Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to better understand the career advancement expectations that Generation Y hopes to achieve as they enter the workplace.

Methodology

Data were obtained from a survey compiled of 40 previous survey questions. Respondents were 4th year University of Guelph students (N=136). Both male and female students from various degree programs completed the survey. They were recruited through online social media, and using the man-on-the-street technique.

Results

Results showed that five out of the six hypotheses predicted were statistically significant. The findings suggest that family income, family involvement, and a father’s education have a positive
association with career advancement expectations. Also, work values and ambition values were found to have a significant correlation with career advancement expectations.

**Conclusion**

As Generation Y enters the workforce, employers must be aware of their different values, expectations, and needs for the potential jobs. Managers need to be aware of these new needs, values, and expectations in order to better satisfy their employees, ultimately reducing turnover.

**Introduction**

There have been numerous studies on Generation Y over the years that have discussed their characteristics and attributes. This study is based on the assumption that Generation Y career advancement expectations arise from various socio-economic factors. Career advancement expectations are well researched, however there is limited amount of research on how career expectations apply to Generation Y. Generation Y students are characterized as independent, confident and goal-oriented, and who have grown up with technology and have therefore become confident in its use (Meier et. al, 2010). Generation Y regards career advancement as a top priority in their careers, and holds high expectations in regard to pay and promotion (Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons, 2010). Generation Y is an important element of the labour force that has received a lot of research attention. However, their career advancement expectations have been shown to be unrealistic, which has implications for recruitment, retention, and employee satisfaction. Generation Y is the cohort of individuals born between 1980 and 2000. This generation has already impacted the business environment due to the time of their entrance and the different values they bring to the workplace.

Issues related to career advancement have been extensively analyzed over the past four decades (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988). In addition, career advancement expectations of individuals have been studied in the past. The research however is scarce on how career advancement
expectations affect Generation Y and how it differs from past theories. Career advancement expectations of Generation Y merit special consideration because they are known to have unrealistic and supersized work expectations (Ng et al., 2010). This has implications for recruitment, retention and employee satisfaction. Our study will help close the gap between career advancement expectations and how it relates to Generation Y. We hope to gain an understanding of what socio-economic indicators have a positive association with career advancement expectations. This study contributes to the literature by examining factors that explain their career advancement expectations.

In addition, society, organizations, managers, and employees can all benefit from the research on Generation Y. Employers will benefit from our results by being able to tailor their recruitment and retention methods to what will best suit Generation Y students who will be entering the job market. Greater depth will be brought about by this study by specifically measuring Generation Y's family socio-economic factors and how they affect career advancement expectations.

**Literature Review**

Career advancement expectations of Generation Y value special consideration because researchers are curious about how this Generation will impact the workforce and the difference between them and past generations. This research will help companies discover and learn how to adapt to the needs and expectations of this younger workforce. Also, because companies are facing baby boomer retirement, this research will help companies recognize where they need to adapt quickly to retain the best Generation Y talent.
Our study will help close the gap between career advancement expectations and its relation to Generation Y. This research will help to gain an understanding of what socio-economic indicators have a positive association with career advancement expectations. As the workforce in North America becomes increasingly diverse, organizational leaders and Human Resources professionals are charged with managing complex people practices. The practices need to tap into employees’ career advancement expectations in order to harness and drive higher levels of engagement and improve retention statistics. Greater depth will be brought about by this study by specifically measuring Generation Y’s family socio-economic factors and how they affect career advancement expectations. The socio-economic status and work values of Generation Y are essential for this research because Generation Y’s career-related attitudes will provide a clear understanding of what they bring to the workplace and what they expect from employers and their companies. A clear understanding of this generation’s perceptions and expectations about work and career-related issues will assist companies in formulating its recruitment and retention strategies.

This study contributes to the literature by examining factors that explain their expectations. This study will aim to gain an understanding of and demonstrate the impact of socio-economic factors on career advancement expectations, by specifically examining family education, occupation, income and involvement. Also, the findings will advance the research literature on the basic family socio-economic factors that predict the career advancement expectations of their children. Previous research by Wong & Lui (2010) found that there is a positive association between socio-economic indicators and career advancement expectations; however, this research will expand upon the relationship between these variables and Generation Y. Wong & Lui (2010) discussed how the parents’ family income and socio-economic status sets a stage for experience that influences many dimensions of their children’s lives, including the educational opportunities
available to that individual and the attainments that he or she achieves. Researchers in diverse fields such as child development, sociology, demography, and career development understand that families play a major role in shaping their children's career decisions. This research will allow these various researchers to understand the nature and extent of the family's influence on employment and education, which will help to develop effective strategies for helping parents encourage their children to strive for higher career advancement expectations.

