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Seeking Resources: Predicting Retirees' Return to their Workplace

Armstrong-Stassen, M., Schlosser, F., Zinni, D., Seeking resources: Predicting retirees, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 27(6), 615-635, 2012.

To date the focus of the retirement research has been on identifying the factors that predict older workers' decision to retire from the workforce and the factors related to retirement adjustment and satisfaction. The factors associated with the decision of retired people to return to the labour force have received little attention (Griffin and Hesketh, 2008; Maestas, 2010). This is due, in part, to the fact that unretirement is a relatively recent phenomenon. Historically, when people retired from the workforce, they remained retired. However, in most developed countries, there has been a growing trend towards retired people returning to paid employment. For example, Maestas (2010) found that 26 percent of retired people in the US returned to the workforce. In Australia, Griffin and Hesketh (2008) found the incidence of unretirement to be 38 percent. Schellenberg *et al.* (2005) found that 22 percent of recent retirees in Canada had engaged in paid work after their retirement. It is now recognized that retirement no longer means permanently leaving the workforce (Adler and Hilber, 2008). In fact, Brown *et al.* (2010) suggested that working in retirement may become the "new normal" (p. 4).

Researchers have identified a diverse array of motives for why older workers continue to work (see, for example, Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Bal and Visser, 2011; Barnes *et al.*, 2004; Groeneman, 2008; Humphrey *et al.*, 2003; Weckerle and Shultz, 1999). Kooij *et al.* (2010) classified these work-related motives into three categories: security motives, social motives, and growth motives. Griffin and Hesketh (2008) suggested that work-related variables that act to delay retirement will also influence whether or not a person engages in work activity in

retirement. Drawing on the work of Mor-Barak (1995), Armstrong-Stassen and Staats (in press) identified four primary motives for retirees to return to the workforce: financial, social, personal fulfillment, and generative (the opportunity to share one's knowledge and skills with the younger generation). Most of the existing empirical research on post-retirement employment has focused on identifying the factors that predict retirees' decision to return to the labour force in general, and not explicitly to their former workplace (Brown *et al.*, 2010; Giandrea *et al.*, 2010; Griffin and Hesketh, 2008; Lahey *et al.*, 2006; Maestas, 2010; Moen *et al.*, 2000; Park, 2011; Schellenberg *et al.*, 2005). Adler and Hilber (2008) noted that many older workers will retire and then contract back with their former employer. However, we found only one study (Madvig and Shultz, 2008) that specifically investigated the factors related to retirees' desire to return to the organization from which they had retired.

The purpose of the present study was to build upon and extend the work of Madvig and Shultz. The sample in the Madvig and Shultz study was primarily men (85%) who had retired from a utility company and included not only people who were fully retired but also those who were working in retirement (20%). The sample in our study had an equal proportion of men and women aged 50 to 64 who were fully retired and no longer active in the labour force and who had been employed in a broad range of organizations in both the private and public sectors prior to their retirement. Madvig and Shultz based their conceptual model on social exchange theory, proposing that perception of the organization, perception of retirement, and individual's meaning of work are major predictors of post-retirement behaviour. Only retirees' perception of retirement was a significant predictor of interest in returning to one's former organization—the more positive the perception of retirement the less desire retirees had to return to their former

organization. For our study, we employed a resource-oriented theoretical perspective to develop our conceptual model.

Conservation of Resources Theory

Wang (2007) proposed using a resource perspective as an integrative theory for the study of retirement. Such a resource-based approach draws heavily on Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. COR theory is a general motivational and stress theory that has been applied broadly in the organizational literature (Hobfoll, 2011). A basic tenet of COR theory is that individuals are motivated to obtain, retain, protect, and foster those things that they value (i.e., resources) (Hobfoll, 2001). Hobfoll (2002) defined resources as those entities that either are valued in their own right, such as good health, or act as a means to obtain valued ends, for example money. Hobfoll and Wells (1998) noted that later life is a period of multiple transitions, and to some degree mirrors late adolescence in terms of the number of new, major transitions. In addition, significant resource losses are more likely in later life making it all the more critical to offset these losses by mobilizing other resources. We propose that retirees are motivated to return to their former organization to protect, obtain, and utilize resources available to them in order to offset the resource losses incurred by retirement.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The conceptual model for this study is presented in Figure 1. We posited that three sets of factors—retirement-related resource losses, retirement-related resource gains, and organization-related resource gains—would significantly predict retirees' interest in returning to their former organization. Adams and Beehr (1998) argued that retirement and turnover are

similar to the extent that both represent ways workers may withdraw from their current workplace, but turnover involves leaving the organization whereas retirement entails leaving the workforce. Adams and Beehr found that turnover and retirement intentions had some common antecedents, but they also had unique antecedents as well. In particular, work-related variables (job satisfaction and organizational commitment) were strongly related to turnover intentions but not to retirement intentions. We suggest that intentions to unretire and intentions to return to one's former organization parallel retirement and turnover intentions in that one involves returning to the workforce in general whereas the other refers specifically to returning to one's former organization. We therefore anticipated that some factors, such as financial insecurity, that have been found to be significant predictors of unretirement would also predict interest in returning to one's former organization. However, given the findings from the Adams and Beehr study, we expected that interest in returning to one's former organization would have some unique antecedents and these would be the resource variables embedded in the job and organization.

