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Article in *Human Resource Development Review* · May 2014

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Human Resource Development Review
2014, Vol. 13(2) 181–206
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DOI: 10.1177/1534484314524201
hrd.sagepub.com



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Abstract

Research on human resource development is needed to empirically document the changing nature of careers among successive generational cohorts of workers. This article offers a conceptual framework for examining shifting careers, which accounts for important demographic shifts occurring in the labor force. Our research framework provides a comprehensive set of career-related variables (including career expectations, experience, and outcomes) for investigation. We illustrate the need to consider confounding influences of other demographic shifts in the study of changing careers, using the Canadian context as an illustrative example. We further argue that generational differences may be confounded with gender, immigration, and socioeconomic effects, and therefore, all three effects need to be considered simultaneously with generation. We identify some of the challenges faced by organizations in adjusting to these shifts and conclude with directions for future research.

Keywords

shifting careers, gender, generations, immigration, socioeconomic status

Introduction

Human Resource Development (HRD) is concerned with the development of people to enhance individual, group, and organizational effectiveness (Gilley, Eggland, & Gilley,

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2002). It is generally focused on organizational development, training and development, and career development (cf. Kim, 2012). As such, it is critical for HRD researchers and practitioners to have access to current and relevant knowledge about the evolving nature of careers. Career researchers have long recognized that changes are occurring in the nature of employment relationships, career progression patterns, and career expectations (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1996), which have direct implications for employers and HRD practitioners. The complexity of these changes is compounded by a number of trends in the composition of the labor forces of many developed countries, including generational differences, increased workforce diversity resulting from immigration, and an individual's socioeconomic status (SES; Henderson & Provo, 2006; Torraco & Yorks, 2006; Wang & Wang, 2004). These trends suggest that managers and practitioners will need to be adaptive and develop different approaches to HRD to meet the needs of successive generations of workers and the changing nature of work and careers (Burke & Ng, 2006; Callanan & Greenhaus, 2008; Ross-Gordon & Brooks, 2004).

Generational differences in the workplace have garnered extensive attention in the media and academic research (Twenge, 2010). Therefore, it is important to understand how career expectations, experiences, and outcomes shift from generation to generation, for HRD professionals to create effective career development systems (Eversole, Venneberg, & Crowder, 2012; McDonald & Hite, 2008). We argue, however, that generational research frequently obscures important demographic heterogeneity within generational cohorts (Parry & Urwin, 2011). We contend that gender, immigration, and SES are particularly salient moderating factors that will interact with generations, producing different trajectories of career change among men and women and among immigrant populations. Successful HRD will require a better understanding of how generational changes are unfolding within the context of other salient demographic variables. For example, there are greater expectations of gender equity among successive generations (Ng & Wiesner, 2007), and employers must be sensitive to issues of work/life balance and career development of women in contemporary workplace (Shapiro, Ingols, O'Neill, & Blake-Beard, 2009). Furthermore, globalization and worker immigration have brought on greater cultural and socioeconomic diversity in the labor market (Burke & Ng, 2006). However, many immigrants remain underemployed, while employers grapple with how best to utilize the diverse talents to gain a competitive advantage in a global economy. Although other demographic factors such as gender identity (Gedro, 2010; Schmidt, Githens, Rocco, & Kormanik, 2012) as well as race and ethnicity (Brooks & Clunis, 2007) have been studied within the context of HRD and careers in recent years, to our knowledge, there has been no research considering the confluence of generational differences and shifting demographics in the labor force. An understanding of demographic shifts in the labor market is thus crucial to creating and implementing effective programs for recruitment, utilization, and career development of new workforce entrants (Oloo, 2012). In this article, we also answer the call for more research on new issues confronting organizations and HRD such as generational differences and worker immigration (Torraco & Yorks, 2006).

Our primary objective is therefore to propose a framework for studying the shifting nature of careers that considers the simultaneous impacts of generation, gender, immigration, and SES on the evolution of individual careers. In addition, we consider career constructs at the broad level, including three primary dimensions of the career concept: career expectations, career experiences, and career outcomes. Past research concerning shifting work experiences and attitudes among successive generations has tended to focus on isolated constructs. We explore career trends across all four generations in the workforce, rather than focusing on a subset, as much of the extant research has done. Because shifts in gender, immigration, and socioeconomic diversity vary in the labor forces of different countries, we apply our framework to one specific context: the Canadian workforce. Canada serves as an illustrative example of the challenges of studying careers in countries with shifting demographic profiles, as it has a richly diverse labor force that continues to grow ever more diverse, with increasing percentages of older workers, immigrant workers, and a growing divide in SES among the labor force (Martel, Caron-Malenfant, Vézina, & Bélanger, 2007; Matthews, Pendakur, & Young, 2009). At present, almost 30% of Canada's population belongs to the baby boom generation, most of whom will retire by 2031 and will be replaced by subsequent generations (Statistics Canada, 2013). Because demographic patterns are somewhat similar among Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand in terms of birth cohorts (Anderson & Hussey, 2000; Chandola, Coleman, & Hiorns, 2002), labor force participation rates of women (Jaumotte, 2003), and immigration trends (Antecol, Cobb-Clark, & Trejo, 2003; Coppel, Dumont, & Visco, 2001), our research framework can be used with some adaptation to study the shifting nature of careers in these and other countries.

