/APDs are not involved in the selection of training incumbents nor are they formally involved in the ordination services. What is the academic career progression for C/APDs or what benefits/incentives are there for them to remain in these positions to ensure continuity in academic practice? Do qualifications add to the notion of professionalism? Furthermore, do actions taken by others (i.e. organisational bureaucracy) that contradict the C/APDs role and values/integrity (i.e. their professionalism), cause organisation-professional conflict (OPC)?

Research by Gerhardt (2015) indicates a few examples of this within our present case study of the Church of England. A curate ordained as a distinctive deacon a year later due to the context they were in, was locally ordained as a priest for them to baptise and marry. This curate now wishes to move to another diocese and there is fear that their ordination as priest may not be accepted by that diocese due to not following national guidelines. A stipendiary reader licenced as the focal leader of a parish expressed frustration that they cannot baptise or marry. He was ordained without the need of a BAP. If at a BAP, you have candidated to be a self-supporting minister (SSM) but during curacy, you wish to change your status to that of a stipendiary priest (paid priest), general practice is that the person should return to a candidates’

panel at a BAP for consideration of a change of status. One curate was made to do just that and because of a change of status had an extra year of curacy training. Another SSM curate in the same year group simply applied for a stipendiary post once their curacy was completed and was granted the post without the need to return to a candidate’s panel for a change in status. These are examples of disparity and examples of practice that may cause OPC. “Individuals who perceived higher levels of OPC were less committed to the organisation, had lower job satisfaction and higher turnover intentions” (Sejjaaka and Kaawaase, 2014).

HE professional career development is dependent on several key factors as indicated on employment job descriptions, which are key indicators toward academic professional identity and career development. These include qualifications, publication in top peer reviewed journals, presenting papers at academic conferences, high impact research and successfully securing research funding.

Methodology

The researcher must have a great degree of reflexivity, a thoughtful, conscious self-awareness (Rogers, 2012, p.4) because the researcher has their own interest, agenda or aim. “Truth involves a certain way of thinking”, argues Jacoby (2002, p.34), and so the researcher is included in the truth criterion. This is further explicated since this research aims to help the author understand their own academic professional identity and career development. The researcher included their narrative as actor and agent because of,

the reflexive and self-reflexive potential of experience, in which the knower is part of the matrix of what is known, and where the researcher needs to ask... in what ways has s/he grown in, and shaped the process of research (Merrill & West, 2009, p.31).

The researcher aims to be self-critical of their theoretical predispositions and preferences (Schwandt, 2007). Collini (2012, p.98) recognises this bias when he says, "In articulating the argument for education as a public good, we must be careful not to overstate the case". Collini (ibid, p.3) however, shares the sentiment of some within the Church of England, when he says, "there is unprecedented scepticism about the benefits of a University education". The review of literature confirmed the presence of professionalism and the need for further professionalism within the clerical role, even if resisted or debated with a still strong connection to education. However, it raised questions as to whether professional development for the C/APD in HE can take place within the context of the Church of England.

A survey questionnaire was designed online (see appendix 1), and those responsible for curacy training within the respective dioceses were invited to participate. There were 41 responses. Data was collated, and key significant points highlighted. Key to this descriptive analysis was the HE professional identity and career development of the Curacy/Academic Programme Director (C/APD).

Some key questions addressed by the survey were:

- Which dioceses officially have an IME 4-7 Curacy/Academic Programme

Director post?

- What is the longevity of the role?
- What are the specifications of the role?
- What are the most common dual roles?

Other key data involved qualifications, post titles, what aspects of the role were common and how many of those in the role were ordained priests. Data is represented in tables.

Findings and Discussion

Qualifications

Using the Church of England clerical directory called Crockfords, the qualifications of C/APDs at the time of appointment as an indication of the expectation of the qualification for the role were identified. This also helped to identify how many in these posts were ordained clergy. Most were ordained clergy. Most had a Masters, followed by PhDs, then degrees and finally only three had a diploma. One of these was at the time running a university validated curacy programme for a BA and MA award. To have a diploma qualified person as an academic programme leader of BA and MA level programmes is not common practice in HE. The appointment of the author as a C/APD had a MA qualification in theology or education as a requirement. The high frequency of high qualifications indicates a continued historical precedent of educated clergy and the expectation that those appointed as C/APD are qualified. It is consistent with the analysis of historical notions of professionalism and consistent with HE expectations. However, anecdotally, the author argues that having the status of an Area Dean

or DDO or Archdeacon has greater authority and credence than an academic qualification, especially if that qualification is not even in Theology. This was evident in terms of progression after the role of C/APD. Career development as a non-ordained academic within the Church of England that honours its priestly ranks created low OCB for the author. However, a doctorate partly funded by the diocese encouraged an increase in OCB because it provided opportunities to engage with the annual Church of England Faith in Research conference and academic communities at the university which all aided a sense of being a part of an academic community of practice.

Dual Roles

The most popular dual role (51%) found among respondents was that of a C/APD and continuing ministerial development (CMD) officer i.e. CMD is similar to CPD. This dual role would not necessarily necessitate the pursuit of an academic professional identity nor would it necessarily allow the time to pursue such an identity. The second most common dual role (37%) was that of the C/APD and diocesan director of ordinands (DDO). Due to the nature of this dual role, the person would be ordained and be involved in ordination services, although the data indicated that 76% of the C/APDs were already involved in ordination services. The author was not which felt undermining and led to a constant low OCB in that regard. This dual role also enhances the discussion before about clerical role status as a DDO as the potential dominant identity. Latham (2012), an ordained priest, in her MA research recommended a way forward to improve curacy by focusing on enhancing the role of the DDO. In contrast,

other research by Gerhardt (2015), to improve curacy, focussed on the role of the C/APD. To be a DDO requires being a priest which means a minimum qualification of a diploma. This could enhance professional identity and career development. However, if most curacies do not participate in further HE validated academic study, relying more on skills development, then a dual role of CMD and C/APD would have greater coherence but may not encourage academic professional identity or HE career development. Only one person was employed full time in the role of C/APD covering IME 1-7. Some commented that they have more than dual roles for example IME 1-3 and DDO as well as a C/APD. It may be more accurate therefore to speak of multiple roles rather than dual roles and this multiplicity may hamper professional identity and HE career development and impact upon OCB.

The questions related to this data indicating the weighting of these dual roles (see appendix 1) can be seen in Table 1 below:

Role Specifications

Most respondents (71%) indicated that a theological degree was required as a minimum requirement for the role in their diocese compared to only 52% indicating experience in adult education. This narrows academic profile and career development to only those within theological disciplines. Educational disciplines, specifically adult education, do not appear to be valued in the same way. This was the case of the author having higher educational qualifications than theological ones. From the 38 respondents, 58% indicated that the role had to have ordained experience, due to the three-year placement in a ministry

Table 1

The Dual Roles of Curacy/Academic Programme Director

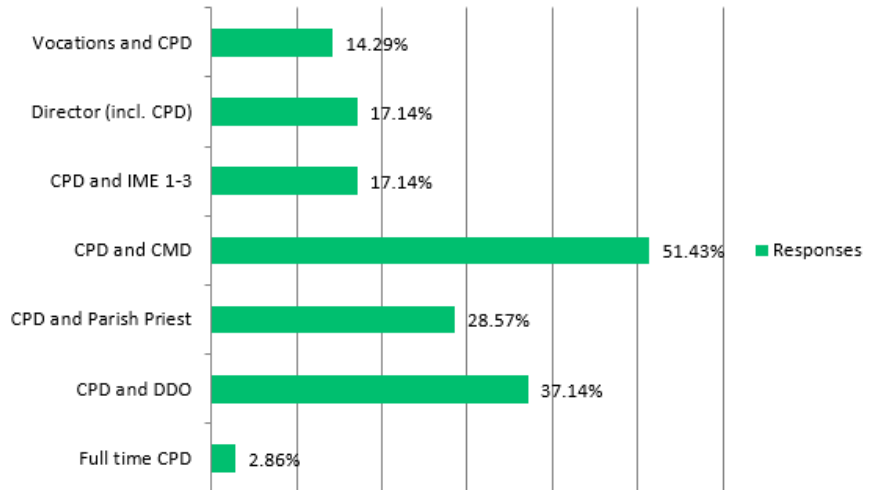
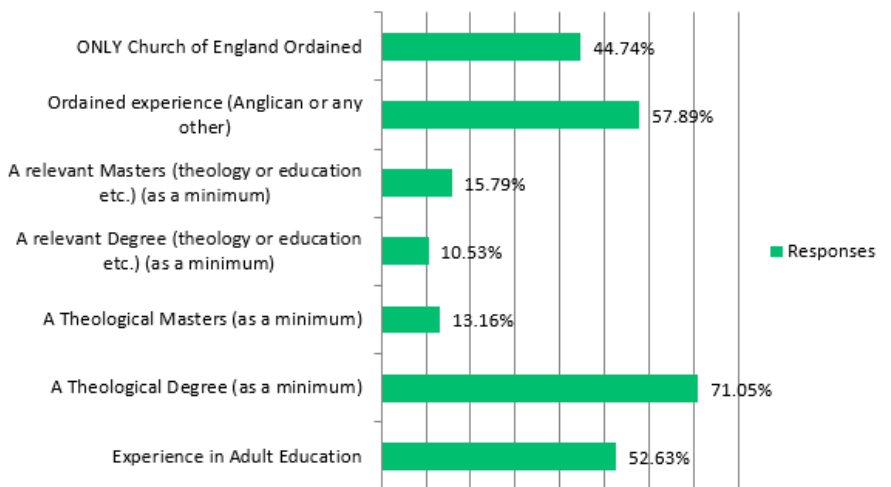


Table 2

Curacy/Academic Programme Director Role Specifications



context as a key part of the IME 4-7 training. Data collected to this question (see appendix 1) is indicated in Table 2 below regarding role specifications for C/APDs:

Due to the academic emphasis, it is understandable why there is a perception that C/APDs are too academic and why curacies are too theological/academic if it over-emphasises academic attainment over pastoral experience. However, an academic focus would allow HE

professional identity and development. The data, however, did dispelled the premise that the C/APDs had little or no parish experience and therefore that they would be overtly academic in focus.

Many of the comments to the data indicated that the role specifications changed over time to become more stringent. Others indicated that they inherited the role as more roles were combined with existing roles. Some indicated that

lay officers were advertised for the role i.e. a non-ordained focus. The diversity of expectation may hamper a clear indication as to what the role requires and therefore what actual impact the role has had on curacy, and HE professional identity and development. The increased bureaucracy may also increase OPC and lead to a low OCB.

Although the author was a Baptist minister and missionary, they were precluded from certain practices such as presiding at the Eucharist because they were not an ordained priest (Church of England, Methodist or Catholic). These restrictions, in addition to competing with the clerical role status, negatively affected their OCB.

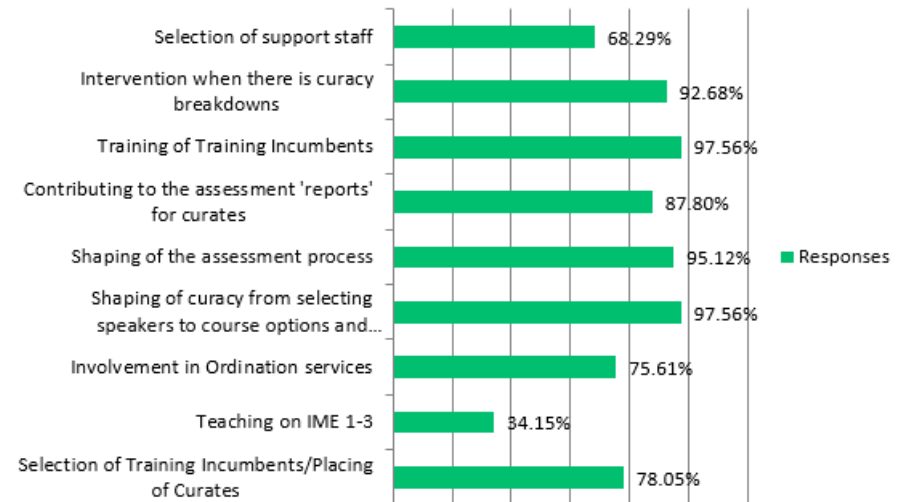
Role Activity

Considering the mix of multiple roles already indicated; it was a surprise to discover that 78% of respondents were involved in the placing of curates and therefore the selection of training incumbents. This was not the case for the author. It was another factor of low OCB. To influence this decision, the author did start collating lists of good training incumbents based on phase 1 training parishes (IME 1-3) and even lay training which allowed repeated assessments to combine and inform the selection of the best training incumbents and training parishes for curacy. Details of the questions answered can be seen in appendix 1. The data for this question is displayed in Table 3 below:

It was surprising to discover in the data that only 68% of C/APDs selected the support staff that they would work with during curacy, assuming C/APDs would hold some sense of management over the process and those involved as 'staff'.

Table 3

The Activity Included With The Role



Considering that 98% of C/APDs shaped the curacy, they are key people to include in phase 1 training in the holistic process of training i.e. the IME 1-7 process, creating where possible greater continuity between the two phases and maintaining greater HE contact or connection. However, only 34% of C/APDs indicated that this happens in their diocese. The disparity of professional action in the role led the author to reflect upon the confusion of their HE professional identity and development in the activities they were included and excluded on. It undermined their academic status and action, led to OPC and resulted in low OCB.

Curacy Data

As already demonstrated, there is considerable variation nationally on what curacies look like in each diocese. This variation results in different practice and creates OPC scenarios. As part of doctoral research, Gerhardt (2016) discovered that before the common suite

of awards which started in the academic year of September 2014, only eight of the 41 dioceses had a curacy shaped around a university validated award (about 20%). A further four dioceses allowed curates the option of pursuing an academic award during curacy if they so choose (about 9%). That means most dioceses did not have a further HE validated award as part of their curacy programme (about 71%). Data collected for this paper indicated that only one diocese expected all curates to participate in a further validated academic award as part of curacy. There are exemption criteria for example, if a curate is already engaged in a MA or PhD or has already achieved a MA or PhD in theology or the equivalent. The data below may therefore be misleading due to not specifying the question in that detail. More accurately, the data indicated that 26% of dioceses allow curates the option to do further academic study as part of their curacy and only 21% of these would involve Common Awards modules, taught as part of the curacy. Using

this data, it is accurate to recognise that still only about a third of dioceses are involved in further academic study as a part of curacy. This data resonates with data collected before the start of the Common Suite of Awards. However, intriguingly 70% of dioceses use essays as part of their assessment process. This paradox again has grave implications on HE professional identity and development if employed by a diocese to oversee academic programmes, using assessment methods associated with HE but needing to convince those involved in the process that it is not academic or overly academic. Based on authors experience, their appointed dioceses' academic validated curacy occupied less than 10% of the year in formal taught sessions. 75% of dioceses concurred that this is also their approach. Is the C/APD profile therefore distinct enough to elicit academic professional status and development? It was the authors experience that it does not, hence this research and this has led eventually, if you are not an ordained priest, to declining OCB. The clear majority of C/APDs moved onto posts within the Church of England that necessitated being a priest such as a full-time parish priest, archdeacon and even bishop.

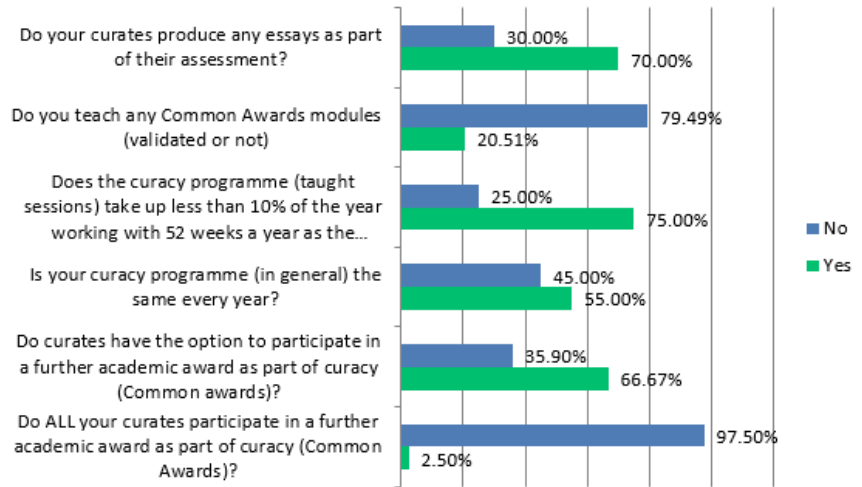
The questions answered can be seen in appendix 1. The data can be seen below in Table 4.