Figure 1: Theoretical Model

The theoretical model is highlighted in Figure 1 and each element will be discussed in turn. The independent variable will be the four indicators that have been selected to represent socio-economic factors. These indicators are: family income, family education, family involvement and family occupation. Socialization theories of young people support this study’s beliefs and theoretical model. Certain socialization theories have gathered information on how people who have grown up in privileged homes, and are exposed to greater educational opportunities and financial resources, exhibit higher career aspirations (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Schoon, Martin, & Ross, 2007; Schoon, Ross, & Martin, 2007; Schoon & Parsons, 2002).
On the basis of this model, we predict that the independent variables and dependent variable will be positively associated with each other, suggesting that the socio-economic indicators will be positively associated with career advancement expectations. Also, the independent and dependent variable relationship will be mediated by the constructs of work values and ambition values. This study will also predict that the socio-economic factors will be positively associated with work values and ambition values. Furthermore the mediating variable of work values and ambition values will be positively associated with career advancement expectations. Previous research has led us to indicate a positive association between these variables because according to Brown et al (2011), a higher degree of family education has been found to facilitate career development due to the increased support and related experiences. Also, Brown et al (2011) specifically discussed how family education research has shown that individuals whose fathers who are employed in a professional occupation are more likely to expect to become employed in the same occupation. The positive association between socio-economic factors, work and ambition value, and career expectations of Generation Y is reflected through the research of Ashby and Schoon (2010). The literature defines ambition value as “captures the importance adolescents attach to having a job that enables them to be challenged, promoted and get ahead in the organization and profession” (Ashby & Schoon, 2010). This definition clearly supports the belief that work and ambition value will mediate to the independent and dependant variable relationship.

**Career Advancement Expectations**

This study will define career advancement expectations as the employees’ motivation and commitment which will give individuals the ability to achieve improved access to resources and higher status within an organization as the result of promotions and increases in compensation. This construct is important to our study because we will be using family socio-economic indicators
to predict career advancement expectations. Previous research has shown that recent graduates reported that being dependable at work, demonstrating a positive attitude at work, achieving organizational and personal goals independently, and being on time for organizational meetings and completing work on time are all very important skills needed for potential career advancement (Heimler, 2010). The ability to solve problems and have a strong work ethic are important skills for recent graduates’ career advancement potential. Interpersonal skills, communication and leadership ability are all related to career advancement potential (Heimler, 2010). Human Resources managers identified that the indicators of career advancement potential are work ethic, leadership skills, and systems thinking skills (Heimler, 2010).

*Socio-Economic Status*

The construct of family will be defined as where the participants spent their formative years or the family in which they were raised. The definition will include parents, step-parents, grandparents, foster parents, uncles, aunts, and others who have played an active role in the individual’s development. Previous research from Whiston, S. & Keller B. (2004) also defines family as who they spent their formative years with and includes a variety of possible guardians.

Family income will be defined as the amount of yearly earnings that a family earns as a combined total. Wong & Lui (2010) discussed how the parents’ combined family income and socio-economic status sets a stage for experience that influences many dimensions of their children’s lives, including the educational opportunities available to that individual and the attainments that he or she achieves. Wont & Lui (2012) found that students whose parents have low incomes are impacted by their family’s salary levels when it comes to career choice and career development, and students that have parents with high income tend to gain more support which facilitates career development. Our research will allow us to understand whether students whose
parents have low incomes are truly impacted by their parent’s salary levels when it comes to career choice and career development.

Family education will be defined as the highest level of schooling that one has completed. Wong & Lui (2010) found that parents with a high level of education tend to gain more support for career development from their parents. Meanwhile, Ashby & Schoon (2010) found that parental occupation, which includes their mothers and father's education, does not significantly differ compared to males and females in their sample. Therefore this construct will be important to test in order to determine whether it will be as great an impact when measured with other socio-economic variables.