A Conceptual Model of Shifting Careers

Career development is a set of activities through which one determines appropriate personal and professional goals and works to obtain the required skills and experience necessary to obtain those goals (Werner & DeSimone, 2011). As such, it is an important element of HRD, which links individual development goals with developmental needs of their employers. A career can be defined as “an individual's work-related and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside of organizations, that form a unique pattern over the individual's life span” (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009, p. 1543). This definition includes not only work activities, but also the pre-work educational choices and attainment that are foundational to career enactment. Careers can be analyzed through both objective and subjective points of view (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999). From an objective perspective, one's career can be viewed as the number and nature of roles and role transitions that one makes as part of his or her working life (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). From a subjective perspective, careers can be viewed as the meaning or story that one constructs to make sense of their vocational choices, and the needs, satisfactions, self-conceptions, and attitudes that affect and are affected by those choices (Savickas, 2002). Given the variations in which careers are conceptualized, any effort to identify a viable framework for studying the shifting nature of careers must begin

with a consideration of the pertinent dimensions of the career concept. Although the literature on careers has considered a wide range of concepts, they can be broadly categorized in terms of career expectations, career experiences, and career outcomes (career satisfaction and career commitment), each of which is explored below.

Existing career theories, such as social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) and work experience theory (Tesluk & Jacobs, 1998), are focused on individual career decisions and do not consider broader changes in the nature of careers. Research and writing on “new careers” (e.g., Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1996) has examined the ways in which careers are enacted among individuals, but has not simultaneously considered the role of career expectations and experiences in shaping career outcomes, and has not integrated demographic factors such as gender, SES, and immigration, which are affecting the evolution of careers in many societies. By incorporating generation, gender, immigration, and SES, our model is far broader than existing theories of changing careers. We also note that while most studies on HRD have focused on employee satisfaction and organizational commitment (e.g., Fornes, Rocco, & Wollard, 2008), we incorporate career satisfaction and career commitment as outcomes in our model. This reflects a long-term perspective on satisfaction and commitment and recognizes that individual careers are increasingly characterized by frequent job change and organizational mobility (Lyons, Schweitzer, Ng, & Kuron, 2012; Zaleska & de Menezes, 2007). Furthermore, it is difficult to measure employee satisfaction or organization commitment with immigrant workers as these attitudes are less transferable with a changing external environment (e.g., switching employers or countries). Career-related attitudes are therefore better suitable to career development theorizing, because they are more indicative of one’s dedication to a series of related jobs or within the same profession (Shim & Rohrbaugh, 2011), particularly for immigrant workers. Likewise, professional fulfillment and career satisfaction are related to staying in the same profession (Peterson & Wiesenber, 2004) even after crossing national boundaries.

Career Expectations

As a starting point for studying individual careers, we first consider an individual’s subjective career reality (Collin, 1998, also see Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). Career expectations relate to people’s subjective beliefs about what is appropriate and fair in their careers, how they envision an ideal career unfolding, and what they view as important in pursuing their career goals. Previous research has examined individuals’ expectations related to (a) pay, both at the beginning of one’s career and at the peak of one’s career (Jackson, Gardner, & Sullivan, 1992); (b) career progression patterns, that is, the career path (Jackson et al., 1992); (c) personal definitions of career success, that is, the accumulated positive work and psychological outcomes resulting from one’s work experiences (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001); (d) work-related values, which represent the importance that people place on various work goals and work attributes (Brown & Crace, 1996; Lyons, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2010); and (e) the salience that one places on various roles in life, such as employee, parent, and spouse, which is critical to understanding how people make career choices (Super & Sverko, 1995).

Although research has incorporated each of these constructs separately, to date, there has been no attempt to integrate them into a holistic conception of one's total career expectations. To assess whether career expectations are shifting over time, it is thus necessary to determine the career expectations that were formed by members of the various generations early in their careers, how those expectations differ for men and women and among immigrant subgroups, and how those expectations have changed, if at all, over the course of their careers.

Career Experience

We use the term *career experience* to refer to the objective and subjective reality of one's career. This includes two components. First, we must examine the objective facts: the seminal educational, work, family-related, and leisure activities that constitute one's "career-in-life" history over time (cf. Ituma & Simpson, 2006). Until recently, career theory has been largely predicated on the assumption that the "normal" career pattern involved the acquisition of educational credentials and entry into the labor market, followed by a linear upward progression in a small number of organizations (Bidwell & Briscoe, 2010; Chudzikowski, 2012; Verbruggen, 2012). Sullivan (1999) noted that this "normal career pattern" is inadequate for two reasons. It may never have been the norm for women, whose career patterns have historically involved delayed entry or short-term hiatus from the labor market for the purposes of child-bearing and child-rearing. Second, it is no longer applicable in the modern employment context. Adamson, Doherty, and Viney (1998) have suggested that three significant employment trends have shaped modern careers: (a) the death of long-term employment relationships has resulted in a short-term perspective on careers; (b) hierarchical career advancement has given way to less predictable patterns of career progression that involve lateral and even downward progressions of duties and status over time; and (c) there is no longer a logical sequence of jobs that can be deemed a "normal" career.