The retirement-related resource losses included financial loss, job role loss, and pervasive role loss. Financial need has been shown to be a major determinant of post-retirement employment (Brown *et al.*, 2010; Moen *et al.*, 2000; Park, 2011; Schellenberg *et al.*, 2005).

Hence, we predicted that

H1a: Financial loss is expected to be positively related to interest in returning to one's former organization.

Take in Figure 1

Job role loss, characterized in this paper as missing aspects of one's former job, refers to loss associated specifically with the loss of one's work role. In their study of the factors related to the retirement experience, McGoldrick and Cooper (1994) identified missing aspects (e.g., responsibility, satisfaction, routine) of one's former job as a major concern associated with the loss of work. The Miss Work measure was significantly negatively related to satisfaction with one's post-retirement experience. Enjoyment of one's job has been shown to be an important reason for why older workers work (Groeneman, 2008) or return to work (Park, 2011). Conversely, dislike of one's job is a major reason for retiring and remaining retired (Wang and Shultz, 2010). Accordingly, we proposed that

H1b: Job role loss is expected to be positively related to interest in returning to one's former organization.

Retirement can mean the loss of prized roles at work beyond those of the job role (Hobfoll, 2002). For example, if a retiree's social network is still employed, the retiree may experience a loss of social resources (van Dam *et al.*, 2009). For people who value their organizational member role and have a strong attachment to their organization, leaving the organization represents a major role loss (Barnes and Farrell, 2003; Wang, 2007). Successful role transition to retirement involves losing or weakening the worker role and the organizational member role and strengthening the family and community member roles (Wang, 2007; Wang *et al.*, 2011). When retired people fail to replace the loss of work-related roles with non-work roles, their well-being in retirement can be negatively affected (Wang *et al.*, 2011; Zaniboni *et al.*, 2010). We have used the term pervasive role loss to characterize this situation.

Embeddedness plays a major role in pervasive role loss. When individuals are no longer enmeshed in their job and their organization and when they are not embedded in their family or

community, they do not have access to social resources that facilitate their adjustment to retirement (Wang *et al.*, 2011). We suggest that those retirees who are experiencing pervasive role loss are more likely to desire to return to their former organization than their counterparts who have made a successful transition to family and community member roles. Empirical evidence shows that many retirees returned to work to avoid being bored, to feel productive, useful, and helpful, and to keep active (Brown *et al.*, 2010; Moen *et al.*, 2000). Thus, we hypothesized that

H1c: Pervasive role loss is expected to be positively related to interest in returning to one's former organization.

Although later life is generally characterized as a period of significant resource losses, resource gains are still possible (Hobfoll, 2002; Hobfoll and Wells, 1998). Kim and Moen (2002) made the distinction between a role enhancement perspective and a role strain perspective. The role enhancement perspective takes a resource loss approach to retirement and contends that people who retire are vulnerable to feelings of role loss which, in turn, can negatively affect their psychological well-being. Conversely, the role strain perspective adheres to a resource gain position, suggesting that retirement from the demands of one's job may serve to reduce role strain and overload, thereby enhancing one's psychological well-being. Other researchers (Floyd *et al.*, 1992; Kubicek *et al.*, 2011; Potočnik *et al.*, 2010; Wang, 2007) have also noted that retiring from a stressful and demanding job could be a very positive experience. Wang *et al.* (2008) found that retirees who reported higher work stress ratings with their career jobs were significantly less likely to engage in career bridge employment instead of full retirement. According to COR theory, the only thing that individuals have to protect and preserve their resources is other resources. However, the investment of resources to gain

resources or to prevent resource loss places other resources at risk (Hobfoll *et al.*, 1990). For example, returning to one's former organization to counteract retirement-related losses would jeopardize the gains made by leaving work. This suggests that individuals who experience gains from leaving their former organization would be less likely to have a desire to return to it.

We identified two potential resource gains associated with retirement: (1) gains in leaving work, and (2) gains in life satisfaction. Gains in leaving work include freedom from a dictated schedule and leaving behind negative aspects of work, such as unreasonable work-role demands and poor work conditions (Anson *et al.*, 1989). Retirees who perceive retirement as providing relief from unfavourable work and work-related experiences are less likely to have an interest in returning to their former organization than their counterparts who have a more positive view of their work experience. This led us to hypothesize that

H2a: Gains in leaving work is expected to be negatively related to interest in returning to one's former organization.

People can also experience improved life satisfaction following retirement. Apart from providing relief from a stressful job, retirement provides greater opportunity to engage in social activities (e.g., spending more time with family and friends) and leisure activities (e.g., volunteering, traveling, hobbies). In this paper, gains in life satisfaction during retirement refer to greater satisfaction with one's social life, leisure activities, and overall well-being compared with before retirement. The empirical evidence shows that individuals who are more satisfied with their retirement experience are significantly less likely to engage in post-retirement employment (Lahey *et al.*, 2006; Madvig and Shultz, 2008; Maestas, 2010; Schellenberg *et al.*, 2005). Consequently, we predicted that

H2b: Gains in life satisfaction is expected to be negatively related to interest in returning to one's former organization.