Autobiographical Reflections

Positive organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) as defined by Cohen and Kol (2004) incorporates role status that allows altruism, autonomy and professionalism. They found that in their study of nurses, that there was a higher correlation between OCB and formal education and professionalism (ibid, p.401). In other words, the higher the academic

Table 4

Data About The Kind of Curacy Implemented



award becomes (and HE and professional socialisation), the higher the demands for the factors that lead to OCB will be. Shafer et al. (2002) argue that as individuals move up in the hierarchy of a bureaucratic organisation, the organisational values begin to trump professional values. The professional 'out-growing the organisation' and/or being in direct conflict between their individual professionalism and organisational expectations, will lead to an increase in organisation-professional conflict (OPC). High levels of OPC will result in low levels of job satisfaction and therefore higher turnover intentions (Sejjaaka & Kaawaase, 2014).

One of the outcomes of doctoral research by Gerhardt (2016) highlighted that if the Church of England as an organisation seeks continuity between phase 1 (compulsory HE training) and phase 2 training (non-compulsory HE training), then the continuity must incorporate the HE professional identity and development of curacy/academic programme directors (C/APDs). The author acknowledges, this is important because they are not a priest and therefore do not have a competing vocational identity. If

most dioceses are not engaging in further HE academic study as part of their curacy, the continuity from phase 1 training may be more of a VET sector inspired process. In the authors appointed diocese they were seeking to place ordinands in a training parish in phase 1 that could potentially become their curacy i.e. they do not remain in their sending parish. The curacy context can then be a lot more complex by allowing multiple parishes and multiple training incumbents acting as coaches. The training incumbent from the phase 1 training parish acts as the lead training incumbent during curacy i.e. a key consistency aspect and works in collaboration with others. The post of the C/APD therefore becomes more than just a facilitation, management and enforcement role, and so allows the expression of expertise, autonomy of role and broader authority. A professional dis-empowerment can create a high sense of injustice, a key aspect of OCB according to Cohen and Kol (2004).

Conclusion

The Church of England as a case study has a long and complicated history with education and professionalism. Recent research indicates that this complexity persists. Priestly status/profile/identity and organisational values supersede HE and professional identity, both in values and structure, although incorporated within its practice and organisational narratives. The high frequency of high qualifications indicates a continued historical precedent of educated clergy and the expectation that those appointed as C/APDs are qualified. However, the status of an Area Dean or DDO or Archdeacon had greater authority and credence than an academic qualification. Professional identity and development and the impact by the discovery of multiple roles indicated that this multiplicity may hamper OCB. Many of the comments to the data indicated that the role specifications changed over time to become more stringent. Others indicated that they inherited the role as more roles were combined with existing roles i.e. multiplicity of roles. Some indicated that lay officers were advertised for the role. The diversity of expectation may hamper a clear indication as to what the role requires and thereby impact upon the role and HE professional identity and development. The disparity and paradox of professional action of the role further adds to this complexity and potential negative impact upon OCB and the consequential increase of OPC.

In comparison, working now full time in a HEI, within a year, the author has experienced much more of the HE activities accustomed to HEIs. Few of these took place in the previous post employed by the diocese as a curacy

academic programme director. The increase in qualifications (especially if they not in theology) may increase OPC and cause lower OCB. Publication in peer reviewed journals outside of theology may further add to conflicting developing trajectories. Presenting papers at HE academic conferences exposing the academic programme director to HE professional community may add to the discontent of a conflicting and struggling HE professional identity. The limitations to research and successful research funding, not being directly employed by a HEI further excludes the academic programme director from a potential HE professional identity. With few curacy programmes engaging in further HE and curacy programme directors not engaging in HE teaching at the IME 1-3 level, and priestly roles and status taking credence, it is unlikely that non-ordained academic programme directors would naturally progress within the Church of England context in their HE professional identity and career development.

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Appendix 1

Survey Questionnaire

Question 1

- Indicate the name of the Diocese and all C/APDs appointed between 2003-2013

Question 2

Indicate present C/APD dual roles- Full time Curacy Programme Director (CPD)

- CPD and DDO
- CPD and parish priest
- CPD and CMD
- CPD and IME 1-3
- Director (incl. CPD)
- Vocations and CPD

Question 3

Indicate C/APD role specifications- Experience in adult education

- Theological degree (as a minimum requirement)
- Theological masters (as a minimum requirement)
- A relevant degree (as a minimum in theology or education)
- A relevant masters (as a minimum in theology or education)
- Ordained experience
- Only Church of England ordained

Question 4

Indicate C/APD involvement Selection of training incumbents & placement of curates

- Teaching on IME 1-3
- Involvement in ordination services
- Shaping of curacy from selecting speakers to course options and development
- Shaping of the assessment process

- Contributing to the assessment reports for curates
- Training of training incumbents
- Intervention when there is a curacy breakdown
- Selection of support staff

Question 5

Indicate 'yes' or 'no' to statements below

- Do all your curates participate in a further academic award as part of curacy (Common Awards)?
- Do curates have the option to participate in a further academic award as part of curacy (Common Awards)?
- Is your curacy programme (in general) the same every year?
- Does the curacy programme (taught sessions) take up less than 10% of the year working with 52 weeks a year as the standard ratio?
- Do you teach any Common Awards modules (validated or not)?
- Do your curates produce any essays as part of their assessment?



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From Knowledge to Wisdom: Indigenous Women's Narratives of Doing Well With Career Decision Making

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Abstract

Indigenous women in Canada are outperforming other Canadians in the labour market (DePratto, 2015). However, we currently have limited understanding about how

Indigenous women decide on their choice of career. We sought to understand Indigenous women's narratives of doing well in making career decisions. Ten women volunteered to tell their stories of how they made career decisions that resulted in positive outcomes. Using a narrative research design, in-depth interviews were recorded and narrative accounts were generated that illuminated the ways in which women in this study overcame life circumstances in their quest to establish a career. Verbatim transcriptions and individual narrative accounts were constructed. The narratives were then analyzed using a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). All participants confirmed the following five main themes: (1) focusing on a career direction, (2) pursuing further education and training, (3) overcoming and learning from adversity, (4) relational experiences that influenced career decisions and (5) connection to Aboriginal community as part of career decision-making. Implications for future research, career theory development and education as well as career counselling practice are discussed.

Indigenous peoples and settlers have been living in one another's presence since the onset of colonialism and throughout centuries of environmental dispossession and cultural upheaval (Richmond, 2015; Richmond & Ross, 2009). The changes Indigenous communities have endured over the past 150 years have transformed their

relationships with the land, their way of life, and modes of survival. "Loss of land is the precise cause of Indigenous impoverishment" wrote the late Secwepemc leader Art Manual (Manual & Derrickson, 2015, p.18). The overall percentage of Indigenous lands today in Canada is 0.2 per cent, with the settler share being 99.8 percent (Manual & Derrickson, 2015). In this era of reconciliation, it is essential to recognize our historical truths as a nation in our efforts to undo colonial harms such as the poverty imposed on Indigenous ways of life.

The National Aboriginal Economic Development Board (Fiscal Realities Economists, 2016) asserts several bold findings and recommendations for closing the gap economically and socially for Indigenous peoples. They write: (a) the poverty rate for Indigenous peoples in Canada is 11% higher than the non-Indigenous population; (b) closing this gap means that 173,234 fewer Indigenous people will be living in poverty, and an estimated increase in Gross Domestic Product of 27.7 billion annually; (c) the number of Indigenous people of working age (25-64) increased 21% between 2006 and 2011 compared with only 5% growth among the non-Indigenous population; and (d) the implications for improving equity in education and training for Indigenous peoples could result in an additional 8.5 billion in income earned annually by the estimated Indigenous workforce.

Indigenous women specifically have lower employment and labour force participation rates than Indigenous men yet have been outperforming both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women in labour market growth (Employment and Social Development Canada [ESDC], 2015). In 2014, Indigenous women comprised over one third of the Indigenous self-employed workforce becoming entrepreneurs at twice the rate of non-Indigenous women (ESDC, 2015). Among Indigenous peoples in Canada, women have higher levels of education, greater access to employment in growth sectors such as the service and knowledge industries, and greater entrepreneurship (DePratto, 2015). There is a wealth of knowledge held by Indigenous women and many untold stories to illustrate how they are doing well with their career-decision making in spite of centuries of environmental dispossession and cultural loss.

Literature Review

Landscape of Indigenous Women's Careers

There is a lack of research that focuses on the career experiences of Indigenous women, and a lack of research concerning Indigenous women who have done well. It is well documented in the literature that Indigenous peoples in Canada have experienced a legacy of acculturation imposed on them by the Canadian government (Gerber, 2014; Halseth, 2013). Discriminative government policies embedded in the Indian Act have targeted Indigenous women as a group and terminated their "Indian Status" thus excluding them from their Indigenous rights (Lawrence, 2003). This often rendered Indigenous women less

successful in achieving economic and sociopolitical freedom than non-Indigenous women and men in Canada (Bourassa, McKay-McNabb, & Hampton, 2004). In Todd's (2012) focus group research with Indigenous and Non-Indigenous entrepreneurial young women whose businesses were predominantly in creative and cultural industries, the author identified some important trends. For Indigenous women, support for those seeking self-employment was found through a number of government-supported programs. Social networks have important roles within Indigenous communities with an emphasis on giving back to their respective communities through their businesses. Positive orientations to self-employment were developed through family, business, and educational networks. Transitions towards self-employment were identified as complex, involving educational, occupational, and family careers. The social-structural circumstances of urban Indigenous communities in particular were the focus of Todd's work, excluding the experiences of rural or northern Indigenous women/communities.

In her critical engagement with Statistics Canada data from 2001 and 2006, Gerber (2014) scrutinized the extent of social inequality in terms of education, employment, and income between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations and among the three distinct groups among Indigenous peoples: The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Métis (who are the most urban) are closest to non-Indigenous peoples in education, employment, and income. On all accounts, First Nations and Inuit women "remain the lowest ranks" in Canada. Suffering both physical and social isolation (i.e., living on reserve lands designated Crown

Lands which comprise 0.2% of the National land base and set apart for the use and benefit of a band), Aboriginal people have had inferior education, limited or non-existent employment opportunities, and lack of access to credit/capital to prevent free-market competition by communities, businesses, or individuals (Gerber, 2014). In overcoming physical and social isolation, some steps may involve acculturation and assimilation (Gerber, 2014). Pursuing post-secondary education and/or acquiring full-time employment/higher salaries means moving away from community, unless they are second or third generation urbanites (Gerber, 2014).

For Indigenous women who work in rural, resource-based economies, work experiences can be precarious and seasonal (Morgan, 2015). In her case study, Morgan identified ten key experiences amongst 20 Indigenous women cannery workers in Prince Rupert, BC: (a) on-call working conditions; (b) economic downturns closing employment generating industries; (c) income insecurity; (d) the closure of affordable grocery stores; (e) high job competition in the service sector; (f) reliance on social assistance, food banks, and high barriers to accessing employment insurance; (g) lack of affordable formal childcare; (h) lack of affordable training programs that would lift them into full-time work; (i) discrimination based on race and ageism; and (j) lack of public transportation that accommodates insecure work schedules. One stereotype affecting Indigenous women workers was the perception of Indigenous people as being limited by culture and traditions, such as traditional forms of preserving salmon being viewed synonymously with manufacturing labour in a salmon cannery (Morgan, 2015).

These stereotypes may cause Indigenous peoples to be occupationally limited as well (Knight, 1996).

Career Decision-making

In order to frame the study, we provide a review of theories used in the field of vocational psychology in the conceptualization of career decision-making. There is recognition in the literature that traditional career theories are not readily applicable to the experience of Indigenous young adults (Young, Marshall, & Valach, 2007). Also, there are very few career counselling models for application with Indigenous populations (Neumann, McCormick, Amundson, & McLean, 2000). Career development literature and career decision making literature, including Indigenous career development/career decision making literature has only minimally acknowledged the contribution of contextual factors in both theory and practice. McCormick and Amundson's (1997) Career/Life Planning Model was developed specifically for use with Indigenous clients and Indigenous youth (Neumann, McCormick, Amundson, & McLean, 2000). In recognition of traditional values and processes of many Indigenous peoples, this model emphasizes the importance of including family and community members in the counselling process in an effort to provide support and encouragement (Neumann et al., 2000). It also shares some similarities with the tenets of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which is a contemporary model for career counselling that views career counselling as a holistic process and considers multiple aspects of the client's context (Lent & Brown, 2013). The SCCT framework has been used to examine adolescent career

development, including career decision-making, but with limited attention to cultural dimensions (Rogers & Creed, 2011). We felt the need to position our research using theory that recognizes aspects of cultural diversity, plurality of worldviews, and experiences that are uniquely associated with Indigenous ways of living. Some of these experiences include the increased emphasis on community in the decision-making process, the role of relationships in career planning, and the reliance on meaning-making through spirituality in setting life/career goals. These realities are often seen to be at odds with the priorities of the dominant culture, which adds to the extent of marginalization that Indigenous people experience.

Purpose of the Study and Research Question

It has been argued that poverty eradication is the most important determinant of health to address Indigenous peoples of Canada (Reading, 2009). Despite the myriad socioeconomic and political challenges faced by Indigenous people of Canada, many attain career success. However, there is little research that investigates the experiences of Indigenous people who do attain career success. In particular there is very limited empirical research on the qualitative experiences of Indigenous women's successful career decision making. Thus, the aim of the current study was to gain further insight into the contextual and personal issues related to career decision making among this understudied population. Our research team sought to understand the benefits and challenges faced by Indigenous women during their career decision-making experiences over time. We asked ten Indigenous

women the following research question: "What stories do Indigenous women narrate about doing well with career decision making?" A narrative research design was employed to answer this question.

Method

Indigenous perspectives specifically privilege research practices that begin from Indigenous experiences (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999 & 2005). One of the authors (Goodwill) is an Indigenous woman engaged with this research, and is able to "claim [to] a genealogical, cultural and political set of experiences" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 12) granting an emic perspective on this collaborative effort. We chose a narrative research design because it complements the oral traditions of storytelling. Narrative methodology is compatible with Indigenous epistemology that is formed through oral narratives, storytelling and art. It encourages multiple ways of knowing (Barton, 2004). Narratives are viewed as active processes of meaning-making for those who create and share their stories (Hiles et al., 2017). Narrative construction also lends chronological, sequential structure and order to events and actions, highlighting individual and communal perspectives on these events (Hiles, et al., 2017; Riessman, 2008; Sarbin, 1986). By investigating the individual narratives of Indigenous women we are able to see how culture is at work in the construction of their narrative accounts.

Recruitment Procedures and Participant Descriptions

Ten young adult Indigenous women volunteered for this study. Once The University of British

Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board approved the research ethics for this study, we began the recruitment process. Recruitment posters were distributed at universities, colleges and Indigenous community centres within the lower mainland of British Columbia. Snowball sampling was also employed through word of mouth. The inclusion criteria for the study were: (a) English speaker, (b) Indigenous woman between the age of 25 to 35 years; and (c) self-reporting as doing well in career decision-making. Informed consent was obtained once the study was described to the volunteer participants. It is important to note that since the participants were recruited as individuals we are not able to provide their First Nations affiliations. We did not work with any specific First Nations however we are able to indicate that participants came from a range of Indigenous Nations situated in Western Canada. Demographic information was gathered at the end of the narrative interview. The ten participants were between the ages of 26 to 33 years, earned an average income of \$0 (student) to \$150,000. Seven of the women had bachelor's degrees and two were pursuing graduate degrees. Only one woman remained in her native community to pursue her career as an early childhood educator; all others attended educational institutions outside their communities. Examples of the careers described in the study were: Aboriginal student support worker; coordinator of an Aboriginal sport organization; massage therapist, actor, dancer, Aboriginal educator, Aboriginal health board member; entrepreneur, university/college student and law student.

Data Collection

Open-ended audio-recorded interviews were held at the University of British Columbia in (co-author's name) research lab. The interviews commenced after all participants gave informed consent. The interviews ranged in length from 40 minutes to 1 hour. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Data was managed through the use of Atlas-ti, a computer software program designed to analyze qualitative data. All data was stored securely in (co-author's name) research lab and all participant files were encrypted and pseudonyms were assigned to each participant in this study.