Recent decades have seen steady increases in post-secondary education rates in the United States (KewalRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007) and Canada (Hango & de Broucker, 2007), although these increases have been smaller in minority populations (KewalRamani et al., 2007), immigrant populations (McMullen, 2011), and low-income families (Finnie, Childs, & Wismer, 2011). It is not possible to fully examine changing career patterns through a generational lens, as each of the generations inhabiting the current workforce is at a different stage of its career. Only when the careers of these generations are complete will it be possible to cross-sectionally compare their entire career paths. There is, however, some evidence to suggest that early career patterns have shifted from generation to generation. For instance, Lyons and colleagues (2012) documented increased job mobility and organizational mobility in the early career stage (i.e., under age 30) with successive generations.

Recent literature on career patterns has surmised a shift away from linear, organization-based careers toward "boundaryless careers" which span across organizations and even professions (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Inkson, Gunz, Ganesh, & Roper,

2012; Sullivan, 1999). Similarly, Hall (1996) has predicted the rise of the “protean career,” which involves an individual’s progression through a number of learning cycles within and across organizations over the span of his or her career. Furthermore, Templer and Cawsey (1999) proposed that modern careers might be characterized as “portfolio careers,” in which individuals develop sets of skills that they sell to various clients on a contractual basis. However, despite the seeming consensus that modern careers are dynamic and span multiple organizations and occupations, there is insufficient empirical evidence to date to support the existence of such a shift in general (Inkson et al., 2012; Rodrigues & Guest, 2010). Most recently, empirical research has shown changes in career patterns between the generations, including a shift toward greater mobility (Lyons et al., 2012).

Second, we must examine the interplay of work and other life roles (i.e., the work-life interface) and the degree to which work and non-work roles have conflicted with each other or balanced over one’s career. The seminal work of Super (1980) suggested that the career be viewed as a broader interactive pattern of life roles that are played out in our homes, workplaces, schools, and communities. The various roles change in their relative salience over time and may conflict with one another when they place contradictory expectations on the individual. Most notably, work and family roles may conflict in making career-related decisions (Ballout, 2008; Harrington & Harrigan, 2006; Slan-Jerusalim & Chen, 2009). We have therefore included the construct of work-life conflict, an inter-role conflict in which the pressures and expectations of two or more roles are incompatible.

Career Outcomes

A full consideration of careers must also incorporate perceived career outcomes. A basic tenet of the theory of met expectations holds that if people’s work-related experiences fail to meet or exceed their expectations, they will experience negative attitudes such as dissatisfaction and low commitment (Irving & Montes, 2009). We consider two critical attitudes related to one’s career: career satisfaction and career commitment.

Career satisfaction represents an individual’s positive internal evaluation of an individual’s career, including his or her ability to meet career goals related to overall success, income, promotion, and personal development (Feldman & Ng, 2007; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005). Career commitment refers to one’s level of dedication to the pursuit of one’s career. Carson and Bedeian (1994, p. 240) argued that career commitment is comprised of three components: (a) career identity, establishing a close emotional association with one’s career; (b) career planning, determining one’s developmental needs and deciding on career goals; and (c) career resilience, resisting career disruption, even in the face of adversity.

The three categories of career concepts described above provide an encompassing depiction of individual careers. Using this broad representation of the career concept, we next consider how careers are changing from generation to generation. The conceptual model depicted in Figure 1 serves as a basis for our discussion of changing careers.

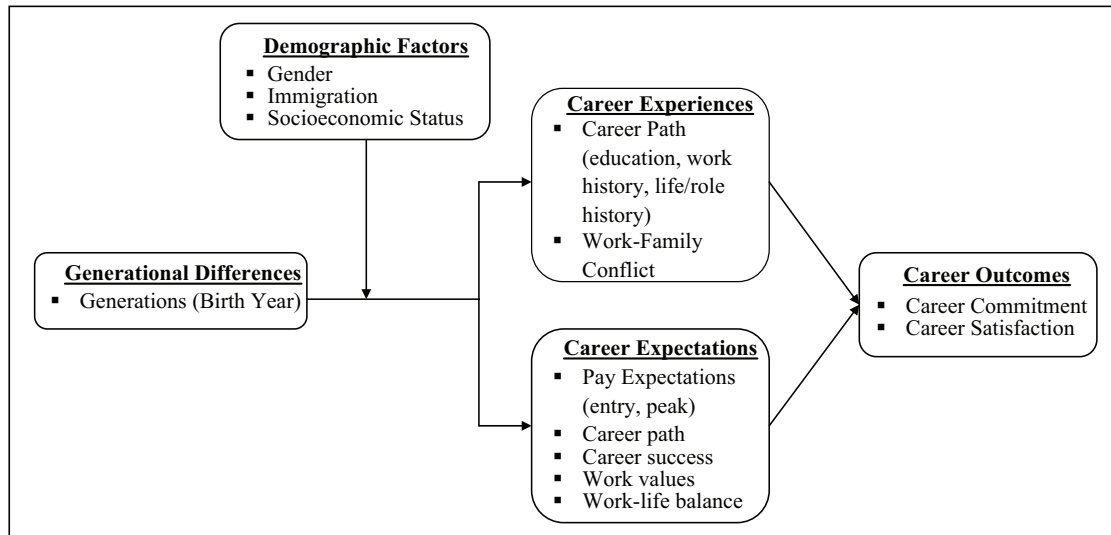


Figure 1. Conceptual framework career experiences, expectations, and attitudes.