A major difference between both the Madvig and Shultz (2008) study and this study and the other studies on unretirement (Brown *et al.*, 2010; Giandrea *et al.*, 2010; Griffin and Hesketh, 2008; Lahey *et al.*, 2006; Maestas, 2010; McNair *et al.*, 2004; Moen *et al.*, 2000; Park, 2011; Schellenberg *et al.*, 2005) is the focus on returning to one's former organization as opposed to returning to the labour force in general. When retirees are being asked expressly about their desire to return to their former organization, it is likely that their interest in doing so will be related to factors specific to their former organization. Hobfoll (1989) defined resources as those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these valued entities. Hobfoll (1989) also pointed out the need to delineate how certain demands are met by specific resources, i.e., what aspects of the resource "fit" the demands resulting from the loss. Hobfoll (2001) noted the overlap between COR theory and Person-Environment (P-E) Fit theory and recently Wang and Shultz (2010) proposed incorporating a P-E Fit framework into retirement and bridge job decision making. We propose that the decision to return to one's former organization can be conceptualized as a result of a perceived fit between a retiree and his or her job and organization. P-E fit serves as a key determinant of resource gain by alleviating uncertainty and promoting the accrual of valuable resources (Lanivich *et al.*, 2010). Lanivich *et al.* suggested that individuals who believe they have a high P-E fit would exhibit a bond with their organization because they perceive greater resources available to them than individuals who have low perceptions of P-E fit.

Researchers have identified various types of P-E fit. The fit between retirees and their former job (Person-Job fit) as well as the fit between retirees and their former organization

(Person-Organization fit) were especially relevant to our study. There are two types of Person-Job (P-J) fit perceptions: demands-abilities fit and needs-supplies fit. Demands-abilities P-J fit is the extent to which a person's KSA's meet the demands and requirements of the job (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005). Demands-abilities fit may decline as workers age because of declines in abilities or because of the underemployment of older workers (Feldman and Vogel, 2009). Retirees who perceive a mismatch between their KSA's and the demands of their former job are unlikely to have an interest in returning to their former organization. Conversely, retirees who perceive a high demands-abilities fit with their former job would be more likely to think about returning to that job and their former organization. Therefore, we predicted that

H3a: Perceived demands-abilities Person-Job fit is expected to be positively related to interest in returning to one's former organization.

Needs-supplies P-J fit refers to the extent to which a person's needs, desires, or preferences are met by his or her job (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005). In addition to skill mismatches, Kalleberg (2008) identified temporal mismatches, noting that older adults have different needs and preferences, including the number of hours they prefer to work, than those who are younger. Older workers, especially retirees considering returning to the workforce, are attracted to an organization that engages in practices tailored to their needs and desires (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008). There is evidence that work conditions for older employees, such as the opportunity to engage in interesting tasks, job transitions, and development activities, do not always meet their needs (van Dam *et al.*, 2009). Because of this mismatch, older workers may not only be inclined to retire early but also be less inclined to return to their former organization. On the other hand, retirees who perceive that their former job fulfilled their needs are more likely to have a desire to return to that job and the organization. Consequently we proposed that

H3b: Perceived needs-supplies Person-Job fit is expected to be positively related to interest in returning to one's former organization.

Person-Organization (P-O) fit reflects the compatibility between individuals and their organization and is more strongly associated with attitudes about the organization in general (Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001). Retirees who perceive that they fit well in their former organization will be more satisfied with their organization and therefore more likely to have an interest in returning to that organization. However, a poor fit would produce dissatisfaction and it is unlikely that retirees who are dissatisfied with their former organization would have a desire to return to it. We anticipated that

H3c: Person-Organization fit is expected to be positively related to interest in returning to the organization.

Method

Research Context

This study was conducted in 2007 with Canada's Association for the Fifty-Plus (CARP), a national non-profit organization representing the interests of Canadians aged 50 and over. The sample for this paper was limited to respondents who were less than 65 years of age. Among Canadian workers aged 50 to 75, only a small number (8%) of those aged 65 to 69 participated in the labour market in 2008 and just 2 percent of those aged 70 to 75 were in the workforce (Pignal *et al.*, 2010). Even though mandatory retirement no longer exists in Canada, at the time of the study half of the 10 Canadian provinces had mandatory retirement legislation in place that allowed employers to force employees to retire at age 65. During this period, mandatory retirement policies were the reason for retirement for one out of five recent retirees who left the labour force at age 65 (Turcotte and Schellenberg, 2007). Unlike many OECD countries, the

Canadian public pension system does not encourage people to retire early (Whitehouse, 2009). However, public pension programs, including Old Age Security which has near universal coverage and the means-tested General Income Supplement, both of which become available at age 65 and have claw back provisions, may discourage people who are 65 and over from returning to paid employment (Skills Research Initiative, 2008). The incidence of low income among Canadians aged 65 and over is lower than in most other industrialized countries, including Sweden, the US, and the UK (Turcotte and Schellenberg, 2007; Whitehouse, 2009). Using longitudinal data from 1982 to 2007, LaRochelle-Côté *et al.* (2010) found that the median income replacement rate for Canadians in their 70s was 0.8 (80%) of that observed when they were in their mid-50s. For people who were in the bottom quintile in their mid-50s, their replacement rate in their 70s was above 1.0, indicating that the public pension system more than replaced the earnings and other income they had in their 50s.