Data Analysis

Once the transcripts were completed, the research team created a narrative account from each of the ten transcripts. In this process, the content was placed in sequential order and all details that answered the research question were included in the participants' stories about doing well in their career decision-making. The narratives were transferred into the Atlas-ti program in preparation for the thematic analysis. The ten narrative accounts were then analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-step guide for thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke describe the process of coding and theme development as "organic, exploratory and inherently subjective, involving active, creative and reflexive research" (p. 741). Thematic analysis involved the following stages: (a) becoming familiar with the data through the process of transcription and reading and rereading the participants' stories; (b) coding the data to identify important information that addresses the research question; (c) reviewing the codes that were generated and

collating them into possible overarching categories of themes and sub-themes using a mind map to look for potential relationships or patterns between codes; (d) reviewing these themes in order to rework and refine them until they accurately represent the data set; (e) defining, refining and naming themes, as well as any sub-themes, in order to describe how the themes were an essential part of the data; (f) writing up the findings using evidence from the data to demonstrate how each theme was a vital part of the stories told by the participants in the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Trustworthiness and Rigor

As this study was part of a larger Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) research project involving the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique, trustworthiness was ascertained through nine credibility checks for the overall study. Parts of the nine credibility checks that pertain to the narrative portion of this study were: (1) cross-checking final themes with participants through member checking process; (2) expert opinions by two outside experts in the field; (3) theoretical agreement—themes were considered within the realm of both the existing literature and the researchers' assumptions; (4) descriptive validity—accuracy of the findings must reasonably represent the participants' experiences; (5) interview fidelity to check the consistency in interviewing.

Findings

Through an in-depth narrative analysis, five main themes emerged from the narrative accounts. The themes were endorsed by all participants and are as follows: (1) Focusing on a Career

Direction; (2) Pursuing Further Education and Training; (3) Overcoming and Learning from Adversity; (4) Relational Experiences that Influenced Career Decisions; and (5) Connection to Aboriginal Community as Part of Career Decision Making. All the participants were asked an evaluative scaling question about how they would rate their career decision-making on a scale from 1 (doing poorly) to 10 (doing very well). All ten participants scored their response between 8 and 9 on the scale. In the description of the five main themes in this section, participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity and provide confidentiality.

Focusing on a Career Direction

All of the women in this study discussed focusing on a career direction during childhood and pursuing a career direction throughout their lives. Several had early career opportunities that influenced their career direction. Within this theme, participants spoke about identifying career interests and then investigating how to obtain that career and exploring the career opportunities available in their fields of interest. They also described work experiences that they assessed as not having a future or not meeting their long-term career goals. Marianne provides an excellent example of focusing on a career direction early in her life:

I've always wanted to be a lawyer. From a fairly young age I kind of had an idea of what I wanted my job to be. When I became an adult I felt like I always kind of built towards that one goal. . . . I worked a few jobs and still remembered my long-term goal of what I wanted to do.

Many had interruptions to their career pursuits due to life circumstances such as financial issues, family obligations, and pregnancy. However, there was persistence in their narratives in terms of learning how to navigate systems, how to network within organizations, and making important connections to further their career goals. As Jenna summarizes her learning process:

Everything really led me to where I am now. I really see everything kind of taught me a different lesson and that what I liked and what I didn't like and gave me different skills. That was an amazing opportunity . . . to get those skills I needed for networking. . . . This internship is my first step on a career path because it's successful, it's good pay and it's something that I'm kind of proud to tell people about.

Also implicit in this theme was a discussion about clarifying personal values in terms of their career decision-making. Self-knowledge and self-exploration for many was the means through which they clarified their values in terms of discerning a career path. For example, Carol stated: "I learned that what I had to say was valuable and so it allowed me to recognize that within myself that I could do a variety of things." Emma discussed how she determined what she valued in a career through experiences within stressful workplaces where she learned that a positive work environment was very important to her to maintain her health over time. All the participants who were mothers spoke about parenting as a precedence that had career implications (i.e., postponing educational opportunities; moving back to their home communities; seeking support from family

members; taking temporary employment as examples).

In summary, focusing on a career direction from childhood to young adulthood, exploring personal values, and having persistence in terms of pursuing career goals appear to be important factors in their success in making future career decisions.

Pursuing Further Education and Training

In this theme, many women described having family members who went to university and felt encouraged to follow in their footsteps. However, some family members discouraged women in this study from their non-academic choices. For example, as a teen Marianne told her father she wanted to become a mechanic but

He completely shut me down saying: 'You can't do that; you're too smart to be a mechanic. Look where I got being a mechanic!' . . . I highly respected my parents and I knew from then on that that wasn't a good choice for me.

Many experienced difficulty at university or college because there was no support for Aboriginal students. Carol explained:

I was completely lost. I came from an isolated northern community; I didn't know anybody; I didn't know how to write a paper. So I just had to learn about how to live and how to manage schooling and manage studying. . . . When I got pregnant in my second year, that's when I realized I really needed my education and I needed to start being serious about school.

Later Carol states: “I feel like education is the one thing that can help change our communities and it’s kind of what I’ve been trying to focus on.” Carol’s career path eventually led to a position with a university as an Aboriginal Student Support Provider.

Several women stated that pursuing an education was a catalyst in meeting their career goals. Cheryl describes her experience this way:

I started taking some women’s studies classes . . . and I would say that was like a big turning point . . . learning more about the systems and oppression and how the world works in a deeper way as I was putting words to experiences I’ve had all through my life. . . . It was quite a big moment in my life. . . . I was like, okay how do I translate this to real life? And then the social service worker diploma translated it for me.

Cheryl eventually achieved a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work and is now considering a Master’s degree in Social Work.

All of the women sought further education and qualifications/certification as a way to advance their career goals. These choices were not easy for almost all of the women in this study but again their perseverance and their ability to seek support from others helped them to succeed in their career decision-making.

Overcoming and Learning from Adversity in Career Decision-Making

This theme garnered the largest support from the women in this study. Several women described feeling lost after high school

especially if they moved to the city to go to college or university. They also felt unprepared for university and shared that they did not have all the skills they needed to succeed. A few participants had to make career decisions when they became pregnant at university/college and had to quit for a few years to raise their children. All of these women spoke about needing to continue or finish their education, as it was important to their future career goals.

Six of the participants chose a career in Aboriginal support services, Aboriginal sport, Aboriginal health services and Ministry of Education in Aboriginal Education. One participant chose a career in Indigenous student support services after getting her degree due to the adverse experiences she had to overcome as a university student without financial support. Alicia describes her application for financial support when Bill C 3 made a college education a possibility. Bill C 3 is entitled the Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act. It passed in 2010 and included clauses that provide “that any person born prior to 17 April 1985 and is a direct descendant of a person registered or entitled to be registered under the Indian Act may also be entitled registration” (p. 153, Hurley & Simone, 2014). During her first year of college she discovered her application was not successful because it was determined that she didn’t have Aboriginal status. This created a serious financial situation where she struggled to finish her college degree with more student loans and more debt. However, she found the stamina to complete her degree and continue on with her career goals. Emma explains that she had to go on welfare for a period of time when she lost her job. She states:

That was a bad experience because it taught me to be lazy. I got into this mentality of not really having to work for my money and just blow my time away doing nothing. . . . I finally learned that I don’t want to be dependent on other people [for money] cause that’s very stressful.

All the participants in the study described the experience of career barriers as a learning experience, as a motivator and as a struggle but also part of the process of finally succeeding in their career goals. All of the women related how the adversity they experienced served as a catalyst for their career path. Sherry spoke about receiving career-limiting advice. “At that time there was deficit thinking about focusing on a degree in Indigenous education or culture. It wasn’t seen as a good degree to pursue.” She explained that other people just assumed that because you were First Nations that you should be doing studies in First Nations or working toward a social work degree. Karen also spoke about other’s assumptions. “Oh, you’re First Nations. You must be doing a degree in First Nations studies.” I’m like, “Well no, I’m interested in other things.” It appears that these assumptions from others, influenced by ideas of race/ethnicity, contributed to feelings of oppression and exposure to racist comments.

Perseverance was a major factor in overcoming adversity. An example of perseverance is Natasha’s experience of being given a position above her level of training and finding that she quickly had to figure it out on her own:

It was kind of like throwing me in the deep end and making me learn how to swim. I was managing the

entire admissions department for the most part on my own . . . I felt like the work I was doing and the students I was connecting with was worth all the trouble that I had to go through.

Several participants described feeling lost and missing home when they left their small, rural communities to pursue a career or education. Carol stated that she felt completely lost when she went to university because she came from a small isolated community in northern Canada. She didn't feel prepared and had to learn how to live in the big city. For most of the participants in the study, there were no supports in place for Aboriginal students. Several women had to leave their home communities to pursue further education and employment. All felt a loss of home community as an adverse experience.

In a few narratives, the participants' long-term family struggles with the justice system and family services influenced their career choice. Natasha, who grew up in foster care and was a high-risk teen, in trouble with the law and finally placed in a group home for troubled teens, explained a potent example of the "Legacy of Being in Care". For Natasha getting a career was a catalyst for getting her children back and eventually led to her career choice of working with youth at-risk in the healthcare system. Another example is provided in Marianne's narrative where she describes her family's struggle with the justice system in which her brother's children were apprehended and how this struggle led to her decision to pursue a law degree at an early age.

A few of the women in the study became mothers when they were first pursuing an education.

They described experiencing difficulty in pursuing their career goals due to financial and family/child rearing reasons. Often the relationships with the father did not last and they found themselves returning to their communities for support as single mothers. They stated that their career goals were put on hold. Marianne's abusive relationship with her partner was described as the motivator for her to return to college to get a degree and complete her original career plan now as a single mother. However, other women in the study who struggled with achieving their career goals described feeling useless during their early child rearing experiences because they were not productive members of society and they felt they were a burden on their families and communities. Often support from family and community assisted these women to continue to look at their options and find ways to move forward. Every woman who had a child while pursuing an education described being a parent as the most valued part of her life. Community support and family support were key aspects of persevering onward toward their career goals.

Relational Experiences That Influence Career Decision-Making

The most prominent thread in this theme was connection with family and family support while pursuing a career path. Marianne for example described how her family sent her money and supported her so she could return home and get out of an abusive relationship. They supported her as a young mother and helped her to return to her career aspirations to be a lawyer. Janet's dedication to her children fostered a career path in parenting education: "I guess you could call it

a career because you learn a lot of things just being a parent and you learn a lot of things being a parent on your own." Janet was highly esteemed in her community for her contributions to supporting new parents. The women in the study also described situations where knowing a family member in the field where they sought work or education was an asset and helped them by supporting them in a new setting away from home.

Another aspect of this theme was being mentored or having a role model. Jenna described her experience of being mentored in an Aboriginal Youth Internship Program where she worked with an Indigenous supervisor during her internship. She states: "I was one of the few interns who actually had a mentor who was Indigenous. She provided a really safe space for me in that internship where I could really be myself." Marianne described her parents and her aunts and uncles as her role models. "They were well respected in our community and that meant a lot to me." She described how they gave her a sense of direction in her life. Almost all the participants experienced having a mentor or role model that influenced and supported their career choices.

Connection to Indigenous Community as Part of Career Decision-Making

Almost all the participants in this study ended up in careers in the fields of Indigenous education, Indigenous health organizations and Indigenous sport organizations. Almost all participants returned to their home communities to receive support or to provide support to their communities through their career choices. All of the women

mentioned the importance of connecting to their Indigenous communities and families and often these connections influenced their final career goals. Cheryl provides an exemplary example of reconnecting to family:

I went to our original ancestral home two years ago with my Mom. It was awesome. . . . I've got tons of family that I never really knew when I was growing up. . . . It was a time in my life where I felt I really wanted to connect with family. I want to know more about who I am. It's kind of a coming of age thing.

Alicia describes how connecting to Indigenous values and ancestry helped her clarify her own career goals. She wanted her children to always know who they are and where they are from and how they would identify being Indigenous and participate in traditional ceremonies and other cultural events. She states: "It is always something that I have been focused on and helped me to continue pushing this path as a career."

Almost all the women spoke to some aspect of being involved in Indigenous knowledge opportunities such as being an Indigenous family lawyer, working to support Indigenous communities, and seeking careers in Indigenous education program. The women provided many examples of teaching Indigenous knowledge within their own communities as a career focus.

Discussion

The results of this study bear several implications for theory, practice, and future research pertaining to Indigenous women and career decision-making and

career development theory. To our knowledge, there is a paucity of studies that explore the career decision-making experiences of Indigenous women and how these experiences relate to contemporary career theory and the practice of career counselling with Indigenous women. Ideally, the themes inherent to this study will serve as a basis for the development of enhanced theory and practice for Indigenous women who are soon to be, or currently are in, the process of making career decisions

Implications for Career Theory

As with all theory within vocational psychology, there is no essential paradigm that encapsulates the lived experiences of all people, including Indigenous women, and which proposes to explain how they made and arrived at certain career decisions. However, the themes that were identified by our participants complement the tenets of several established theories of career decision-making, adding a relevance to the experiences of our participants within accepted theoretical frameworks. In applying our study's themes to current models of career decision-making, the need for more developed theories of career with minority groups in general, and Indigenous women in particular, was highlighted

Many of the experiences and themes described by our participants align with developmental models of career decision-making, which underscore the life-long nature of the career process. Developmental theories, such as Super's (1953) theory of career choice and development, and Super, Savickas and Super's (1996) Life-Span, Life-space Model, emphasize the importance of a variety of contextual

and circumstantial factors that influence career over the course of an individual's life. These include psychosocial roles such as motherhood (Super et al., 1996). Our participant's narratives spoke strongly to the effect that parenthood, family roles, expectations, and community support had in shaping career decision-making processes. Further, the constructionist component of Super et al.'s (1996) theory suggests that people's self-concepts are shaped by their experiences, of which they make meaning and which influence career decisions in turn. Our participant's narratives supported these fundamental notions. Many of our participants described their experiences of oppression and systemic struggles as catalysts for their decisions, and for some participants their family's conceptualizations of them were described as motivating factors in attaining a certain level of education that would eventually lead to a desired career.

More recently developed models of career decision-making often adopt a post-modern stance (Betz, 2008), and underscore the influencing forces of continuous change in the workforce. These models suggest that relying on a blend of intuition and rational thinking, or capitalizing on learning experiences, are fundamental processes that are involved in career change (Bright & Pryor, 2011; Gelatt, 1989; Krumboltz, 2009). Again, our participants' narratives were congruent with many of the assumptions within these theories. Participants described rewarding and challenging experiences in the workforce from which new opportunities emerged and which shaped the desires they had in terms of pursuing certain career choices. This is particularly evident in the theme of overcoming and learning from adversity.

However, while these theories can be applied to the narrative themes to a degree, they do not account for how our participants were able to make decisions regarding their education and career journeys despite facing substantial adversity, such as domestic abuse and serious financial limitations.

One of the most prolific theories of career, Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) Social-Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), suggests that career decisions are made according to a person's beliefs about their own ability to attain a desired outcome (self-efficacy beliefs), outcome expectations (the imagined outcomes of a specific behaviour), and goals, which serve to organize behaviour in the service of obtaining a particular outcome. SCCT fits with virtually all of the themes that were garnered in this study, as this model incorporates not only practical and contextual influences on career (e.g., financial constraints, child-rearing duties, opportunities for work), but also the importance of envisioning a specific path or outcome for one's career. Many of our participants did this in an ongoing process that could be viewed as either a positive or negative experience depending on the situation at a particular time. While SCCT is effective at capturing the importance of belief in oneself and one's abilities as well as external constraints on the outcomes of one's efforts that our participants spoke to, it is our view that it does not fully address how or why many of our participants overcame exceptionally challenging life circumstances to make career decisions that they felt ultimately benefitted them.

In considering these career theories, several implications for the development of career theory emerged. The themes that arose in

our study suggested that many Indigenous women have experienced significant systemic and non-systemic barriers in making career decisions that are unique to being an Indigenous woman. Yet they navigated these circumstances in such a way that they were able to achieve remarkable success and satisfaction with their work life. There is a dearth of available literature that conceptualizes how people - minority groups in particular - are able to bridge this gap. Future career theory could benefit from exploring and theorizing as to how Indigenous women address barriers, including financial, location, time, and practical constraints such as raising children and accessing resources, with the goal of achieving career satisfaction and/or success.