Generation as a Perspective for Shifting Careers

As shown in Figure 1, we propose that generational shifts provide a basis for examining changes to the career concepts outlined above. Social scientists have long used generational cohorts as units of analysis in the study of broader social change. The concept of generation is attributed to sociologist Karl Mannheim who posited that a generation's unique identity is forged when important historical events or periods of rapid social change disrupt continuity and challenge the perception of what is "normal" (Cavalli, 2004; Mannheim, 1928/1952; Pilcher, 1994). While adults seek to make sense of disruptive change by integrating it into their existing cognitive schema, young people who are still in the formative years of their developmental lifecycle will have their cognitive schema shaped by the change and its social and historical repercussions (Pilcher, 1994). The shared formative experience of a cohort of people born and raised in the same historical era thus becomes the basis for shared values, and even common personality traits (Parry & Urwin, 2011; Twenge, 2006).

Naturally, the social and historical punctuations that create generational divisions will differ greatly from country to country. Generational divides that are unique with respect to birth-year boundaries and value differences have been documented in Western Europe (Abramson & Inglehart, 1992), China (Egri & Ralston, 2004), India (Mellahi & Guermat, 2004), Japan (Takese, Oba, & Yamashita, 2009), Pakistan (Khilji, 2004), and the Middle East (Whiteoak, Crawford, & Mapstone, 2006). Some Westernized countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom have highly similar generational cohort patterns created by common demographic, social, and historical trends in the post–World War II era (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Foot, 1998; Pilcher, 1994). In this article, we focus on these common cohorts, and we draw examples from Canada. Research in other cultural contexts can benefit from this research if allowances are made for the unique demographics of those cultures.

The North American birth cohorts that coexist today have been ascribed a variety of names and birth-year boundaries. The most commonly used birth-year names and boundaries are as follows: *Matures* were born prior to 1945 (Adams, 1998; Foot, 1998); *Baby Boomers* were born between 1945 and 1964 (Adams, 1998; Statistics Canada, 2006); *Generation Xers* were born between 1965 and 1979; and *Millennials* were born in 1980 or later (Foot, 1998; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). A growing body of literature documents differences among the various generational birth cohorts in terms of their values, attitudes toward jobs, organizations and careers, and differing expectations with respect to career paths and career success (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). A number of popular press publications have also reported on the career expectations of individual cohorts (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Shelton & Shelton, 2005).

A number of recent studies have documented generational differences in career variables, providing support for the anecdotal evidence presented in the popular press (e.g., Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Zemke et al., 2000). With respect to career expectations, Millennials have been found to have pay and promotion expectations that are excessive relative to labor market standards (Ng et al., 2010). A number of studies have identified generational differences in work values. Smola and Sutton (2002) found that Generation Xers placed greater emphasis on being promoted quickly and on the importance of hard work than did Baby Boomers, whereas Baby Boomers placed more emphasis on the centrality of work to one's identity. Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance (2010) found that Millennial high school seniors placed more importance on leisure and less importance on intrinsic rewards, altruism, and social rewards than did previous generations when they were the same age. Likewise, Cennamo and Gardner (2008) compared the work values of three generational cohorts (i.e., Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Millennials) of New Zealand workers and found that Millennials valued freedom most, while Baby Boomers valued status least. Research has also documented increases from generation to generation in the importance of work-life balance (Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2012; Sullivan, Forret, Carraher, & Mainiero, 2009; Twenge et al., 2010; Wray-Lake, Syvertsen, Briddell, Osgood, & Flanagan, 2011). Dries, Pepermans, and De Kerpel (2008) compared four generations of Belgian workers and found that there were no significant inter-generational differences in definitions of career success, with all generations indicating that satisfaction was their top criterion for defining career success.

A small number of studies have examined generational differences in the career experience variables listed in Figure 1. Dries et al. (2008) found that successive generations of Belgians were less likely to follow the "traditional" upward linear career path and were increasingly mobile in their careers, despite a desire for stability. Increased job and organizational mobility in successive generations was also observed in studies from Canada (Lyons et al., 2012) and Austria (Chudzikowski, 2012). Beutell and Wittig-Berman (2008) observed generational differences in two forms of work-family conflict: "work interfering with family" (WIF) and "family interfering with work" (FIW) were higher for "Baby Boomers" than for the preceding and following generations. Conversely, they found that work-family synergy (i.e., positive spillover

of one domain in to another) was lowest for “Baby Boomers.” Beutell (2013) found that WIF was higher with successive generations, peaking with Generation Xers and declining with Millennials to levels comparable with “Baby Boomers.” The trend was similar for FIW, with successive generations being higher, but stabilizing between Generation Xers and Millennials.

With respect to the career outcomes included in Figure 1, no studies have yet examined generational differences in career satisfaction or commitment. However, successive generations have been found to have lower levels of organizational commitment (Brunetto, Farr-Wharton, & Shacklock, 2012; Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, & Gade, 2012; D’Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008; Lub, Bijvank, Bal, Blomme, & Schalk, 2012; Solnet & Kralj, 2011) and job satisfaction (Benson & Brown, 2011; Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008; Maier, 2011; Solnet & Kralj, 2011). Although organizational commitment and job satisfaction are the most commonly studied work attitudes (Costanza et al., 2012), their use in comparative studies of generations is somewhat problematic because these variables are evaluations of specific target objects (i.e., organizations and jobs). Thus, any observed inter-generational differences in these variables might reflect differences in the nature of jobs and organizations among generations, rather than differing evaluations of similar jobs or organizations. Career satisfaction and commitment, however, represent attitudes toward one’s career in general, which is a broader and more general set of attitudes. By studying differences in career expectations and career experiences (as in Figure 1), one can control for objective and subjective career differences among generations, making the comparison of career attitudes feasible.