The definition of family occupation will include the professional career that the members of the family have attained. Wong & Lui (2010) found that young adults that have fathers who are employed in a professional occupation are more likely to expect to become employed in the same occupation (Brown, Ortiz-Nunez & Taylor, 2011). They also found that Parents with hospitality and tourism working experience scored higher than parents who did not have hospitality and tourism working experience on perceived parental support (Wong & Lui, 2010). This is important to our study because it will help us determine if it has the same impact on career advancement expectations in combination with other socio-economic factors.

Family involvement will be described as the impact of the family relationship on the child’s interests, goals and accomplishments. Previous research from Brown et al (2011) discusses how young adults are more likely to want a professional career if they receive support from their mothers. This construct is important to our study because it is one of the four family socio-economic factors that we will be measuring career advancement expectations with. These four socio-economic factors led to the following hypotheses:
**Hypothesis 1:** Family income will have a positive association to career advancement expectations

**Hypothesis 2:** Family education will have a positive association to career advancement expectations

**Hypothesis 3:** Family occupation will have a positive association to career advancement expectations

**Hypothesis 4:** Family involvement will have a positive association to career advancement expectations

*Mediating Variables*

The measure of ambition value captures the importance adolescents’ attachment to having a job that enables them to be challenged, be promoted and get ahead. Ashby & Schoon (2010) found that adolescents from high income families were more likely to aspire to professional jobs, and that female adolescents from high income families were more likely to rate having a job that enables them to “aim high” as important (ambition value). Their research proved that there is a link between ambition value and earnings, since young people who reported that it was important for them to get ahead in a career ended up earning more money than those who did not say it was important to them (Ashby & Schoon, 2010). Family income was positively related to female ambition value, but not to males. As well, males rated being challenged as more important and expressed high job ambition, but this was not dependent on family income (Ashby & Schoon, 2010). They also found that females who had family’s with high earnings, acted as role models for them. This gave them motivation to get ahead in their careers, which is also why females with parents in low income brackets do not report high ambition value (Ashby & Schoon, 2010).

Work values will be defined by four types of basic values in the work setting, which are intrinsic, extrinsic, social and prestige. Intrinsic work values will express openness to change
values such as the pursuit of autonomy, interest, growth, and creativity in work. Extrinsic work values express conservation values such as job security and income, which provide workers with the requirements needed for general security and maintenance of order in their lives. Social or interpersonal work values express the pursuit of positive social relations and contributions to society. Prestige work values will include achievement advancement, status, recognition, independence, company that you are proud to work for, and having influence in work and in the organization. These four types emerge in re-examinations of past research. Ros, Swartz, and Surkiss (1999) identified the same three types of work values: (1) intrinsic or self-actualisation values, (2) extrinsic or security or material values, (3) social or relational values. By understanding how these work values influence students, it will help us recognize the different values that contribute to their career advancement expectations. These two mediating variables led to the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 5:** Ambition value will positively mediate the relationship between socio-economic factors and career advancement expectations.

**Hypothesis 6:** Work value will positively mediate the relationship between socio-economic factors and career advancement expectations.

**Method**

1) **Sample and Procedure**

The current research reports data from one sample of University of Guelph students, who were recruited through social media (Facebook), as well as through man on the street (individual approach). The survey was available online and was completed toward the end of the first semester of Fall 2012 by the participants.

The sample was comprised of 450 students of which 136 participants responded, which
resulted in a response rate of 30.2%. Of the 136 participants in the sample, there were 118 respondents to gender, with 63.77% of them being female, and with a mean age of 21. This means that the average student in the sample was born in 1991. Over half of the sample pursued either a Bachelor of Commerce Degree (29.93%), or a Bachelor of Arts Degree (27.74%). The other majors pursued were Bachelor of Science (14.6%), no answer or not completed (11.68%), Bachelor of Applied Science (4.38%), Bachelor of Engineering (4.38%), Bachelor of Arts and Science (3.65%), Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (0.73%), and Other (2.19%).

The majority of the students in the sample were in 4th year (72.99%); other or no answer (18.25%), 3rd year (7.30%), and 2nd year (1.46%). Half of the respondents were employed during the time of completion of the survey (50.36%), not employed (38.69%), and (10.95%) had no answer or completion of the question.

2) Measures

Data were obtained using self-assessment questionnaires measuring career advancement expectations, family income, family education, family involvement, family occupation, ambition values, and work values.