Participants and Procedure

Questionnaires were administered online as well as by mail. For the online questionnaires, CARP placed a hyperlink on its home page that directly connected to the questionnaire website at the university, resulting in 334 completed questionnaires. For the mail questionnaires, questionnaire packets were mailed to those people whose names were randomly selected from CARP's membership list, resulting in 634 completed questionnaires (38% response rate).

The sample for this paper was comprised of respondents between the ages of 50 and 64 who had retired from a career job and who had been retired less than 10 years. Of the 243 participants who met these criteria, 118 were men and 119 were women (6 missing values). Their average age was 60.42 years ($SD = 2.69$) and they had been retired an average of 4.37

years ($SD = 2.50$). Approximately two-thirds (65%) had retired from the public sector (education, government and public administration, and healthcare) and the other third had retired from a broad range of private sector organizations including manufacturing, finance and insurance, high tech, services, construction, and wholesale and retail trade. The types of career jobs that they had retired from included professional (40%), management (28%), administrative (10%), technical and support (7%), skilled trades (6%), sales and customer service (3%), and other (5%). An overwhelming majority (91%) had been employed full time when they retired. Seventy-eight percent were married.

Measures

Unless otherwise noted, the response categories consisted of five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

Retirement-related losses. *Financial loss* was assessed with four items adapted from the Money Worries scale developed by McGoldrick and Cooper (1994). Respondents were asked to indicate how often they had experienced each of the four financial concerns since they retired. A sample item is “Worries about finances generally.” The response categories ranged from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Quite often). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach coefficient alpha) was 0.85. *Job role loss* was assessed with four items adapted from the Miss Work scale developed by McGoldrick and Cooper (1994). The items referred to missing the responsibility, the routine, and the satisfaction of one’s former job as well as work colleagues. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they had experienced each type of loss since they retired. The response categories ranged from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Quite often). The coefficient alpha was 0.81. *Pervasive role loss* was measured with five items from the Losses in Retirement scale developed by Anson *et al.* (1989). The lead-in statement read: “People have different feelings about

retirement. Based on your own experience, please indicate what retirement has meant to you.” A sample item is “Retirement is part of a broader pattern of withdrawing from lots of other activities.” The coefficient alpha was 0.83.

Retirement-related gains. *Gains in leaving work* was measured with the 4-item Gains in Leaving Work scale developed by Anson *et al.* (1989). The lead-in statement was the same as that used for the pervasive role loss items. A sample item is “Retirement means being free to do what one wants to do, not what someone else decides one has to do.” The coefficient alpha was 0.76. *Gains in life satisfaction* was assessed with four items developed for this study. Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they were at the present time compared with before they retired. The items pertained to their overall well-being, their social life, and leisure activities. The response categories ranged from 1 (Much less satisfied) to 5 (Much more satisfied). The coefficient alpha was 0.84.

Organization-related resource gains. *Perceived demands-abilities P-J fit* was assessed with the 5-item Perceived Ability-Job Fit scale developed by Abdel-Halim (1981). This measure assesses the extent to which the individual’s ability and competence are matched with his or her job. A sample item is “I felt that my job and I were well matched.” We modified the original 7-point false-true response scale to a 5-point strongly disagree-strongly agree response scale. The coefficient alpha was 0.84. *Perceived needs-supplies P-J fit* was measured with four items. Two of the items were adapted from Armstrong-Stassen’s (2008) Job Design measure and two of the items were developed for this study. The items referred to the current availability of opportunities to take on meaningful new roles or work assignments (1 item), to engage in mentoring activities (2 items), and to assume a modified role with reduced job demands (1 item). Respondents were asked to indicate whether providing these practices was important in

influencing the decision to return to work. The coefficient alpha was 0.83. *Perceived P-O fit* was operationalized as satisfaction with one's former organization. In their meta-analysis, Kristof-Brown *et al.* (2005) found a strong ($\rho = 0.65$) relationship between P-O fit and organizational satisfaction. Satisfaction with the organization the respondent was employed in just prior to his or her retirement was assessed with two items adapted from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann *et al.*, 1983). The items are "All in all, I was satisfied with the organization" and "In General, I liked working in the organization." The coefficient alpha was 0.79.

Interest in returning. The three-item measure of interest in returning to one's former organization was developed for this study. Respondents were instructed that the items in this section of the questionnaire referred to the organization they were employed in just prior to their retirement. The items are "If the organization asked me to return to work for it, I would," "Barring unforeseen circumstances, I do not intend to return to paid employment" (reverse scored), and "I plan to spend the rest of my life in full retirement" (reverse scored). The coefficient alpha was 0.72.