Demographic Moderators of Generational Shifts in Careers

The generational differences in career variables that have been observed belie a rich diversity of differences related to other factors (see Joshi, Dencker, Franz, & Martocchio, 2010). To truly understand how careers are changing from one generation to the next, one must make every effort to disentangle the confounding effects of other factors that are influencing shifting careers. Although there are many demographic factors that might contribute to our understanding of careers (see earlier review), we consider here three factors that are likely to interact with generation in shaping changes in career experiences, expectations, and outcomes: gender, immigration, and SES.

Gender

Generational shifts in careers have coincided with a number of important changes in the career opportunities and experiences of women. The participation of women in the labor force has increased steadily since the turn of the 20th century, rising from around 18% just after World War I and doubling to nearly 50% from the period extending from World War II to the beginning of the 1980s (Chaykowski & Powell, 1999). In the 1990s, female participation rose to over 52% worldwide, and to between 60% and 85% in industrialized countries in the 1990s (International Labour Office, 2009). In

Canada, 74% of women aged 15 to 64 years participate in the workforce, a proportion which is slightly higher than other developed countries like Australia, France, Germany, New Zealand, and the United States (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD], 2008; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Women now make up roughly 47% of all Canadian workers (Statistics Canada, 2009a), similar to other developed nations (OECD, 2008). Previous studies on women in the workforce have been devoted to issues of equity and wages (e.g., Chaykowski & Powell, 1999; Gunderson, 1989; Leck, 2002), and few, if any, studies have examined the careers and working lives of women, particularly from different birth cohorts.

Historically, women stopped work when they got married and when they bore children. This is no longer the norm. In Canada, over a 20-year period, from 1978 to 1998, the labor force participation rate increased from 47.1% to 62.3% for married women and from 48.2% to 72.8% for women with children (Chaykowski & Powell, 1999). This upward trend can be attributed to changes in attitudes toward women at work and the functioning of the family unit. It is now more culturally acceptable for women with children to work because of family-friendly policies made possible by firms (Wallace & Young, 2008). The widespread affordability of technology has also reduced the amount of time that women devote to housework (Chaykowski & Powell, 1999). In addition, there appears to be a trend toward gender-equal housework arrangements and increasing normality of “househusbands” (women working and men raising children) among the younger generation (Bulbeck, 2005). Furthermore, preferences for greater consumption of goods have also contributed to the dual-income family, necessitating women to work.

As women began entering the workforce, they have been subjected to gender-role stereotyping, a belief that choice of occupation should be related to gender (Koberg & Chusmir, 1991). There is a general perception that men possess more of certain attributes such as dominance, aggression, and endurance, whereas women are seen as exhibiting greater nurturance, succorance, and sympathy. Accordingly, certain jobs such as management positions, and science and engineering jobs are considered to be men’s work, whereas child care, teaching, and clerical work are seen as women’s work. For example, in Canada, Reavley (1993) reported high percentages of women in clerical work (80%), nursing and health care (79%), teaching (62%), and service occupations (57%). This attitude has been very slowly changing for some time. The influx of women into the workforce during World War II has seen women increasingly willing and able to take on men’s work (e.g., starting with making bullets and bombers). Changing attitudes in the workplace has also seen an increasing number of women in men’s work. Ng and Wiesner (2007) found that young Canadians were more willing to hire women over men for work that is typically viewed as men’s work (e.g., police officers), as long as they are equally or more qualified. This should not come as a surprise given that the younger generation is constantly exposed to messages on equal treatment for all.

Young women’s views of their roles and careers are also changing. Twenge and Campbell (2008) found that women have become more assertive over the years, and younger women displayed no significant difference on measures of assertiveness compared with men. Many women were raised by mothers who were first-generation

feminists, and while they may not be feminist themselves, they are better equipped to break any glass ceilings they encounter, having been given very high self-esteem by their parents (Fuller, 2008). Consequently, younger generations of women are more ambitious and career driven compared with women from earlier generations (Konrad, Ritchie, Lieb, & Corrigan, 2000). Women are increasingly entering and being encouraged to pursue traditionally male-dominated fields such as science, technology, engineering, and entrepreneurship (Armstrong-Stassen & Cameron, 2005; Jubas & Butterwick, 2008; Madill et al., 2000).

There is also growing awareness that women's approach to leadership and differing perspectives such as participative management, enhancing others' self-worth, and energizing followers (Rosener, 1990) make them uniquely qualified to assume leadership positions. Woodd (1999) suggested that women may, in fact, be better prepared than men for a modern career. Tung (2004) also suggested that in the era of globalization, women are especially suited to undertake expatriate assignments; they are equally successful as men in culturally tough environments and possess certain attributes that render them particularly suited to succeed in international assignments. These attributes are rooted in their ability to cope with isolation and in their abilities to interact and communicate with local nationals. Top business schools are already offering women-focused programs and developing female business leaders for global management (Ibeh, Carter, Poff, & Hamill, 2008).