Implications for Career Counselling Practice

A central aim of this study involved collecting information from Indigenous women who have done well in making career decisions, with the goal of considering their strengths and perspectives to create and enhance counselling practice for Indigenous women who are pursuing career counselling. In reviewing the themes that emerged from our participant narratives, a prominent refrain involves the importance of developing career goals and elucidating steps towards the attainment of these goals. Our participants spoke to this in the themes of focusing on career direction, pursuing education and training, and connecting to Indigenous communities. It is apparent that goal clarification and identifying interests at a relatively young age were experiences that aided participants in pursuing their career decisions. With this in mind, counselling interventions that

involve goal-setting and the exploration of personal values might be helpful in working with Indigenous women and career, regardless of the phase of life that they are currently experiencing.

Participants also described themes of persistence and resilience with regard to pursuing career, including lack of financial and practical supports, interruptions to career pursuits due to life circumstances, and feeling supported (or unsupported) as Indigenous students in academic settings. Counsellors who are working with Indigenous women within the context of career might explore processes and techniques for drawing on strengths, reframing negative experiences, and problem-solving with regard to systemic and institutional barriers. Ideally, this would occur without ignoring the deleterious impact that negative encounters and systemic issues can cause.

As is evident from the emergent themes of our study, one of the most potent sources of strength and support for Indigenous women who have done well in making career decisions came from their communities, mentors, and families. For example, while children and child-rearing were described as posing interruptions to career advancements, participants also stressed how their children were motivating factors in their persistence and pursuit of further education and career advancement. The findings regarding loyalty to one's community, as well as participants' personal values and cultural beliefs were integral factors that were described as contributing to participants' career decision-making processes. With this in mind, counsellors who are working with this population could benefit from using interventions that invite clients to explore how their personal

values align with their cultural values, as well as how their communities might contribute to their personal values and goals with respect to career. It is also our hope that the themes that emerged in this study could form the basis for further research and counselling groups or workshops that explore each theme in turn, applying them to client's lives on an individual level.

Recommendations for Future Research

Scholarship needs to evolve to include the multiple positions Indigenous women occupy (i.e., race, class, gender, Indigeneity, mobility, geography). The implications of this work produce a message that future research should focus on Indigenous women and their work-family strategies in specific contexts, especially among Indigenous women who are doing well. These narratives articulate stories embedded in intersectionality, and our participants spoke into the voids of understanding Indigenous women's career decision-making. While the literature is now able to report measurable improvements in Indigenous women's levels of education, access to employment in growth sectors, and greater entrepreneurship (dePratto, 2015) we were able to identify practices of career decision-making nested within the life-roles of Indigenous women during this era of reconciliation. Aboriginal education promulgation that protects languages and culture and closes the education gap (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015) needs research evidencing the strategies Indigenous peoples employ to negotiate geographic displacement, mobility challenges, and structural racism in our schools and institutions. The career decision-making revealed here

demonstrated that Indigenous women are working harder at reconciling a relationship with the shifting Canadian economic landscape situated on their traditional lands (eg. Moving away from their lands to find work, access centralized educational and training resources, endure separation from cultural supports in favour of adjusting to training and employment expectations). Finally, future research extending the results of this study, with a larger sample of women from a larger number of occupational fields and life circumstance, could lead to new policies and practices to support Indigenous people in their career pursuits.

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The Effects of the Online Self-Directed Search on the Career Decision State

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Abstract

An exploratory study examined the effects of a counselor-free career intervention, the online Self-Directed Search Form R Fifth Edition (SDS), with 114 undergraduate students at three levels of career decision state or readiness for career decision making. The effects of this intervention included (a) changes in the career decision state low ($d = 1.14$), medium, ($d = .14$), and high ($d = .17$) over a three-week time period, (b) the extent of engagement in the task of taking the SDS and reviewing the reports, and (c) attitudes regarding aspects of the experience itself. Results showed a significant, positive impact of the online SDS on non-client students who were in a low career decision state (high career uncertainty, high career dissatisfaction, low career clarity) regarding their career goals and aspirations. Regardless of the students' career decision state, the majority of students engaged the opportunity to further explore their interests through the SDS and reacted positively to the experience.

Key Words: career decision-making, Self-Directed Search, career programming/interventions, undergraduates

The present study addresses the use of counselor-free or self-help career interventions by career service providers, a matter of longstanding

controversy. Disagreements about the use of self-assessment in vocational guidance began in the early 20th century when some saw individuals having the capability to engage in self-directed career planning. For example, Parsons (1909) used responses to questionnaires and interviews to assess individual characteristics important for career planning; however, this approach was not universally accepted. Other leaders in vocational guidance, such as Hugo Munsterberg and E. G. Williamson, believed that reliance on self-report from individuals was unreliable and naïve (Savickas & Baker, 2005).

Given this historic perspective, we examined the use of a career decision-making readiness assessment to identify more precisely individuals who might benefit from self-help services. In addition, we examined the use of the online Self-Directed Search (SDS; Holland & Messer, 2013) as a tool for providing counselor-free career services.

The issue of whether self-help career interventions are effective is important because counselor-free interventions are less expensive than other interventions that require direct involvement by service providers. In the delivery of career services, practitioners influence the supply of career services through the career theories they utilize and nature of interventions they select, e.g., self-help, brief-staff assisted, or individual case-managed services (Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz (2004).

In designing and conducting

this study, we begin with a review of the Self-Directed Search, a career interest inventory available in paper, online, and computer-based formats as a self-help intervention. This instrument has been translated into over 30 languages, including Canadian editions in English and French (Bullock, Andrews, Braud, & Reardon. (2009-2010).

The Self-Directed Search Form R (SDS:R)

At the outset, we note that the literature on Holland's RIASEC theory, research, and applications is extensive. Foutch, McHugh, Berthoch, and Reardon (2013) located 1,970 unique reference citations to Holland's theory and applications from 1953-2011, and later, Kennelly, Sargent, and Reardon (2018) found 2,318 published references about RIASEC theory and its applications in practice. Given this extensive literature on Holland's contributions, it is ironic that so few studies have been reported on the self-directed aspect of Holland's Self-Directed Search (SDS; Holland & Messer, 2013). Indeed, after searching these databases we found only three studies that reported use of the SDS as a counselor-free intervention and they are reviewed later in this article.

The SDS can be dissected into its component parts as a simulation of what might typically occur in a career counseling session. The SDS Daydreams section can be scored separately as a measure of

expressed vocational interests. The Assessment booklet includes four sections that could be topics in a typical counseling session. These include Activities (What things do you like to do?), Competencies (What are you good at?), Occupations (Which ones do you like?), and Self-Estimates (Rate your skills and abilities.). Scores on these sections can be summed to provide a measure of *assessed* vocational interests. Both of these interest measures can be examined in terms of the RIA-SEC typology and the theory.

The Client Interpretive Report for the online SDS (SDS:R/CIR; Reardon, Messer, & PAR Staff, 2013) used in this study was first published in 1996 and expanded in 2013. In 2014, an SDS Interactive Report was added to the online version of the SDS. Upon completion of the SDS, the two reports are provided to the user. Dozier, Sampson, and Reardon (2013) reported favorable outcomes from students using the online SDS Client Interpretive Report as compared to the paper SDS interpretive materials.

The SDS Form R Fifth Edition (SDS:R5th) is available in a paper format (three booklets), online through the Internet, and through an electronic platform provided by the publisher. The present study used the online SDS as a career intervention per se, not just as an assessment instrument. The SDS:R5th includes 266 items with links to over 1,300 occupations in O*NET (Holland & Messer, 2013). The SDS was normed using 1,739 persons matched with the U.S. population, had internal consistency for SDS summary scales as .88-.93, found test-retest reliability as .96-.82 overall sample ($N = 49$), short reliability, 2-4 weeks as .98-.78, and long reliability, 2-4 months as .96-.87. Lumsden, Sampson, Reardon, Lenz,

and Peterson (2004) found the three modes of administering the SDS can be considered statistically and practically equivalent measures of the same SDS constructs.

Two studies were located examining the effectiveness of the SDS:R Fourth Edition (Holland, 1994) in a self-help or counselor-free delivery mode. In the first study, Behrens and Nauta (2014) evaluated the effectiveness of the SDS paper version as a stand-alone intervention with students in an undergraduate psychology course. The researchers compared this sample of college students completing the SDS ($n = 39$) with a no-treatment control group ($n = 41$) on several outcomes. Completion of the SDS was marked by an increase in the number of career alternatives being considered four weeks later, but was not associated with career exploration, career decision-making self-efficacy, career indecision, or seeking of career counseling services. These findings should be interpreted in light of the fact that these students were not seeking career services.

In a second study, Dozier, Sampson, Lenz, Peterson, and Reardon (2015) used the Self-Directed Search Form R Internet Version (Reardon & PAR Staff, 2010) in an experimental study of a counselor-free career exploration. College students ($N = 125$) in a communications class volunteered to participate in a study of career exploratory behavior. They were randomly assigned to complete either the Self-Directed Search Form R (SDS:R) Internet version or to a control group that did not complete the SDS. Results indicated that individuals who completed the online SDS:R Internet and reviewed the Client Interpretive Report engaged in a greater frequency of exploratory career behaviors over three weeks

and were considering more occupational alternatives than members of the control group. The amount of time spent reviewing the report by members of the treatment group was associated with greater frequency of career exploratory behavior and with an increased number of occupations being considered. Furthermore, vocational identity, as a mediating variable, was inversely associated with the number of occupations being explored (i.e., high vocational identity led to exploration of fewer occupations, ostensibly because these individuals were more settled in their career goals).

Holland, Fritzsche, and Powell (1994) indicated that some of the most promising experimental research with the SDS would be to understand how the SDS actually influences the user in terms of career exploration and decision making. As a continuing investigation of the SDS as a self-help career intervention, the present study examined how online SDS users processed information provided by the career intervention and the outcomes of the intervention. In addition, we sought to explore how readiness for career decision making, as revealed by the status of a user's career decision state, was associated with how users processed the online SDS intervention, as well as their subsequent career exploratory behavior.

Counselor-Free and Self-Help Career Interventions

Sampson et al. (2004, p. 11) defined self-help career services as "self-guided use of self-assessment, information, and instructional resources in a library-like or Internet-based remote setting, where resources have been designed for independent use by individuals with a high readiness for career decision making." Accordingly, individuals

showing higher levels of readiness for career choice would be better prepared to benefit from career guidance interventions with limited assistance, while those with lower levels of readiness would be less ready to benefit from a career intervention without assistance from a practitioner. This is an important conceptualization because there are always limited funds and resources available to provide career services. Self-help interventions can assist those ready to benefit immediately from such services.

Sampson, Dozier and Colvin (2011) observed that "Career guidance interventions offered on a one-to-one basis are simply more expensive and increasingly difficult to justify" (p. 330). Typically, much career theory used to design and promote career interventions is aimed at individual counseling interventions. A differentiated service delivery model can maximize cost-effectiveness of career interventions using readiness constructs (Sampson et al., 2004). However, as Sampson et al. (2011) noted, "It is not possible to deliver effective differentiated services without a robust self-help career guidance provision" (p. 332).

Previous studies of counselor-free or self-help career interventions indicate mixed or inconclusive results in terms of effectiveness. Whiston (2011) concluded that counselor-free vocational interventions are largely ineffective. In contrast, Craighead, McNamara, and Horan (1984) concluded that the results of self-help in career counseling were generally favorable. Moreover, Gati and Asulin-Peretz (2011) reported that Internet-based self-help interventions have the advantage of being carried out at the time, pace, and place most convenient to the user, are highly structured and

standardized for repeated applications, and may be delivered at lower costs.

Kivlighan and Shapiro (1987) examined used RIASEC high point codes to examine the effectiveness of a self-help career intervention involving the VEIK, a 15-step treatment program consisting of a vocational card sort, the Self-Directed Search (paper version), and an action plan booklet. They found that individuals with Realistic, Investigative, or Conventional high-point codes showed greater changes in vocational identity when compared with participants with Artistic, Social, or Enterprising high-point codes. Studies by Fretz and Leong (1982) and Power, Holland, Daiger, and Takai (1979) suggested that people who needed less support were the ones benefitting the most from self-help. This means that the readiness for career decision making may be a contributing factor in self-help intervention outcomes.

Self-help or counselor-free career interventions reported in earlier studies may not have been theory-based in nature, incorporated the five ingredients of successful interventions identified in a benchmark meta-analytic study by Brown and Ryan Krane (2000), or took into account the person's readiness for career decision making (Sampson et al., 2004). To address these issues, we used the online SDS:R Fifth Edition Internet version which is directly based on RIASEC theory (Holland, 1997) in a self-help delivery system. We believe the online SDS incorporates all five of the essential ingredients for successful career interventions identified in the seminal work by Brown and Ryan Krane (2000). For example, the SDS:R Internet Fifth Edition used in this study included (a) a workbook or written exercises (as provided by the

SDS Assessment booklet), (b) individualized interpretation and feedback (provided by the SDS Client Interpretive Report), (c) information about the world of work (provided by the SDS Interpretive Report with links to O*NET Occupations as well as information about fields of study and leisure options), (d) modeling (provided by the theoretical descriptions of RIASEC types and the SDS as an impersonal, simulated model of career decision-making activity), and (e) environmental supports (SDS Interpretive Report with links to O*Net occupations, fields of study, and leisure activities related to the person's assessed personality code).

Self-help services are intended to maximize the cost-effective use of career interventions by avoiding underserving individuals needing more assistance and overserving those needing less assistance. Self-help services are intended to be an immediate career intervention, limited in most instances to one session of 20-45 minutes, an alternative to brief-staff assisted or individual case-managed career services (Sampson et al., 2004), and provided at limited cost. Self-help resources such as the SDS may be used in this approach. In the following section, the theoretical bases for incorporating readiness assessment used in this study will be described.

Readiness for Career Decision Making

A key aspect of the present study was to examine the effects of the online SDS Form R Fifth Edition (Holland & Messer, 2013) on (a) changes in the career decision state over a three-week period, (b) the extent of engagement in the task of taking the SDS and reviewing reports, and (c) attitudes regarding

aspects of the experience itself for non-client undergraduate students. The impact of engaging the online SDS was analyzed in terms of three levels of participant readiness for career decision making (low, medium, high) assessed at the outset and at the conclusion of the intervention three weeks later.

In this study, we used a recently developed concept of the *career decision state* to examine career decision-making readiness (Leierer, Wilde, Peterson, & Reardon, 2016) and the Career State Inventory (CSI; Leierer, Peterson, & Reardon, 2017-2018; Leierer, Peterson, Reardon, & Osborn, 2017) as a measure of it. The career decision state is a subjective state of being or consciousness in the moment regarding a career goal or career aspiration and is composed of both cognitive and affective components. This existential state raises such questions as “Who am I? (Identity), “To what goal am I headed? (Direction)” “What are my feelings regarding my goal?” (Satisfaction, Confusion), and “Do I believe in myself to make an appropriate choice and to attain a goal? (self-confidence, self-efficacy). We assume that when individuals seek career assistance, they are in a subjective state of being referred to as the career decision state.

Additionally, the career decision state is thought of as a condition of being or consciousness, a “snapshot,” with respect to one’s career goals and aspirations in the present (Leierer et al., 2016). The components of this state are contained within working memory and include (a) a person’s self-assessment of occupational preferences or lack thereof, (b) a personal hierarchical assessment of the degree of positive to negative feelings of satisfaction related to the preferences or lack of preferences, and (c)

the strength of a person’s vocational identity regarding the career decision-making process. The career decision state for an individual may range from being highly certain, satisfied, clear, and confident in one’s choice (first choice, no alternatives), to being completely undecided, dissatisfied, confused, and lacking confidence in making a choice (no choice, no options). This conceptualization builds on the research by Bullock-Yowell, Peterson, Wright, Reardon, and Mohn (2011) and Leierer et al. (2016). Finally, we ask to what extent does one’s career certainty, satisfaction, and clarity (i.e., self-confidence and self-efficacy) affect the quality of post-intervention outcomes derived from the self-help SDS? In this study, the effects of engaging in the counselor-free online SDS were observed in a general population of university students.

Three questions guided this study.

1. What is the impact of engaging the online SDS on the career decision state?
2. In what manner did participants process information contained in the online SDS in terms of the number of times reviewing the SDS report, the amount of time reviewing the report, and the choice of reports (client interpretive or interactive) they reviewed?
3. What outcomes are associated with the experience of engaging the online SDS in terms of user attitudes and feelings about the SDS intervention as well as subsequent behaviors?