Career Advancement Expectations. We assessed the career advancement expectations of the participants by asking questions pertaining to opportunity, continual professional development/growth and assessment of goals, and likelihood to seek mentors to improve future performance. One of the questions used to assess career advancement expectations was “How likely are you to proactively seek mentors to improve future performance and career advancement?” With the options for responses being measured by: Highly Unlikely (HU), Unlikely (U), Somewhat Unlikely (SU), Somewhat Likely (SL), Likely (L), Highly Likely (HL)
The five career advancement items were subjected to principle components analysis with varimax rotation and it was found that they loaded on to a single item that explained 55% of the variance in the items (Eigenvalue=2.72). The five items also performed well in the reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha=.776).

*Family Income.* Family Income was measured by a single item asking, “What is your family’s estimated combined income for one year?” and then were measured in correlation to career advancement along with the other variables. Responses were measured using options from the range of 0 to $20,000 to $160,000+.

*Family education.*

We measured family education by presenting two questions in the survey related to the level of education of the father and mother of the participant. The participant indicated which level of education through the following responses: Some High School, High School Graduate, Some University/College, Trade/Vocational/Technical Training, University/College Graduate, Post-Graduate Degree and Other.

*Family Involvement/Parental Work Values.* We measured family involvement and parental work values by assessing the perception of the participant regarding parental encouragement regarding career-related education and training, as well as the participant’s perception of their parents work values on their own work values. Both were assessed and measured from their respective questions and using a scale ranging from a 5 qualitative options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

*Family Occupation.* We measured the variable of family occupation by identifying the specific job
status that participants felt their parents were currently achieving. The participants were asked the same question, “What job status best describes your father’s (and mother’s) occupation, as two separate questions (Leete & Fox 1977).

Ambition Value. We assessed the extent to which the respondents had ambition value based on challenging work, promotion and moving up in their desired profession using two items: How much will it matter to you to get promoted in order to get ahead in your career? and How much will it matter to get promoted in order to get ahead in your career. Respondents had to indicate the extent of the importance of these questions. They were options for responses included: (1) Doesn’t matter, (2) Matters somewhat, (3) Matters very much (Ashby, J. S., & Schoon, I. (2010).

Work Values. We assessed the extent to which the participants revealed their core work values by using a set of questions and then correlated the results with career advancement variables. The group of questions first stated, “In the next set of questions presented please indicate which of the following would be a Top Priority for you in deciding whether to accept a job or stay in your current job. (Please select one answer for each question below). Example question: Having the AUTHORITY to organize and direct the work of others. The response options for this set of questions were: Please indicate whether it is: Highly Unlikely (HU), Unlikely (U), Somewhat Unlikely (SU), Somewhat Likely (SL), Likely (L), Highly Likely (HL).

Participants work values were also measured by asking ranking questions with specific options given. The statement given was Please rank your top 3 work values from the list provided by clicking on them in order from (1) highest priority to (3) third-most important priority. The options consisted of: Salary, Opportunity of Advancement, Challenging Work, Security, Flexible Work Hours, Pleasant Work Environment, Fringe Benefits.
Control Variables. We statistically controlled the variables for the demographics of age, gender and program of study. Possible option answers for age were 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 years of age. Gender was measured using an option for either male or female, and asked “What is your Gender?” Program of study was measured using qualitative options of each program; Bachelor of Applied Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts of Science, Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Computing, Bachelor of Engineering, Bachelor of Landscape Architecture, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science and Agriculture, Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences, and Other.

3) Analysis procedures

Data was analyzed using a correlation analysis to test the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The p-values provide an indication of the statistical significance for four out of the six hypotheses. A two-sided test of equality for column means provided statistical significance for the two other hypotheses where p<0.05. Using these measures we explored the relationship between the variables in the theoretical model and whether our hypotheses proved to be true.

Results

In order to test statistically the relationships between our dependent variable and independent variables, as stated in our theoretical model, we used a correlation analysis. For the analysis our dependent variable was career advancement expectations and our independent variables were the socio-economic factors of family income, family occupation, family involvement and family education. We also tested the mediating effects of work values and ambition value on our dependent variable of career advancement expectations. In Table 1, the
significance for each hypothesis is outlined and from our results we were able to find that five out of our six hypotheses were correct. Specifically our results indicate that H1, H2, H4, H5 and H6 were found to be statistically significant. Hypothesis 3 (family occupation will have a positive association to career advancement expectations) was not correlated to career advancement expectations. The results of each hypothesis are discussed in detail below.