In terms of career outcomes, it appears that women continue to define career success differently from men. Women tend to emphasize balance and relationships when measuring career success, whereas men focus more on material success (Dyke & Murphy, 2006). However, this pattern of difference may change as younger women also display a stronger sense of entitlement than previous generations. In Canada, Ng and Sears (2010) reported that women espouse essentially the same work values as men, and they also want the same rewards and recognition as men. According to Fuller (2008), young women will expect promotions, raises, and fairness in the workplace, given their increased assertiveness and strong sense of self-worth. These women will also not let motherhood be an obstacle to their success, and will demand that employers address their family needs when they want to have children.

While women have made significant inroads in their careers, we acknowledge that there remain significant gaps in terms of their career attainment and pay relative to men. Furthermore, women continue to face barriers in their advancement to senior management, and have to make tough choices between work and family life. Gersick and Kram (2002) found high-achieving women (currently in their 50s) had to trade-off family and careers to become leaders in their professions and communities. Given the more egalitarian values among the younger generation, it remains to be seen whether those values transcend into homes and the workplace.

Immigration

Our understanding of shifting career expectations, experiences, and outcomes must also be examined through the lens of differential experiences faced by immigrant

workers. Globally, immigration has been growing since the end of the World War II, spurred by differences in socioeconomic factors and demographics, advances in transportation technologies, and more affordable transportation (Burke & Ng, 2006; United Nations, 2004). In 2003, immigrants made up almost 3% of the population worldwide, rising to 8.7% in developed countries. Canada, known for its open immigration policies, boasts the highest rate of immigration among the G8 nations, with immigrants making up over one fifth of the population (22.4%) in 2009.¹ Likewise, immigrants also represented over 20% of the population in Australia and New Zealand, 13.3% in the United States, and 8.7% in the United Kingdom (cf. Belot & Hatton, 2012).

Canada has looked to immigration as a way to lessen the impact of a declining birthrate and an aging workforce. As the Baby Boomers retire, immigrant workers will contribute a greater proportion of the labor force essential to Canada's economic growth and sustainability. In 2011, immigrants made up 31% of Canada's workforce, and they accounted for 53% of employment growth in 2011 compared with the previous year (Statistics Canada, 2012). In light of the projected shortage of skilled labor, Canada's immigration strategy has been aimed at attracting skilled workers through policies that admit a greater number of immigrants in the economic class (i.e., immigrants having higher levels of education and professional work experience; Somerville & Walsworth, 2009). Prior to the 1960s, most immigrants to Canada were unskilled workers (e.g., farmers, farm workers, domestic help) to settle in the West (Ferrer, Picot, & Riddell, 2012). By contrast, almost 60% of Canada's immigrants belong to the skilled economic class in 2011 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). Recent immigrants have higher levels of education than native-born Canadians, are twice as likely as Canadians to have a university degree, and four times more likely to have a graduate degree (Zietsma, 2010). These highly educated and skilled immigrants are expected to contribute to the Canadian workforce and to the knowledge industry in particular.

The age distributions of immigrants also differ from that of the native-born population. In general, immigrants to Canada arrive at a relatively young age. Although the proportion of youth (15 to 24 years) immigrating to Canada is similar to the Canadian population (about 15%), almost three quarters of recent immigrants (between 70% and 73%) are between the ages of 25 and 54 years, whereas this age group represents a little more than half of the native-born population (54.3%). By contrast, only 4% of new immigrants are in the older, working-age group aged 55 to 64 years. This is less than half of the native-born representation in this age group (10.7%; Statistics Canada, 2007). Immigrants who come to Canada at younger ages may also fare better in terms of their career outcomes given the acquisition of Canadian education and experience, and better acculturation as they adjust to a new country during their formation years (cf. Ferrer et al., 2012).

Many immigrant women who are racial minorities also face the double-jeopardy of being a woman and a racial minority in the labor market, and some also face a triple-jeopardy of not speaking English (or speaking it with an accent). As a result, they face greater unemployment than their male immigrant and native-born female counterparts (Preston & Man, 1999). Despite Canada's focus on education and skills for immigrant

admission, most women enter the country as a dependent of their husband, who is the principal applicant. Even among immigrant women who are highly educated and highly skilled, many lacked the social capital to stay in their trained professions and had to switch occupations (Shan, 2009). Immigrant women have had to engage in lifelong learning to counter the gender and race challenges of navigating the Canadian labor market (Ng & Shan, 2010).

Until the 1960s, the majority of Canadian immigrants arrived from countries that were culturally and racially similar to Canada. However, in recent years, changes in immigration policies caused a shift away from Europe as the primary source of immigrants toward Asia and the Pacific region. Currently, the majority of Canada's immigrants come from the Philippines, China, and India, and make up more than a third of new immigrants to Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). As a result, recent immigrants are much more likely to be culturally distinct and are racial or visible minorities. According to Hofstede (1984), Asian cultures differ from Canada's on every dimension, and it is widely recognized that different cultures have different career priorities and have different values with respect to work. For example, Bauder (2006) notes that South Asians value social status, whereas individuals from the former Yugoslavia value a leisure lifestyle. Different cultures also subscribe to different gender-role stereotyping, which are manifested in the types of careers that are considered suitable or desirable by each gender (Salaff & Greve, 2003). The definitions and structure of Canadian career and labor markets can be considered to be socially constructed, and therefore potentially ill-fitting for immigrants (Ng & Burke, 2004; Salaff, Greve, & Ping, 2002).