Method

Procedures and Participants

Career center staff made brief presentations about career services to first and second year university students in English composition classes and invited them to participate in an online study of a career interest inventory. The presentation indicated that participation would include (a) answering a few demographic questions in an initial survey including the CSI, (b) completing an interest inventory (SDS), and then (c) completing a 5-10-minute follow-up survey three weeks later including the CSI. Students volunteering received a paper note showing the website link for participation in the study and an online informed consent to endorse with details of the study procedures. They also completed the online demographic form to provide educational information (gender, age, class standing) and the CSI. Participants were invited to discuss questions about the online SDS and review results with career center staff as needed. The estimated total time commitment for the study was between 40-60 minutes, and those who completed all three activities received a gift certificate to any campus dining facility. Given the high possibility of attrition due to the use of a follow-up survey, undergraduate students who completed all surveys in this study received a certificate that could be redeemed at any dining location on-campus. Support for the study was provided by Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc., publisher of the SDS, and Aramark, the provider of campus dining services.

A total of 219 students in the classes were initially informed about the study. Of these, 170 completed the online initial survey, 140

completed the online SDS, and 114 students completed the online follow-up survey instruments and were included in the study. Participants were enrolled in a large research university in the southeastern United States and their demographic characteristics included female (76%), male (24%), other (.01%); Caucasian (63%), Hispanic/Latino (18%), Black/African-American (10%), Asian (5%), Other (3%), and prefer not to answer (1%). We do not know the number of international students in our study sample, but we can note that the population of students from which the participants were drawn consisted of 684 international students in an undergraduate enrollment of 32,812, about 2%.

Instruments

The Career State

Inventory (CSI). The CSI (Leierer et al., 2017-2018; Leierer et al., 2017) was used as a pretest and posttest. It consists of four components, (a) career certainty, (b) satisfaction, (c) clarity, and (d) a total score. Certainty is measured by the Occupational Alternatives Question (OAQ), satisfaction by a single item (Satisfaction Item), and clarity (Vocational Clarity) by three items from the My Vocational Situation Identity Scale. Certainty, satisfaction, and clarity are treated as independent variables with correlations among them, $r = .575$, $.350$ and $.562$ respectively on the CSI pretest for the total sample. The three components and the total score are described as follows.

(a) Career certainty was assessed by the OAQ, a career indecision measure that was initially used in Self-Directed Search validity studies of high school students (Zener & Schnuelle, 1976) and revised by Slaney (1980). The OAQ

consists of two parts: (a) List all the occupations you are considering right now; and (b) Circle the occupation that is your first choice (if undecided, write undecided). The OAQ produces one of four scores: 1 = A first occupational choice is listed with no alternatives; 2 = A first choice is listed with alternatives; 3 = No first choice is listed, just alternatives; 4 = Neither a first choice nor alternatives are listed. Lower scores indicate greater career certainty.

(b) The Satisfaction Item, first reported by (Zener & Schnuelle, 1976) and modified by Holland, Gottfredson, and Nafziger (1975), asked the single question, "How well satisfied are you with your first choice?" The Satisfaction Item was rated on a five-point scale in which 1 = well satisfied, 2 = satisfied, 3 = not sure, 4 = dissatisfied, 5 = very dissatisfied. Lower the scores indicate a greater the degree of satisfaction with choice.

(c) Vocational Clarity was measured with three true-false items drawn from the My Vocational Situation (MVS; Holland, Johnston, & Asama, 1993): (a) "If I had to make an occupational choice right now, I'm afraid I would make a bad choice" (MVS #6); (b) "Making up my mind about a career has been a long and difficult problem for me" (MVS #8); and (c) "I am confused about the whole problem of deciding on a career" (MVS #9). These items were selected *a priori* (by reason alone) by the CSI authors as having content validity for the career decision state with respect to vocational clarity regarding a career goal or aspiration. A false response to one of the items is scored "0" and a true response is scored "1." The range of scores on vocational clarity is 0 (all false) to 3 (all true), with a low score indicating a high degree of clarity and confidence in career decision

making, and a higher score indicating decision-making difficulty and confusion.

(d) The total score is the sum of the scores from the three components and ranges from 2 – 12. The 11-point continuum of the CDS profile ranges from being highly certain, satisfied, clear, and confident in one's choice at one pole (i.e., 2-4), to being completely frozen, dissatisfied, confused, and lacking confidence in making a choice (i.e., 8-12). Mid-range scores (i.e., 5 - 7) may be described as having one or more options but still uncertain about them, having doubts about one's capability to make an appropriate career decision, and tentative in approaching one's career choice.

Leierer et al. (2017) combined data across several studies ($n = 425$) and found this 3-item scale (uncertainty, satisfaction, and clarity) possessed a Cronbach alpha of $r = .74$, inter-item correlations of $.63$ (OAQ/SAT), $.36$ (OAQ/Clarity), and $.59$ (SAT/Clarity). Participant Cronbach alpha for this sample was $r = .687$ with inter-item correlation ranges from $.235$ to $.535$. Thus, the CSI possesses a desirable level of commonality across the items as well as independence among them. This measure may also be considered as producing normally distributed scores in college student populations with mean = 6.21, SD = 2.45, median = 6.00, skew = $-.004$, and kurtosis = 1.33. The standard error of measure (SEM) is 0.12.

We do not report stability or test-retest coefficients because the CSI is designed as a *state measure* as opposed to a *trait measure*. To reiterate, it is a snapshot of one's state of consciousness regarding career goals in the moment along three dimensions (certainty, satisfaction, and clarity) and a total score. Further, as an aspect of stability, we

also believe the CSI is very sensitive to developmental events that might alter the career decision state in either direction.

In terms of concurrent or convergent validity, Leierer et al. (2017) found the CSI total score significantly ($p < .001$) predicted the total score on the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI; Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996) total score, $R = .63$ and the three subscales (DMC, $R = .63$, CA, $R = .60$, and EC, $R = .42$.)

Self-Directed Search Follow-up Survey. Participant perceptions of the online SDS were measured utilizing the SDS Follow-up Survey, a questionnaire comprised of seven items employing a five-point Likert-type rating scale. Questionnaire items were adapted from the Computer-Assisted Career Guidance Evaluation Form (Peterson, Ryan-Jones, Sampson, Reardon, & Shahnasarian, 1987). Examples of items were, “The SDS report presented appropriate options given my interests,” and “The SDS report identified occupations not previously considered.” The alpha reliability coefficient of the 7-item attitudinal scale for this sample was $r = .84$. In addition to attitudes, the follow-up survey addressed certain behaviors associated with processing information contained in the online SDS, namely (a) whether participants used one or both of the SDS reports (i.e., the Client Interpretive Report and/or the Interactive Report), (b) how much time in minutes they spent reading the reports, and (c) how many times they read them.

Research Design and Data Analysis

A pretest-posttest only quasi-experimental design was used to

examine the impact of the online SDS on the career decision state. Given access to the population of interest, regular university English courses, we judged this research design to be the most feasible and, hence, did not use a control group. Cook and Campbell (1979) discussed threats to internal validity germane to this design, including history, maturation, testing, and instrumentation. Regarding history, we are unaware of any events over the three-week period of this study that might have affected this study, but we cannot rule out such events in a field-based study. Regarding maturation, testing, and instrumentation, we do not believe these threats exerted an appreciable influence on participant responses to the CSI. For example, the time interval between the pre-post testing and the lack of instrument changes on-line mitigate these potential threats to internal validity.

The posttest occurred three weeks following the intervention. Process variables (i.e., time spent on task and the number of reviews) and the attitudinal variables were assessed only at the posttest. All variables of interest were analyzed in terms of high, medium, and low levels of the career decision state as measured by the CSI total scores at pretest, with scores 2 – 4 as high ($n = 43$), 5 – 7 medium ($n = 36$), and 8 – 12, low ($n = 35$). A three by two mixed-effects repeated measures MANOVA with three levels of career decision state and pretest and posttest with three dependent variables, certainty, satisfaction, and clarity, served as the omnibus test for the impact of the intervention on the career decision state. The MANOVA test was followed by univariate ANOVA tests and dependent t -tests to ascertain pretest-posttest differences within the three levels of

the career decision state (low, medium, high). One-way ANOVA with three levels of career decision state was used to compare means among the three CSI groups on all other process and outcome variables of interest.

A power analysis was conducted for a repeated measure within factors. The following parameters were set: effect size = .25, alpha = .05, power = .95, groups = 3, means = 3, and correlation among repeated means = .35. The desired sample size reported was 57, so the current sample size of 114, is well beyond the recommended minimum.

Results

Examination of the CSI pretest total scores revealed no statistically significant differences for participants in terms of gender, ethnicity, year in school, or age.

SDS Impact on Career Decision State

The low career decision state group members (total score on CSI 8 – 12, $M = 9.09$) had options only or were undecided on the OAQ, were not sure about their state of satisfaction with their certainty ($M = 2.91$), and endorsed 2 or 3 of the clarity items as true ($M = 2.51$). Members of the medium group (total CSI 5 – 7, $M = 5.92$) tended to have a first choice with options or options only on the OAQ ($M = 2.42$), agreed or were not sure if they were satisfied with their state of certainty ($M = 2.11$), and endorsed at least one clarity item as true ($M = 1.39$). Members of the high CDS group (total score on CSI 2 – 4, $M = 3.21$) tended to have an OAQ score $M = 1.81$ indicating they had a first choice only or at least a first choice with options, agreed they were

Table 1

Career State Inventory pretest and posttest means, standard deviations, t-ratios, and effect sizes for low, medium, and high levels of the career decision state (N = 114)

Levels of CDS	Pretest		Posttest		<i>t</i>	<i>d</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Certainty^a						
Low (<i>n</i> = 35)	3.66	.73	3.14	1.03	2.65*	.59
Medium (<i>n</i> = 36)	2.42	1.08	2.58	1.08	-.798	.15
Hi (<i>n</i> = 43)	1.81	.39	1.84	.53	-.24	.07
Satisfaction^b						
Low	2.91	.51	2.34	.68	4.35***	.48
Medium	2.11	.79	1.92	.77	1.31	.24
Hi	1.19	.39	1.30	.51	-1.40	.24
Clarity^c						
Low	2.51	.74	2.06	1.08	2.68*	.50
Medium	1.39	1.20	1.22	1.12	1.29	.15
Hi	.21	.47	.23	.57	-.33	.04
Total						
Low	9.09	.85	7.57	1.85	4.85***	1.14
Medium	5.92	.87	5.72	1.94	.67	.14
Hi	3.21	.60	3.37	1.27	-.93	.17

Note: Low (*n* = 35), Medium (*n* = 36), Hi (*n* = 43)

**p* < .05

***p* < .01

****p* < .001

^a 1 = First choice, no options, 2 = First choice plus options, 3 = options only, 4 = blank

^b Satisfaction with certainty; 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Not sure, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

^c Three T - F items; 3 = all true, 0 = all false

satisfied (*M* = 1.19) with their level of certainty, and tended to answer all three clarity items as false (*M* = .21). We delineated three clearly different career decision state groups with 35 (30.7%) of the participants

in the low group, 36 (31.6%) in the medium group, and 43 (37.7%) in the high readiness group.

Preliminary assumption tests for MANOVA were conducted including checks for normality

such as skew and kurtosis. No violations beyond acceptable parameters were noted (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995). The results of the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) analysis of the impact

of the online SDS intervention on the three career decision state groups (low, medium, high) indicated that there was a significant multivariate main effect for pretest-posttest differences for all three components of the CSI, certainty, satisfaction, and clarity (Wilks = .869, $F = 5.495$, $df = 3$, $p = .001$), as well as a significant multivariate interaction effect (Wilks = .788, $F = 4.601$, $df = 6$, $p < .001$). The significant interaction effect indicates that the effect of the SDS intervention was not the same for the respective three career decision state groups. Follow-up univariate ANOVA tests for pretest-posttest differences among the three career decision state groups revealed significant differences for satisfaction ($F = 9.705$, $df = 1$, $p = .002$), and clarity ($F = 7.777$, $df = 1$, $p = .006$), but not for certainty ($F = 1.257$, $df = 1$, $p = .265$). However, there were significant interaction effects among the three career decision state groups for all three CSI components, certainty ($F = 4.384$, $df = 2$, $p = .015$), satisfaction ($F = 8.353$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$), and clarity ($F = 3.836$, $df = 2$, $p = .024$). Finally, follow-up dependent t -tests revealed that the significant ($p < .05$) differences between pretest and posttest within each of the three career decision state groups (low, medium, high) occurred exclusively in the low career decision state group, thus portraying the interaction effect in all three components of the CSI as well as the total CSI score (see Table 1).

Therefore, participants using the online SDS with CSI total scores in the 8 – 12 range (low readiness) exhibited significantly lower scores on the posttest as compared to the pretest on all three CSI components as well as the total score. There were no significant pretest-posttest differences in any of the respective CSI components and total score in

either the medium or high career decision state categories. The respective treatment effect sizes (Cohen's d , Cohen, 1988) regarding the online SDS intervention indicate that this treatment appears to induce a considerable impact on the career decision state of individuals who began the intervention in the group with high states of uncertainty regarding career goals (ES = .59), dissatisfaction with their uncertainty (ES = .48), lacking clarity of goals (ES = .50), and total (ES = 1.14).

Processing the SDS Intervention

The second research question alluded to the manner in which the participants processed the information contained in the online SDS. To address this question, we examined the (a) number of times participants reviewed the reports over a three-week period, (b) the number of minutes reviewing the reports, and (c) which particular report the participants reviewed (i.e., the full report or the interactive on-line report). The three respective information-processing behaviors were analyzed with respect to three career decision state levels (low, medium, high). Descriptive data regarding the number of times and the amount of time spent reviewing the report are presented in Table 2. Skewness did not exceed .15, which does not violate the normality assumptions.

The first finding was that there were no significant ($p < .05$) differences among the three levels of career decision state at the posttest with respect to all three information-processing behaviors. Thus, the extent to which the participants engaged in processing the information contained in the task was independent of the level of career decision state at the outset. Although 25 participants (21.9%) did not review

any of the reports, 89 participants reported reviewing the report once ($M = 1.32$, $Mdn = 1$), and spent 10 to 20 minutes reviewing it ($M = 18.78$, $Mdn = 15$). The maximum number of times students reviewed the report was 15, and the maximum amount of time spent reviewing the report was 120 minutes. Since the distributions were highly skewed, the respective mean, median, and maximum frequencies are presented in Table 2. Regarding the choice of report reviewed, 7.8% reviewed the full client interpretive report only, 38.3% the interactive report only, 47.8% both, and 6.1% neither. Therefore, almost 80% of the study participants spent an average of more than 18 minutes reviewing the reports, and generally preferred access to both of them.

Outcomes of SDS Intervention

The third inquiry question addressed the outcomes of the online SDS experience in terms of resultant behaviors, attitudes about the intervention, and feelings going forward from the experience. Regarding behaviors, one question on the Follow-up Survey was, "In the past 3 weeks, I met with the following individuals, academic advisor, other, or none." There were no significant differences among the three levels of CSI scores in terms of frequency of occurrence ($X^2 = 4.27$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). For the total participants, 38.6% met with an advisor, 14.0% met with an "other," and 47.4% met with "none." A second question was, "My need for additional career services in terms of intensive, brief, self-directed, or none." Again, there were no significant differences among the levels of CSI scores in terms of frequency of endorsement of need ($X^2 = 8.21$, $df = 6$, $p > .05$). In terms of total

Table 2

Information processing behaviors by level of career decision state (CDS)

Behaviors	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Median	Range	<i>F</i>
<i>Times Reviewed SDS Report</i>					
Low CDS (<i>n</i> = 35)	1.71	2.96	1	0 - 15	
Medium CDS (<i>n</i> = 36)	.97	.91	1	0 - 4	1.466
High CDS (<i>n</i> = 43)	1.30	1.51	1	0 - 10	
Total CDS (<i>n</i> = 114)	1.32	1.84	1	0 - 15	
<i>Minutes reviewing SDS Report</i>					
Low CDS	19.74	14.66	15	0 - 60	
Medium CDS	19.88	22.11	10	1 - 120	.303
High CDS	17.12	15.96	10	0 - 75	
Total CDS	18.78	17.76	15	0 - 120	

**p* < .05

participants, 19.2% felt the need for intensive services, 43.9% brief assistance, 19.3% self-directed, and 17.5% none. Therefore, regarding outcome behaviors over the span of 3 weeks, over half of the participants met with someone to discuss career goals, and 82.5% felt a need for further career assistance.