Table 1: Statistical Significance of Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family income</td>
<td>0.351**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Involvement</td>
<td>0.393**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition value</td>
<td>0.467**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Value- Cognitive</td>
<td>0.414**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Value- Instrumental</td>
<td>0.308**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Value- Prestige</td>
<td>0.380**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<0.01**

*Family Income*

Hypothesis 1 (family income will have a positive association to career advancement expectations) was found to be significantly supported by our data. The relationship is highly significant (r= 0.351, p<0.01). We were able to conclude that the socio-economic factor of family income for Generation Y, will have a strong positive association with career advancement expectations of 4th years students.

*Family Involvement*

Hypothesis 4 (family involvement will have a positive association to career advancement expectations) was also found to be statistically supported by our data. This relationship is highly
significant \( (r=0.393, p<0.01) \). We can conclude that the socio-economic factor of family involvement will have a strong positive association with career advancement expectations.

*Ambition Value*

Hypothesis 5 (ambition value will positively mediate the relationship between socio-economic factors and career advancement expectations) was found to be statistically supported by our data. The relationship is highly significant \( (r=0.467, p<0.01) \). These finding show that ambition value does have a positive mediating affect between our socio-economic factors and career advancement expectations.

*Work Values*

Hypothesis 6 (work values will positively mediate the relationship between socio-economic factors and career advancement expectations) was found to be statistically supported by our data. Work values were split into three categories: Cognitive, Instrumental and prestige and the relationship between these and career advancement expectations are highly significant, with a level of 0.414, 0.308, and 0.380 respectively. These findings show that work values have a positive mediating affect between our socio-economic factors and career advancement expectations.

*Family Education*

Hypothesis 2 (family education will have a positive association to career advancement expectations) was tested using pairwise \( t-tests \) \( (p<0.05) \) of the mean ratings of the importance of career advancement groups with different levels of parental education. The hypothesis was found to be statistically supported by data, but only in relation to one’s father figures education, as shown in table 2. This relationship is significant since the mean ratings of respondents whose fathers had some High School differed significantly from those whose fathers had Post-Graduate education \( (p<0.05) \). However, there were no other significant differences among parental education groups.
These findings show that if your father has only some High School education this will affect career advancement expectations, and if your father has Post-Graduate education this will also affect your career advancement expectations. Mother’s education was not statistically supported by data and thus had no effect on career advancement expectations.

**Table 2: Statistical significance of Hypothesis 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Figures Education</th>
<th>Some High School</th>
<th>High School Graduate</th>
<th>Some University/ College</th>
<th>Trade/ Technical training</th>
<th>University/ College Graduate</th>
<th>Post-Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Adv</td>
<td>( \mu ) 4.50a</td>
<td>( \sigma ) .49</td>
<td>( \mu ) 4.81a,b</td>
<td>( \mu ) 5.29a,b</td>
<td>( \mu ) 4.98a,b</td>
<td>( \mu ) 5.08a,b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \sigma ) .42</td>
<td>( N ) 6</td>
<td>( \sigma ) .42</td>
<td>( \sigma ) .35</td>
<td>( \sigma ) .52</td>
<td>( \sigma ) .67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( N ) 15</td>
<td></td>
<td>( N ) 15</td>
<td>( N ) 9</td>
<td>( N ) 8</td>
<td>( N ) 54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

These findings suggest that socio-economic factors have an impact on Generation Y’s career advancement expectations. The results from our survey indicate that all of our socio-economic factors except for family occupation contribute to high career advancement expectations. As expected, we also found significant correlations between work values and ambition values for career advancement expectations.

**Family Income, Involvement and Education**

The findings presented allowed us to conclude that the higher the family income is, the higher career advancement expectations will be. In line with our predictions and previous research by Wong & Lui (2010), we are able to determine that the parents’ combined family income and socio-economic status set a stage for experience and plays an important role. This is significant for employers because it will allow them to understand that if Generation Y were brought up in high
income families, that they will have higher career advancement expectations than those who were not. As well, this could mean that an individual whose parents had a lower combined income could be retained and satisfied easier because of their minimal career advancement expectations. The findings also suggest that the more involved a family is while their child is growing up, then the higher Generation Y’s career advancement expectations will be. As expected, family involvement impacts these expectations and is consistent with Brown et al (2011). This insight can help employers because it explains how family involvement shapes how quickly Generation Y feels they need to advance in their careers. The results also concluded that the father’s education impacted the career advancement expectations of Generation Y, but not the mother’s education. These results could have been impacted by the overwhelming number of women who answered our survey (63.77%). This could have affected the findings due to a bias response from one gender. Overall, the socio-economic indicators need to be recognized by employers in order to help recruit, retain, and satisfy Generation Y workers that are entering the workforce.