The shifts in Canada's immigration profile have been accompanied by changes in the immigrant labor experience, as documented by the two major labor force outcomes measured by Statistics Canada: unemployment and wages. Immigrants have higher unemployment rates, and have lower wages than their native-born Canadian counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2009b, 2012). Most recent immigrants to Canada also face a career setback when entering the labor market (Worswick, 2004). These challenges are most prevalent for the skilled and university-educated immigrant group. Despite being highly educated and skilled, newcomers frequently face language barriers, discounting of educational credentials, and a devaluation of foreign work experience (Haq & Ng, 2010; Somerville & Walsworth, 2010). As an example of the latter, management ability is perceived in Canada to be an experientially and culturally based skill, two requirements that will exclude most immigrants (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Somerville & Walsworth, 2010).

There is a prevalent perception that immigrants have different attitudes toward work than native-born Canadians (Bauder, 2006). For some immigrants, the immediate purpose of working is to provide for their family, rather than pursuing their career aspirations or seeking advancement (Bauder, 2006). When faced with difficulties in obtaining employment at their previous level or status, immigrants may seek out any job, rather than face unemployment (Kazemipur & Halli, 2001). Immigrants may also seek employment for the purpose of integration into Canadian society and its workforce, and as a means of improving their language skills or alternately, connecting with

other immigrants from their homeland (Bauder, 2006). The work experiences of immigrants have also changed over time as more recent immigrants have faced much greater difficulty integrating effectively into the Canadian workforce. Even immigrants who find employment in their chosen field, often accept employment which is inferior to their previous positions, leading to underemployment and underutilization of their talents. In the past, it has been expected that in time, immigrants would overcome these barriers and enjoy upward mobility in their careers. There is evidence, however, that more recent immigrants never fully recover from the setbacks experienced upon their arrival in Canada (Kazemipur & Halli, 2001).

In general, individuals seek congruence between their values and identities and those of their employers. A perceived lack of fit may affect an individual's attraction to an organization, their satisfaction with their job, their commitment, and their turnover (Ng & Burke, 2005). Ng and Tung (1998) reported that individuals who had experience working in other countries before coming to Canada were less satisfied with their jobs, had lower levels of commitment, and were more likely to turn over. Perceived differential treatment leading to career setbacks or lack of advancement has also been found to be a predictor of job dissatisfaction (DeConinck & Stilwell, 1996). In a study of Israeli immigrants, Krau (1984) determined that immigrants had lower levels of career expectations but higher levels of commitment and job involvement. These career setback experiences, whether major (falling off their career path and finding a job for survival) or moderate (experiencing a setback on a particular career path by accepting employment at a lower level than that obtained in their home country) can be expected to have an influence on the expectations and attitudes of immigrants toward their careers.

SES

The theory of generation as a vehicle for social change derives from the work of sociologist Karl Mannheim, who viewed generation to be a stratifying variable similar in nature to social class (Pilcher, 1994). Mannheim (1928/1952) argued that a generation takes shape within a given social and historical context, suggesting that people from different socioeconomic strata would not share sufficient formative experiences to become united in a single generational consciousness. Although some commentators have argued that generation has become a more important stratifying factor in society than social class (e.g. Eyerman & Turner, 1998), Laufer and Bengtson (1974) argued that generation and social class are intricately entwined as explanations of social change. These authors posited that the primary differentiating factor for people of lower social class is poverty, which is sometimes conflated with racial minority status, and that generational differences are a phenomenon endemic to the upper classes. Thus, "the upper strata are most susceptible to generational discontinuity and its attendant consequences" (Laufer & Bengtson, 1974, p. 188).

Much of the research and theory concerning social class as a career determinant has focused on distinctions between blue-collar workers and white-collar or knowledge workers (e.g., Bruce Prince, 2003; Hennequin, 2007; Thomas, 1989). Because

blue-collar careers often lack the upwardly driven, developmental, long-term trajectories that are hallmarks of the traditional career concept, and instead entail more disjointed job patterns, they are often viewed to be fundamentally different than professional and white-collar careers (Thomas, 1989). Blue-collar careers have different structural constraints, a lower social status, and are segmented in the labor market (Hennequin, 2007). Recent decades have seen a polarization of the labor force in developed countries, where a disproportionate amount of new job creation has been in high-paying professions (i.e., knowledge work) and in low-education, low-wage jobs, particularly in the service sector (Autor & Dorn, 2013; Goos & Manning, 2007). The erosion of the middle class in developed countries (Pressman, 2007) has indeed increased the stakes for successive generations of career entrants, as failure to attain the requisite educational credentials for a professional or managerial career results in significant earnings gaps (Powell & Snellman, 2004).

More recent research has focused on the impact of SES on career decision making. Trusty (2004) found that SES was strongly positively associated with completion of an undergraduate degree in a national U.S. longitudinal study of middle- and high school students. SES has been found to influence the career aspirations of youth in Australia (Marjoribanks, 2002), the United Kingdom (Schoon & Parsons, 2002), and the United States (Bigler, Averhart, & Liben, 2003; Howard et al., 2011). In a study of undergraduate students, Metheny and McWhirter (2013) found that SES was positively related to differential status identity, a measure of one's perception of their social status, which was positively related to career self-efficacy and career expectations, two variables considered important to career decision making. Similarly, Huang and Hsieh's (2011) study of Taiwanese students found that SES (i.e., parents' education, occupation, and income) predicted career decision self-efficacy (i.e., self-appraisal, occupational information gathering, goal selection, planning, and problem solving), which then predicted career intentions and career and academic expectations.