A brief survey of attitudes regarding the online SDS experience revealed that these non-client participants generally viewed the experience positively (see Table 3). The first finding in the examination of attitudes is that there were no significant (*p* < .05) differences among the three levels of career decision state

(low, medium, high) with respect to any of the seven survey items or in terms of total scores on the 7-item summative rating scale. Thus, the extent to which the participants viewed the experience positively or negatively was not related to one's career decision state at entry. In general, the participants agreed they would recommend the online SDS to someone for educational and career planning (*M* = 2.20) and that the report materials helped confirm occupations already being considered (*M* = 2.42). They disagreed that it was a waste of time (*M* = 3.54), or that it left them confused and uncertain about what next to do (*M* =

3.32). Using a reverse scale where 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, participants neither agreed nor disagreed that they felt anxious about their career concern (*M* = 2.96), but generally agreed they know next steps needed to attain their career goals (*M* = 3.68) and were confident they can take the next steps to attain their goals (*M* = 3.84).

Discussion

SDS Impact on Career Decision State (CDS)

The impact of the online SDS experience is discussed in terms of the three levels of the career decision state at entry (i.e., low, medium, and high).

Low CDS group.

This group was characterized by high scores on the Career State Inventory and low readiness for career decision making. The results suggest that the SDS experience was particularly effective in altering the career decision state of participants in this group by helping them increase their levels of certainty regarding their career goals as well as becoming more satisfied with their newly acquired level of certainty. Over half of this group listed no occupations (*M* = 3.66 on the OAQ) being considered at entry, but finished formulating occupational options (*M* = 3.11). They also increased satisfaction with their first occupational choice from *M* = 2.91 to *M* = 2.34, and they increased their

Table 3

Attitudinal outcomes of the online SDS experience (n = 114)

Item	Mean	SD
<i>The SDS as an Intervention^a</i>		
1. I would recommend SDS to someone for educational and career planning	2.20 ^a	.89
2. The SDS was a waste of time	3.54	1.04
3. The SDS report materials helped confirm occupations I was already considering	2.42	1.18
4. After reading my SDS report materials, I am so confused that I am uncertain about what to do.	3.32	1.12
<i>Going Forward^b</i>		
5. I feel anxious about my career concern	2.96 ^b	1.15
6. I feel I know the next steps needed to attain my career goals	3.68	1.04
7. I feel confident that I can make the next steps to attain my career goals	3.84	.97

^a Items 1 – 4: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

^b Items 5 – 7: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

level of clarity regarding their career goal going from a mean of 2.5 items to a mean of 2.1 items. Lack of clarity entails being fearful of making a bad choice, difficulty in making a decision, and confusion regarding the choice process. The effect sizes of certainty, satisfaction and clarity were .59, .48, and .50 respectively, indicating a strong effect on all three dimensions. The effect size for the CSI total score was particularly strong, 1.14. Most of those in

the low career decision state group spent about 20 minutes ($M = 19.74$) reviewing the report at least once (see Table 2). Therefore, given the amount of effort in completing the online SDS career intervention, these positive gains in the career decision state or career readiness are particularly noteworthy. Of course with this group, one must be mindful that these participants had the most to gain in all three dimensions. Finally, their attitudes regarding their

experience were mainly positive.

We were somewhat surprised by these findings for the low career decision state group, given that earlier reports (Kivlighan, & Shapiro, 1987; Fretz & Leong, 1982; Power et al., 1979) suggested that those needing less support or in a high career decision state would benefit the most from self-help. These results indicate this might not be the case, at least with the online SDS.

Medium CDS group. Collectively, the SDS experience for participants in the medium group did not significantly result in career decision state changes. They entered and exited the experience with a first choice with options or options only, generally agreed they were satisfied with their state of certainty, and endorsed between 1 and 2 clarity items. The effect sizes, although not statistically significant, were $-.15$, $.24$, and $.15$, respectively, for certainty, satisfaction, and clarity. The effect size of the total score was $.14$. As with the low group, this group also spent about 20 minutes ($M = 19.83$) reviewing the reports at least once, and their attitudes regarding their experience were rated as positive. Thus, the effect of the online SDS, for those in the medium group, would appear to be a mixture of individuals exploring new career possibilities and others confirming existing ones with pretest-posttest means on the OAQ at the 2.5 level. Nevertheless, the participants in this group, as in the low group, generally rated their SDS experience positively in the follow-up survey.

High CDS group. Those in the high range in their career decision state remained at that level. Their CSI pretest scores were not significantly different from their posttest scores on the CSI and the effect sizes were $.07$, $.24$, and $.04$, respectively, for certainty, satisfaction, and clarity with total score $.17$. In terms of certainty, they were between a first choice and no alternatives and first choice with options. They either strongly agreed or agree with their state of certainty and they endorsed between 0 and one item in clarity. As with low and medium groups, these members also spent almost 20 minutes ($M = 17.12$) reviewing the report at least once and

rated their SDS experience as positive. We speculate that members of this group viewed the SDS experience mainly as confirming their choice of occupation with OAQ scores around 1.8, satisfaction 1.2, and clarity $.22$, and that they were pleased to have had to opportunity to engage the SDS for such a purpose.

These findings regarding the positive impact of the online SDS in a self-help delivery mode may be viewed in relation to the report by Whiston (2011) that counselor-free vocational interventions are largely ineffective. Indeed, these results for a non-client population demonstrate that the SDS can have a strong, positive impact on the career decision state, especially for those who are less career decided, satisfied, and clear.

Processing the SDS Intervention

The second research question concerned the manner in which the participants processed information contained in the online SDS intervention. There were no differences between high, medium, and low career decision state groups with respect to the number of times they reviewed the report, the minutes reviewing the report, or preferences regarding version of delivery (i.e., interactive online, full report, both or neither). The “bottom line” is that collectively, the participants reviewed the reports 1.3 times for approximately 20 minutes, and preferred access to both interactive and full client interpretive report delivery options. There were wide ranges in individual differences with reviewing the reports, and the extent to which the online SDS captured attention and interest in career exploration varied widely.

Outcomes of the SDS Intervention

An important outcome of any career or intervention involves the attitudes individuals take away from the experience. Going back in the literature, attitudes may, in fact, be the most lasting effect (Edwards, 1957; Seeleman, 1940.) In this study, we examined attitudes concerning the online SDS intervention, and how it contributed to further career exploration (see Table 3). There were no significant differences among the three career decision state groups regarding their responses to any of the attitudinal items. Regarding the experience itself, the participants generally agreed they would recommend the SDS to someone for educational and career planning ($M = 2.2$). Responses were somewhat mixed ($M = 2.4$) regarding the question, “the SDS materials helped confirm occupations they were already considering.” Some individuals likely viewed the SDS experience as confirmatory, whereas others used the SDS as a vehicle for career exploration. A review of Table 3 indicates that most of the participants found the online SDS experience positive and worthwhile.

A second important attitudinal outcome of the online SDS concerns how individuals projected their experience into the future. Participants tended to respond neither agree nor disagree to the item, “I feel anxious about my career concern,” but with a wide variation. Thus, some appeared to be very concerned while others were not. The participants were between neither agree nor disagree and agree ($M = 3.68$) with the item, “I feel I know the next steps needed to attain my career goals.” The responses to this item with a mean of 3.65 (between neither agree nor disagree and agree) but with a standard deviation

of 1.04 suggest there are many who responded in the neutral or disagree categories and thus could profit from further assistance in career planning. Here, the online SDS could help individuals form a goal, but they would require further assistance in developing a plan to attain it. The participants tended to agree ($M = 3.84$) with the item, "I feel confident that I can make the next steps to attain my career goals." In spite of the average or above level of confidence for many, with a standard deviation of .97, there are some who lack self-assurance going forward. The responses to these items suggest that some in this non-client sample felt anxious, lacked self-confidence, and did not know how to move forward.

Students participating in this study found the online SDS to be interesting and confidence-building regarding educational and career planning even though counselors were not involved in the intervention. The majority of participants would recommend the SDS to others for career planning and the interpretive reports helped them confirm occupations already being considered. This happened across all three levels of career readiness assessed with the CSI, although only the group with the highest CSI scores (least ready for career decisions) demonstrated significant differences between pretest and posttest on the CSI. These findings lend support to the use of the SDS as a counselor-free, self-help career intervention for all students regardless of readiness for career decision making.

Limitations

Given the nature of the quasi-experimental design and the absence of an experimental control group, we cannot conclude that the online SDS intervention caused the

significant change in the career decision state for those who were in a low state of certainty, satisfaction, and clarity at the outset. In addition, maturation and testing effects were also possible threats to internal validity with this design. Nevertheless, repeated-measures statistics were employed to offset the problem of correlated errors when using the same instrument for both pretest and posttest. Of the students initially informed about the study, 140 completed the SDS, and 114 students completed all surveys including the follow-up survey instruments.

There was also a potential limitation of demand characteristics in that the 114 participants knew they were taking part in a research study. However, given the responses to the attitudinal items and the fact that nearly every participant responded to open-ended questions such as "what was most helpful about your SDS report materials?" and "what was least helpful about your SDS report materials," our belief is that the participants were more concerned about the results of the SDS, the meaning of their scores, and the implications for their career choices than they were about the researchers conducting the study. Regarding external validity, the use of lower division students enrolled in an introductory English course at a large public research university represents a unique population from which to draw a sample of participants, which may limit generalizability to other college environments and populations. Nevertheless, the background characteristics in this study (e.g., gender, ethnicity, and year in school) were comparable to this university population.

Implications for Practice

In 2001, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Professional Users Guide OECD, 2004) began to study career guidance policies in 14 OECD countries (OECD now has 34 member states). It looked at how the organization, management, and delivery of career guidance can help to advance important public policy objectives. The cost-efficient delivery of career guidance was viewed as having important national and international ramifications. The service delivery model described in article seeks to address that need. Conceptualizing career interventions based on a limited, carefully circumscribed counseling relationship flies in the face of the current myopic obsession in the profession shared by many narrative-based approaches and the life-design model promoted by Savickas (2012) and others. Holland (1974) suggested that vocational interventions did not need to be personal or provided in a person-to-person situation. He concluded, "In short, there is ample evidence to support more impersonal approaches for the solution of vocational problems" (p. 10). Holland's observation questioning the need for a personal relationship in a career intervention remains highly relevant in 2019.

With regard to implications for the practice of assisting individuals in career exploration and decision making, the CSI could be included in an intake assessment for career counseling. Individuals low in certainty, satisfaction, and clarity may immediately profit from the use of the online SDS in helping them improve their career decision state and readiness for career decision making. Since the processing of information from the SDS and the

attitudinal outcome acquired from it are independent of the career decision state at entry, this study reveals that any individual may profit from the online SDS intervention. Those with a low career decision state and low career readiness may use the SDS for exploration of career possibilities, whereas those with a higher career decision state may use the results of the SDS to confirm a choice with which they are certain, satisfied, and confident. Thus, the online SDS would appear to be useful in self-help service delivery. Moreover, the CSI, coupled with the SDS, may assist counselors and advisors in identifying those who may find additional staff advising support or individual counseling helpful.

Implications for Research

The findings of this initial field-based study raise some challenging questions that could lead to further research on the use of the CSI and SDS. For example, would an experimental study of the online SDS and a control group show similar CSI results as this study? Do individuals benefit from this kind of online self-help service? Do they like it? Which individuals benefit and which ones do not? Do counselors “buy in” to this type of service delivery model? Research could examine how individuals with a low career decision state use the information from the online SDS to gain higher levels of career certainty, satisfaction, and clarity? Related to this, how do individuals at a medium or high level of career decision state use the information from the SDS? Are there moderator variables that may influence the impact of the SDS on the career decision state, such as depression, anxiety, work history, or academic standing?

Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion, our procedures and findings are congruent with Holland’s observation that impersonal approaches for the solution of vocational problems are not harmful (Holland, 1974). In this instance, we would add the online SDS to Holland’s observation. These findings demonstrate the positive impact of the online SDS in a self-help mode on non-client students who were in a high state of uncertainty, dissatisfaction, and clarity regarding their career goals and aspirations. Regardless of one’s career decision state, the majority of participants engaged the opportunity to further explore their interests through the online SDS and reacted positively to the experience.

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Not Just for Undergraduates: Examining a University Narrative-Based Career Management Course for Engineering Graduate Students

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Abstract

The experiences of graduate engineering students enrolled in a credit-bearing, career management course at a Canadian University were explored from a narrative perspective. Scant literature exists on the outcomes of career planning courses at the graduate level, largely because these classes tend to be aimed at undergraduate students. Individual interviews were conducted with 10 students who completed the semester-length course. The inquiry focused on students' life-career plans and their experiences in the course. Applying social constructivism to career development as a theoretical framework, thematic analysis was used to generate results in the form of three main thematic categories. These categories included: fostering career awareness and exploration skills; finding affiliation with others; and developing optimism and confidence. Findings highlight the benefits for graduate students who are offered opportunities to develop career planning skills through credit bearing courses. Implications for practice, policy, and research exist based on the data analysis, including alternative strategies to incorporate life-career planning skills into graduate-level coursework.

Keywords: career planning courses, narrative career development, qualitative research, graduate students, career management, social constructivism

University students continue to graduate into an increasingly diverse and global marketplace (Bevan, Brinkley, Bajorek, & Cooper, 2018). Uncertainty regarding technology's impact on future work permeates the workplace today (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2016). Projections suggest that most new graduates and employees will need to develop and hone life-long career management skills to thrive (Aoun, 2017; Callanan, Perri, & Tomkowicz, 2017). This is true for students entering the fast-growing and rapidly changing workplace, especially in industries reliant upon STEM education (Rottinghaus, Falk, & Park, 2018). Career management skills, such as life-career decision-making competencies, are deemed necessary for university students (both undergraduate and graduate students) to find relevant work and proactively manage their careers for the future (Stebleton & Franklin, 2017).

Academic institutions and higher education professionals use multiple strategies to educate and prepare students for life-career planning. One preparatory strategy is credit-bearing career planning, or career management courses, typically at the undergraduate level (Fouad, Ghosh, Chang, Figueiredo, & Bachhuber, 2016; Hansen, Jackson, & Pederson, 2017). Although some career education is embedded into academic planning and orientation activities (e.g., University 101 first-year experience classes), there are fewer opportunities for students to

enroll in a structured career planning course that bears credit towards graduation. Previously, some institutions have offered individual career planning courses affiliated with specific majors or departments (Reardon & Fiore, 2014). Providing education to a specified group of students by discipline (e.g., engineering) allows educators to tailor curriculum to the specific needs, aspirations, and concerns of that student population.

Rationale for Graduate Student Career Management Planning

Past studies on the outcomes of career planning courses focus on the experiences of students enrolled at the undergraduate, university level (Reardon & Fiore, 2014; Reardon, Melvin, McClain, Peterson, & Bowman 2015). Frequently, these courses serve undecided students; therefore, topics of career exploration receive much of the curricular focus. In comparison, most graduate and professional programs do not offer career management classes, resulting in a dearth of literature and understanding around these student experiences.

The lack of data on the experiences of graduate students enrolled in career planning classes and the over-reliance on quantitative methods represent two significant gaps in the literature. To fill these gaps, we examined the experiences of 10 graduate students enrolled in a for-credit career planning course offered through an engineering program at a

Canadian university. The students completed a semester-long course that utilized a narrative-based framework to life-career planning (Franklin & Feller, 2017; Savickas, 2012; Zikic & Franklin, 2010). At the conclusion of the course, students were invited to participate in an individual interview during which the goal was to inquire about what they learned through the course. The central research question that guided our study was: What are the experiences of graduate engineering students who completed a credit-bearing career management course at a large Canadian research university?

For the purposes of this paper, we define several key terms as follows. “Life-career planning” will be used to encompass the acknowledgment of and preparation for the holistic and integrative nature of life roles over the course of a lifetime (Hansen, 2001). “Career management” will be defined using the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) framework for career readiness. According to NACE, career management includes the ability “to identify and articulate one’s skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth.” In this study, *life-career planning courses* and *career management courses* will be used synonymously.

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Career Planning Courses in Higher Education

Career planning courses maintain a long history on college campuses. Higher education professionals first offered career courses in the early 1900s, and curricula

was included in first-year orientation programs (Maverick, 1926; Reardon & Fiore, 2014). The general outcomes from an analysis of career course literature are clear and convincing (Folsom & Reardon, 2003; Hung, 2002; Reardon & Fiore). Overall, well-executed career planning courses favorably influence student outcomes, such as measures of career thoughts, career-decision-making, vocational identity, and career decidedness. Career course outcomes positively affect persistence of undergraduate students, graduation rate, cumulative GPA, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with field of study (Reardon & Fiore). Additionally, participating in a career planning course contributes to students’ occupational engagement, awareness of career resources, and self-efficacy (Cox, Rasmussen, Jacobson, Wells, Rettew, & Sirridge, 2006; Fouad et al., 2016; Thompson & Feldman, 2010).