Control variables. The control variables were age (in years), gender, marital status (married/not married), pre-retirement occupation (managerial/professional or other), retirement duration (length of time retired in years), retirement reasons (retired due to organizational downsizing; retired because of health issues), current health status, unretirement history (whether the respondent had previously engaged in post-retirement employment), and data collection procedure (mail or web questionnaire). For the two-item measure of health status, respondents were asked to rate their health at the present time and then to rate how their health compared to most people their age (coefficient alpha=0.79). To assess reasons for retirement, respondents

were asked to indicate how important various reasons were in influencing their decision to retire. Two of these reasons (downsizing and health issues) imply the retirement decision was not voluntary.

Age, gender, marital status, health status, length of time retired, and prior history of post-retirement employment were included as control variables because they have been shown to be significantly related to returning to the labour force after retirement in prior empirical studies (Choi, 2000; Giandrea *et al.*, 2010; Griffin and Hesketh, 2008; Higo and Williamson, 2009; Hill, 2002; Madvig and Shultz, 2008; Maestas, 2010; Moen *et al.*, 2000; Park, 2011; Schellenberg *et al.*, 2005). Specifically, retirees who are younger, male, in good health, retired a shorter time, and who previously returned to the labour force are more likely to return to paid employment than retirees who are older, female, in poor health, and who have been retired longer. Married women are less likely to unretire than never-married women (Choi, 2000; Pleau, 2010). There is also empirical evidence that individuals who were in managerial/professional occupations prior to retirement are more likely to return to the workforce than their counterparts who retired from other types of occupations (Maestas, 2010; McNair *et al.*, 2004; Schellenberg *et al.*, 2005). Although the empirical evidence, with the exception of the Madvig and Shultz study, focused on returning to the labour force in general, it is likely that these individual characteristics are also related to returning to one's former organization. Using data from a 30-year longitudinal study, Pyper and Giles (2002) found that for those who left their career job involuntarily, 21% did not engage in paid work again whereas 61% started a new full-time job. Conversely, for those who ended their career job voluntarily the numbers are reversed: 62% did not return to the labour force whereas 21% started a new full-time job. These findings indicate that older workers whose retirement was not voluntary are more likely to return to the workforce. However, Pignal *et al.*

(2010) found that when displacement, i.e., losing a job due to layoff or business downsizing, was the reason older workers left the workforce, 91% of those who returned to paid employment were employed in a different company. Therefore, older workers who retire because of downsizing are more likely to return to the labour force, but they are less likely to return to their former organization than their counterparts whose reason for retiring was not due to organizational downsizing. Data collection procedure was included as a control variable because initial data analysis indicated that those who completed the web questionnaire expressed a significantly greater interest in returning to their former organization, $F(1,240) = 4.55, p = 0.04$, than those who completed the mail questionnaire.

Data Analysis

To test the hypotheses, we used multivariate regression with the control variables, the retirement-related resource gains and losses variables, and the organization-related resource gains variables entered simultaneously.

Results

We conducted a series of confirmatory factor analyses to establish the distinctiveness of the multi-item measures of the nine major study variables. The initial analysis indicated that one of the items assessing the gains in leaving work variable cross-loaded on the pervasive role loss factor. This item was omitted from subsequent analyses. The fit indices for the confirmatory factor analyses are shown in Table I. The results showed that the 9-factor model fit the data significantly better than various alternative models including 8-factor, 7-factor, and 1-factor models. All of the items were significantly related to their respective factor in the 9-factor model which was not the case when the number of factors was reduced.

Take in Table I

The means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations are presented in Table II. The direction of the correlations was as expected with the retirement-related loss variables and the organization-related resource gains positively related to interest in returning to one's former organization and the resource-related gains variables negatively related to desire to return to the organization.

Take in Table II

The regression results are shown in Table III. Overall, the predictor variables accounted for 47 percent of the variance in interest in returning to one's former organization. The beta coefficients showed that financial loss and pervasive role loss were significant positive predictors of interest in returning to one's former organization, thus confirming H1a and H1c. Job role loss was not a significant predictor of interest in returning to one's former organization. Therefore, H1b was not supported. Both gains in leaving work and gains in life satisfaction were significant negative predictors of interest in returning to one's former organization, confirming H2a and H2b. For the organization-related resource gains variables, the needs-supplies Person-Job fit and Person-Organization fit variables were significant predictors of interest in returning to one's former organization, confirming H3b and H3c. The demands-abilities Person-Job fit variable was not a significant predictor, thus H3a was not supported.

Take in Table III

Discussion

This study makes several important contributions to the unretirement literature. First, the conceptual model was developed using a resource perspective grounded in COR theory. The results of our study indicate that a resource-oriented theoretical perspective is a useful approach to identifying factors that encourage or discourage unretirement. Second, our focus was on retirees' interest in returning to retirees' former organization and not the labour force in general. This allowed us to incorporate factors that were specific to their former job and organization, such as job role loss, and the Person-Job and Person-Organization fit variables. Third, compared with the Madvig and Shultz (2008) sample, the sample in our study had an equal number of men and women, included only people who were fully retired and workplace inactive, and consisted of people who had retired from a broad range of organizations in both the private and public sectors.