The Interaction Effect of Gender, Immigration, SES, and Generation on Shifting Careers

As in many developed nations, the labor market in Canada is undergoing a shift whereby an aging workforce is being replaced by a younger generation of workers. Complementing this trend is an influx of women and immigrants whose work values, career expectations, and experiences may be significantly different from those of previous generations. Younger women are more assertive, have a greater sense of self-worth, expect fair treatment, are willing and expect to take on traditionally male roles, and are not afraid to make demands to address their family work-life needs (Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Wallace & Young, 2008). As men take on more housework and devote more time to family life, the integration of work and family will become less and less of a gendered issue (Bulbeck, 2005). In many developed countries, immigrant workers are also being brought in to address low birthrates and to plug the shortage of skills. Many immigrants coming to Canada are highly skilled and educated but they

are also unfamiliar with the Canadian way, resulting in underemployment and underutilization of talent. At issue is whether and how gender and cultural differences will interact to affect the types of careers that they find meaningful and fulfilling. There are suggestions that the combined effects of gender, race, and age may lead to “double” or “triple jeopardy,” resulting in limited career attainments for socially marginalized group members (Hurley & Giannantonio, 1999). We have also documented the impact of SES on career expectations and choices.

The confluence of these important factors makes the assessment of generational shifts in careers tricky. Given the impacts of these demographic variables, it is insufficient to view generations as homogeneous groups embodying social change. It is therefore critical that we examine the interaction of these variables. In Figure 1, these variables are presented as moderators of the relationships between generation and career expectations and experiences. This suggests that the nature and possibly the direction of generational shifts in career variables might differ by gender, immigration, and SES. It is also possible that the three demographic variables might interact among themselves as well. For example, career expectations and experiences for immigrant women might have differed from those of immigrant men; high-SES immigrants may differ from low-SES immigrants; gender may have different implications for low-SES people than for high-SES people. The nature of generational differences may interact with any or all of these variables as well. It is possible that all four variables interact in their effects on career variables. Further research is needed to examine and disentangle the effects of these important variables on the evolution of careers. The model presented in Figure 1 offers a starting point for this investigation.

We also emphasize the role of career satisfaction and career commitment in our model in keeping with shifting career expectations and increasing worker mobility (Lyons et al., 2012). From an HRD perspective, promoting career satisfaction and career commitment (vis-a-vis job satisfaction and organizational commitment) as career outcomes is more sustainable over the long term, given individual interests are aligned with knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). In this regard, HRD professionals can design and implement career development programs and strategies according to individual characteristics (generations, gender, immigration status, SES) and their career expectations and experiences.

Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

The challenge for HRD managers and practitioners is to manage the shifting careers of successive generations of workers in consideration of the added career dynamics of women, immigrant workers, and workers from low-SES backgrounds. To this end, we raise several questions from our proposed model, with implications for future research in mind. How can employers provide career development to immigrant workers given their underemployment in the labor market? What are some of the ways in which organizations can bridge the knowledge gap between older and younger workers? What role does compensation play in motivating employees who place an increasing emphasis on work–life balance? It is no surprise that organizations that are able to understand

the shift in career expectations, experiences, and attitudes will likely gain a competitive advantage in attracting and utilizing the best talents in the new millennium.

Previous research on the changing nature of careers has focused on inter-generational differences without adequate consideration of other important demographic influences that engender significant diversity within generational cohorts. The framework we have proposed provides at least three advantages over previous research endeavors in this area. First, the research concerning shifting work experiences and attitudes among successive generations has tended to focus on isolated constructs, such as teamwork (Karp, Sirias, & Arnold, 1999) and work values (Smola & Sutton, 2002), rather than investigating differences in broader level career constructs. Although anecdotal evidence concerning the career expectations, experiences, and attitudes of the various birth cohorts abounds (e.g., Lancaster & Stillman, 2002), no academic study has empirically examined these constructs to date. Our research framework provides a comprehensive set of career-related variables for investigation. Second, much of the inter-cohort research focuses on one or two cohorts, rather than exploring broader trends across all of the cohorts within today's labor force. For instance, Smola and Sutton (2002) compared the work values and beliefs of Baby Boomers and Generation Xers and the study conducted by the PEW Research Center (2007) focused on "Generation Next," born between 1980 and 1988. A comprehensive study of all four generations in the current workplace is necessary to gauge the inter-cohort trends that are emerging over time. Third, although some research has examined the interaction of gender and generation as influences on career variables, there has been no attempt to integrate these variables with immigration and SES to gain a complete picture of how careers are changing for men and women, both immigrant and native-born, of both high and low SES. Such research will generate important knowledge about shifts in the nature of careers that may be unfolding quite differently in different demographic subgroups.

Although this article has documented the confluence of demographic forces within the Canadian context, the interaction of gender, generation, and immigration is an important consideration in a wide range of countries. Our illustration of the Canadian example serves as a starting point for consideration of the specific demographic contexts of other countries faced with similar challenges.

Authors' Note

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Preparation of this manuscript has been supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grant to the research team.

Note

1. Most recent comparable data available.

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