Despite this comprehensive outcome data, there remains at least one shortcoming. Most of the evaluation studies on career planning courses have been conducted at the undergraduate level and involved quantitative analysis (Reardon et al., 2015); less is known about the effectiveness of career planning courses for graduate level students from a qualitative perspective. The literature on graduate students and career readiness focuses primarily on the role of career services for graduate and professional students. Academic institutions and departments offer support services to graduate students mainly through initiatives via career development offices. These services tend to focus on specific tools—such as individual development plans, online career resources, on-campus recruiting events, and workshops for graduate students—designed to assist students for their transition

into the workplace (Cassuto, 2014; Hobin, Clifford, Dunn, Rich, & Justement, 2014; Wang, 2016). Based on our review of the literature, we found limited scholarly work that explored outcomes for graduate and/or professional school students who completed a credit-bearing career management course. This is perhaps because there are so few for-credit graduate level career planning courses in higher education contexts, both in Canada and the United States. Notably, many Canadian colleges (comparable to the U.S. community college system) offer career specific planning courses that represent different disciplines (e.g., business-oriented programs).

There remains a lack of career management courses offered in science and technology programs. Lent, Schmidt, and Larkin (1985) studied the impact of a career course in science and engineering in adult students at the University of Minnesota. The authors discovered that the students improved in career decision-making as measured by the Career Decision Scale and related measures. In other words, a career planning course for science and technology students proved effective based on student outcomes.

A compelling need exists to learn more about the experiences of graduate students who complete graduate-level career planning courses. Specifically, more needs to be understood about graduate students’ experiences in career management courses grounded in narrative approaches to career development that are offered at Canadian institutions. Scholarly inquiries that exist so far on the effectiveness of career planning courses comprise largely of quantitative (i.e., using pre-test and post-test measures) and survey-based approaches. In an analysis of 88 studies of career course

interventions and publications, almost all used a pre/post-test design (Reardon & Fiore, 2014). Qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, which examine the impact of career planning courses on students, remain largely absent in the career development literature. The lack of data on the experiences of graduate students enrolled in career planning classes and the over-reliance on quantitative methods represent two major gaps in the literature.

Theoretical Framework: Social Constructivist Career Development

The constructivist framework to career development served as the theoretical foundation for this inquiry. Since the early 1990s, Mark Savickas and other scholars have advocated for a shift in career development theory and practice towards a social constructivist perspective (Savickas, 1993). Under this approach, proponents argued for a shift from a reliance on scores towards an emphasis on stories, or a narrative approach (Peavy, 1992). This movement towards constructivist approaches advanced in the 2000s, and it gained further prominence and acceptance among career development scholars and practitioners (Bujold, 2004; Young & Collin, 2004). Unlike traditional post-positivist views on career development, a constructivist framework allows career educators to conceptualize career as meaningful and complex, as opposed to “sequential, patterned, and normative” (Peavy, 1992, p. 218). Challenging these traditional assumptions, however, requires both practitioners and clients to make meaning of the career process. Perhaps more importantly, it encourages individuals to seek order

within every interaction or acquisition of knowledge (Young & Collin, 2004). Constructivist approaches to career development and the understanding of *career* continue to gain credibility, and they have been applied to varied contexts and populations (Franklin, Yanar, & Feller, 2015; Savickas, 2011).

From the constructivist perspective, “career” can be understood as much more than paid work experiences and takes on a life design process (Savickas, 2012). Career is examined holistically, including the constellation of life and work roles such as non-paid work, childcare, citizen/volunteer, and others (Glavin, Haag, & Forbes, 2017; Supper, 1990; Taylor & Savickas, 2016). With an understanding of these shifting roles, career planning becomes a co-shared, collaborative process between the client and the practitioner (Bujold, 2004; Richardson, 2004). The constructivist approach aligns with a narrative or storied approach to career development. A narrative approach can further guide practitioners and individuals towards this process of understanding career-related experiences as meaningful, engaging, and transformative.

Using intentional reflection, narrative approaches assume that one’s life involves a story with multiple chapters; the reflection process allows for a better understanding of these meaningful life-career experiences. An extensive body of work on narrative approaches in career development exists, and the potential merits of employing narrative to career counseling and management continues to be well-documented (Bott, Duffy, Borges, Braun, Jordan, & Marino, 2017; Brott, 2005; Franklin, 2015; Stebleton, 2010). Narrative approaches applied to students (undergraduate and graduate) serve as useful tools given that

most graduates will enter a continually shifting workplace where they are likely to hold multiple jobs and careers over the course of a lifetime. Narrative career counseling models can also be used effectively with underserved and marginalized students, such as first-generation students, immigrant students, and other diverse populations (Abkhezr, McMahon, Glasheen, & Campbell, 2018; Grier-Reid & Ganuza, 2011). These studies exclusively explore the undergraduate student experience. A dearth of scholarly inquiry exists around the impact of career planning courses that employ a narrative approach at the graduate and professional student levels. Our study intends to fill this gap in the literature.

Method

Study Location and Overview of Course

The study was conducted through the Institute for Leadership Education in Engineering (ILead) at the University of Toronto, located in Ontario, Canada. The university serves over 90,000 undergraduate and graduate students from around the world. The Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering offers a range of graduate degrees, including master’s and PhD options. The students in this study were enrolled in one of two master’s programs, the more popular 10-credit non-thesis Master of Engineering program, and the research focused Master of Applied Science.

Students opted to enroll in a for-credit career management course in Fall semester, 2016. The course, *APS1030 – Engineering Careers – Theories and Strategies to Manage your Career for the Future* is offered once each academic year through the School of Graduate Studies and

ILead. Career management aligns with ILead’s focus on four aspects of leadership: self, team, organization, and society. The goal of the course is to support graduate engineering students to learn more about contemporary theories, concepts, and issues in career development, so they may apply knowledge and skills to better manage their own career transitions.

The course instructor uses a narrative-based framework, positioning the curriculum around career clarification that is grounded in both theory and practice. There are four main components of the course: a) navigating your career in a volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous world; b) career and life clarification; c) intentional career exploration and making choices; and d) job search tools and strategies; managing engineering talent. Students in the course completed a range of projects, including a group-based informational interview, critical reviews of readings, and a career management logbook reflecting on weekly activities and tracking personal changes. Within the curriculum, students experienced a narrative-based gamified tool called *Who You Are Matters!*, a peer-to-peer storytelling activity from OneLife Tools that aims to build the key career readiness competencies articulated by NACE. Additionally, students used a narrative assessment web application called Online Storyteller. This interactive, responsively designed tool was used individually by students to reflect on their educational, work, and volunteer experiences in an organized fashion, resulting in a robust ‘career statement,’ and career exploration plans for each of their career possibilities.

Participants and Recruitment

The study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Program at the University of Toronto. At the end of the semester, enrolled students in APS1030 were invited to participate in the study. Direct communication with students occurred by informal announcements in class and by formal email after grades had been submitted. Participation or non-participation did not influence students’ grades in any way. Interested students completed a consent form. Of the 21 students enrolled in this offering of the course, 10 students agreed to participate in an individual interview. The participants were enrolled in a master’s program, had less than five years work experience, and had successfully completed the course. In an attempt to minimize bias in the research process, the instructor did not play a role in the interview process, and the principal investigator of the study assumed no role in teaching the course or evaluating the students.

Students earned a \$10 gift card upon completion of the interview.

Interviews

Individual interviews were completed with each of the 10 participants. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Interviews were conducted by the lead PI using WebEx video conferencing software. Of the 10 participants, three identified as women; seven identified as men. Nine of the ten students identified as non-White. Participants were both international and domestic students, most of whom are non-native English speakers. Interviews were transcribed, and pseudonyms were assigned to each student. Interviews focused on students’ personal life-career plans and their views on the course. Examples of interview questions included: What future visions do you have for your career and life? How engaged are you in your career exploration? How confident are you about planning for your career and life? What was your

Table 1

Demographic information of study participants

Name*	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Program Name	Home Country
Lisa	Female	White	Chemical Engineering and Applied Chemistry	Canada
Jazmin	Female	Middle Eastern	Chemical Engineering	United States
Ping	Female	Asian	Engineering	China
Derek	Male	Multiracial	Applied Science	Canada
Jun	Male	Asian	Applied Engineering	China
Amin	Male	Multiracial	Electrical, Computer, and Biomedical Engineering	Yemen
Yunxu	Male	Asian	Mechanical Engineering	China
Alexander	Male	White	Engineering, Leadership and Innovation	Canada
Jianyu	Male	Asian	Computer Engineering	China
Arjun	Male	Asian	Chemical Engineering	India

* Pseudonyms. Not the actual name of participants.

personal experience of differences in you between the start and end of the course? How organized is your thinking now about your career choices compared to before the course?

Research Design

We engaged in a type of narrative research in which the focus of inquiry is to understand the lived experiences of the individual (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Our goal was to learn more about the stories of the graduate Engineering students who had successfully completed APS 1030. There are varied forms of narrative research inquiry. We opted to use what Polkinghorne (1995) titled an *analysis of narratives*, in which the stories themselves form the data. Excerpts of participants' stories led to descriptions of shared themes. From this perspective, the goal is to assign or understand the narrative meaning of an experience (i.e., participation in the course). According to Polkinghorne (1988), "the aim of study of narrative meaning is to make explicit the operations that produce its particular kind of meaning, and to draw out the implications this meaning has for understanding human existence" (p. 6). As is the case with other qualitative research approaches, the objective is to reach a better and deeper understanding of the experience (rather than to create generalizations or predictions about the experience). This analysis of narrative approach aligns with the theoretical framework for the study, which focuses on narrative career development and counseling.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis approaches were used to code and interpret the interview transcripts (Braun &

Clarke, 2006). We used Dedoose, a qualitative software management program, to help organize the data. An inductive and interpretive process was used to code the data, where pre-existing coding frameworks were *not* used. The analysis is data-driven, and the themes that result ideally align closely with the data (Braun & Clarke). We started by doing initial line-by-line coding of all 10 transcripts. We generated 358 initial codes. From there, we clustered text into focused codes, or more general categories based on common experiences or statements made across the participants. We engaged in memoing as a writing strategy to develop a better understanding of the main thematic categories that were emerging (Saldaña, 2009). After reviewing possible themes, larger thematic categories were titled through ongoing team analysis discussions. We generated six thematic categories across the 10 student interviews (Morrow, 2005). For purposes of this article, we focused on three main thematic categories, which represent the most engaging and robust of the six categories.

Trustworthiness and Validation Strategies

Creswell and Miller (2000) outlined several strategies to determine validity and trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry. Four approaches were employed that fit best with this study. First, the researchers met numerous times in order to code and re-code data multiple times, finally agreeing on the thematic categories. Second, using a constructivist paradigm, thick, rich descriptions drawn from students' quotes were used to provide readers with an understanding of students' experiences (Denzin, 1989). Third, we engaged

in researcher reflexivity, which is the process of becoming self-aware via ongoing reflection (Morrow, 2005). For example, the lead researchers recognized their commitment to career interventions and how their bias in favor of such interventions may have affected their interpretation of the data. Fourth, we used a colleague as an external auditor who reviewed tentative findings and quotes and provided feedback; this individual did not participate in the interview or analysis processes.

Results

We opted to focus on three thematic findings that resulted from the data analysis process. The themes are distinct yet overlap (i.e., some quotes could fit into more than one category). The three themes include fostering career awareness and exploration skills; finding affiliation with others; and developing optimism and confidence.

Fostering Career Awareness and Exploration Skills

All of the students in the study discussed newly developed insights and skills related to career awareness and exploration. Students gained an understanding of the career development process, including how concepts related to career planning can be applied to their own lives. Many students discussed the changing nature of work and how their personal and professional goals might fit into this unpredictability (e.g., overcoming obstacles). They discussed the need to be flexible and proactive; this awareness was often challenging for them. Additionally, students discussed how the career-planning course allowed them to develop more skill-oriented knowledge that helped prepare them

for their next steps. Frequently, these competencies focused on networking skills, interviewing, resume writing, and communication. Both the career awareness component and the more concrete skill-building aspects comprise this thematic category and lead to a better understanding of students' experiences in the course.

All of the students in the study explained how their perceptions of life-career planning were influenced by the course. Most notably, students reflected on how the narrative component of the course encouraged them to view work and career as more *unpredictable* in the future. For example, Derek discussed the challenges of planning and the need to be flexible:

Yeah, I guess trying to create a narrative for your, for your life. I think it's a good way of going about it, just like reflecting on certain things, because yeah, basically right now you can't really predict anything so creating a sort of like narrative, or way you want to see your career progress, or based on like, what you want, is like a good way to do it because of the unpredictability of everything... I guess leaves a lot of flexibility in terms of career.

In addition to remaining flexible, Derek noted the importance of knowing self and being proactive in the planning process, recognizing that barriers will likely exist such as learning "to work within the chaos theory" – a concept learned in class. Amin discussed how concepts from the course curriculum contributed to a better understanding whereby he might confront obstacles in his own future planning. He stated:

I think it's related to the framework of the course like how do you kind of use your support systems and how do you try to overcome obstacles and how the course provided us with tools that you can kind of use in order to overcome these. For example, through this course we now know that there are certain ways and there are specific inspired actions that you can take that I didn't specifically know before.

For Amin, key concepts from the course encouraged him to take specific actions when he gets stuck in his own career planning. Similarly, Yunxu talked about setting goals, yet realizing that they might not occur according to a pre-determined plan. He discussed new insights regarding planning for specific job titles at certain milestones in his life:

So planning something like that—it might not work in the future. So actually discovered this is really important. Seriously, I thought maybe I should really have a future career target, like in, maybe in 20 years in 30 years I should become someone, or something... I should be in some situation. But after reading that article, I discovered that may not be really correct.

Yunxu realized that long-term career plans can change and that openness and flexibility are important traits. Accepting that *change* occurs and should be anticipated was a recurring pattern in many of the interviews. Another student, Jun, stated "you don't need to stick to one position." Additionally, he explained "it's okay to make a change in your career...and it is

important to keep a positive mindset about one's career; that is the main thing I learned about the class."

Jazmin also discussed change and stated that the course allowed her to acknowledge that making significant work changes was acceptable and normal. Additionally, she felt reassured that others were experiencing similar challenges with the planning process. Prior to starting the masters program, Jazmin worked at a prestigious financial company. She explained:

Because while working at my previous job, they told us, you know, 'this is the best career ever, you should never quit,'...I never heard people getting out, it's just like 'no, you stay there forever'.

Alexander, a recent graduate of the program, captured the core of this career awareness theme. He explained:

It opened my eyes to this idea of career development being a lot more than just a job title, or how much money you make, or whatever it may be; so it completely changes your mind as to what career development individuals actually do, how it is that they do the work, and it changes the way you think (about) your own career.

Furthermore, most students discussed learning specific skills related to the career exploration process, including interviewing and communication skills. Arjun expressed the value of learning how to communicate one's experiences to a prospective employer. For him and some other students, this was a new concept and skill set. Arjun explained, "So to get a job you

actually need to sell yourself to your recruiter right; so if you don't do it with smartness, not the academic smartness but street smartness." Arjun explained that this 'street smartness' was different from formal academic preparation, and that it is a skill that he and others developed in the course.

Participants seemed to understand that the future is unpredictable, and that they needed to develop the skills to manage changes in their professional work lives. To accomplish this goal, the students engaged in numerous learning activities throughout the semester, including engaging in structured 'conversation café' discussions about assigned articles, and exercises about work and future trends. These challenges pushed them to think and plan in new ways, resulting in greater career awareness and exploratory skills as well as a greater connection to each other as colleagues.

Finding Affiliation with Others

The narratives of graduate engineering students in this career class suggested that they found a sense of connection and affiliation with others. These feelings included a strong sense of belonging that students fostered through numerous collaborative activities and discussions around life-career decision-making. In turn, this created a community of learning founded on disclosure, dialogue, and engagement in a common space. Some students were re-assured that they were not going through this process entirely on their own; it was a reminder that other students struggled with similar life-career issues.

Jazmin talked about the value of learning from others. She mentioned that: "And then, um, I like reading like articles like

'miswanting,' or seeing other people who struggled with their career as well, because *I thought I was alone.*" She contrasted experiencing feelings of loneliness with new perspectives offered by hearing others' stories. She found value in others' career stories, which were presented in assigned readings, podcasts, and websites:

We had the option to listen to a career story and then I think, or he (the instructor) made us do reflections; I think those were really, really helpful. I especially liked going through the website he provided because I would have never come up with those websites, I didn't even know about them. And then just like doing personal reflections were really also helpful as well.