The objective of our study was not to replicate the Madvig and Shultz (2008) study but to build on and extend their research. We proposed that retirement-related resource losses and organization-related resource gains would be significant positive predictors of interest in returning to one's former organization whereas retirement-related gains would be significant negative predictors of interest in returning. With two exceptions, the results supported the hypothesized relationships. Retirees who had experienced financial loss and pervasive role loss following their retirement expressed a significantly greater interest in returning to their former organization than their counterparts who had not experienced such losses. For the organization-related resource gains, P-O fit, characterized by satisfaction with one's former organization, and needs-supply P-J fit, embodied by the availability of job role options, were significantly positively related to interest in returning. Finally, retirees who experienced gains in leaving work as well as gains in their life satisfaction following retirement reported significantly less

interest in returning to their former organization than those retirees who did not experience these gains. This latter finding is consistent with the Madvig and Shultz results. These researchers found that the more positive the perception of retirement, the less desire retirees had to return to their former organization.

It is interesting to note that the two variables specific to retirees' former job, job role loss and demands-abilities P-J fit, were not significant predictors of interest in returning to their former organization. This suggests that even though retirees have an interest in returning to his or her former organization it does not necessarily mean that they desire to return to their former job. Instead, the findings indicate retirees are looking for available job role options, such as mentoring opportunities and modified work role demands, which better fit their current needs. Armstrong-Stassen (2008) found that respondents who had retired and not returned to work rated the importance of job design options (challenging and meaningful assignments, new roles for older workers, and reduced workload pressures and job demands) as significantly more important in influencing their decision to return to the workforce compared with how important these job design options were rated in influencing the decision of those in post-retirement and career jobs to remain in the workforce. Bal and Visser (2011) found that possibilities to change one's job role within the organization was positively associated with teachers' motivation to continue working in their organization after retirement. Consistent with these results, our findings show that the availability of job role options also plays an important role in the decision to return to one's former organization.

Implications

The implications of an ageing population for employers include both labour and skill shortages due to the loss of older experienced workers through retirement and fewer younger

workers to fill the void (Parker, 2006). One way to address these projected shortages is for older people to come out of retirement and re-enter the workforce (Anderson and Hussey, 2000; Baxter, 2001; van Dalen *et al.*, 2010). The challenge for employers is how to encourage retirees to return. Our findings have important practical implications for human resource management policies and ultimately for organizational effectiveness. Strengthening ties with individuals who have already invested themselves in the organization is more manageable through human resource policies than recruiting external strangers. Retirees will be more likely to want to return to work for their former employer, particularly when they have the ability to work in jobs that are meaningful, with mentoring opportunities, and with a modified work role. Experienced retirees can share their expert knowledge with younger workers through mentorship programs that appropriately match the skills and personality of young workers with returning retired workers.

An organization that values older workers as assets can build a culture of trust and socialize all workers to continuously share ideas and to respect one another for what they have to offer, regardless of their age (Schlosser and Zinni, 2011). Management can ensure that retirees are kept informed about what is going on in the organization. This keeps retirees connected, and makes it easier for them to reintegrate into the organization. Inviting retirees to workplace functions for milestone celebrations is also important to keeping them informed and to showing them they are valued. This presents an opportunity for retirees to meet current employees, have some discussion of the workplace and organization's activities, consequently developing an interest in workplace events that might stimulate their desire to return. This socialization and openness to ageing workers will become important as the workplace continues to change, influenced by economic conditions, the ageing workforce, skills mastery, and even government retirement policies.

Our findings also have societal implications. The Conference Board of Canada (2006) identified the ageing of the population as one of the greatest challenges facing the country. By 2021, close to one in four workers could be 55 years of age or over, a proportion never seen before in Canada (Martel *et al.*, 2011). Recently, the Finance Minister of Canada stated that the challenges of Canada's ageing population are coming up repeatedly in his pre-budget consultations and there is speculation that the government may raise the eligibility age from 65 to 67 for the government-provided pension programs (The Canadian Press, 2012). Fougère *et al.* (2005) argued that having older adults participate in the labour force until the age of 65 would more than fully offset the negative impact of ageing in Canada for at least the next 35 years. The problem is that the average age of retirement (62) in Canada has changed little since 1996 (Park, 2010). This indicates that the majority of older workers retire well before the age of 65. Given the ageing of the Canadian population, early retirement not only can lead to labour shortages but also can exacerbate issues related to the dependency ratio and put additional pressure on publicly funded programs including healthcare (Park, 2010). Public policies that encourage older adults to participate in the labour force can have a considerable offsetting impact (Boothby *et al.*, 2003). Parker (2006) noted that retirees represent a large, underutilized, skilled labour pool but little is being done to attract retirees back into the workforce. Policies that currently act to discourage retirees from returning to the labour force, including pension regulations and tax laws, need to be replaced with policies that encourage unretirement by allowing the accrual of resource gains and limiting resource losses that may be incurred when a retiree returns to paid employment.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this study has several strengths, including the resource-driven conceptual model and the broad range of pre-retirement organizational backgrounds represented by the sample, the study also has several limitations. The cross-sectional research design and the reliance on self-report data create a potential for bias. The restrictions placed on the sample, especially having to have retired from a career job, may limit the generalizability of the results to those retirees with characteristics that are comparable to those of the study sample. To establish the generalizability of the findings beyond the Canadian context, this study needs to be replicated with retiree populations in other countries. The findings are based on respondents' 'interest' in returning to their former organization. It is not known if this expressed interest will convert to actually returning to the organization. Evidence to support this would require following respondents over time and determining if such a relationship does in fact exist. To measure some of the variables, such as gains in life satisfaction and satisfaction with one's former organization, we relied on respondents' retrospective assessment of how satisfied they were prior to their retirement or with their former organization. Therefore, this makes these measures susceptible to memory biases. Another measurement issue is the use of global measures to assess losses and gains instead of assessing specific types of losses and gains separately. It is possible that specific types of losses or gains could be differentially associated with interest in returning to one's former organization. For example, instead of a global measure of job role loss, assessing each specific type of job role loss (responsibility of the job, contact with work colleagues, and routine of the job) could shed some insight on which specific losses are the strongest predictors of interest in returning to one's former organization.