Family Occupation

The results showed that family occupation did not affect the career advancement expectations of Generation Y. This is inconsistent with research from (Brown, Ortiz-Nunez & Taylor, 2011) which found that young adults who have fathers that are employed in a professional occupation, are more likely to expect to become employed in the same occupation. These results could have been impacted due to the fact that individuals in this study are university students, which differ from past research. This is however helpful for organizations and employers to help them understand that an individual’s parent’s occupation does not necessarily affect their career advancement expectations.

Work Values and Ambition Value
The results on work values (intrinsic, extrinsic, social, prestige) conclude that they positively mediate career advancement expectations of Generation Y. This is important for employers because this explains that Generation Y's pursuit of autonomy, interest, growth, and creativity in work are all indicators of high career advancement expectations. This information could be beneficial for employers that have employees with high work values, because they will understand that they need to promote them (new job title, not much of a difference in job) in order to retain and satisfy the employees. As well, in regards to succession planning, they can identify employees with high work values to advance quickly in the workplace and learn managerial roles. The findings have also allowed us to conclude that a higher ambition means higher career advancement expectations in Generation Y. Specifically, the higher the value put on promotion opportunities and challenging work, the higher the career advancement expectations of Generation Y. This is consistent with Ashby & Schoon (2010) who discussed how high ambition value was a factor for career advancement expectations. Employers and organizations can use this information to help structure jobs for Generation Y by making them more challenging and rewarding (potential promotion opportunities).

**Limitations**

The main objective of the research was to determine the effects of socio-economic factors and work values on Generation Y's career advancement expectations. Through the developed hypotheses, data collection and analysis findings were reached, which supported previous research and the drawn research hypotheses. Throughout the research process several limitations were uncovered that impeded the study. The main limitation experienced was the availability of time and resources. The research study was conducted over the Fall 2012 Semester running from September until early December. Each section was clearly defined and outlined, but because of the
allotted time frame to complete the study, there was no extra time to focus on certain steps of the research process. Recruiting the sample and collecting the data were most affected by the time constraint. For this study, extra time to recruit more participants to increase the sample size would have created a more representative sample, and more generalizable results. Specifically the data collected was female dominated (87 females, 31 males). This number does represent the sample population at the University of Guelph, however having a more even split between genders would have produced more generalizable results on Generation Y as a whole.

The study gathered data exclusively focused on Generation Y. This limited the study by not allowing the ability to cross examine generational differences. The results show that socio-economic conditions and work values do affect career advancement for Generation Y. However, without data from other generational cohorts, the research cannot determine if the socio-economic conditions and work values affect Generation Y exclusively, or have similar or different effects than other generational cohorts such as the Baby Boomers and Generation X.

When analyzing results, it was discovered that there was a loss of valuable data due to surveys which were incomplete or completed incorrectly. This suggests that the survey response rate and sample size was limited due to inefficiencies in the survey. The incomplete surveys implies the design was not entirely transparent and user friendly. It can be assumed that completion of the survey consumed too much of the participant’s time, or the questions were not presented clearly. If there had been more time to develop and test the survey, the amount of data lost to incomplete surveys could have been decreased.

The results of the research revealed opportunities for further research. The particular result that was interesting was related to family education and career advancement expectations. The results showed that 4th Year University of Guelph student’s father figures education was relevant in
determining that students work values and career advancement expectations, yet the mother’s education level was not supported. This is especially interesting because the participants in the research were for the most part female. In further research a team could narrow in on how each gender answered the questions pertaining to whether their work values and expectations come from their mother or father and why one rather than the other.

Conclusion

Overall the research study built upon previous research on Generation Y and facilitated new insight into Generation Y’s work values and career expectations. The research was a success in that we developed results that proved to support the hypotheses constructed at the beginning of the research process. It was educational to gain knowledge on how work values and socio economic conditions affect and develop the career advancement expectations held by Generation Y.

References