Similar to Jazmin, Lisa discussed the importance of sharing ideas in class and receiving feedback from others in the group. She talked about creating an action plan near the end of the semester:

What I found was actually the most difficult part was the end when you had to—the possibilities—come up with an action of possibility, you know, I was...I am kind of still unsure of what I wanted to do, but I got really good kind of ideas from the people around. Even (the instructor) would go around to each group and "oh, did you hear about this option" and "this is kind of good for you," so that was cool.

Lisa continued by stating that:

I was able to meet a lot of people, too, in the class. It was a small class, so you have a lot of interactions. I had the

experience of talking to a career professional, which I have never done before, so that was good.

Jianyu also found support from others in the class who pushed him to try new activities—including ice skating and participating in the in-class career game activity. What Jianyu learned from these activities translated into building career skills. He explained:

...I started to skate, ice skating, from last year, and I felt that was pretty good. And during the first few times, I couldn't really stand up on the ice, but in the end it turned out I can skate. And the other people told me that you can get out of your comfort zone and sort of get over obstacles, and you can try something new, which is really awesome. And I never thought about that before.

Jianyu gained strength through the support of his classmates, and he equated learning to ice skate with new concepts that he could apply to his own career management. His classmates encouraged him to try new challenges. Similarly, Arjun, a male student, talked about how the students learned through group discussion, often debating concepts from key articles. He discussed this sense of community developed in the class:

...It was actually interesting to know that we all have different opinions but at the end of the day we're all just same everyone, everyone is just as confused as the one sitting next to me, so that was actually good to know and also (the instructor) used to talk about the same thing, the same theme or used

to have a different theme and then we also had reflections to write about...

Arjun reflected a similar message that was evident in Jazmin's previous quote, that they were collectively grappling with important decisions; the struggle fostered bonds between students and the instructor.

Yunxu reflected on the classroom atmosphere that helped foster this sense of connection and belonging.

Honestly, it was really it was a nice class and had a very open and friendly atmosphere and when we actually work, study in that class, we were giving some reading assignments about different people...

He continued:

I think this is a really nice experience because it was a really nice experience to talk to many students and to understand some more. And, also the course, the most useful thing I think is the career and life cycle clarification model; I really liked that model.

Students valued the opportunity to talk and learn from others in class. It validated their own experiences, and they found comfort in knowing that others struggled with the same life-career issues. This sense of belonging created a strong atmosphere of connection and communication and contributed to positive feelings about their future planning.

Developing Optimism and Confidence

Students in the study expressed the growth of optimism and confidence in their degree program and career field. For participants, these two themes manifested along a spectrum. For example, some students registered for the course because they lacked confidence in their future plans and left the course feeling very confident in their next steps. Conversely, some students gained only some confidence; still others left the course more uncertain than when they started. Students who reported increased optimism attributed it to class activities, such as the reflection assignments and career game.

Alexander described his false confidence before the class and felt the course helped him differentiate between real and false confidence:

...from my perspective there's really two types of confidence in this in what I've seen in myself. The first is this idea sort of I guess...ignorant confidence where you're just very confident in yourself and your skills from without understanding all the problems and all the things that lay ahead [I: Yeah] and I would like I would probably classify myself as that before (the) course took over in terms of planning for the future ...

Alexander elaborated further on how the course helped him re-define his own perceptions of confidence:

For me it was this idea of the fact that you actually need to plan for something in the future...taking the course and sort of going through it and

realizing there are steps and different components involved and even getting to the point where I'm at now isn't necessarily based on luck...I walked out much more confused than I did walking in because all of a sudden there's all this new information and it's no longer as clear cut and I don't want to say that I am no longer as confident, but the confidence has now changed...

Jun disclosed that the course stimulated the way he thought about careers, allowing him to consider different career paths, and more importantly, feel more comfortable switching careers or being unsure:

I would say that it's definitely went up in optimism. Before I have taken this course, I wasn't sure what I should do in my career. But after I have taken it I at least feel it's ok to make a change in your career. Just to do something like following your passion. I'm definitely more optimistic with that...this course it just give a lot inside of what you do consider.

Derek mentioned how the class put him more at ease. In general, he feels more positive in situations that may warrant negativity, and he felt reassured that positivity would not erode his ambition or determination to reach his goals:

I think just being positive about it is maybe one of the most important things. Like not being too down on it and like trying to do what you want, like not trying to settle, but just trying to be positive that you'll get what you want and keep trying to get it. And I think that's what I

learned, one of the most important takeaways from the course.

Derek and Jun expressed confidence while remaining unsure about their specific career outlook. However, not all students felt empowered or entirely confident. Lisa struggled with what kind of career would fit her needs, before, during, and after the class.

So, I think, right now, I am leaning towards doing the exam just to, just to do it. I don't have to make a decision right there, but at least I'll have the option...I'm not one hundred percent sure, but I do like working in the lab. I am interested in science still, and engineering kind of, you know, any pharmaceutical companies or companies that involve research and science, I don't know; that's what I'm thinking of at the moment.

Lisa took the course to help her sort through her many options. She discussed gaining some confidence upon talking more with her instructor about her future plans: "So, [my professor and I] kind of drew this timeline together, and I have the option of bypassing into a PhD program, or...finishing off or getting an industry job." She was still somewhat undecided about her career trajectory, but had narrowed her options and felt confident in her ability to move forward despite inherent ambiguity and uncertainty of her situation.

Other students fell in the middle of this spectrum of confidence and optimism. Yunxu, for example, indicated that his optimism increased some because of the course. He stated that he has "discovered one direction" and is "optimistic about [his] future." On the

other hand, Amin revealed that his optimism only increased slightly.

I think for me only optimism improved slightly, and the others remained the same because I think the course...I tend to reflect and sit back and think about what I want to do and research it and stuff...so I think that's related to the fact that there were so many kind of options or ways to think about future opportunities that I didn't necessarily think in terms of a framework of thinking that way before the course, so it kind of opened my eyes.

Most students reported an increased capacity to define and assess their confidence and optimism about their life-career plans. For some students, the reported gains were minimal. In sum, developing optimism aligned with the other themes, developing career awareness and finding affiliation with others.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of graduate engineering students in a career management course at a large Canadian university. Although much work has been done on the experiences of undergraduate students in career planning courses, little scholarly inquiry exists on graduate or professional school students enrolled in these classes. The findings of these students' interviews suggest that a narrative-based career management course provides several benefits to graduate engineering students in this particular context. Although this inquiry explores a single course offering, student participants articulated a greater sense of career awareness as well as increased

optimism and confidence upon completion of the course. Using a narrative-based framework that served as the basis for the course curriculum, students seemed to gain an understanding that *career* can be viewed as flexible and unpredictable. Most students discussed the merits of learning how to better manage their career through the self-reflection activities and projects completed in the course. Moreover, students articulated the need to be proactive in the career management process as well as the desire to keep options somewhat open. For many students, these were new concepts that they explored throughout the semester.

Students fostered a stronger sense of optimism and confidence about their futures, despite the uncertain nature of the world of work. The analysis of the interviews indicated that students had not only gained higher level career management skills but had also honed job search and exploratory skills around informational interviewing, resume preparation, and networking. As they completed the assignments, students acquired a greater sense of confidence and empowerment to engage in these activities. They reported being generally optimistic and hopeful about their futures.

The results suggested that students benefitted from interactions with their peers in the class. Several students noted that they enjoyed hearing from others and they realized that they did not feel alone in the career planning process. From this perspective, experiences—and even fears—were alleviated by engaging with classmates in the course. This collaboration was demonstrated in several activities and projects, notably the group-based informational interview and the activities in which students were asked to share their own narratives

with their classmates (e.g., gamification exercises). It should be noted that not all of the comments about the course were positive. For example, one student mentioned, “Some of the articles were redundant” and not as useful. That said, the outcomes of the career course align with what we know about the benefits of career planning courses as outlined in the literature review (Reardon & Fiore, 2014), mainly growth in measures of career self-efficacy, confidence, and career decidedness. The contribution of this study lies in the uniqueness of the student population; all participants were graduate students enrolled in a career management course.

Limitations

Several limitations of the study exist. The lead author is a strong advocate of career planning courses and has taught career planning classes for numerous years. Potential researcher biases and assumptions that may have influenced the interpretation of findings are acknowledged, even though it is often assumed that bias and subjectivity is inherent in the qualitative inquiry process (Hodges, 2011). Second, member checking was not able to be conducted due to timing issues at the end of the semester. Third, there was not a comparison or control group, although this practice is less common in qualitative research since the goal of inquiry tends to be discovery and *not* difference (Hodges). Finally, students may have been influenced by social desirability, not wanting to share comments that might have been viewed as disparaging or negative. We aimed to minimize this phenomenon by separating the instructor role from the researcher roles (i.e., lead PI had no connection to the students other than

the interviews that were completed after the course). Notwithstanding these limitations, this study adds to the growing body of literature about graduate student career interventions, and, as a qualitative inquiry, allows for a rich understanding of the meaning students made of their experience in the course.

Implications for Career Development Practice, Policy, and Research

Several implications for career development educators exist based on the analysis. First, the findings from this study suggest that graduate and professional students may benefit from more opportunities to enroll in career management courses. Often, educators may assume that graduate level students do not need career education because they have already made significant career-focused educational choices; graduate students typically are at an advanced level of training. These assumptions are not entirely accurate given what students shared. Based on the analysis of students’ narratives, participants needed and benefitted from the opportunities of a structured forum to engage intentionally in the career reflection process. Administrators who oversee professional programs at universities should consider adding career management courses to the curriculum, especially at the graduate level. These programs would benefit from narrative style interventions designed to foster student reflections on paid, unpaid, and educational experiences in order to identify strengths, desires, personal qualities, influences of others, and future work possibilities.

Second, students mentioned individual course activities as having a positive effect on their

life-career planning abilities. For higher education leaders who may be unable to marshal resources to support a career management course, or who have concerns about enrollment at the graduate level, this study demonstrates a practical alternative. Career development educators can explore ways to integrate or infuse career management planning modules into existing courses. Within existing courses, educators can dedicate one or two class meetings to core career development concepts where the focus is on key career development concepts. Multiple options exist to facilitate these discussions: either provide instructors with career development tools and training on curriculum elements, such as narrative games and web applications tools, or invite the career development services staff into the classroom to facilitate this learning. These infused career modules may provide opportunities for graduate students to engage in the life-career planning process at a critical juncture in their professional training.

Although students did not specifically address policy recommendations in the interviews, there are policy-related suggestions that stem from the findings. The outcomes and implications of this study represent the experiences of 10 students in one course. Yet, based on the mostly favorable experiences reported by participants in this semester-long course, such career initiatives should be offered—and on-going assessment and evaluation can determine how to proceed with career interventions at the graduate level. We recommend that higher education administrators support career-related initiatives, such as semester-long career courses like the one described here. Furthermore, credit-bearing classes can be integrated into career interventions

within other programs at the institution.

Additionally, undergraduate career services garner most of the attention and resources at many academic institutions. However, based on the results of this study, graduate level support focused on career management for graduate and professional school students may be highly beneficial. It is recommended that the current course continue and additional data be collected to assess effectiveness. A movement in career services delivery is occurring that challenges the entire campus community—rather than only career development educators—to support students in their career development processes (Fox, 2018). From a student affairs perspective, professionals can explore new and innovative ways to engage both undergraduate and graduate students in intentional planning, using narrative or storied-based approaches. Career educators can explore partnerships with other groups on campus such as residence hall programming, student counselling and mental health services, multicultural student affairs, orientation, and student life.

The findings of this study suggest several implications for further research on this timely topic. First, scholars can expand research by comparing qualitative themes and results, such as those presented, with quantitative measures. Future studies might employ alternative approaches to gain an understanding of students' experiences in a graduate level career management course (e.g., ethnography, focus groups). As noted in the literature review, there exists a plethora of survey-based studies focused on undergraduate students in career planning courses; less is known about graduate level students primarily because fewer opportunities exist.

Second, future qualitative studies could employ a longitudinal approach to exploring students' career decision-making over a period of time. Narrative scholars might use a life history approach to structure several individual interviews to create a holistic biographical portrait of each student; this study did not allow for the extensive investigation that is required to do this type of inquiry.

Finally, scholars can conduct research on other career initiatives at the same institution and examine differences if they wanted to compare groups and outcomes. Frequently, there are several sections of a career management course offered (in undergraduate career programs) and educators may implement new initiatives in one course while not offering the exact equivalent in the other. For example, at the University of Toronto, the OPTIONS program offers an 11-week program for PhD students and post-doctoral fellows to consider alternative career paths beyond the academy (Diddiano et al., 2019). Embedded in OPTIONS is a two-session component drawing on the same narrative framework that was outlined in this paper. APS1030 is an established course; therefore, it provides a potential 'laboratory' for future research, including insights students share about the rationale for changes in measures over the duration of the course.

Further research could compare results from APS1030 to OPTIONS to explore how different curricula influence students under varying formats. There are numerous choices for exploration and development. This study aims to provide an in-depth qualitative inquiry of one particular course. As is the case in most qualitative scholarly work, the purpose is *understanding*

rather than generating universal generalizations across multiple student populations or using control groups for comparison.

Conclusion

Students will graduate into an ever-changing world of work, where self-managed, ever-shifting careers will become the norm rather than the exception. Career development educators hold unique opportunities to support students, including graduate students, as they enter new work contexts. A graduate career management course serves as a structured and intentional strategy for students to engage in life-career planning. This qualitative study explored the experiences of 10 graduate engineering students enrolled in a career management course at the University of Toronto. The course used a narrative-based framework and activities stemmed from a narrative career development perspective. Results indicated that students gained greater career awareness and possessed optimism and confidence upon completion of the course. We contend that more opportunities need to exist for graduate students to engage in career reflection and exploration.

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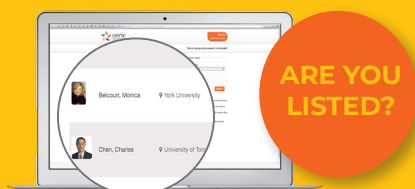
The authors would like to thank Sara Franklin-White and Allie Fenwick for their contributions to this article.

Doing research in career development? Here are two great resources to help!

1 CANADIAN CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESEARCHER DATABASE

ceric.ca/researchers

Find out who is doing what research in Canada with this easy-to-use, searchable online database.



- Search by 40 areas of interest or simply browse the list of 160 researchers and growing
- Use the database to identify potential academic and community partners for research
- Learn about the latest research in any area of career development

Researchers are invited to contact admin@ceric.ca to have their names added or update their profiles.

2 LITERATURE SEARCHES

ceric.ca/literature-searches

Use these 54 bibliographies to stay up to date on the latest research in key areas of career development.

Also a valuable reference if you are considering a submission to CERIC for project partnership funding.

New literature searches include:

- Climate Change and Career Development
- Career Development and Experiential Learning
- Workforce Development
- Public Sector and Career Development
- Future of Work

Etta St John Wileman Award Prix Etta-St.-John-Wileman

This award is designed to recognize and celebrate individuals who have devoted their lives to enhancing the field of career development. It honours Etta St John Wileman, a champion and crusader of career, work and workplace development in Canada in the early 20th century.

For full information on the nomination and selection process, as well as profiles of past winners, visit ceric.ca/wileman_award.

NOMINATION DEADLINE: JUNE 30, 2020

Ce prix vise à souligner et à célébrer l'apport des personnes qui ont consacré toute leur vie à améliorer le domaine du développement de carrière. Ce prix honore la mémoire d'Etta St. John Wileman, pionnière et fervente militante du développement de carrière et de l'amélioration des conditions de travail au Canada au début du XX^e siècle.

Pour plus d'information sur les nominations et la sélection, ou pour consulter la liste des anciens récipiendaires du prix, visitez ceric.ca/prix_wileman.

DATE LIMITE : LE 30 JUIN 2020

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

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

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

Journal Topic Areas:

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

Instructions to Contributors for Submission

Submissions are now done online. For submission instructions and the online form visit <http://cjcdonline.ca/submit/>

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Peer-Reviewed: <http://cjcdonline.ca/peer-reviewed-publication-categories/>

Non-Peer Reviewed: <http://cjcdonline.ca/non-peer-reviewed-publication-categories/>

CONSIGNES AUX AUTEUR(E)S

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

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

Thèmes de la Revue :

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

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