Our conceptual model was founded on COR theory. However, there are other relevant theoretical models that could be used to explain the relationships between the predictor variables

and interest in returning to one's former organization. One alternative approach, proposed by one of the reviewers, would be to use a general attitudinal framework of beliefs → evaluations of these beliefs → interest in returning to one's former organization. Clearly, further refinement of the theoretical model is warranted, including extending our proposed conceptual framework by developing an integrated model that incorporates COR theory as well as other relevant theories.

We examined only the direct relationships of the resource gains and losses variables with interest in returning to one's former organization. It is possible that indirect relationships also exist. For example, the job role loss variable had a moderately strong correlation ($r = 0.41$) with interest in returning yet it was not a significant predictor suggesting that its association with returning to one's former organization may be mediated by another variable, such as satisfaction with one's former organization. It is also possible that the relationship between demands-abilities P-J fit and interest in returning is mediated by either the needs-supplies P-J fit or by the P-O fit variables. However, we were unable to test for mediation because of our research design and our statistical analysis approach. Rosopa and Stone-Romero (2008) noted that cross-sectional, quasi-experimental and nonexperimental research designs are inappropriate for testing for mediation. These researchers also concluded that hierarchical multiple regression should not be used in testing for mediation. We therefore recommend that future studies be designed in such a way that tests for mediation could be conducted.

We suggest that future research investigate how work centrality influences the likelihood of returning to one's former organization. Work centrality represents the extent to which a person identifies with the work role (Hirschfeld and Feild, 2000) and may be especially relevant to retirement-related role loss. Empirical evidence shows that work centrality is a significant predictor of older workers' intention to remain working in their organization (Armstrong-Stassen

and Schlosser, 2008; Davies and Cartwright, 2011). Bal and Kooij (2011) found that work centrality determines the type of relationship people negotiate with their organization. People with high work centrality were more likely to have a positive relationship with their employer and this relationship was stronger for older workers than for younger workers. People who have a more positive relationship with their organization are more likely to have greater access to resources and to be more strongly embedded in their job and organization than those people who have a less positive relationship (Harris *et al.*, 2011).

Conclusions

With impending skills shortages, the retention of older workers and return of skilled organization-specific retirees will provide a source of competitive advantage. This study demonstrates the usefulness of a resource-oriented perspective in predicting the desire of fully-retired individuals to return to their former organization. Retirees who wish to replenish the financial and emotional resources related to their work experience will be more likely to want to return to work for their former employer, particularly when they have the ability to work in jobs that are meaningful, with mentoring opportunities, and with a modified work role that is of interest to them.

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Table I.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Fit Indices

	X^2	df	GFI	AGFI	NNFI	CFI	RMSEA	ΔX^2
9 Factors	689.19	485	0.84	0.81	0.96	0.97	0.04	
8 Factors ^a	876.98	493	0.81	0.77	0.94	0.95	0.06	187.79***
7 Factors ^b	1977.37	500	0.65	0.58	0.83	0.85	0.12	1288.18***
7 Factors ^c	1059.28	500	0.78	0.73	0.91	0.92	0.07	370.09***
1 Factor	4204.02	521	0.47	0.39	0.65	0.67	0.18	3514.83***

Notes: ^aEquating the retirement-related gains variables; ^bEquating the retirement-related loss variables; ^cEquating the organization-related resource gains variables.

*** $p < 0.001$

Table II.

Means, Standard Deviations and Zero-order Correlations for the Study Variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	60.42	2.69							
2. Gender ^a	---	---	-0.07						
3. Marital status ^b	---	---	0.01	0.18**					
4. Occupation ^c	---	---	-0.14*	-0.04	-0.05				
5. Retirement duration	4.37	2.50		-0.14*	-0.11	-0.16*			
6. Downsizing reason ^d	---	---	0.05	-	-0.05	0.12	-0.06		
7. Health issues reason ^e	---	---	-0.12	0.23**	-0.03	0.22**	-0.15*	0.13	
8. Health status	---	---	0.03	0.06	0.01	-0.16*	0.04	-0.06	-
9. Unretirement history ^f	---	---	-0.05	0.07	0.03	0.05	-0.12	-0.16*	0.29**
10. Collection method ^g	---	---	-0.13*	0.06	0.15*	0.00	-0.15*	0.14*	0.12
11. Financial loss	2.34	0.99	-0.16*	0.19**	0.17*	0.12	-	0.14*	0.21**
12. Job role loss	2.20	0.76	0.03	0.10	-0.11	-0.03	-	-	0.04
13. Pervasive role loss	1.84	0.74	0.06	-0.05	-0.06	0.06	-	0.19**	0.18**
14. Gains leaving work	3.66	0.83	-0.07	0.10	0.21**	0.02	-0.03	-0.04	0.27**
15. Gains life satis.	4.71	0.88	-0.12	0.13	0.08	-	-0.00	-0.19*	0.19**
16. P-J fit (D-A) ^h	3.91	0.76	0.06	0.06	-0.04	-	0.14*	-0.18*	0.01
17. P-J fit (N-S) ⁱ	4.08	0.61	0.03	0.19**	0.15**	-	0.22**	-0.11	-0.13*
18. P-O fit	3.48	0.94	0.11	-0.09	-	-	0.17**	-0.11	0.14*
19. Return interest	2.17	1.02	-0.09	0.10	-0.04	0.18**	-	0.14*	-0.09
							0.29**	0.10	0.10

	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Age								
2. Gender ^a								
3. Marital status ^b								
4. Occupation ^c								
5. Retirement duration								
6. Downsizing reason ^d								
7. Health issues reason ^e								
8. Health status								
9. Unretirement history ^f	-0.10							
10. Collection method ^g	-0.12	-0.01						
11. Financial loss	-0.26**	-0.04	0.15*					
12. Job role loss	-0.09	-0.09	0.05	0.28**				
13. Pervasive role loss	-0.24**	-0.14*	0.02	0.33**	0.49**			
14. Gains leaving work	-0.02	0.02	0.09	0.03	-0.28**	-0.11		
15. Gains life satis.	0.28**	0.04	0.07	-0.22**	-0.26**	-0.50**	0.33**	
16. P-J fit (D-A) ^h	0.12	0.09	0.02	-0.21**	0.16*	-0.08	-0.18*	0.00
17. P-J fit (N-S) ⁱ	0.04	-0.01	0.13*	0.06	0.14*	-0.04	0.09	0.10
18. P-O fit	0.06	0.03	-0.09	-0.15*	0.16*	0.01	-0.20**	-0.03
19. Return interest	-0.17**	-0.14*	0.14*	0.38**	0.41**	0.34**	-0.20**	-0.31**

	16	17	18	19
1. Age				
2. Gender ^a				
3. Marital status ^b				
4. Occupation ^c				
5. Retirement duration				
6. Downsizing reason ^d				
7. Health issues reason ^e				
8. Health status				
9. Unretirement history ^f				
10. Collection method ^g				
11. Financial loss				
12. Job role loss				
13. Pervasive role loss				
14. Gains leaving work				
15. Gains life satis.				
16. P-J fit (D-A) ^h				
17. P-J fit (N-S) ⁱ	0.22*			
18. P-O fit	0.46**	0.11		
19. Return interest	0.03	0.22**	0.17**	

Notes: ^aGender: 1 = male; 2 = female; ^bMarital status: 1 = marital; 2 = not married; ^cOccupation 1 = managerial/professional; 2 = other; ^dDownsizing reason 1 = did not retire due to organizational downsizing; 2 = retired due to organizational downsizing; ^eHealth issues reason 1 = did not retire due to health issues; 2 = retired due to health issues; ^fUnretirement history 1 = previously returned to the workforce after retiring; 2 = had not returned to the workforce; ^gCollection method 1 = mail; 2 = online; ^hDemands-abilities fit; ⁱNeeds-supplies fit. Significance levels: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Table III.

Predictors of Interest in Returning to One's Former Organization

Independent variables	β	SE	<i>t</i> -value
Age	-0.01	0.02	-0.13
Gender	0.10	0.12	1.64
Marital status	-0.10	0.15	-1.61
Occupation	0.16	0.13	2.67**
Retirement duration	-0.21	0.03	-3.13**
Downsizing	-0.07	0.17	-1.09
Health issues	0.02	0.14	0.30
Current health status	-0.06	0.08	-0.95
Unretirement history	-0.13	0.14	-2.20*
Collection method	0.08	0.12	1.38
Financial loss	0.14	0.07	2.15*
Job role loss	0.08	0.10	1.15
Pervasive role loss	0.16	0.10	2.11*
Gains in leaving work	-0.15	0.08	-2.40*
Gains in life satisfaction	-0.17	0.08	-2.32*
Person-Job fit (Demands-Abilities)	-0.04	0.09	-0.56
Person-Job fit (Needs-Supplies)	0.18	0.10	2.90**
Person-Organization fit	0.19	0.07	3.05**
<i>R</i>	0.69		
<i>R</i> ²	0.47		
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.42		
<i>F</i>	8.73**		
d.f.	18,177		

Notes. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

Figure 1.

Conceptual Model

